

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND HISTORY WORKSHOP
AND RADICAL SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP
IN THE 1970s AND 1980s

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the History Workshop at the University of the University of the Witwatersrand in the context of radical South African historical scholarship. Not only is the History Workshop shown to mirror developments in radical scholarship but it is seen to guide and stimulate particular directions of research. The history of the Workshop is traced and its academic as well as popularising activities are examined. The Marxist social history approach, which was encouraged by the Workshop, is considered with reference to the social and political environment in which it emerged, and the international and local historiographical context. The issues, themes and concepts reflective of that approach are unpacked and some thought is given to their impact on Marxist categories of analysis.

The History Workshop is seen to reflect and to have some influence on the direction pursued in labour and urban as well as rural history. In labour history it pursued concerns of the social history of labour. Labour history was to take two different paths in the 1980s due partially to the influence of the Workshop group.

Urban history grew rapidly as a field in the 1980s. The triennial Workshops reflected that development while the Workshop group particularly encouraged social history concerns within that field. The development of Marxist social history is seen in the change from an economistic approach in some of the papers presented at the first History Workshops to a broader social history emphasis in many of the later papers. The themes and issues arising out of urban Marxist social history are considered as is their impact on the understanding of South Africa's urban history in general.

The Workshop reflected and encouraged social history themes in rural history studies, which was another expanding field of research in the 1980s. These themes incorporated Africanist insight as well as an emphasis on oral history and local history. The Marxist social history studies, which were presented at the triennial Workshops, produced new insights into the rural history of South Africa which challenged earlier theories.

The History Workshop with its materialist social history approach acted as a forum and as such, a catalyst for a radical scholarship in South Africa.

The triennial workshops reflected what was happening in the terrain of Marxist social history. These Workshops, which attracted a large gathering of local, as well as foreign academics, legitimised that research and gave the Marxist social history scholars a certain standing within the local academic community. Although the study of South Africa's past may have similar directions in the late 1970s and 1980s without the presence of the Workshop, that presence gave a coherence and an added impetus to those routes of Marxist social history.

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PREFACE

My initial interest in the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand began when I was studying for a Higher Diploma in Education at the University of Natal, Durban in 1986. The mid 1980s was a period of intense activity around educational issues, and groups like the NECC were working on developing alternative education materials. Luli Callinicos gave a talk on the History Workshop and its popularising activities during that year.

Against the initial interest in alternative education and popularising, the research direction changed as a result of two factors. The desire to be an historian and to remain within the department of history, as opposed to the education department, meant that my focus had to be more historical. On deciding to write a history of the History Workshop, a door was closed when I was informed that the minutes and correspondence of the Workshop were confidential.¹ It was largely with a sense of frustration that I entered the field of historiography to consider the academic side of history from below, or alternative history, with a special emphasis on the History Workshop. The subject of surveying the field of historiography is a difficult one which should be left to a historian who has had many years of experience in reading, teaching, and writing history. As a very recent postgraduate I found the subject incredibly dense and complex, yet at the same time, challenging and stimulating. Various doors opened into vibrant new fields of research, and I was only able to touch the surface of many issues such as, the impact of gender analysis, narrative, and oral history on our understanding of South Africa's past.

At a later date I was given access to the Workshop's correspondence and minutes and my thanks go to Philip Bonner and the Workshop committee for making that possible. My experiences explain the nature that the thesis takes as a study of the History Workshop and radical South African historical scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Human Sciences Research Council and the University of Cape Town provided financial assistance while the research was in progress. Funds from

¹ Minutes of the History Workshop Executive Committee (ad hoc) held on June 22, 1988, Executive File, HWO, Wits.

the History Department enabled me to travel to Johannesburg on a few occasions to collect data and conduct interviews.

I would like to thank my two supervisors. Colin Bundy provided critical, in-depth commentary on the initial drafts of my chapters. Christopher Saunders gave me broad encouragement and advice for the completion of the thesis. I am indebted to the academics whom I interviewed, for providing me with information about their careers and their involvement in, and perceptions of the Workshop. I am grateful to those academics who answered my questionnaire. The data from those answers is included in the thesis.

My thanks also go to my colleagues and friends, in particular Kerry Ward, Tom Winslow and Claire Jones who walked with me through the troughs and peaks encountered en route as a research student.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family. My husband's family rallied when the going got tough. My mother, who has always been a wonderful role model, instilled in me a thirst for knowledge and always had the confidence that I could do it. My husband made me hold on, and my son gave a purpose to my work.

INTRODUCTION

THE FOCUS

In 1986, in a memorandum to the committee of the History Workshop of the University of the Witwatersrand, of which he was a member, Tom Lodge wrote: 'It is time for a historiographical re-appraisal, one of an order of that which occurred at the beginning of the 1970s'.¹ My research was undertaken in an attempt to provide some historiographical assessment of Marxist social history as it was produced in South Africa from the late 1970s and through the 1980s. For practical reasons, this thesis does not comprehensively examine every historical publication of the Marxist social history persuasion. Rather the focus is on the Wits History Workshop. The History Workshop cannot be seen as a tangible entity on its own. It consists of the people who formed its committee and those who contributed to the triennial Workshops. The study, then, is concerned with: the research conducted by members of the History Workshop which was relevant to the preoccupations of the Workshop; the papers which were presented to the triennial History Workshops from 1978; the publications which arose from those History Workshops; and work, such as Keegan's, which drew heavily from the insights produced and discussion emanating from the triennial Workshops.

My reason for focusing on the Wits History Workshop as such was that it reflected developments in South African historiography and particularly Marxist social history. Also, it was a strong force directing Marxist social history in the country.² The Workshop's growing influence and reputation amongst South African scholars was obvious in its expansion over

¹ T. Lodge, "Theme for the next (1987) workshop", Memorandum to the History Workshop (hereafter cited as HW) committee members, n.d., History Workshop Office (hereafter cited as HWO), University of the Witwatersrand (hereafter cited as Wits.), Johannesburg.

² As far as reflecting developments in South African historiography was concerned, van Onselen commented: 'It was the research that was happening at the time, particularly in Marxist social history, which influenced the direction the History workshop took. C. van Onselen, Telephonic interview, by G.K.Tatham, May 1992.

the years. At the 1978 Workshop thirty-five papers were presented, while at the 1990 Workshop ninety-two papers were presented at the academic part of the conference alone. As Grundlingh commented: 'since its inception in 1978 the Workshop has become a major event on the academic calendar'.³ Bonner spoke of the History Workshop's vigour in the terrain of Marxist social history in South Africa and his words are confirmation that an analysis of radical South African scholarship necessitates a comprehensive knowledge of the History Workshop's activities and the work which it encouraged:

The History Workshop has stimulated scholarship in particular directions. It has developed social history in South Africa. Obviously the individuals in their individual capacities have done that but the Workshop has acted as a focus and it has brought people together from different disciplines into the conference. It has related us more closely to a broader constituency ... It is in the course of developing an indigenous school of radical revisionist historiography in South Africa of a particular kind which is distinctly South African. It has done all that.⁴

Although the Workshop appeared to 'attract only those with an attachment to a particular social history approach', its influence was far wider.⁵ There were many graduate students and academics throughout the country, who would not call themselves Marxist social historians, but who have been clearly influenced in their research and teaching by the subject

³ A. Grundlingh " Review of Class Community and Conflict", The Star, 31 January 1987.

⁴ P. Bonner, interview by G.K.Tatham, October 1989, Tape recording and transcript, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, p.3; By encouraging the presentation of 'work in progress' it speeded the process of historical research in the area of Marxist social history. Bozzoli noted: 'Papers have been reproduced in this unrevised form simply to make them available in a single volume to other researchers and interested readers quickly and cheaply'; B. Bozzoli, ed., Labour Townships and Protest: Studies in the Social History of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1979.p 12. In fact many of the papers which were presented to the History Workshop over the years as 'work in progress' found their way into local South African journal publications as well as many academic books. Social Dynamics, Africa Perspective, South African Labour Bulletin (Hereafter cited as SALB), Report June 1981, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand, p.4. History Research Group, Report for three years, 1 October 1984 - 31 July 1987, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. p.36.

⁵ C. Saunders, " Methodological issues in South African urban history", penultimate draft of a report commissioned by the H.S.R.C., paper presented at History seminar, Department of History, University of Cape Town, 1991.

matter and style of those papers presented to the triennial Workshops over the years.⁶

The focus of the thesis is historiographical. For this reason the thesis is arranged thematically and not chronologically. The chapters cover developments in the fields of labour history, urban history and rural history and the part that the History Workshop group played in reflecting as well as contributing to those developments.

Due to the historiographical nature of the work, very little attention has been paid to what has been an integral part of its activities - the Wits History Workshop group's attempts at popularising history. This aspect could be the subject of another thesis in itself. The historiographical emphasis of the thesis, does not mean that I see the academic and popularising sides of the History Workshop as completely separate entities. They complement each other and at times are very closely connected.

MARXIST SOCIAL HISTORY AS REFLECTED BY THE WITS HISTORY WORKSHOP

The content of history

It was in the spheres of labour history, urban history and rural history that Marxist social history developed in South Africa. Often however, as the papers which were presented to the History Workshop reveal, these fields were merely incidental to the main focus, which was social history. Nevertheless these studies have illuminated many facets of life in the workplace, the urban areas, and the countryside. They have also provided more knowledge about 'what happened' and as a result have challenged past historiographical assumptions by providing new interpretations within these different fields of study.

⁶ See survey of academics below - Chapter One; The University of Cape Town Urban History Project has also had its influence; A. Bank, 'Crime, class and gender in Cape Town', Paper presented at Workshop on Cape Town History, University of Cape Town, 1989; P. van der Spuy, 'The involvement of Women in violent crime as processed by the Institutions of Justice in Cape Town 1860-1879, Honours thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989.

The papers presented to the History Workshop over the years reflect the re-orientation in South African historical research which occurred over the last two decades. This re-orientation had three fundamental currents which were not mutually exclusive: materialist scholarship, Africanist scholarship and social history. The materialist scholarship initiated by revisionist scholars in the early 1970s was concerned with the penetration and accumulation of capital and its effect on the formation of classes. Land, capital and labour were central issues. Africanist scholarship overturned the rigid concepts of mode of production and political economy. Studies of the transformation of nineteenth century African societies in the face of the growth of capital, revealed that residual and persistent ideologies, power relationships, gender and age divisions of labour and property, interacted with broader structural forces. Social history research gave consideration to the lives of ordinary people. It embraced that which was unique, regional, local and experiential. The History Workshop papers at a basic level appear to have partially absorbed all three currents. Essentially these papers have some basic common themes. They give insight into the very complex history of capitalist penetration and industrialisation in South Africa. They reveal how these processes affected the lives of ordinary people and how people's responses to these broad processes actually shaped to some degree their course and pattern.

From the late 1970s the trend within Marxist social history was away from an institutional focus on groupings, organisations, movements and leadership. According to that focus, areas of consciousness and culture were only considered important when they were expressed through parties and organisations or when they reflected the determinations of the political economy. At that time however, even the emerging Marxist social histories were rather economistic. In 1979 Johnstone described the teething problems encountered in many of the first papers presented to the History Workshop:

But the more we move from political economy into such areas as political sociology and social psychology - to issues of culture and subjectivity, of ideology and psychology, of meaning and identity, the more the Marxist approach is faced with the paradigmatic

weaknesses of an essentially materialist approach confronted by the role of non-economic factors in history and society ... The very strengths of Marxist political economy have perhaps discouraged a greater concern for and sensitivity to this whole issue of the non-economic.⁷

However, generally, the Workshop papers avoided structural determinist explanations and grappled with the question of non-economic factors and how these related to class analysis. The daily life of ordinary people, their consciousness, cultural patterns, experiences, family, community, race, ethnicity, religion became subjects of consideration. Gender was also an increasingly acknowledged category in historical analysis. The papers were concerned, not just with the structural constraints which impinged on people's lives, but with how these constraints were perceived and how they were restructured by people's struggles. As a result these empirically based studies changed the understanding and identification of class formation, class consciousness and class struggles.

The methodology

Not only did Marxist social history alter the content of history, it also modified the methodology. The 'history from below' focus inevitably meant that oral history became an important source of information. Narrative formed an essential part of that oral history approach. There was also an increasing emphasis on empirical detail and a 'listening' approach to history.

It became obvious from the papers which were presented to the Workshop that radical scholars were drawing from a variety of different approaches. Johnstone's challenge to South African scholars in 1979 anticipated the directions Marxist social history would take in the 1980s:

... the Marxist approach is ... nevertheless a heavily materialist paradigm. Given the basic complexity and multi-dimensionality of social life and history, we would not be ill-advised, as social scientists, to reject the idea that any one approach alone can

⁷ F. Johnstone "'Most painful to our hearts": South Africa through the eyes of the new school' in Canadian Journal of African Studies, vol.16, 1982, p.23.

completely do justice to it all, and to accept some degree of epistemological and paradigmatic pluralism ... A more pluralistic Marxist approach would argue ... that inquiry can fruitfully proceed within a variety of paradigms; that there may be some measure of complementarity besides incompatibility ... Some kind of a more pluralistic Marxist approach seems to be called for.⁸

He added, 'Quite what all this would mean as far as the future of South African studies is concerned is not clear'.

By concentrating on the Wits History Workshop and those contributing to it, the study considers: the currents feeding in to the Marxist social history; the people involved in writing that history; the characteristics of that history; the various directions and emphases taken in the late 1970s and 1980s; and the new interpretations pioneered in labour; urban and rural history. Hopefully some light will be shed on 'quite what all this has meant'.

A FOCUS ON THE HISTORY WORKSHOP

There are problems with having the History Workshop, its publications and the papers presented to its conferences, as the central focus of the thesis. While the History Workshop was at the forefront of developments in Marxist social history, it is important to recognise that the Workshop was not the only group or set of conferences to perform that role. The extent of the History Workshop's contribution to historical research may be overemphasised. It may also be seen to be the initiator of certain approaches to history when, at times, it was just following a trend. Van Onselen commented that, it was 'the research that was happening at the time, particularly in Marxist social history which influenced the direction that the History Workshop took'.⁹

⁸ Johnstone, " New school " pp. 25-26.

⁹ van Onselen, telephonic interview, May 1992.

Although the History Workshop became recognised by the University authorities in 1985 as the History Research Group, throughout the thesis, I have continued to refer to it by its popular name 'The History Workshop', or the 'Workshop'.

SOURCES

The Workshop's annual and triennial Reports provided valuable information about: the aims and purposes of the History Workshop; the funding the committee received; the activities of the committee and sub-committees, both in the academic as well as the popularising arenas; and the publications of the History Research Group. These reports were written mainly for the funders and for the University Council and as a result were limited in the amount and type of information they gave.

The files kept by the Workshop provided information about: what happened at committee meetings; what the pre-occupations and interests of the different committee members were, and what influence they had on the directions which were pursued by the History Research Group; as well as what relationships were established between the Workshop and union and community groups.

My attendance at the 1990 History Workshop was invaluable in the sense that I was able to get a first-hand impression of the atmosphere and the proceedings. The discussions at the seminars and the plenary sessions revealed the problems and the dynamism of interdisciplinary discussions and exposed the major directions that research was taking in the country.

The introductions and the choice of papers in the academic books published by the Workshop, as well as the proposed themes for the different Workshops, revealed the particular interests of certain members of the committee, and the directions pursued in academic research by the Workshop.¹⁰

¹⁰ B. Bozzoli, ed., Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: Capitalist Penetration and Popular Response, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983. p 55. It should be recognised that the selection did not necessarily reflect the interests of all the committee members Bozzoli noted in TCT 'The very criteria for the selection of essay for inclusion reflects my own views on the subject' and again in CCC she notes 'The selection of these papers was made

The papers which were presented to the triennial History Workshops reflected the state of radical research in the country. These papers were not necessarily completely in line with the directions the History Workshop committee was wishing to pursue in historical research. This misfit was particularly obvious at the 1978 Workshop. It was clear that the History Workshop was not a mere reflection of historical research in the country but served to focus and stimulate particular directions of research.

Interviews with the various members of the committee and participants at the Workshops yielded valuable information which could not have been gained from any other source. The information gathered from talking to people who were involved in the Workshop revealed: the sources of inspiration acting on different academics; the reasons behind the creation of the Workshop; the rifts that developed within the Workshop over the whole question of academic answerability to a popular constituency; the different perceptions held of the History Workshop and its functions, by various academics; and the impact that the History Workshop has had on academic thought.

In 1989 I sent a questionnaire to academics in the social sciences at virtually every University in the country. The questionnaire explored academic involvement in the Workshop as well as academic perceptions as to: what the main aims of the History Workshop were; whether there was any perceived discrepancy between its stated aims and its practises; what approaches to history it was encouraging; how it had changed direction over the years. Academics views of the organisations and groups that had the greatest influence on the practices of the History Workshop were also assessed. The questionnaire also investigated the extent to which the History Workshop and the Workshop papers influenced academic research and teaching. It sought out the various criticisms levelled at the History Workshop from various academic quarters. There are limits to, and problems with, a structured questionnaire. My own pre-conceived notions of the History Workshop affected the way the questionnaire was structured and the

by the editor and reflects her particular choice of focus rather than that of the Workshop as a whole. B. Bozzoli, ed., Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987. p.1.

questions asked did not allow academics to fully explore their own perceptions and forced them instead into a set framework. There was no room to follow up certain comments or for academics to elaborate on certain points. Nevertheless much information was gained from this source.

THE THESIS

Chapter One examines the history of the History Workshop. This chapter provides the context for a study of the development of Marxist social history in South Africa. It considers the formation of the History Workshop group, as well as the particular directions it pursued both in the academic as well as the popularising spheres. The interests of the committee members and the relationships between the committee and various funding, university, academic, union and community bodies are shown to have had an impact on the particular directions taken by the History Workshop in the 1980s. A portion of the chapter is devoted to summarising the results of a survey sent to academics and graduate students throughout the country on their perceptions of the History Workshop and the extent to which it influenced their thought and teaching.

Chapter Two looks at the Marxist social history approach. The growth of Marxist social history is shown to have been influenced by: international historiographical developments; as well as the local political and economic milieu in South Africa and local intellectual trends. A large section of the chapter is devoted to destroying the framework which sets the rise of Marxist social history in South Africa in the context of the 'race/class' and 'structuralist/social history' debate. The development of Marxist social history is shown to have been built on and to have incorporated valuable elements from a variety of different paradigms. The pluralism of the Marxist social history approach is exposed and this exposure reveals the inner nuances and subtleties of that history.

Chapter Three considers themes that emerge in most of the papers presented to the History Workshop. The growing reluctance on the part of Marxist social history scholars to use broad and inelastic concepts or

forms of classification become obvious. Their concern with subjective and non-economic forces in history is revealed. Their consideration of culture, ideology, ethnicity, subjectivity, community, gender and age divisions has meant that a more nuanced, fluid and complex history of South Africa has been drawn. The introduction of these concepts has given new interpretations and understandings to what were rather rigid categories of 'class', 'race', 'the state', 'dominant group', 'the oppressed' and 'hegemony'. An attempt is made to draw out working generalisations from the common themes within the Workshop papers.

Chapter Four examines the path followed by labour history in the late 1970s and 1980s. Labour history and labour studies in the early and mid 1970s are shown to have had some impact on the rise of social history concerns. However, Labour history is seen to take two different directions in the 1980s. The 1978 History Workshop reflected the beginnings of that split. One line followed a social history direction under the encouragement of some members of the History Workshop committee. The other line, although affected by the insights produced by Marxist social history, remained within the sociology departments and focused on institutions and relations of production. The role of the History Workshop both in reflecting and guiding the directions taken by labour history is considered.

Chapter Five considers the extent to which the History Workshop reflected developments in urban history in South Africa from the late 1970s, as well as the part that it played in encouraging social history concerns within urban history. The subjects given consideration in this chapter include: the reasons behind the rapid expansion of urban history studies; contemporary crises and their effects on academic thought; the growing emphasis in issues of culture, ideology, community and other social history concerns within urban history studies; and the problems with and lacunae in urban history. Consideration is also given to the contributions made by Marxist social urban history to an understanding of urban life in South Africa.

Chapter Six deals with developments in rural history in South Africa during the late 1970s and 1980s. The influence on the rapidly expanding subject of rural history, of Africanist studies, local political events,

and local action groups, is considered. The History Workshop is shown to reflect developments in Marxist social rural history. Themes of rural studies are shown to include dispossession, labour bondage and rural resistance. The growing concern with life histories, ethnicity and community studies is mapped. Changing emphases in studies of nineteenth century societies are also traced. The chapter considers the role that the History Workshop played in encouraging the social history directions which were pursued in many rural history studies.

Chapter Seven considers the claims to have provided a re-interpretation of South Africa's rural history, made by scholars who had strong links to the History Workshop's pre-occupations. The chapter examines: the new approaches to rural history; the various insights which the social history approach into rural life and the transformation in the countryside; and the challenges which these interpretations posed to contemporary analyses of agrarian change.

In the conclusion, the methodological approach of the Marxist social historians is discussed. The problems and challenges faced by Marxist social historians are considered. Giving due consideration to their aims, their activities and their influence, an assessment is made of the achievements of the Wits History Workshop group in terms of the contribution they made to the growth and directions taken by Marxist social history in South Africa.

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP - A BRIEF HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to think about Marxist social history in South Africa without giving a fleeting glance towards the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand. Some would argue that the two are integrally connected. Certainly it could be argued that knowledge of the history of the Workshop could provide for a fuller understanding of the development of Marxist social history in the country. With this in mind a consideration will be given to such issues as: who was on the committee; what their interests were; what academic conferences were organised by the Workshop group and when they took place; what popularising activities the committee were involved in; the relationships the History Workshop committee had with community and trade union groups; the links it established with international worker as well as local social history groups; and the particular directions the Workshop took over the last fifteen years of its existence.

The committee and its intentions

The Wits History Workshop came into being when a small group of scholars met on 11 July 1977 in a house in Melville, Johannesburg. The group that were to comprise the first committee were: Belinda Bozzoli, Luli Callinicos, Eddie Webster, Philip Bonner, Peter Kallaway, Taffy Adler, Tim Couzens and Patrick Pearson.¹ These scholars were based in different

¹ Charles van Onselen was an interested observer at that stage. History Workshop 2. Report of first meeting, 1978 File History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; E. Webster, interview by G.K. Tatham, October 1989, tape recording and transcript, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; E. Webster, entry in diary, 11 July 1977; L Callinicos, interview by G.K.Tatham, October 1989, tape recording and transcript, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; P Kallaway, interview by G.K. Tatham, June 1990, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

disciplines in the social sciences at the University of the Witwatersrand. The Workshop committee was, as a result, a partially autonomous and voluntary body, which was not attached specifically to any department.

The original idea for a History Workshop was conceived when certain scholars, among them Bozzoli, van Onselen had some contact with the History Workshop movement in Britain. Having attended one such Workshop, Bozzoli felt at the time that this was what South Africa needed. Subsequently she found that many other academics felt this way. The emergence of the History Workshop group in South Africa was a result of the recognition by these scholars that it was the right time and place for such a development.²

The aims of the small South African group were twofold. They hoped to promote research which embraced a 'history from below' focus, which concentrated on the lives, experiences and consciousness of 'ordinary people' within a materialist framework. They also set out to make the results of academic research available and accessible to ordinary people. These popularising attempts were a natural facet of producing history from below. As Bozzoli noted at an early stage in the History Workshop's life: 'what kind of blind academicism would it be to adopt a "grassroots" academic perspective without making some attempt to communicate this perspective beyond the seminar room and conference table?'³

While recognising that there was an obvious tension between the academic side and the popularising side, Bonner noted that it was desirable to have both: 'They reinforce each other'.⁴ Hyslop, who became a committee member in the late 1980s, spoke of a 'creative tension' between the two aspects.⁵

² B. Bozzoli, Interview by G.K.Tatham, June 1988, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

³ Bozzoli, Labour Townships and Protest, p.4; La Hausse was also to observe, 'it is almost a contradiction in terms to write 'History from Below' without actually in some ways trying to feed some of it back into those very constituencies who have historically made up the substance of the history you are writing'. La Hausse, interview by G.K.Tatham, October 1989, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁴ Bonner, interview, 1989.

⁵ J. Hyslop, interview by G.K. Tatham, October 1989, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

As part of their focus on history from below the Workshop committee wanted to 'decolonise' history. These scholars wished to encourage local research. They hoped to change the balance so that academic research on South African history would not be dominated by scholars based at overseas universities like Sussex and London.⁶ To do that the committee decided to hold a Workshop every three years at the University of the Witwatersrand. These workshops would encourage local scholars to present their 'work in progress' and that would facilitate the spread of ideas across disciplines within South African research.

THE 1978 HISTORY WORKSHOP

The first Workshop was held in February 1978. Its theme was 'The Witwatersrand: Labour, Townships and Patterns of Protest'. The emphasis on social history and particularly on workers in the workplace and in the townships reflected the concerns of the committee members.

The committee

Bonner, who had an Africanist training, was involved in the educational side of the labour movement. He was closely involved with the Trade Union Advisory and Co-ordinating Committee (hereafter cited as TUACC) and later, the Federation of South African Trade Unions (hereafter cited as FOSATU). In 1981, for a period, he worked full time for the unions.⁷ As an historian, his interest lay in the creation of a labour force over the period of the mining revolution, as well as in the spontaneous protests of

⁶ Many of the scholars contributing papers to the conference were not residents in South Africa at the time; Kallaway, interview 1990; Conference on Southern Africa Labour History, April 1976, Africa Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand. Among these scholars were Moorsom, O'Mera, Phimister, Richardson, Trapido, van Onslen.

⁷ Bonner was on the FOSATU education committee. He was later to start the FOSATU worker news. P. Bonner, interview by G.K.Tatham, June 1988, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg; Delius, interview, October 1989; Webster, interview, October 1989.

workers in the early part of this century. However, his interest also lay in township studies and he was to encourage many of his students in that area.⁸ Adler was involved in the labour movement. He had also just edited a book of labour papers, Perspectives on South Africa.⁹ Eddie Webster had initially been interested in community and township research, however that interest changed to worker education and institutional labour history, which included the labour and production process.¹⁰ Webster was an industrial sociologist who had been directly involved in the labour movement in Durban in the mid 1970s. He founded the South African Labour Bulletin (hereafter cited as SALB) and, along with Turner, founded the Institute of Industrial Education (hereafter cited as IIE).¹¹ Webster was interested in examining the strike activities of workers at individual companies, such as the Heinemann Electric company.¹² Callinicos's particular interest and involvement was in worker history, and especially popularising that history.¹³

Pearson had a labour interest: his honours dissertation was on the labour compounds. However, as an anthropologist and under the supervision of David Webster, Pearson was more interested in the human face of labour

⁸ History Workshop 2, Report of First Meeting, 1978 Workshop File, HWO, Wits; His thesis was titled: 'The rise, consolidation and disintegration of Dlamini power in Swaziland between 1820 and 1889', Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1977. He had edited a book of labour studies: Working Papers in Southern African Studies, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1982; Delius, interview, October 1989; Webster, interview, October, 1989.

⁹ T. Adler, Perspectives on South Africa: A Collection of Working Papers, Johannesburg: African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, 1977.

¹⁰ He originally looked at Cato Manor, Webster, interview, October, 1989; E. Webster, 'The labour process and forms of workplace organisation in South African foundaries', Ph.D thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983.

¹¹ Webster, interview, October 1989, p.2.

¹² Ibid., History Workshop 2, Report of First Meeting, History Workshop 1978 File, p.3.

¹³ Callinicos, interview, October 1989. She had been an organiser in the Metal and Allied Worker's Union in Durban during 1974 and 1975. She wrote a labour history for a worker newspaper called Abasebenzi. She worked for SACHED writing a black social history series for the People's College, a supplement which appeared every weekend in the Weekend World.

as opposed to the institutional.¹⁴ Kallaway was schooled in the liberal tradition. He was not involved in the labour movement but had many contacts who were, and he had worked on a history of the mining industry. His interest focused on education.¹⁵ Couzens was particularly concerned with the cultural forms of communities. He was a strong promoter of oral history and African literature.¹⁶ Bozzoli was a sociologist who was influenced by Gramsci's thought. She had not been an active participator in the labour movement and was known to dislike institutional labour history.¹⁷ Her interest lay in the ideologies of both the ruling groups as well as the ordinary people in society, and she promoted research which considered the experiences of the underclasses.¹⁸ It was obvious that labour and the history of ordinary people in the townships was an inevitable choice of theme for the first Workshop.

The academic proceedings

At the 1978 Workshop thirty-five research papers were presented at eight seminars.¹⁹ These seminars followed a particular format. A discussant, or chairperson, guided the seminars at which small numbers of people presented related papers.

¹⁴ HW 2, Report of First Meeting, p.3.

¹⁵ Kallaway, interview, June 1990.

¹⁶ Couzens was a research fellow in the African Studies Institute; T. Couzens; 'The ABC of research' Africa Perspective 6, No.4 July 1976, reprinted April 1980; T. Couzens, The New African: a study of the life and work of H.I.E. Dhlomo, Johannesburg: Ravan Press 1985; T. Couzens, 'The New African: Herbert Dhlomo and Black South African Writing in English, 1903-1956', Ph.D University of the Witwatersrand, 1980.

¹⁷ B. Bozzoli quoting E.Hobsbawn in 'Class, community and ideology in the evolution of South African Society', in B. Bozzoli, ed, Class, Community and Conflict, pl.

¹⁸ Bozzoli, interview, June 1988; B. Bozzoli, The Political Nature of a Ruling Class: Capital and Ideology in South Africa; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.

¹⁹ Appendix C

In line with the Workshop's aim to decolonise, the majority of scholars who attended were local researchers, although some scholars from the United Kingdom and from North America did attend.²⁰

Bonner commented that the invitations to the Workshop were open ended: 'we ask people to circulate those invitations to anybody they think might be interested. We don't exclude anyone from the conference'.²¹ Nevertheless the History Workshop was seen by many to adopt only a left perspective. As Freund noted, 'other academics feel alienated. It does not allow room for other approaches to history'.²²

Three public lectures were given: F. A. Johnstone considered the impact of revisionist history in South Africa; van Onselen gave two lectures on the lives of ordinary people in Johannesburg over the period of the industrial revolution. In 1979 a book was produced by Belinda Bozzoli titled Labour Townships and Protest: Studies in the Social History of the Witwatersrand. Ten of the papers from the first Workshop were included in that book.²³

Popularising activities

At that early stage in the History Workshop's life, the committee's concern with popularising history was as yet in an embryonic form. Webster, who at the time was interested in worker theatre, along with Kallaway and Pearson, was involved in the popularising side.²⁴ He commented: 'the open day was not an issue in 1978, it was quite a small part of the activities'.²⁵

²⁰ HW Report for 1978, 1978 File, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand.p.2. Among these academics were R. Davies T.D. Moodie, and F.A Johnstone.

²¹ Bonner, interview, October 1989.

²² B. Freund, interview by G.K.Tatham, September 1989, University of Natal, Durban.

²³ B. Bozzoli, ed. Labour, Townships and Protest: Studies in the social history of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1979.

²⁴ Kallaway, interview, June, 1990.

²⁵ Webster, interview, October 1989.

Callinicos suggested that, 'there wasn't really a popular history component' at all.²⁶ Non-academic events were held in the evenings. Invitations were sent to the Unions.²⁷ Webster noted that the unions were quite enthusiastic about the Workshop's popularising attempts, however there was very little participation on their part. For people from the townships on the East Rand and in Soweto the evening sessions discouraged their attendance at those functions.²⁸ The committee of the Workshop learned by their mistakes as regards the timing of the sessions as well as the advertising for the 1978 popular events.

We failed hopelessly in linking with the Black community. Perhaps we should build in a stronger structural link with the Doornfontein local history project and other ongoing concerns at this planning stage rather than rely on posters and invitations.²⁹

Only a few popularising events were presented at the 1978 History Workshop. A play, based on research by van Onselen, on African labour and the liquor monopoly on the mines in the late nineteenth century was performed by the 'Junction Avenue Theatre Company'. Sitas, an honours student at that stage, was closely involved with the play. Webster noted that the play, although 'a very amateurish affair ... pointed towards the cultural domain which ... became a major area of importance in the History Workshop'.³⁰ Kallaway and Pearson exhibited a large number of photographs depicting the lives of workers in Johannesburg under themes such as: 'the mining industry', 'Chinese labour', 'living areas', 'the informal sector', and 'demonstrations and disturbances'. In 1986 these photographs were reproduced in a book titled Johannesburg: Images and Continuities. A slide-tape show 'Gold and Workers' which examined the experiences of workers

²⁶ Callinicos, interview, October 1989.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Webster, interview, October 1989.

²⁹ Meeting HW 1980, Meetings, Minutes and Agendas Box File, 1981, Workshop, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand.

³⁰ Webster, interview, October 1989.

affected by the gold mining revolution was also presented, as were two other slide shows (one of which was attended by members of the Garment Workers' Union), and a number of historical films.³¹

The Workshop committee felt that their popularising attempts should not happen only over the period of the February Workshop, but should be a continuous effort. As part of that effort they commissioned Callinicos, to write a book, to be called Gold and Workers 1886-1924: A People's History of South Africa.³² It was written for a worker audience and, looked at the early years of gold mining on the Reef and considered the mechanisms of control over the labour force as well as the development of migrant labour.³³

THE 1981 HISTORY WORKSHOP

The committee

By 1981 three further members had joined the committee: van Onselen; David Webster, a social anthropologist; and Lodge, a lecturer in political studies. Van Onselen, who had some impact on the directions the History Workshop pursued into the 1980s, was influenced by radical American rural history and, in particular, scholars like Genovese; as well as certain British Marxist historians, among them Rude, Hobsbawm and Thompson. He was particularly interested in historical, materialist studies of the social world of workers, whether in the compound, the township or the countryside.

³¹ Slide shows: 'The Garment worker's Union' and 'Vrededorp: Rise and Decline of a Community'. Letter from Bozzoli to The Garment workers' Union, 9 February 1978, File 1978 Workshop, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand. Films: 'Golden Harvest'; Dr. P. Lewis' film on Soweto in the 1950s. D. Swanson's (director) films 'Jim comes to Joburg' and 'The Magic Garden'; P. Pearson and P. Kallaway, Johannesburg: Images and Continuities: A History of Working Class Life through Pictures, 1885-1935, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987.

³² Callinicos, interview, October 1989; History Workshop Report for 1978, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand. L. Callinicos, Gold and Workers 1886-1924: A People's History of South Africa, vol.1, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981.

³³ Callinicos, interview, October 1989.

In 1979 he had become the director of the African Studies Institute at Wits. The Institute facilitated the collection of rural oral history studies which reflected the experiences of people during the transformation of the highveld in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.³⁴ Van Onselen was amongst those on the committee who suggested 'countryside' in the Transvaal, as part of the theme for the second Workshop.³⁵ David Webster's interests were in migrant labour, particularly from Mozambique. He was also closely involved in community politics and the struggles of poor people in urban areas.³⁶ Lodge was also interested in community issues and in African resistance, in rural as well as in urban areas.³⁷ The theme for the second History Workshop 'Town and Countryside' reflected these scholars' interests, along with those of the other members of the committee.³⁸

³⁴C. van Onselen and I. R. Phimister, Studies in the History of African mine labour in colonial Zimbabwe, Gwelo: Mambo, 1978. C. Van Onselen, 'South Africa's lumpenproletarian army: "Umkosi wa Ntaba" - "the regiment of the hills", 1890-1920'. History Workshop, 2, Autumn 1976; C. van Onselen 'The randlords and rotgut 1886-1903', in History Workshop 2 Autumn 1976; C. Van Onselen, New Babylon vol.1., New Nineveh, vol. 2., Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1982. Van Onselen, telephonic interview, May 1992.

³⁵ T. Keegan, telephonic interview by G. K. Tatham, Cape Town, May 1992; C. van Onselen, telephonic interview, Johannesburg, May 1992.

³⁶ D. Webster, 'Labour migrancy, problems of the underdevelopment of Mozambique', University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute, African Studies seminar programme, 1975; D. Webster and W. D. Hammond-Tooke, eds. 'Agnates and Affines, Studies in African marriage manners and land allocation', African Studies, 34, 4, 1975; D. Webster, 'The reproduction of labour power and the struggle for survival in Soweto', Cape Town: Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in southern Africa, 1984; P. Wilkinson and D. Webster, 'Living in the interstices of capitalism: towards a reformulation of the informal sector concept', in R. Haines and G. Buijs eds. The Struggle for Social and Economic Space: Urbanisation in Twentieth Century South Africa, Durban: University of Durban Westville, 1985.

³⁷T. Lodge, 'The rural struggle; Poqo and Transkei resistance, 1960-1965', paper delivered at the University of the Witwatersrand, Conference on the History of Opposition in South Africa, Johannesburg, 1978; T. Lodge, 'The Paarl Insurrection', paper delivered at the Cape Town History Workshop, University Of Cape Town, 1979; T. Lodge, 'The ANC in the Rand Townships, 1955-1957', Africa Perspective, 8, July 1978, pp. 1-15; T. Lodge, 'We are being punished because we are poor': the bus boycotts of Evaton and Alexandra, 1955-1957', in P. Bonner, ed. Working Papers in Southern African Studies.

³⁸ Bozzoli was conducting oral history research into a rural area in the early 1980s. Her growing interest in oral and rural history was certain to have had some impact on the rural history emphasis of the History Workshop in 1981. Bozzoli's research led to her book B. Bozzoli with M. Nkotswe Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa 1900-1983, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1991.

Academic proceedings

The second History Workshop was held in February 1981 at the University of the Witwatersrand. The theme was 'Town and Countryside in the Transvaal'. It was apparent that the Workshop had expanded considerably. Forty-five papers were presented, and fourteen seminars were held.³⁹ As a result the conference was extended from three days to five. The Workshop also appeared to be gaining a reputation in the academic world. A number of libraries applied for full sets of the conference papers.⁴⁰ Considering the above, as well as the fact that the previous book Labour Townships and Protest was sold out, the committee was to comment that, 'it seems that the audience for the academic work produced through the Workshop is well established'.⁴¹

The academic product of the 1981 Workshop was a book titled Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: Capitalist Penetration and Popular Response, edited by Bozzoli. Sixteen Workshop papers were reproduced in that book. Many other papers were published in various journals.⁴²

Although the committee commented on the large number of locally produced papers, there were nevertheless a number from outside the country; fourteen in all from Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, and this despite the academic boycott.⁴³ Possibly the History Workshop's radical orientation and its emphasis on the underclasses could explain the

³⁹ Appendix D

⁴⁰ The African Studies Library at UCT was one of them.

⁴¹ HW 1981, Report, 9 June 1981, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. p.3.

⁴² The journals include: Africa Perspective, Social Dynamics, South African Labour Bulletin.

⁴³ Among these scholars were P. Rich (University of Aston); T. Dunbar Moodie (Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York); W. Beinart and S. Trapido (Institute of Commonwealth studies, Oxford). HW 1981, Report 9 June 1981, p.3.

continued attendance by international scholars. Freund commented that, for foreign academics, during the academic boycott, the History Workshop became a substitute for the South African Historical Society Conferences.⁴⁴

Popularising activities

The 1981 Workshop took the form of structured discussions over the first few days, followed by a very open 'Open Day'. By 1981 the History Workshop committee were far more organised in terms of their attempts to popularise history. They set aside a Saturday for an Open Day of popular events. They advertised the Open Day widely. The result was that over one thousand people from the East rand townships, Soweto, Pretoria and Johannesburg attended that day.

The events at the Open Day included: a David Goldblatt photographic exhibition entitled 'Ou Kas Maine', reflecting an African sharecropper's life in the Transvaal; a slide tape show produced by Lodge and Sack on resistance in South Africa in the 1950s; a number of films, plays and slide shows and illustrated lectures and a performance of gumboot dancing. Callinicos launched her book Gold and Workers.⁴⁵ All these events were directed especially at workers. This was partly a result of the fact that the FOSATU concept of worker education was strong at the time. According to Bonner there was a strong worker presence at the 1981 Open Day.⁴⁶

The second Workshop was better organised than the first in both the academic conference as well as the Open Day. By 1981, having received funding from the Marshall Attack Fund and small amounts from the University of the Witwatersrand Wartenweiler Library, the committee employed a secretary to organise the Open Day. The committee also felt more confident about its ability to organise further triennial Workshops and Open Days,

⁴⁴ Freund, interview, September 1989.

⁴⁵ HW 1981, Report June 1981; L. Callinicos, Gold and Workers 1886 - 1924: A People's History of South Africa, Vol.1, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981.

⁴⁶ Bonner, interview, June 1988.

and other intermediate affairs such as: funding the production of popular books, slide-tape shows and smaller open days; as well as the maintenance and development of educational resources.

Shortly after the second Workshop, the Workshop committee took their ideas to particular communities. They organised a Workshop at Actonville in Benoni which was attended by approximately 300 people.⁴⁷ A further attempt, by the History Workshop committee, to reach the general public was the organisation of a short history writing competition through Learn And Teach.⁴⁸

Despite the committee's attempts at popularising, Delius commented that when he joined in 1982,

the amount of popularisation being done was not all that great. There was a commitment to popularisation and Luli [Callinicos] was certainly involved but if you actually look at the productivity of the Workshop and what was being produced there wasn't really a large amount that was being supplied.⁴⁹

Tensions

During 1982 many tensions emerged within the History Workshop. These tensions manifest themselves over two issues. The first was the question of the elitism of the academic conference. Only those who presented academic papers were allowed to participate in the academic proceedings. The second issue was over the extent of the History Workshop's connections with community organisations.

Regarding the first issue, the committee felt that it was necessary that the participants be contributors to the conference. They felt that serious academic discussions 'cannot take place at large gatherings, as is only too well understood by "popular organisations"'.⁵⁰ To some extent

⁴⁷ Callinicos, interview, October 1989; HW 1981, Report June 1981, p.4.

⁴⁸ Report June 1981, p.4.

⁴⁹ Delius, interview, October 1989.

⁵⁰ The History Workshop Committee's reply to Karl von Holdt, Weekly Mail letters, 24 February 1987, Correspondence July 1988 File, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

they wished to avoid the problems experienced by the Ruskin History Workshop in England. Marks, who was trustee on the Board of the Ruskin History Workshop noted that, as a result of Ruskin's more open proceedings: 'They have a conference of over one thousand people ... Arrangements are totally chaotic'. She noted that there was just as much closure in those conferences, only it took the form of 'people using academic jargon as a form of closure'.⁵¹ Nevertheless, over the years, the Wits History Workshop committee were criticised for their closed conference by both: academics, who wished to participate without having to produce a paper; and by community and union groups as well as individual academics who felt that 'there was a danger of academics becoming so specialised and so remote from reality that ordinary people would no longer be able to understand them'.⁵²

As regards the second issue, that of greater community links, the tensions manifest themselves within the committee itself. Van Onselen outlined the context of this disaccord. He noted the 'considerable anti-intellectual feeling on the campus ... most people want "activism" rather than "academicism"'. He added, 'some of this attitude has, and will no doubt continue, to spill over into the committee and affect its work'.⁵³ The dissention within the committee came to a head over the of funding a play titled 'Illange Lizophumela Abasebenzi' which dealt with a dispute in a foundry at Boksburg. Although a small issue, it brought to the fore the different directions people on the committee wanted to take. On the one side academics, like van Onselen, felt strongly about professionalism versus populism. As a historian, van Onselen felt the contribution he could make lay largely in the academic side of the Workshop.⁵⁴ On the other side scholars, like David Webster and Eddie Webster, argued for the need for a

⁵¹ S. Marks, interview by G. K. Tatham, Cape Town, July 1989.

⁵² Karl von Holdt review article for the Weekly Mail, February 1987, Correspondence July 1988 File, History Workshop office, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁵³ Letter from van Onselen to Bozzoli, tending his resignation 25 August 1982, HW Minutes of Meetings File, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁵⁴ Letter from van Onselen to Bozzoli, 25 August 1982, History Workshop Minutes of Meeting File, HWO, Wits.

more structured relationship with community and union groups.⁵⁵ Throughout the years the unions themselves consistently voiced that concern.⁵⁶ David Webster resigned from the History Workshop committee in August 1982 as his interests took him further into political involvement in non worker organisations like the detainees' parents support group.

THE 1984 HISTORY WORKSHOP

The committee

By 1984 a further five people had joined the committee, two joined as associate members. Delius, a lecturer in the history department, became a member of the committee in 1982, although, along with Beinart, he had been involved in organising and chairing some of the sessions at the 1981 Workshop. An Africanist and anthropologist by training, he had an interest in the transformations of African societies in the Transvaal.⁵⁷ Essop and James, who was a scholar with an interest in rural African societies, also joined the committee at this time.⁵⁸ The associate members were: Kallaway, who had moved to Cape Town; Manson, who at the time was in the Institute of Race Relations and later moved to the School of Education at the University of Bophutatswana. Shapiro, a research student from the Southern African research programme at Yale, was appointed as full time organiser of the 1984 Open day.

⁵⁵ E. Webster interview by G. K. Tatham, October 1989, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁵⁶ Delius interview, In 1987 Alec Erwin, education officer of COSATU, voiced the need for academics to align themselves politically and have more contact with a popular constituency. K. von Holdt review article for Weekly Mail February 1987.

⁵⁷ Delius, interview, October, 1989.

⁵⁸ D. James, 'Land Shortage and Inheritance in a Lebowa village', 1987 HW.

Academic proceedings

The theme of the 1984 Workshop was, on van Onselen's recommendation, 'Class, Community and Conflict: Local Perspectives'.⁵⁹ This time the focus was broader than the Transvaal. As a result many scholars from other Universities in the country attended. Again the Workshop had grown. Fifty five papers were delivered at sixteen seminars.⁶⁰ Parallel sessions helped to alleviate the congestion of papers. The majority of the scholars were local researchers. The committee congratulated themselves on the fact that many graduate students participated. A number of scholars from overseas universities attended as well. The book arising from the Workshop was edited by Bozzoli and was titled Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives. Seventeen Workshop papers were presented in that book. Papers were chosen particularly for their focus on communities.

Popularising activities

Apart from University support and financial aid from the Richard Ward fund (University of the Witwatersrand), the main financing for the History Workshop was provided by the Ford Foundation. The Foundation put forward certain stipulations to the Workshop committee. They suggested that the History Workshop establish some black participation at their committee level - the 'planning and doing' level - and not just the audience level.⁶¹ The Foundation also insisted that the Workshop make concerted efforts to establish and consolidate on their existing links with the wider

⁵⁹ Memorandum van Onselen to Bozzoli 10 February 1983, HW, Minutes of Meeting File, HWO, University of Witwatersrand.

⁶⁰ Appendix E.

⁶¹ Planning meeting, October 31 (n.d.), HW Minutes of Meeting File, Minutes 30 November 1983. This issue of black participation was raised again in 1986 when Bozzoli met David Bonbright from the Ford Foundation who made it clear that the History Workshop was 'still regarded slightly sceptically as a much too white organisation' - B. Bozzoli Report on 1984 trip to USA and Britain, History Research Group Second Annual Report October 1985-September 1986; Notice of Meeting Friday 27 July, Minutes of Meeting File.

public.⁶² The funding gave the committee the momentum that they needed, as was obvious from the vastly expanded popularising activities that the Workshop undertook, both at the 1984 Workshop, and in their interim projects. As Delius noted, 'Really the drive towards popularisation only took place on any scale ... mainly from 1984 onwards'.⁶³

However it was not only pressure from the funders that inspired the increase in activity around popularising. Delius commented that:

what the Workshop partly does in the 1980s is to respond to demand. It sets itself an agenda and that agenda becomes much more pressing with the quickening tempo of political activity in society.⁶⁴

As part of their efforts at popularising, the Workshop committee, and in particular Callinicos, organised a 'Popularising History Day' at the 1984 Workshop. A number of groups, involved in popularising activities, were invited to attend.⁶⁵ The agenda was to invite discussion around the problems, format, techniques and potential of popularising written history.

By 1984 there was an apparent growing awareness abroad of South African Wits History Workshop and its popularising activities. In 1981 the History Workshop had established links with the American Social History Project and in 1984 these were cemented when Kate Pfordresher represented the latter project on the popularising history day.⁶⁶ In 1983 the British History Workshop in Manchester had made overtures to the Wits History Workshop.

The 1984 Open Day was far better attended than had previously been the case. It was estimated that well over 3000 people attended the day. The better attendance could be explained by the Workshop's organisation, consultation, advertising and offer of transport. A full-time organiser was

⁶² HW Report for three years ended December 31st, 1984, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁶³ Delius interview, October 1989.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ SACHED, ILRIG, Economic History Research Group, LEARN and TEACH, EDA, SAIIR Oral Documentation Project, Junction Avenue Theatre Company, South African Research Services, FOSATU education as well as individual popularisers.

⁶⁶ History Research Group (hereafter cited as HRG), Report for three years October 1984- July 1987, p.14.

appointed to organise the day.⁶⁷ The committee consulted with FOSATU and NACTU.⁶⁸ The History Workshop committee increasingly tried to draw the unions in on an ongoing basis. To begin with there had not been much consultation.⁶⁹ The Open Day was widely advertised amongst a number of trade union, teacher and education groups.⁷⁰ Transport was offered to those groups who wished to attend. Callinicos commented, 'we actually had to help an audience to get to the Open Day. We actually had to create the audience'.⁷¹

The larger number of people meant that venues were overcrowded despite the running of three concurrent sets of events. Marks was to comment that the 'taking over by the unions of campus during these Open Days was not as unproblematic as it seems'. However she added, 'this situation of the Wits History Workshop and its links with the working class is unique in the world'.⁷² Included in the festivities during the Open Day were plays, films, slide/tape shows, choir performances and photographic exhibitions.

The idea of an Open Day inspired many trade union and community organisations to organise similar events for themselves. The United Democratic Front held 'festivals'; FOSATU 'education workshops' and later

⁶⁷ HW Report for three years ended December 31st 1984, p.12.

⁶⁸ Bonner, interview, October 1989.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Actstop (Action to stop Eviction); SAIRR; Sached (SA Council for Higher Education); South African Council of Churches; JODAC (Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee); Learn and Teach; FUBA (Federated Union of Black Artists); Council of Unions of South Africa; Federation of South African Trade Unions; Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union of South Africa; Food and Canning Workers Union; General and Allied Workers Union; South African Allied Workers Union; Young Christian Workers; Black University Workers Association; Council for Black Education and Research; Teachers English Language Improvement Programme; Teachers Action Committee and others. Report for three years ended December 31st, 1984.

⁷¹ Callinicos, interview, September 1989.

⁷² Marks, interview, October 1989.

the Congress of South African Trade Unions (hereafter cited as COSATU) was to hold an 'Open Day'.⁷³

INTERIM POPULARISING ACTIVITIES

Delius commented that before 1984,

The Workshop was something which peaked every three years around the academic conference. There was a certain amount of activity between conferences but in fact ... the pulse of the organisation beat at a pretty slow rate.

However, later the Workshop 'tended to be more and more of an ongoing full-time activity'.⁷⁴ The History Workshop continued with and expanded on its interim popularising activities.

The committee worked under rather adverse conditions in terms of funding and energy levels. A number of committee members commented on being overstretched and underfunded. According to Bonner:

All of us put in a lot of work. We are full time in other capacities. It may be thought in some circles that we don't do enough between the conferences. We are not doing spectacular public things in between, but we do do a lot in between. If we had resources, we would do more, but it is both staggeringly time consuming and enormously expensive.⁷⁵

'Working Life'

Funded by the Richard Ward fund, as research officer for the History Workshop, Callinicos wrote a second 'popular history' book. She made use of the latest research produced by scholars on the committee. Working Life: Factories, Townships, and Popular Culture on the Rand 1886-1940, like her first book, was written in simple easy English and contained many photographs depicting the lives of ordinary workers on the Rand in the early years of the twentieth century. In contrast to the first book it was concerned more with a permanent urban population than with migrant workers.

⁷³ HW Report for three years ended December 31st, 1984; Slide Show committee meeting 18 July 1987 Minutes General File, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁷⁴ Delius, interview, October 1989.

⁷⁵ Bonner, interview, October 1989.

Callinicos, like Genovese, was just as interested in how workers shaped their world as in how the workers' world was made. Although it was meant to be a resource for labour education, Freund criticised the book as being 'too dense, diffuse and lacking in a central message to fit that purpose readily'. He did however recognise its usefulness for 'people's education' and 'alternative teaching purposes'.⁷⁶ It won the Noma award for publishing in Africa in October 1988.⁷⁷ As part of the Workshop's interim activities Callinicos also gave a number of lectures and talks on popularising to interested groups.

Resource centre

Apart from producing, or commissioning, a number of slide/tape shows, among them 'Gold and Workers' (1978) and 'Decade of Defiance' (1981), and 'Fight where we Stand' (1987), the Workshop committee also set up a resource centre to house, not only these, but many other popularising materials as well.⁷⁸

The committee prided themselves that, partly as a result of that media centre, 'the University has thus come to be seen as a place where resources are available for use by non-University groups'.⁷⁹

Another resource in the safekeeping of the History Workshop was a collection of historical photographs which were accumulated from the various projects the Workshop was involved with. These too, were utilised by various members of the public, including the National Union of Mineworkers (hereafter cited as NUM), Learn and Teach, Readers Digest,

⁷⁶ Prof B. Freund review of books by Ken Swindell, Sharon Stichter and Luli Callinicos for Labour Capital and Society in HRG Report for three years October 1984-July 1987.

⁷⁷ HRG Fourth Annual Report 1 October 1988- 30 September 1989 p.14; letter from Zell to Wheeler, 4 October 1988, Correspondence File, July 1988. HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁷⁸ HW research activities and highlights, HW involvement in community projects, Correspondence File July 1988, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁷⁹ Report for three years ended December 31st 1984, p.13.

publishers, film producers and researchers.⁸⁰ However the committee felt that these resources needed to be made more accessible to members of the public, and in early 1986 it was suggested that a part - time media officer be appointed to take charge of that area of the Workshop's activities.⁸¹ The appointment was made in April 1987.⁸² The media centre set up a system of subscription whereby subscribers could make use of the centre's facilities. The Workshop worked closely with the Wits Wartenweiler Library's Audio-visual centre. Despite their aspirations for the media centre, the Workshop was always short of adequate funding even for the centre's basic needs. It was only in 1989 that funding for equipment was obtained from the British Embassy and the salary of the media officer from the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Forschungsinstitut.⁸³

During 1984, the Workshop committee strengthened its relationships with various groups, among them NUM, FOSATU Education, SACHED, and the International Labour and Research Information Group.⁸⁴

INTERIM ACTIVITIES FROM 1985

By 1985, although still plagued by financial and accommodation problems, the Workshop's position was slightly better. In early 1985 it was granted the status of a Research Group at the University of the Witwatersrand. This position meant that the Workshop committee would receive a certain amount of funding from the University, with which to employ a part-time secretary and to embark on further activities. From 1984 onwards a part-time

⁸⁰ HRG Second Annual Report, p.14; as well as Callinicos' collection of photos from the 1940s and 1950s. Callinicos, Gold and Workers, 1886-1924, P. Pearson and P. Kallaway, Johannesburg: Images and Continuities: A History of the Working Class through Pictures 1885-1935, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987.

⁸¹ Some proposals for HW activities during 1989 Minutes General File, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁸² HRG Report for 3 Years, October 1984-July 1987, p.4.

⁸³ Members of the media committee included Lodge, James, Callinicos and Moys - Minutes of HW committee meeting, April 4 1985, HRG Fourth Annual Report, October 1988-September 1989, p.5.

⁸⁴ HW Report for the three years ended December 31st 1984, p.14.

secretary was employed to undertake many of the accumulating administrative tasks of the Workshop. The committee emphasised that their new status 'was not to be seen as a downgrading or underplaying of the other "arm" of the Workshop' - its role in popularisation.⁸⁵ The University Council Grant was also used to finance the 1987 conference.⁸⁶

Despite their new status within the University the History Workshop group continued to have problems with University administration. In 1986, they finally solved their accomodation problems and settled into two rooms in the Central Block at the University, close to the History Department.

The Workshop group also encountered difficulties in getting their publications and particularly their popular history books recognised by the University administration for subsidy purposes. In 1989 Sellschop, the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) wrote to the Workshop:

We appreciate the work being done, but ... urge you to get more work published in recognised, refereed journals, particularly those that are on the accepted list of the Department of National Education.'⁸⁷

However, the difficulty with the History Workshop being an interdisciplinary and independent group, was that the research published was being claimed for subsidy purposes by the departments in which the individuals on the Workshop committee were employed.

The committee

As their activities increased, so the committee found it necessary to form a number of overlapping sub-committees. To conserve people's energies, an executive committee was appointed to meet more regularly and deal with the less important matters.⁸⁸ The sub-committees included: oral history, slide shows, the 'Write Your own History' project; the Media centre, 'Topics' in

⁸⁵ HW Committee meeting, 3 April 1984, HW Minutes of Meeting File, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁸⁶ HRG Report for Three Years, p.6.

⁸⁷ Letter from Sellschop, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, to Bonner 9 October, Correspondence File July 1988, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁸⁸ see appendix on committee members.

social analysis, and the 'Working Lives' project, as well as the committees planning the 1987 Workshop and Open Day.⁸⁹ When necessary, experts in particular fields were co-opted on to those committees. By 1987 four new members had joined the Workshop committee. Hofmeyr, Hyslop, Jaffee, and La Hausse. Pearson and Eddie Webster resigned in that year. Krige and Witz, who had been involved with the Workshop since 1985 and 1986 respectively joined the Workshop in 1988 and 1989. Bozzoli commented that the new members of the committee 'had both been influenced by the committee and served to give it a new lease of life'.⁹⁰

The interests of the new members of the committee reflected the slightly changed directions the History Workshop was to pursue in the latter part of the 1980s. The new emphasis was on teachers and education. According to La Hausse, people, 'who had particular kinds of ties, for example strong ties with teachers organisations and associations', were co-opted on to the committee.⁹¹ Kallaway had been campaigning from 1977 for an educational emphasis within the History Workshop.⁹² Hyslop had taught in schools in Zimbabwe for a few years. His interest was in education. His papers at the 1987 Workshop were on the school boycotts and school committees.⁹³ Witz had been involved with popularising and Sached since 1986. Krige was also particularly interested in education and teaching.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ 'Write Your own History' Project- Bozzoli, H. Perold, Witz, Bonner, Delius and Callinicos; 'Topics' in social analysis- Delius, Bozzoli, Callinicos, S. Krige - editor. Oral History Group - A. Manson, Couzens, Bonner, C. Cachalia. 'Working Lives' Project - E. Webster, Bonner and Bozzoli.

⁹⁰ Appendix B; Bozzoli, interview, June 1988.

⁹¹ La Hausse, interview, October 1989.

⁹² Kallaway, interview, June 1990; S. Krige, interview, October 1989. Kallaway noted that the Workshop committee, in the beginning, had been rather slow to take heed of his efforts. 'The link with schools and school teachers was not seen as a priority either by the labour people or by the van Onselen's'. Callinicos also noted, 'The school side of things tended to get short shrift until the crisis again came to a head in 1985/6'. Callinicos, interview, October 1989; Delius, interview, October 1989.

⁹³ J. Hyslop, 'A preface to people's education: reflections on the 1955-56 school boycotts', HW, 1987; J. Hyslop, 'School boards, school committees and educational politics: Aspects of the failure of Bantu education as a hegemonic strategy, 1955-1976', HTG.

⁹⁴ Krige, interview, October 1989.

The emphasis of the History Workshop from the mid 1980s onwards was partly a response to particular developments within the country. The unions were becoming increasingly self-sufficient, and this meant that the Workshop committee was increasingly free to participate in community education issues.⁹⁵ Bozzoli confirmed this, noting that 'because COSATU rejected intellectuals, they were forced to be independent'.⁹⁶ According to Krige, 'the History Workshop found itself in a crisis of finding a constituency and extending it'. She added, 'the education crisis provided for that'.⁹⁷ In 1985 the National Education Crisis Committee had begun to campaign strongly for an alternative curriculum. These years marked the rise of an increasing demand for people's education and a burgeoning of teachers' organisations. As Delius noted: 'One of the things that has happened in recent years is the whole education crisis and the upsurge in organisation in education'.⁹⁸ Towards the end of 1986 the NECC approached the History Workshop to assist in working on an alternative curriculum.⁹⁹ The committee of the Workshop was responsive to these developments. In the report ended 1984 the committee commented, 'we have begun to make important links with schools, with adult and youth education groups'.¹⁰⁰

Throughout the period between the 1984 History Workshop and the 1987 History Workshop conference, a number of new activities, revolving particularly around popularising and education, were embarked on. One such

⁹⁵ I. Edwards, interview, September 1989; J. Hyslop, interview, October 1989; S. Krige, Interview, September 1989 - all these scholars refer to the fact that the trade unions began getting their own education programmes going and rejecting the involvement of left wing academics.

⁹⁶ Bozzoli, interview, June 1988.

⁹⁷ S. Krige, interview, October 1989.

⁹⁸ P. Delius Interview, October 1989.

⁹⁹ HW General committee meeting, 24 October 1986, Minutes of Meeting File; Callinicos became a member of the NECC History Commission. She worked on the NECC What is History? book. HW Research activities and highlights, Correspondence File, July 1988.

¹⁰⁰ HW Report for Three Years, p.7.

activity was the 'Write Your own History Project'.¹⁰¹ The History Workshop and Sached worked together. Witz was employed by Sached, from March 1986, with the specific directive to co-ordinate and produce a small book which gave advice and guidance to people wishing to research and write their own histories. Emphasis was placed on oral history methodology. The book was based on the experience of three groups who were all involved in producing short histories: the Kagiso Young Christian Workers; students in the Witwatersrand Council of Churches Tuition Project and Driefontein residents.¹⁰² The book was launched on 14 September 1988.¹⁰³ Sitas was to note that the 'Write your own History Project' stood apart from some of the other popularising projects of the History Workshop, which he questioned in the sense of their ability to 'empower the people in terms of their self-expression and the mastering of their own histories'.¹⁰⁴

In the process of producing the book the Workshop established links with oral history projects throughout the country. Among these projects were: the Transvaal Chinese Association, the Grahamstown Oral History Project and the Swaziland Oral History Project.¹⁰⁵ These contacts were in keeping with the oral history sub-committee's aim of working on an oral history network. That committee attempted to organise an informal national bibliography of oral history sources. They also worked at encouraging the production of oral histories.¹⁰⁶

The History Workshop committee also, with the help of funding from the South African Council of Churches, commissioned a series of short

¹⁰¹ The sub-committee consisted of Bozzoli, Perold (Sached liaison), Bonner, Delius, Callinicos and of course Witz. HW 'Write Your Own History' sub-committee report, June 1986, Minutes General File, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

¹⁰² HRG, Second Annual Report, p.7. HRG Report for Three Years, p.10.

¹⁰³ HRG Fourth Annual Report, p.5.

¹⁰⁴ Sitas, interview, January 1990.

¹⁰⁵ HRG, Report for Three Years.

¹⁰⁶ On the oral history sub-committee were Bonner, Couzens and Manson. Coco Cachalia was co-opted. Minutes of meeting of oral history sub-committee of HW held, 22 February 1986, Minutes General File, HWO, UIniversity of the Witwatersrand.

historical booklets based on the most recent social history research.¹⁰⁷

In 1985 Krige who was, at the time, employed by Sached, was appointed to be the overall editor of this 'Topics' series. The audience for this series was to be broader than a purely worker constituency. It was also suggested at a later date that the booklets that were produced be translated into vernacular languages.¹⁰⁸ Among the booklets published in 1987 were:

Because they chose the plan of God, a short history of the 1919 Bulhoek massacre, by Bob Edgar and Paul la Hausse's book, Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A History of Liquor in South Africa.¹⁰⁹ The production of these book was temporarily halted when Ravan went through a period of financial difficulties.¹¹⁰

A further project which was initiated by the Workshop committee, was the 'working lives' project, which aimed to investigate in a sociological sense the lives of leaders within the working class. This project failed as a result of the State of Emergency, which hindered scholarly investigation into union activities and the workplace.¹¹¹

Callinicos, in the meantime, during 1986, was paid by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, to work on her third volume of 'A People's History of South Africa'. This volume covered the period between 1940 and 1964 of Witwatersrand history. It was to have the same popularising format as her earlier volumes. The book made extensive use of oral interviews of five workers on the Rand during the period covered, as well as photographs. The

¹⁰⁷ On the Topics sub-committee were A. Essop, Callinicos, Delius, van Onselen, Bozzoli. Minutes of the History workshop committee meeting 4 April 1985 in History Workshop Minutes of Meeting File.

¹⁰⁸ Slide shows and New Nation articles were also considered for translation. HW General Committee Minutes, 15 February 1989, Minutes General File, HWO, University of the Witwatersrand.

¹⁰⁹ Further books planned for 1988 were: Peires on the Xhosa Cattle Killing of 1856; and Delius and James on a history of the people of KwaNdebele - HRG report for Three Years, p.11.

¹¹⁰ HRG Fourth Annual Report, p.6. In 1989 J. Wells was commissioned to write a booklet on womens' resistance to passes in the early part of the twentieth century.

¹¹¹ HRG Second Annual Report, p.10.

themes included: urbanisation and proletarianisation, the struggle over wages, the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, and the growth of political mass movements.

Financed by the Ford Foundation, the History Workshop committee, in conjunction with the American Social History Project, produced a slide/tape show entitled 'Fight where we Stand'.¹¹² They were later to produce an illustrated booklet to complement the show. In this show, the life story of an individual woman was used to reveal the experiences of people threatened with dispossession and experiencing urbanisation and proletarianisation in South Africa. Following the rent boycotts on the Witwatersrand, the show gained increasing relevance. It was presented at the 1987 History Workshop Open day. In the endeavour to produce a slide/tape show, the Workshop committee exchanged ideas and expertise with the American group. The History Workshop were largely the beneficiaries in that exchange.

The History Workshop committee tried to involve groups such as NAAWU, the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in the production of their slide show.¹¹³ However, as noted earlier, the History Workshop's relationship with trade union groups was becoming increasingly problematic as these unions became more self-reliant on their own resources and as they became caught up in the whirl of union activity in the years of 1985 and 1986 when Cosatu was being formed. As a result of the lack of response by the unions the Workshop committee went ahead with its own slide show and instead invited these groups, along with others, many of them teacher or education oriented organisations, to a series of slide Workshops which were organised by four members of the American group in September and October 1986.¹¹⁴ The latter's activities

¹¹² The slide show sub-committee consisted of Bozzoli, Callinicos, Lodge, van Onselen, Bonner and Couzens. History workshop slide show sub-committee June 1986 in Minutes General File.

¹¹³ L. Callinicos, Report to the HW committee on trip to the UK and North America, in HRG Second Annual Report.

¹¹⁴ Steve Briar (project director); Kate Pfordresher, Joshua Brown, Charles Potter- HRG Second Annual Report - pp. 11, 12. Among the groups invited were: UDF, AZAPO, African Teachers' Association, Environmental Development Agency, Naawu, History Teachers' Association, Black Sash (TRAC), Young Christian Workers, Swaziland Oral History Project, ILRIG, AFRAPIX, NUM, MAWU, CUSA, Cosatu, the South African Council for Higher Education (Sached),

with regard to those Workshops was in keeping with the UDF line during the academic boycott, that 'visitors are welcome - if they co-ordinate with community groups'.¹¹⁵

The committee noted that 'trade union representation was proportionately lower than we had hoped amongst the groups who came'. They attributed the response of many of the groups with an educational interest to, 'the sudden and dramatic increase in interest during 1986 in education, particularly in history, amongst black "alternative" organisations'.¹¹⁶

The new directions pursued by the History Workshop did not mean that the relationship with labour groups collapsed. Rather, according to Delius,

The real shift has been on where a much wider variety of forms of organisation became much more vital in the society ... [these developments] have multiplied our points of contact with wider organisations.¹¹⁷

The committee did not forget their earlier constituency. As Witz noted, 'they still had historical ties to maintain with workers'.¹¹⁸ Confirmation of these links can be seen in Bonner's letter to COSATU in 1989, 'we look forward to further fruitful collaboration with COSATU in years to come'.¹¹⁹ Callinicos, played an important role in establishing a Worker's Library in De Villiers Street Johannesburg. The library was launched in October 1988.¹²⁰ Her position as chairperson of the Worker's

the FUNDA centre, and the Interchurch Media Project. HRG Report for three years October 1984- July 1987. p.20.

¹¹⁵ Minutes of meeting between the ASHP and the HW, 16 October(n.d.), Minutes General File, HWO, Wits.

¹¹⁶ HRG Report for Three Years, pp.20,21.

¹¹⁷ Delius, interview, October 1989.

¹¹⁸ Witz, interview, October 1989.

¹¹⁹ Letter from Bonner to Khetsi Lohoko, 22 March 1989, Correspondence July 1988 File, HWO, Wits.

¹²⁰ Minutes of HW executive meeting, 23 August 1988, Executive File, HWO, Wits.

Library and the committee's talks there on the history of the working class were testimony to the Workshop's continued contact with worker groups.¹²¹

Apart from their production of slide shows as well as their attempts to encourage union and community groups to produce their own slide shows, the committee was to undertake a more ambitious audio-visual programme in 1988. In conjunction with professional film producers the committee applied for funding and embarked on the task of producing a series of three half hour video documentaries on the History of Soweto 1935-76.¹²²

A further popularising activity that the Workshop committee, in particular Delius, Hofmeyr and La Hausse, became involved in, towards the end of 1986, was the commissioning, editing and writing of short, page, histories for the weekly newspaper The New Nation, in their Learning Nation supplement. These short histories, written by specialists in their fields, spanned subjects like urbanisation on the Witwatersrand, trade union activities in the 1940s, histories of particular African kingdoms in the nineteenth century and biographies of political leaders, women in history, histories of the black press. La Hausse commented that the New Nation history page was a response to the sense that:

a strong powerful thirst for alternative history ... from school students who are fed up with the History curriculum, or teachers themselves who want alternative resources, as well as from a more broadly defined worker constituency.¹²³

The Workshop and New Nation, in 1987, questioned their readership to establish their response to these histories and to obtain guidance as to popular areas of interest. A series on Mozambique ranked highly in this regard, as did demands for an international perspective.¹²⁴ These

¹²¹ History Workshop activities and highlights, Correspondence July 1988 File. Some proposals for HW activities during 1989, Minutes General File. Minutes of HW executive meeting 23 August 1988 Executive File, Minutes of HW General committee, 31 August 1989 Minutes General File, HWO, Wits.

¹²² Funding was received from the Canadian Embassy and Rowntree Charitable Trust HRG Fourth Annual Report pp.5,10. Application for temporary post available for the production of educational programmes for the year 1989, Correspondence File, July 1988, HWO, Wits.

¹²³ La Hausse, interview, October 1989.

¹²⁴ Minutes of HW General Committee Meeting, October 9 1987, p.2. In Minutes, General sub-committee Executive File, HWO, Wits.

histories continued to be written throughout 1987, interrupted by a short period in mid 1987 when the New Nation was closed under emergency regulations, and 1988, and, on an ad hoc basis in 1989.¹²⁵ In response to the demand for these histories, New Nation and Ravan, working with the History Workshop committee published a collection of the short page histories in a book which was published in 1989 and was titled New Nation, New History.

INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

In April 1986 Callinicos and Bozzoli travelled to the USA and Britain to liaise with the American Social History Project, with which they had contact since 1982.¹²⁶ Many more contacts were made with other international popular history groups. Among these were: the Hackney, London History Project, titled Centreprise, the Manchester History Project, the Manchester Jewish History Museum, the New York 'Chinatown History Project' and the Massachusetts History Workshop. Some of these contacts were to continue into the future.¹²⁷ Bozzoli also made contact with the historians David Montgomery, Bobby Hill and James Green as well as those connected to MARHO, the radical historians organisation.¹²⁸ During this period the History Workshop was approached to contribute to a special issue of the Radical History Review on South African historiography. This issue was produced in 1990.¹²⁹ Continued international contacts were made over

¹²⁵ Letter from Bonner to Gabu, 9 November 1988, Correspondence July 1988 File; Some proposals for HW activities during 1989 Minutes General File.

¹²⁶ Through Shula Marks, Bozzoli and van Onselen met Gutman. Marks, interview, July 1989.

¹²⁷ The Chinatown History Project was to ask the HW to provide them with information for an issue of their journal devoted to South African Chinese history. HRG Report for Three Years, p. 40.

¹²⁸ B. Bozzoli's Report on 1986 trip to USA and Britain and L. Callinicos Report, HRG 2nd Annual Report.

¹²⁹ Six papers by HW members were published in that journal. These included: B. Bozzoli and P. Delius, 'Radical history and South African society'; P. Bonner, 'The politics of black squatter movements on the Rand, 1944 - 1952'; L. Callinicos, 'Popular history in the eighties'; P. La Hausse,

the years. The Ruskin History Workshop contacted the Wits History Workshop in 1985.¹³⁰ Bozzoli's 1988 trip to America was useful in the sense that contact was made with Minneapolis labour organisers as well as the Yale Southern African Research Programme.¹³¹ Callinicos was given a British Council Study Grant in 1988. She contacted workers education institutes in Britain and groups with particular history projects.

THE 1987 HISTORY WORKSHOP

Academic activities

The theme for the 1987 History Workshop was 'The Making of Class'. This was the largest Workshop held this far, with 77 papers presented. The call for papers had suggested themes such as 'oral history and class analysis', 'household and gender relations: challenging class?', 'culture and class', and 'biography and class'. All these, along with other themes such as urban culture, ethnicity, youth culture, 'family identity and consciousness' and 'narrative and rural settings', contributed to a more complex understanding of class in society.¹³² The book produced from the conference titled Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century South Africa, was edited by Bonner, Hofmeyr, James and

'Oral history and South African historians'; L. Witz, 'The Write Your Own History Project'; D. James, 'Musical form and Social History: Research Perspectives on Black South African Music'. In Radical History Review 46/7 1990.

¹³⁰ Ruskin's letter to Foreign Colleagues 1985; History workshop Centre for Social History Ruskin College, HW Minutes of Meeting File, HWO, Wits.

¹³¹ HRG Fourth Annual Report, p.7.

¹³² University of Witwatersrand HW Fourth Triennial Conference and Open Day Call for Papers in HRG Second Annual Report, HRG Report for Three Years, p.13.

Lodge and nine papers from the 1987 Workshop were published. A number of papers from that Workshop were also published in a special issue of Social Dynamics 2,14,1988.¹³³

The Popular History Day

Many more people attended the 1987 popular history day than had attended in 1984. Amongst those who attended and participated were: the Grahamstown Oral History Group, Junction Avenue Theatre Company, Learn and Teach writers, one group from the 'write your own history project', the Durban Workers Cultural Local and the American Social History group. There was much discussion about school history and the possibilities of escaping a curricula straitjacket. A few of the papers that were presented at that day were published in Perspectives in Education.¹³⁴

Again during that Popular Day the issue of academic answerability to union and community groups was debated, particularly in the session in which Bloch's paper, on popularising history, was presented.¹³⁵ 'There was a lot of controversy at the time over the closed nature of the conference'.¹³⁶ With respect to the above issues, COSATU was one of those criticising the History Workshop group.¹³⁷

The Open Day

Despite the fact that planning for the 1987 Open day took place during the State of Emergency which had been in place from June 1986, in the

¹³³ I. Hofmeyr editorial introduction, J. Peires, 'Piet Draghoender's Lament', J. Starfield, 'The autobiographies of H. Selby Msimang and R.V. Selope Thema and the writing of African History', D. James, 'Land Shortage and Inheritance in a Lebowa Village', A. van Niekerk, 'Changing Patterns of Worker Accommodation, Zebediela Citrus Estate'.

¹³⁴ L. Callinicos, 'The History Workshop 1987' and C. Kros 'The making of class: beyond model curricula', Perspectives in Education, June 1988.

¹³⁵ G. Bloch, 'Popularising History: Some reflections and Experiences, East Rand 1939 - 1955'; L. Witz, interview, October 1989.

¹³⁶ L. Witz, interview, October 1989.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

committee's eyes, the day was considered a success. The Workshop committee employed a full time organiser for a period before the Open day. They advertised the day widely, through the press.¹³⁸ The committee consulted with COSATU, NACTU and the NECC during the stage of planning for the Open Day.¹³⁹ They also sent out invitations to a number of unions and cultural and educational bodies including MAWU, COSATU, CCAWUSA and CUSA. Again the educational emphasis of the Workshop was obvious in their liaison with NEUSA, a recently formed teachers' body.

It was estimated that approximately 5000 people attended the day. The range amongst the audience and participants was tremendous. School children, artists, old people from Magopa, who were fighting a removal case, unionists, university students, township residents, teachers were amongst the crowds. It is difficult however to establish or to generalise about people's attitudes to the Open Day, for as Eddie Webster noted no-one 'has done any systematic research on what the participants in the History Workshop Open Day thought'.¹⁴⁰

Teacher Workshops

As part of their move towards a teaching constituency the History Workshop committee under the initiative of Callinicos and Hyslop, aided by Krige, set out to organise a number of teacher Workshops to inform teachers of the latest developments in South African historiography as well as to encourage new methods of teaching. The committee's efforts in this regard were a response to a felt need. Hyslop noted, 'we became aware that Luli's books were being used by teachers. We sensed that there was a need.'¹⁴¹ The committee set out on this project with ambitious intentions of expanding it

¹³⁸ The Weekly Mail and the New Nation displayed full page advertisements.

¹³⁹ Bonner, interview, October 1989. The committee kept up their contact with certain union groups. They sent their annual reports to COSATU and NACTU HW Executive Meeting, 23 August 1987, Minutes General File, HWO, Wits.

¹⁴⁰ E. Webster, interview, October 1989.

¹⁴¹ Hyslop, interview, October 1989.

to include other educational groups not necessarily within the school system. The first day workshop was held in May 1988. Secondary school teachers were invited, as were other educators within learning institutions. The subject chosen was 'the impact of the mineral discoveries on Southern Africa', which closely fitted with the standard nine syllabus. Those who attended were sent a discussion and resource pack. The success of the teachers' Workshop encouraged the Workshop group to organise a second, this time a two day Workshop for teachers from in and around the Witwatersrand, in May 1989. Krige, the convenor of that second teachers' Workshop noted that the theme: 'Perspectives in Twentieth Century South African History' was a response to 'a very clear demand from teachers (at the first teachers' Workshop) that we present something on the Twentieth Century because ... there was a lot in the syllabus on the post 1948 period'.¹⁴² Lectures were given and a slide/tape show was presented to an audience of 85 teachers. The suggestion was made that these Workshops be a yearly occurrence.

What influence the Wits History Workshop had on teachers and teacher organisations appeared to be limited to the Witwatersrand area. Hindle, from the education department at the University of Natal noted in 1989 that, as far as he knew, 'the influence of the History Workshop has been minimal on teachers' unions in Natal'.¹⁴³

In September/October 1987, the History Workshop committee, and in particular Lodge, also initiated a short programme which involved school children from Orlando, Kagiso and Tsakane.¹⁴⁴ These children were exposed to an alternative version of history through the media centre's resources and discussion groups. The programme was not continued however. At other times the Workshop committee hosted groups of school children and

¹⁴² Krige, interview, October 1989.

¹⁴³ Hindle interview, September 1989.

¹⁴⁴ Minutes of HW General Committee meeting, October 9 1987, p.2, Minutes General Sub-committee Executive File, HWO, Wits.

university students for alternative history lectures, such as the group of 250 Mabopane schoolchildren in May 1988 and the UNITRA students in September 1989.¹⁴⁵

Changes to the committee

In 1987 Pearson and Webster resigned. Webster needed more time to devote to his Sociology of Work Programme (SWOP). He was also rather unhappy with the Workshop's lower priorities on the interests of work and trade unions.¹⁴⁶

In 1988 Bozzoli, who had been chairperson of the History Workshop, resigned. Bonner was to take her place. The only new member to the committee during this time was Krige. At the time of her appointment she was a temporary lecturer in the Wits school of Education. Her appointment was another testimony to the History Workshop committee's growing interest in education and particularly alternative school history.

THE 1990 HISTORY WORKSHOP

Academic activities

The fifth History Workshop was held in February 1990. The theme was: 'Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid, 1933 - 1979'. The emphasis was again on local and cultural analysis. However, now the interest was in the more recent past - 'the formative period in modern South African history'. As can be seen in their choice of theme, the committee also wished to encourage interchange of thought between scholars with an empirical approach to history and those who were more theoretically oriented.

¹⁴⁵ History Workshop Executive Committee Minutes 3 August 1989, Minutes General File.

¹⁴⁶ E. Webster, interview, October 1989.

The local prominence of the History Workshop as an academic conference was obvious at the 1990 academic conference which was far larger than previous ones. The History Workshop's growing international reputation was also clear from the number of overseas visitors who attended. Among these academics were, Marks, Beinart, and Lonsdale.¹⁴⁷

The Open Day

A number of groups participated. Among them were: NACTU and COSATU as well as the National Education Crisis Committee. As Callinicos's records confirm, the groups which participated in the Open Day were also testimony to the links that the History Workshop kept with community and union groups. From late 1988 and through 1989 many union, community and educational groups made appointments with Callinicos about such issues as advice on their popularising projects, research information, access to Workshop media material and invitations for her to lecture.¹⁴⁸

Academic perceptions of the History Workshop

Although the perceptions of the History Workshop held by ordinary people in the community have not been documented, the questionnaire which was sent to scholars at various universities in Southern Africa traced academic views of the Workshop.¹⁴⁹ There is an interesting correlation between when

¹⁴⁷ Prof. S. Marks, Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London; Dr. J. Lonsdale, Trinity College, Cambridge.

¹⁴⁸ Amongst these groups were COSATU, SAWCO, Learn and Teach, NUMSA, SACC, Wits departments, Khanya College, SACHED, UWC People's History Project, Progressive Teachers League, Alex Art Centre, UDW, SARHWU, Yale USA, Sacred Heart, Centaur UK Oxford, IDASA, Weekly Mail, Staffrider. HRG Fourth Annual Report, p.11. The Workshop also had contact with the UDF cultural desk, Bonner to UDF cultural Desk, 22 March 1989, Correspondence July 1988 File, as well as COSAW, COSATU, the Eastern Cape Education Crisis Committee and NACTU; see correspondence in Correspondence July 1988 File, HWO, Wits.

¹⁴⁹ Questionnaires were sent to academics in the History Departments of the University of Vista, the North, Venda, Swaziland, Forte Hare, Zululand, Transkei, Stellenbosch, RAU, the University of Pretoria, UNISA, UWC and Durban Westville. These questionnaires were also sent to the History, English, Anthropology, Sociology, Social Anthropology, African Studies and Economic

academics heard about the History Workshop and when the triennial conferences took place and the Workshop books were published.¹⁵⁰ Most academics heard of the Workshop through their colleagues. The Workshop's function as being, in part, an academic forum, is clear from the fact that knowledge of it was spread by word of mouth among academics at the various universities.¹⁵¹ An analysis of the respondents who had not heard of the Workshop indicates that historians from Afrikaans Universities were more informed than historians from 'Black' Universities. However both were ill informed as compared to white English speaking Universities.

In the eyes of the majority of those questioned the Workshop had clearly achieved its objective to promote history from below. When questioned, about the approach to History which they felt the Workshop was encouraging, a large majority of scholars emphasised: 'social history', 'cultural materialist history' and 'history from below'. Oral history and a radical approach to history were also given a good ranking. Very few academics mentioned feminist history or gender analysis as being high on the Workshop's priorities.¹⁵²

Although very few academics responded to the question on who the stakeholders were in the Workshop and who those stakeholders should be, the general feeling was that academics were important in the Workshop and should be important. However the Workshop committee, foreign Workshops, the funders and the University administration should be less important than they are; and students, teachers, workers' unions and ordinary people should hold a more important position than they are given within the Workshop structure.¹⁵³

Despite the views about the position of ordinary people in the Workshop, many academics placed popularising and people's history, and

History Departments at the Universities of Cape Town, Natal, Rhodes and Wits. Of the approximately 400 questionnaires sent out, 132 responses were received. The data is based on those replies.

¹⁵⁰ See Appendix Ai

¹⁵¹ See Appendix Aii

¹⁵² See appendix Aiii.

¹⁵³ Possibly the question was a bit too complex. See appendix Aiv.

democratising history as being central to the Workshop's aims. However the academic functions of the Workshop as a forum, a place where research was co-ordinated and debated, were also clearly seen.¹⁵⁴ Some scholars felt that the Workshop's attempts to be involved in academic research and popularising led to problems, and that inevitably in that situation the latter would receive less attention.¹⁵⁵

The Workshop's influence was seen to be strongest amongst scholars with an interest in oral history and in South African literature.¹⁵⁶ Of the respondents, 40 % felt that the Workshop had informed their teaching and the Workshops publications were mostly used at a senior level.¹⁵⁷

One of the main criticisms of the Workshop amongst academics was that it was exclusive. A high percentage of the respondents from Afrikaans Universities felt the Workshop was exclusive. Of the respondents from Wits, 20 % felt it was exclusive, while 22 % of the respondents who had given papers at the Workshop felt it was exclusive. Linked to the criticism of exclusivism was the suggestion that its advertising for the conferences was inadequate. One respondent noted:

I have never seen a notice or received an invitation to attend in the ten and a half years I have taught in South Africa. The Workshop has always appeared as a closed shop for left radical historians.¹⁵⁸

However, many of those complaining about the lack of advertising, were wanting to know more about the Workshop and hoping to attend at some stage.

CONCLUSION

The size of the academic conferences held by the History Workshop meant that it rivalled in reputation any other large academic conference in the country in terms of the number of academics attending as well as academic

¹⁵⁴ see Appendix Av.

¹⁵⁵ See appendix Avi.

¹⁵⁶ See appendix Ax.

¹⁵⁷ See Appendix Axi.

¹⁵⁸ Questionnaire response in the keeping of G.K. Tatham

output. The Workshop was responsible for encouraging the presentation of a vast number of quality academic papers, many of which have subsequently been published elsewhere in books and journals. The Workshop committee played an important role in encouraging research, of which oral history was a vital part, which examined the lives and experiences of ordinary people. As opposed to earlier revisionist studies, these local radical research papers were often more accessible to both an academic as well as a lay audience.¹⁵⁹ The Workshop also had an impact on the teaching environment, as the high percentage of respondents to the questionnaire made clear. Linked closely to the committee's academic work were their attempts at popularising. These popularising attempts inevitably meant that there was contact between the History Workshop committee and union and community groups. At first the Workshop committee was strongly connected with union and worker groups, in particular TUAC and FOSATU. However over the years, in response to apparent union rejection of academic links, as well as the growing demands of school children for alternative education, connections were formed between the History Workshop and Transvaal teachers and teachers' associations. The changes in emphasis were reflected in the people leaving and those being co-opted on to the committee. The History Workshop experienced the inevitable pressures of extending themselves in the academic and popularising directions. They were criticised by various groups for their 'closed' conference, as well as for lack of answerability to community organisations. The tensions over these issues were experienced within the committee itself. Nevertheless, generally, the committee appeared satisfied with their achievements in the popularising terrain. The achievements included: Open Days; Popular History Days, in which popularisation as a technique was discussed; the production of popular books, slide shows, articles in newspapers; teaching groups the skills of writing their own histories, producing their own plays and slide shows and exhibitions. The Workshop group's activities, both in terms of its academic and popularising sides, expanded over the years to the extent that Delius could comment: 'The conferences are still important but the Workshop is

¹⁵⁹ See appendix Ax, 27 % of the respondents noted that the History Workshop had made them aware of other work in their fields of research.

much more of a vital and living organisation between conferences than it was earlier.'¹⁶⁰ Considering the efforts of the Wits Workshop group to promote history from below and its growing influence both nationally and internationally, it is obvious that no competent consideration of radical South African historical scholarship can take place without a substantial understanding of the Wits History Workshop and its activities.

¹⁶⁰ Delius, interview, October 1989.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP, MARXIST SOCIAL HISTORY

AND SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

The History Workshop committee visualised that the 1978 Workshop would be one in which social and economic history would be presented. The committee's emphasis lay on social history.¹ Despite the fact that an earlier conference on South African history, held at Oxford in 1974, was entitled 'Workshop on the Social and Economic History of Southern Africa', very few of the papers delivered at that conference actually focused on social history.² In South Africa throughout the 1970s, a few social history studies surfaced in labour seminars and publications, to which van Onselen's work is testimony.³ Nevertheless, until the 1978 History Workshop at Wits there was no coherent and deliberately conscious attempt on the part of a group of South African academics to promote a social history approach to South African studies. Indeed, in this regard, the success of the Witwatersrand History Workshop, can be measured partially by the number of scholars who point to the development in the 1980s of what Murray called 'a distinctive "social history" perspective'.⁴

¹ Proposal for a History Workshop on the social and economic history of Johannesburg, History Workshop office, 1978 Workshop file, p.2.

² General discussion in Colin Bundy's box file on Workshop on the Social and Economic History of Southern Africa, September 1974. Oxford.

³ C. van Onselen, Chibaro: African mine labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900 - 1933. London: Pluto Press, 1976; 'Randlords and Rotgut 1886-1903', in History Workshop No. 2, Autumn 1976; 'Sex and Social Control in the Rhodesian Mine Compounds 1900 - 1933', in South African Labour Bulletin, I, 7, November 1974; 'Worker Consciousness in Black Miners - Southern Rhodesia 1900 - 1920', University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Seminar, April, 1973.

⁴ M.J. Murray, 'The Triumph of Marxist Approaches in South African Social and Labour History', Journal of Asian and African Studies, XXIII 1-2, (1988). pp.79, 80; S.Marks, 'The Historiography of South Africa recent developments', in B. Jewsiewicki and D. Newbury eds. African Historiographies: What history for which Africa? Beverly Hills: Sage Productions, 1986 p.166; H. Bradford, 'Highways, Byways and Cul-de-Sacs: The Transition to Agrarian Capitalism in Revisionist South African History', Radical History Review, p.83, 46,47 ,

The Marxist social history approach in South African historiography had many different tributaries. To fully appreciate its complexity it must be seen in the context of: international intellectual trends; changing political and economic developments within South Africa; as well as local, and particularly South African historiographical traditions and debates.

According to Justin Wells:

intellectual developments can be seen to have a dual growth dynamic: on the one hand they tend to follow more or less closely social and political changes in the contexts in which they are produced, on the other hand, they develop from previous modes of discourse and analysis.⁵

While recognising the impact of international currents of thought, an attempt will be made to move away from an Eurocentric perspective and to highlight the influence of the local context on historical thought processes within the country. Labour, township and rural struggles characterised the 1970s and academic pre-occupation with these struggles will also be considered. As far as local modes of discourse are concerned, the limitations to contextualising the History Workshop's social history approach in the very generalised 'race/class' and 'structuralist/social history' framework will be revealed. An attempt will be made to overcome these generalisations, while, at the same time, recognising their usefulness for analysis. In the process, the diverse local tributaries feeding in to the Marxist social history approach of the Wits History Workshop will be defined. The approach to history encouraged by the Workshop group will be shown to be built on, developed out of, and formed in reaction to a variety of local discourses including certain liberal, Afrikaans, and, what have been termed, first and second generation Marxist work. An understanding of the local political context, as well as the broader intellectual discourse framing the growth of Marxist social history, will provide a fuller comprehension of the inner depths and nuances of that history.

Radical History Review, 46/47, 1990. p213.

⁵ J. A. Wells, 'Social History in South Africa: a review of some theoretical issues'. Unpublished, B.A. Hons. thesis, History, University of Cape Town, 1985. p.1.

SOCIAL HISTORY - A DEFINITION

Social history is a very loose concept which covers a whole range of theoretical, methodological and epistemological approaches. At a basic level, social history can be seen as a particular approach to history which covers the experiences of ordinary people and their everyday activities. It is an approach which looks at history 'from the bottom up'.⁶ This approach may be appropriated by the right and the left of the political spectrum. At times, the words 'social history' have been interchanged with 'popular history'. Both Raphael Samuel and Peter Burke showed that the latter may be manipulated by dominant groups in an attempt to entrench the status quo.⁷ Raphael Samuel at the same time, pointed to the use of social history to undermine the status-quo. He suggested that there was an 'umbilical cord' connecting Marxism to social history and reflected on the fact that Marx's Capital can be seen as a 'history from below', a view of the development of capital 'through the eyes of its victims'.⁸

Both left and right appropriations of social history have the potential to neglect political issues and, in particular, to neglect the consideration of power relations and underlying structural forces.⁹ Certainly, as scholars like Bender pointed out, the 'new' social history in America which arose in the 1970s and 1980s became characterised as 'a

⁶ Phrase first coined by Jesse Lemisch in 'The American Revolution seen from the bottom up' in Barton J. Bernstein (ed.) Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History, (New York :Vintage Books, 1969, pp. 3-45; P.N. Stearns, 'The New Social History, An Overview', in J.B. Gardner and G.R. Adams, Ordinary People and Everyday Life: perspectives on the new social history. Nashville, Tennessee, American Association for state and local History, 1983. pp 4-5.

⁷ R. Samuel, Editorial, 'Liberalism', History Workshop Journal, Spring, 1984, No. 17. pp. 1,2; P. Burke, 'The Discovery of Popular Culture', R. Johnson, 'Against absolutism', and R. Samuel 'Editorial: people's history', in R. Samuel (ed.), People's History and Socialist Theory, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981. pp.xxi, 219, 393; D. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme, Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948. Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983; 'The Ideology of Afrikaner Capitalism; I. Hofmeyr, 'Perspectives on working class life among black and Afrikaans writers 1890-1930', African Perspective, 16, Winter 1980. pp.24-41.

⁸ R. Samuel, 'Editorial: People's History' p.xxxix.

⁹ Interview with Linda Gordon in H. Abelove ... [et al.], eds., Visions of History, New York: Pantheon Books, 1983, p.91.

history with the politics left out', 'a history increasingly concerned with minutiae, increasingly fragmented and kaleidoscopic in nature and portraying very little sense of broader interpretative frameworks'.¹⁰ Samuel agreed that the sense of immediacy given by much social history, in its focus on people's experiences and everyday lives, may destroy 'that necessary moment of abstraction' needed to understand the wider determinations.¹¹ In the 1970s and 1980s, these ambiguities within social history were reflected in the work of the social historians in South Africa.¹²

The Witwatersrand History Workshop's approach to history can be seen to be influenced by the tide of social history which washed through international intellectual circles, driven to a large extent by academics on the left. This approach included the 'macroscopic' 'long run' 'structural' inquiries of the Annales school and its scholars like Fernand Braudel; Ladurie's imaginative reconstructions of historical episodes based upon detailed personal testimony; the 'microscopic' 'people's history' of the British History Workshop and the Oral History Movement in Britain; the work of the British Marxist labour and social historians with their focus on the early 'experiential' Marx and Gramsci's interpretations of hegemony; as well as the work of Marxist scholars, like Genovese, of the American 'new left' which burgeoned in the 1960s.¹³ Most of this history represents a move from the 'macroscopic' to the 'microscopic'. Studies of structures increasingly give way to everyday details of life, people's experiences,

¹⁰ Richard M. Andrews, 'Some Implications of the Annales School and its Methods for a Revision of Historical Writing about the United States' Review 1, 1978, p.165; H. Gutman, 'Whatever happened to History', Nation 21, Nov. 1981, p. 521; Note what Peter Stearns has to say about the adjective 'new' for social history in P. Stearns 'The New Social History' in J.R. Gardner and G.R. Adams, Ordinary People and Everyday Life, pp. 7-9; T. Bender, 'Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History', Journal of American History 73 (1986), p. 126; also C. Bundy 'An image of its own past? Towards a Comparison of America and South African Historiography', 46/7, 1990 in Radical History Review, pp. 132-133.

¹¹ Samuel, 'Editorial: People's History ', p. xxvii.

¹² S. Marks, ' The Historiography of South Africa'.

¹³ F. Braudel, Civilization and capitalism, 15th-18th century, translation from the French by Sian Reynolds, London: Fontana, 1984. The Annales School was an early forerunner of the new social history. (15 ref 114)

assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, spontaneous actions and cultural forms. As Samuel noted, 'the workings of large historical forces' become 'personalised'.¹⁴ This work represents a rejection of 'a Marxism or a sociology of a world seen as oppressive, mechanical, reductive or determinist'.¹⁵

THE WITS HISTORY WORKSHOP'S APPROACH TO HISTORY

At the first meeting to establish the History Workshop at Wits, the central aims and intentions behind its establishment were voiced. The scholars who formed the committee wished to encourage the development of social history within an historical, materialist perspective. In their own words, their intention was to 'recreate history from a grassroots perspective', to encourage the development of history 'from the point of view of the subordinate classes'.¹⁶ The interest would focus on those people who had been 'hidden from history' in the South African context: ordinary people, both black and white, township dwellers, the rural poor, women, workers in the workplace, the lumpenproletariat, and immigrants. The committee attempted to encourage studies that looked not only at structures of exploitation but also considered the way in which these structures and relations were experienced by the people, themselves.

Although the experiences of people often tend to be fragmented and their consciousness is not all incorporating, nevertheless, it was considered essential to take these experiences into account if the scholar

¹⁴ C.Lloyd, Explanation in Social History, New York: B. Blackwell, 1986. p. 2.

¹⁵ E. D. Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made, New York: Pantheon Books, 1972; E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, London: Gollancz, 1963, p. 12-13; E. Hobsbawm, Bandits, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972; A. Gramsci, 'The study of Philosophy', in Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith eds. Selections from the Prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.

¹⁶ B. Bozzoli, Labour, Township and Protest, p. 3; File 1978, Proposal for a History Workshop on the Social and Economic History of Johannesburg Africa Perspective, No. 6, August 1977, p. 62.

were to avoid theoreticism.¹⁷ People's daily experiences, popular culture and consciousness were placed on the agenda. The concept of resistance, too, both organised as well as individual, spontaneous reactions, became an essential part of the research programme. Basically, the committee of the History Workshop were attempting to make provisions for, in Simon Clarke's words, 'a theory that embraces and does not suppress the revolutionary aspirations expressed in the experience of struggle'.¹⁸

An emphasis on 'experience' and 'agency' in history necessarily meant that the historian has to 'listen ... out' for evidence. This essentially involved a local studies approach to history in which regional differences and local specificities and people's faces within those localities are highlighted. In this regard, the committee expressed the importance of grounding broad themes and issues in local and specific contexts. An essential part of this was to ensure that locally-based South African research was encouraged, and this became one of the central drives of the Workshop committee.¹⁹

AN EUROCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE ON THE WITS HISTORY WORKSHOP

Some scholars recognised the impact of local concerns on the formation of the Wits History Workshop. Saunders referred to the impact of the Durban strikes as well as the Soweto uprisings in 1976 on history writing within the country; and Marks noted that 'in the mid 1970s the re-awakening of the

¹⁷ File 1978 First meeting on proposed History Workshop. Genovese, 'Roll Jordan Roll'.

¹⁸S. Clarke, 'Social Humanism and the critique of economism' in History Workshop Journal 8, p.152; B. Bozzoli, 'Popular History and the Witwatersrand in B. Bozzoli ed. Labour, Townships and Protest: Studies in the social history of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1979. p.3; File 1978 Proposal for a History Workshop on the Social and Economic History of Johannesburg; 'Seminars and Workshops' in African Perspectives, 6, August 1977, p.62.

¹⁹ File 1978, Proposal for History Workshop on the Social and Economic History of Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop Offices; see also B. Bozzoli, 'History, Experience and Culture' in B. Bozzoli (ed.) Town and Countryside in the Transvaal, Johannesburg : Ravan Press, p. 17; S. Clarke 'Socialist Humanism and the Critique of Economism', History Workshop Journal, 8, p.152, 1979.

African working class brought to a head the limitations in the existing literature which ignored African agency'.²⁰ She also drew attention to the Labour Bulletin and the Labour Conference at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1976. Nevertheless, the references by historiographers to imported influences, generally, tend to outweigh these local considerations. Until very recently, historiographers paid far more attention to the 'outside' influences on the formation of the History Workshop movement in South Africa and its particular approach to history - often at the expense of considering developments within the country.

Surprisingly, even Bozzoli, one of the prime movers behind the establishment of the History Workshop, made only one explicit reference in her first edited version of the Workshop papers to influences acting on the Workshop movement, and that reference was to Ruskin College at Oxford. She noted: 'In the tradition set by the Ruskin History Workshops this conference set out to begin the process of recreating Witwatersrand history from a grassroots perspective'.²¹ In the second book she edited for the History Workshop, she wrote that, 'the History Workshop was originally conceived as a local version of the History Workshop based at Ruskin College Oxford'.²² However, it cannot be said that Bozzoli brushed over the influence of the local context on academic work. In many ways, both implicitly and explicitly, she pointed to the effect of the 'South African context' 'confronting' the Witwatersrand History Workshop.²³

Both Saunders and Marks also pointed to the influence of the trade union college Ruskin and the British History Workshop movement which, self consciously, were seen to encourage working class studies. They also

²⁰ C. Saunders. The Making of the South African Past. Cape Town, 1988, pp. 182-3; S. Marks, 'the Historiography', p. 173.

²¹ File 1978, First meeting on proposed History Workshop: University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop Office; B. Bozzoli, "History, Experience and Culture" in B. Bozzoli, ed. Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: Capitalist Penetration and Popular Response, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983 pp.17,43.

²² B.Bozzoli ' Popular History and the Witwatersrand', p3; B. Bozzoli 'History, Experience and Culture', p.43. Note: she does mention many local influences. Note: she does mention many local influences.

²³ B. Bozzoli 'Popular History and the Witwatersrand, p.3.

emphasised the 'history from below' approach of the British History Workshop Journal.²⁴ Together with Bozzoli and van Onselen, Saunders and Marks acknowledged the influence on the Witwatersrand History Workshop group and its conception of history of: British Marxist historians like E.P. Thompson, Hobsbawn, Stedman-Jones and John Foster; Genovese and Barrington Moore of the American New Left; as well as certain new African histories.

Certainly, intellectual developments and conferences organised in Britain did have a substantial bearing on the formation of the Wits Workshop and its particular concerns. Among these were the Social and Economic History Conference planned by Stanley Trapido at Oxford in 1974, and Marks and Atmore's three year research project at the Centre of International and Area Studies, University of London in the late 1970s, which was entitled 'Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: the transformation of African societies in Twentieth century South Africa'.²⁵ The British based Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICS), with Shula Marks at the helm, was seen to provide a strong current of continuity for the humanist perspective, from the time that Legassick and his peers set up their challenge to the liberal thesis until the Marxist social history reflected at the triennial History Workshops at Wits in the late 1970s and 1980s. Among scholars who attended the ICS seminars were Legassick, Wolpe and Johnstone. Bonner, Delius, Guy, Beinart, Bundy and van Onselen had connections with the Institute, either, through The School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London, or through the Southern African Studies Seminars at the ICS, or through personal or supervisory contact with Shula Marks herself.

²⁴ C. Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, p. 182; S. Marks, 'The Historiography', p. 165; Editorial Collective, 'History Workshop Journal', History Workshop, 1, Spring 1976. p.2.; also Editorial Collective, Editorial: 'Progress and Problem in our first year', History Workshop, 2, Autumn 1976.

²⁵ Marks and Atmore's project was financed by the Ford Foundation, 'Proposal for a History Workshop on the Social and Economic History of Johannesburg' File 1978; Meeting of the History Workshop 1980 (n.d.), History Workshop 1981, Minutes of meetings and agenda File; See my chapter 6 p.2; Bozzoli, 'History, Experience and Culture'.

Although it is important to recognise the influence of international currents on the ideas behind the emergence and development of the History Workshop movement within South Africa, it is equally important to understand the effect that developments within the country had on such a movement. Attention will be drawn to the latter in an attempt to rectify the imbalance in historiographical surveys.

THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Shula Marks observed that:

what is striking in the development of the historiography of the last decade is the dialectical relationship between the work of the historians and the world in which we live and act.²⁶

In the mid to late 1970s, changes in the political, social and economic situation in South Africa were to have a major impact on historical thought in the country and the direction it would take. The economic recession in South Africa in the mid 1970s created large-scale unemployment.²⁷ The Soweto uprisings, which assumed national proportions, shocked academics with the spectre of opposition and resistance that was not restricted to the workplace. These township struggles meant that the subject matter of many history studies was changed, from worker conditions and struggles at the workplace which had dominated labour history in South Africa in the early 1970s (a consequence of the growth in the trade union movement at that time), to studies which took account of the experiences and struggles of ordinary people in the townships. At this time too, the attention of academics was drawn to the increasing resistance of rural people to removals - as the Apartheid 'homeland' policy was further entrenched. The expanding number of studies concerned with the underclasses and their resistance serves to confirm Richard Johnson's belief that 'histories of

²⁶ S. Marks, 'The Historiography', p.165; Saunders, p.182;

²⁷ 'Proposal for a History Workshop on the Social and Economic History of Johannesburg', File 1978, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand; Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa since 1945, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983, p. 328.

the working class only get written when the larger part of the population is held to matter enough to be an object of inquiry'.²⁸

The slogans rallied by the 'angry new constituency' of radical youth during the Soweto uprisings, such as 'Worker Power' and 'People's Power', and the avalanche of young people clamouring to join the ANC's armed wing from the mid 1970s made it difficult for academics to ignore the possibilities of human agency.²⁹ Following the Soweto uprisings, the disarray, disunity and weaknesses within the ruling group became more obvious. Likewise, the overthrow of Portuguese rule in Mozambique and in Angola in 1974, and the ability of the (*)MPLA to resist the South African army advances in Angola in 1975 and 1976 drew a huge question mark over the concept of an all-powerful state.³⁰ These events were to prompt a revision in the treatment of the underclasses as well as of state power in academic work.³¹ Marks noted that as a result of these developments, 'Historians again began to make room for people's resistance to structures and to make room for process and change'.³²

The theme of the first and subsequent publications arising from the academic proceedings of the triennial History Workshops can be seen to reflect the strong 'indigenous' impulses acting on the History Workshop

²⁸ R. Johnson, 'Culture and the Historians', in J. Clarke, C. Critcher and R. Johnson, Working Class Culture: Studies in history and theory, London: Hutchinson, 1979, p. 42; Marks, 'The historiography', "What is striking in the development of the historiography of the last decade is the dialectical relationship between the work of historians and the world in which we live and act"; S. Marks, 'Towards a people's history of South Africa'. Recent developments in the historiography of South Africa in R. Samuel, People's History and Socialist Theory, Routledge and Keegan Paul, London.

²⁹ C.R.D. Halisi, 'Popular Struggle, Black South African Opposition in Transformation' in Radical History Review, 46/7, 1990, p. 389; Brooks and Brickhill, Whirlwind before the Storm, London: International Defence and Aid for Southern Africa, 1980 p. 228. Leaflet produced by coloured school children; Lodge, Black Politics, p. 335; Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa since 1945, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1983, p.328.

³⁰ Lodge, Black Politics, pp.326, 332; R. Johnson, 'Culture and the historians'; J. Clark, C. Critcher and R. Johnson, Working Class Culture: Studies in history and theory London: Hutchison, 1979, p.43.

³¹ S. Marks, 'The Historiography', p. 173.

³² S. Marks, interview; Lodge, Black Politics, Cape Town, 1989 pp. 326,332

just as much, if not more than, any 'imported' currents. The titles included: Labour, Townships and Protest: Studies in the social history of the Witwatersrand (the book was divided into sections, namely: Township Life and Patterns of Protest; Cultural Alternatives to Hegemony; and Worker Experience and Action); Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: Capitalist penetration and popular response; Class Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives; and Holding their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa.³³

The formation of the History Workshop with its social history emphasis was a response to the changing South African situation. However, it was not the only development. Sitas noted: 'It was in a sense just one of those strands that were alive at the time and it developed its own momentum'.³⁴ Some papers presented to the Conference on The History of Opposition in Southern Africa organised by the (student) Development Studies Group at Wits in 1978, as well as some papers presented in the African Studies seminars at Wits from 1977, reflected a changing focus towards areas such as: the resistance and opposition, agency, experience, culture and consciousness of ordinary people.³⁵

THE LOCAL HISTORIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Having studied the local, social and political context within which the Wits History Workshop was formed, it now remains to place its development in terms of local historiographical modes of discourse and debate.

³³ Marks, *The Historiography*, p.173; Halisi, C.R.D. 'Popular Struggle', p.389

³⁴A. Sitas. Interviewed, by G.K. Tatham, Durban, January, 1990 p. 2; D. Coplan, 'Cultural Politics, Black Performing arts in Johannesburg. Unpublished seminar. University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Seminar, 1977

³⁵ D. Coplan, 'Cultural politics: black performing arts in Johannesburg', African Studies Seminar, Wits, 1977; G. Moss, 'The conceptual determination of class: conflict in opposition?', Conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, January 1978, p. 20.

Certain academics tend to portray the work of the 1970s, essentially, as forming part of the 'race/class' debate and the work of the 1980s as falling into a 'structure/agency' debate. The development of Marxist social history in South Africa thus, becomes contextualised in terms of these polarities and generalizations. Such an approach provides an inadequate framework for comprehending the development of South African Marxist social history and the part played by the History Workshop at Wits in that development.

The 'race/class' framework reduces all liberal work to the race perspective, which glosses over the important differences between the work of various liberal historians. It also conceals the contribution made by certain liberal scholars to social and economic analysis. That polemic also reduces the early Marxist work to a class perspective in which race is reduced to class. The complexities of the early Marxist work are ignored. In being constituted in relation to the liberal work as well as liberation theories of the day, the latter work did not wholly reject the concept of race. The generalization of the 'race/class' debate, therefore, tends to conceal both: the precedents to Marxist social history found in some early liberal work (and even in some Afrikaans works); and the continuities between the early Marxist scholars and the later Marxist social historians.

The generalization of a 'structure/agency' debate for the 1980s, too, by simplifying the many and variegated strands of thought, 'scope, methodology, approach and subject matter' within the revisionist school into two simple poles, can be seen to exaggerate the polarities within the revisionist school. By depicting the debate in 'either/or' terms, the complexities within structuralist work and the contributions made by structuralist scholars to the development of 'revisionist' thought are concealed. The precise historical relationship between structuralist thought and the growth of Marxist social history are also glossed over.

The depiction of Marxist social history as 'culturalist', too, hides the variety of emphases and approaches, as well as the changes in emphasis over time, within Marxist social history itself. These generalizations need to be overcome if the broader, theoretical and historical discourse providing the framework for the development of Marxist social history is to

be comprehended fully, and if the inner shades and gradations of that history are to be understood.

Understanding the History Workshop in terms of the race/class debate

liberal analysis/race analysis

The History Workshop at Wits, essentially, grew out of the 'revisionist' paradigm of the 1970s. That paradigm was shown to emerge in reaction to liberal analyses of South Africa's past. The 'race/class' debate characterised the revisionist challenge to the liberals. All liberal work, however, cannot be portrayed, simply, as embracing an analytic approach with race as its central concept. In fact, it is virtually impossible to define, specifically, a liberal methodology and paradigm. Possibly, the closest one can get to such a definition is found in Elphick's definition of liberalism: a political philosophy 'dedicated to defending the individual against the claims of the collective or the state'.³⁶ The liberal mind is renowned for concentrating on the individual within his particular context rather than on monistic explanations of that context itself; generally, liberal thought remains suspicious of large concepts and all embracing theories - and sticks closely to the evidence. Perhaps, this is more a mind-set than a paradigm; and it is a mind-set which, at times, seems able to incorporate Marxist insights - such as the existence of class and the importance of economic factors in the historical process.

It was relatively easy to associate liberal analysis automatically with race analysis. The Oxford History of South Africa, which represented the apex of liberal scholarship in South Africa was one such liberal work which emphasised race as the underlying propellant of South African history. Although this work concentrated far more on African history than earlier liberal works have done, in many respects it was representative of the liberal tradition within the country. Like the liberal histories of the 1950s and 1960s, the Oxford History emphasised issues of policy and

³⁶ R. Elphick, 'Methodology in South African Historiography: a defence of idealism and empiricism', Seminar Paper, University of Cape Town, Centre for African Studies, Africa seminar, 1984, p.25.

legislation; as well as important individuals and their contribution to the shaping of historical processes.⁴⁵ There was very little, if any, consideration of the development of capitalism within the country or of its impact. Nor was there much analysis of underlying, structural processes or relationships. Class and class conflict did not feature.³⁷ The situation within the country, both contemporary and in the past, was explained in terms of race and ethnicity. Racism, in the form of 'irrational', racial prejudice was seen to be responsible for the system of segregation and apartheid. According to the liberals, racial factors explained why there was a dual economy within the country consisting of backward reserves and a forward-looking capitalist sector. Modernising capitalism, with its inherent tendencies of rationalism and efficiency, was seen to have the potential to encourage integration and interaction between racial groups and, finally, destroy the system based on racial discrimination.³⁸ The potential for interaction between racial groups was a central theme in much of the liberal work. Lonsdale summed up the liberal's modernisation thesis as 'capitalism's colour-blind bourgeois revolution', which would eventually break 'the traditional bonds of racial repression' and bring in the 'era of the melting pot thesis'.³⁹

Nevertheless, even Frederick Johnstone admits that some liberal scholars did not concentrate only on race. Macmillan, de Kiewiet, Robertson, Van der Horst and Wilson produced 'some political economy of South Africa'.⁴⁰ In fact, the early liberal scholars Macmillan and de Kiewiet, the founders of the liberal school in South Africa, give a great deal of attention to social and economic themes. To some extent, they

³⁷ S. Marks, 'The historiography', p. 167; M. Legassick, 'The dynamics of modernisation in South Africa', Journal of African History, 13, 1, 1972, p.142.

³⁸ John Lonsdale, 'From colony to industrial state: South African historiography as seen from England', Social Dynamics, 9,1, June 1983, p. 69.

³⁹ Ibid, p. 69.

⁴⁰ F. Johnstone, 'Most painful to our hearts: South Africa through the eyes of the New School' in Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. 16, 1982, p. 9.

followed a tradition set by Tawney and the Hammonds, English scholars who emphasised economic and social analysis above political analysis.

Macmillan's interest in social history, and even an 'history from below' approach, can be found in his view of what was 'really significant' in South African history, the examination of,

the everyday life of the people, how they lived, what they thought and what they worked at, when they did think and work, what they produced and what and where they marketed, and the whole of their social organisation.⁴¹

De Kiewiet, too recognised the importance and significance of everyday events in the lives of ordinary people.⁴² Such events tell the story of deeper, underlying economic forces and patterns. In both Complex South Africa as well as Bantu, Boer, and Briton, Macmillan considered the social and economic plight of Africans. He looks at the effects of the conflict over land on the frontier, of white conquest, of capital accumulation on the farms and considers how relationships of exploitation on the farms changed as a result of the process of capitalist penetration. Macmillan takes account of African resistance to dispossession of their land and their suffering. Both he and De Kiewiet analysed the process of proletarianisation: from landowning peasants, to wage labourers or poor farmer in the reserves, to migrant labour.⁴³ They both recognised the fundamental driving force behind South Africa's history to be the need for black labour. In their words, the

outstanding social and economic fact ... is not gold, nor diamond mining, nor even agriculture, but the universal dependence on black labour.⁴⁴

⁴¹ W.M. Macmillan, The South African Agrarian Problem and its Historical Development: lectures, Johannesburg: Central news agency, 1919, p. 23.

⁴² Ibid; C.W. de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa: Social and Economic, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942, p.v.

⁴³ De Kiewiet, 'Social and economic developments in native tribal life' in A. P. Newton, E.A. Benians eds. Cambridge History of the British Empire, Vol. 8, Cambridge: U.P., 1936.pp.808-827

⁴⁴ W.M. Macmillan, Complex South Africa: an economic foot-note to history, London : Faber and Faber, 1930, pp. 17-18; de Kiewiet, The Imperial Factor in South Africa: a study in politics and economics, Cambridge: University Press, 1937, pp.1-3; de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa, pp. 79,87,179-80, 217,242.

The themes mentioned above become central to much of the Marxist work in the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, Smith suggests, 'one cannot help feeling that there were perhaps more similarities between Macmillan and de Kiewiet, and the historians of the 1970s, than the latter care to admit'.⁴⁵ Frederick Johnstone, too, acknowledged the debt owed by the revisionists to Macmillan and De Kiewiet's 'pioneering class analysis'.⁴⁶ Marks even suggested that Macmillan could be seen as a socialist.⁴⁷

Nevertheless, instead of emphasizing conflict, as the revisionists did, the liberal view of capitalism emphasised interaction and interdependence and the potential of these forces to annihilate irrational racial prejudices.⁴⁸ Their economic analysis was framed by their capitalist/idealist liberal viewpoint, and as a result they were never able to engage fully in systematic class analysis.

Afrikaans history and race analysis

As in liberal historiography, so, too, within Afrikaans historiography there were some historians who did not interpret everything in terms of race. In Afrikaner Nationalist historiography, scholars like C.J. Uys, C.F.J. Muller and H.B. Thom (although not specifically setting out to explain racism) did give race a central role in their histories of the Afrikaner people and their struggles against Imperialism and against

⁴⁵ K. W. Smith, The Changing Past: trends in South African historical writing, 1st ed., Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988, p. 118.

⁴⁶ F.A. Johnstone, Class Race and Gold; a study of class relations and racial discriminations in South Africa, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, p. 52-54; Johnstone, 'Most painful to our hearts', p.9; Johnstone utilised de Kiewiet's insights on poor white urbanisation in his study Class Race and Gold.

⁴⁷ S. Marks 1988. C. Bundy, S. Marks, S. Trapido and C. van Onslen interviewed jointly in Johannesburg by B. Bozzoli and P. Delius, University of the Witwatersrand, July 1988. p 10.

⁴⁸ W.M. Macmillan, Complex South Africa, pp.17-18; de Kiewiet, The Imperial Factor, pp.1-3; de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa, pp. 79,87,179-180,217,242; De Kiewiet's concept of interdependence and interaction was utilised in M. Wilson and L. Thompson's (eds.) Oxford History of South Africa, vol.1, South Africa to 1870, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

'hostile' African tribes, particularly in the period between 1836 and 1902.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, there were some Afrikaans historians who did not write within the Afrikaner Nationalist paradigm.⁵⁰ P.J. van der Merwe, writing in the 1930s and 1940s, examined the everyday life and activities of the trekboers on the frontier. He concentrated on social, economic and ecological issues. Bundy states that 'this singular historian was South Africa's first annaliste'.⁵¹ Smith suggested that van der Merwe's works had 'more in common with the social and economic history as studied in the 1970s than they did with the work of the majority of his contemporaries'.⁵² His insights were to be taken up by scholars like Trapido and Delius in their studies of the trekboers and their servants in the highveld between 1840 and 1870.⁵³

changes within historiographical traditions

The concept of a race/class debate in the 1970s contains within it the implication that all work outside of the Marxist tradition falls into the race paradigm. Such a view conceals not only the early contributions of some Afrikaans writers and liberal scholars to social and economic and class analysis, but it also tends to ignore the inner dynamics of different traditions and the capacity of each tradition to change and adapt. The liberal and the Afrikaner Nationalist standpoints did not disintegrate once the 'race/class' debate was exhausted. The liberals were forced to review their assumptions, to re-examine certain lacunae in their work, and to

⁴⁹ Floris A. Van Jaarsveld. The Afrikaners' Interpretation of South African History, Cape Town: Simondium, 1964. pp. 57,62. Note: Before 1958 the Afrikaans/English divide was strong in Afrikaans history. The Great Trek, the two Anglo-Boer Wars, the 1948 Nationalist Party Election victory, the establishment of the South African Republic were all considered important episodes in the history of the volk. After 1958 Afrikaner historians began concentrating on the black/white divide.

⁵⁰ J.S. Marais' work was more closely aligned to liberalism; F. A. van Jaarsveld moved in and out of the Afrikaner Nationalist paradigm; H. Giliomee and A. du Toit clearly rejected the republican paradigm.

⁵¹ Bundy, 'An image of its own past', p.126.

⁵² Smith, The Changing Past, p,78

⁵³ P. Delius and S. Trapido 'Inboekselings and Oorlams: the creation and transformation of a servile class' in B. Bozzoli ed. Town and Countryside in the Transvaal, pp. 53-89.

branch out into new fields of enquiry. They accepted many facets of the revisionist work, including much materialist analysis, although they remained convinced that racial discrimination cannot adequately be accounted for, purely, in economic or materialist terms.⁵⁴ The liberal historians, also, through their constant voicing of criticism of Marxist work, particularly in the area of the Marxist treatment of race and their insistence on a continual dialogue between theory and history, were to influence Marxist research, in turn. In fact, much of the work presented to the Wits History Workshop from the late 1970s mirrors a more relaxed Marxist frame of reference partly brought about by those challenges by the liberal historians.

Afrikaner Nationalist history, too, has undergone certain changes in recent years. A call was made in the early 1980s by two prominent Afrikaner historians, van Jaarsveld and Spies, for studies more sensitive to social and economic issues and to the demands of a changing South Africa.⁵⁵ Some Afrikaans historians have responded. A recent study of the Afrikaner people in Johannesburg, Afrikaners in die Goudstad, is a social and economic history and is extensively referred to by scholars, like van Onselen.⁵⁶ Despite such exceptions, it was argued by some critics that Afrikaner Nationalist history will always remain a 'politieke geskiedenis ... wat om die Afrikaner wentel' and, as such, will 'never be able to embrace social history because its central concerns are fundamentally opposed to the

⁵⁴ Welsh, although arguing that racial discrimination cannot be accounted for adequately in purely economic or materialist terms, nevertheless agrees that the growth of the mining industry greatly increased the pressures on African societies to provide labour. He accepts that labour-repressive legislation, the extension of the migrant labour system and the pass laws, the deprivation of the rural areas, and so on, were an important part of the process. Capitalism has been an instrument for exploitation on South Africa (although the link between capitalism and white domination he sees as a contingent rather than a necessary one. Welsh 'South Africa: power process and prospects', pp. 12-13, 21. Inaugural Lecture, University of Cape Town: 1982.

⁵⁵ Sunday Express, 3 Feb. 1985; F.A. Van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Suid Afrikaanse verlede: geskiedenis- ideologie en die historiese skulduraagstuk, Johannesburg: Lax Patria, 1984, p.195; S.B. Spies, The Historian's net, Pretoria, UNISA, 1981; van Jaarsveld Moderne Geskiedskrywing: Opstelle oor 'n nuwe benadering tot geskiedenis, Pretoria, 1982, p.129.

⁵⁶ E.L.P. Stals (ed.) Afrikaners in die Goudstad, Pretoria: H.A.U.M. 1978. Van Onselen used it a lot. Smith, The Changing Past, p. 88.

tenets of modern social history with its emphasis on class conflict and "history from below".⁵⁷ Certainly, as Smith noted, the majority of Afrikaans historians are averse to the Marxism in revisionist work, and many discard the insights produced because of the connection with Marxist analysis.⁵⁸

class analysis and local activists

While there are problems with the concept of a race/class debate categorizing all non-Marxist work as being race oriented, so, too, are there problems with the class aspect of the debate. The view of a race/class debate 'happening' in South Africa in the 1970s lent credence to the assumption that class as a concept and Marxist historical thought was the innovation of the revisionist historians writing in the early 1970s. Bundy, for instance, wrote that 'Marxist historical method was an innovation of historians who emerged in the 1970s.'⁵⁹ Such a view glosses over the contribution made in the 1950s and 1960s by local activists, communists, neo-Marxists, Trotskyists and ANC Nationalists to the development of historical materialism and class analysis, and to a social history perspective for South Africa. Eddie Roux, Dora Taylor and Hosea Jaffe were prominent amongst these activists. Both Saunders and Smith commented that the historical materialist approach evident in the works of the Trotskyists Dora Taylor ('Majeke') and Hosea Jaffe ('Mnguni'), such as The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest and Three Hundred Years represents a 'dress rehearsal' for the revisionist work of the 1970s.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ F.A. Van Jaarsveld Omstrede SA Verlede, p. 195; A.Grundlingh 'Sosiale geskiedenis', p.31, from English summary of article see in C. Bundy in RHR, p. 143.

⁵⁸ Smith, The Changing Past, p.94, on Afrikaans historians and their isolation.

⁵⁹ Dudley 'Foreword' in 'Mnguni Three Hundred Years, Cumberwood: APDUSA, 1988. First published 1952 in B. Nasson, 'The unity movement: its legacy in historical consciousness' in Radical History Review, p.202.

* ⁶⁰C. Saunders 'Historians and apartheid' in John Lonsdale, ed. South Africa in Question, Cambridge, C.U.P. in association with James Curry London: Heinmann, 1988; Saunders, "Mnguni" and Three Hundred Years revisited in Kronos 11, 1986, p. 75; Saunders, The Making, pp.135-8; Ken Smith The Changing Past, pp. 157-9, 177-8; B. Nasson, 'The Unity Movement: its legacy in Historical consciousness', Radical History Review, 46/7, 1990, p. 202.

Although these works may not have had a direct influence or been the immediate harbingers of the historical materialist approach and the later Marxist social history approach, nevertheless the works should be recognised in the sense that they anticipated the later work. Certainly, if historiography is to be seen to consist, partly, of 'the active construction' and reconstruction of 'conceptions of the past', then it is vitally important to place the development of materialist social history in South Africa in the context of these earlier currents of thought.

The works of Jaffe and Taylor were representative of the Unity Movement's 'collective historical polemic' which demanded that South Africa's history should not be seen in terms of racial concepts but rather in terms of 'the motor' force of history the 'social systems ... whereby people produce the necessities of life and the social and political relations into which they enter in this very economic process'.⁶¹ Thus, these scholars rejected the liberal view of the dysfunctional relationship between capitalism and racial segregation and suggested, instead, that capitalist exploitation and racial discrimination were integrally linked in a system that was primarily geared to capital accumulation, and which demanded the supply and reproduction of cheap labour towards that end.⁶² Class analysis, capitalism as an exploitative system of production, and the development of Imperialism as a dominating force within the country were central to these works. Nevertheless, these scholars, in their class analysis, did not forsake the concept of race entirely. In fact, as Saunders comments, neither Taylor's nor Jaffe's works 'used class analysis at all systematically'.⁶³ Their recognition of the complexity of South Africa's past in terms of race and class can be seen in Mnguni's analysis: 'The elements of the past (tribalism, slavery, feudalism) reacted in the

⁶¹ Mpumelelo Temba 'Boycott as a weapon of struggle' in M. Hommel, ed. Contribution of Non European Peoples to World Civilisation, Johannesburg, 1989, p. 193; W.P. Van Schoor, 'The origin and development of segregation in South Africa'; also in Maurice Hommel, ed. Non-European Peoples, p. 136, 139.

⁶² Mnguni, Three Hundred Years, pp. 132-33; Hosea Jaffe 'Fascism in South Africa', reprinted in his The Pyramid of Nations, Milan, 1980, pp. 90,91.

⁶³ Saunders, The Making, p. 137.

vast crucible of the mining revolution to form the compound of monopolistic exploitation and its consequences - totalitarian oppression'.⁶⁴

In their materialist analysis, their Africanist approach, their 'history from below' vision in which emphasis was placed on the 'conquest, subjugation, dispossession, enslavement, segregation and disfranchisement of the oppressed non-Europeans of South Africa' and the latter's resistance to that oppression, these scholars made 'an early contribution to the making of what is a radical South African historiography today'.⁶⁵ In fact, with this insight as well as their recognition of the significance of 'elements of the past' interacting with the new demands of the mining industry, their work represented a precursor to materialist social history. Nasson stressed that these 'seminal early traces and intonations ought not to be overlooked'.⁶⁶

Among works which gained wide circulation with early Marxist scholars, was Jack Simons and Ray Simons's Class and Colour in South Africa which, too, emphasised class struggle in the analysis of South Africa's past. Bundy noted of this book that it could be viewed 'either as precursor to, or as the vanguard of, a wave of revisionist history'.⁶⁷ Legassick acknowledged the debt owed by revisionists to the work of early socialist writers like Roux, Bunting, and Simons and Simons; in particular to their

⁶⁴ Mnguni, Three Hundred Years, p. 132.

⁶⁵ Their work could be seen as a reaction to the Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Celebrations 1952 - a clear expression of the dominant interpretation of history, B. Nasson RHR, pp.205-6; Note: the materialist social history does not only emphasise the aspect of disempowering Africans but stresses their resistance and power to resist as well; Saunders, The Making, pp. 132-4; The historian quoted on the cover of the paperback edition of Time Longer than a Rope; Leonard Barnes, on working class protest, Manchester Guardian, 25 September 1936; Eddie Roux on bus boycotts and resistance to pass laws - E. Roux Time Longer than a Rope: a history of the Black Man's struggle for Freedom in South Africa, London, 1948; Communist Party newspapers Umsebenzi and Inkululeko 1920s onwards; L. Barnes on working class protest in Manchester Guardian, 25 September 1936.

⁶⁶ Nasson, 'The Unity Movement' p. 205-6,209; Inkululeko, communist party in the 1920s.

⁶⁷ H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons Class and Colour in South Africa: 1850-1950, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969, p. 610; Bundy, 'An Image of its own Past?', p. 129.

contribution to socio-economic and class analysis of the South African past.⁶⁸

It is clear that Marxist concepts of class developed within the country well before 'revisionist historiography emerged'. The problem for the Marxist scholars of the early 1970s, however, was that the Simonses did not go far enough in their class analysis. Following, to some degree, an orthodox communist party line which emphasised national oppression, they reverted to almost liberal terms when they described the South African state as fascist since the late 1940s, and described how a 'white oligarchy which uses fascist techniques to enforce racial totalitarianism' and 'perpetuate pre-industrial social rigidities' acted as a fetter on 'the dynamic potential of a multi-racial labour force'.⁶⁹ To these scholars, race, in the form of racial fascism and national resistance remained a dominant concept. To Wolpe and Legassick, the work of Jack Simons and Ray Simons did not go far enough in locating 'the problem at the heart of capitalism. It exonerated capitalism from the whole issue and therefore wasn't an adequate critique of the liberal thesis'.⁷⁰

the revisionists' and class analysis

The revisionists of the early 1970s instituted a far more systematic class analysis, and in this sense the concept of a race/class debate in the early 1970s holds some ground. However, what needs to be discussed is whether or not the early revisionist work can be defined as clearly as Deborah Posel has done in terms of the race/class debate. According to Posel:

having situated their perspective within an "either-or" type of debate with liberal scholars, revisionists thus tended to limit

⁶⁸ M. Legassick, 'Review article: records of protest and challenge' in Journal of African History, 20, 1979, pp. 451-455.

⁶⁹ Simons and Simons, Class and Colour, p. 610; R.A. Deacon, 'Marxism and history: twenty years of South African marxist studies', unpublished M.A. thesis, History, University of Natal, Durban, 1988, p. 16.

⁷⁰ M. Morris, interview by G.K.Tatham, Durban, September, 1989, p. 2; H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid', Economy and Society, 1, 1972, pp. 428-9; R. Davies Capital, State and White Labour in South Africa, 1900-1960, Atlantic Highlands, NJ Humanities 1971, p. 37; H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and labour power in South Africa: from segregation to apartheid', Economy and Society, 1, 1972 pp.428-9.

their theoretical and methodological options to a choice of class over race as their primary variable.⁷¹

While agreeing in some respects with Posel, there are certain reservations. The early Marxist scholars were more ambiguous regarding the relationship of race to class than Posel's assessment. The labelling of all revisionist work into the class aspect of the debate tends to assume an homogeneity within revisionist circles that just was not there. As Murray pointed out, the revisionist work 'did not spring from a single source', it had 'heterodox origins' and as a result this work proved to be tremendously rich and diverse in nature, varying in its 'scope, methodology, approach and subject matter', and taking distinctive patterns in different areas of study.⁷² The view Posel holds has important implications for understanding the context within which materialist social history developed, for, if an absolutist stance regarding class is assumed on the part of the early Marxists, then many lines of continuity between these early Marxists and the later materialist social historians tend to be concealed.

The early Marxist scholars did emphasise a class analysis of the South African past. As students during the 1960s - a time of massive state repression coupled with rapid economic growth - they increasingly came to the conclusion that the liberal view of a beneficial capitalism was being contradicted and that 'no coherent and satisfactory analysis of South African society [was] available'.⁷³

Many of these scholars were studying in Europe and America in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They were influenced by student consciousness

⁷¹ D. Posel, 'Rethinking the race-class debate in South African historiography', in Social Dynamics 9, 1, 1983, p.52.

⁷² M. Murray, 'The Triumph', p. 81; Marks 'The historiography of South Africa', p. 166.

⁷³ Massive State repression was seen in the Sharpeville massacre, the ANC and PAC bannings and the implementation of homeland rule in the 1960s and 1970s; M. Legassick 'Legislation, ideology and economy in post-1948 South Africa', Journal of Southern African Studies 1,1, 1974; he recognized that South African economic growth since 1948 has proceeded apace - exceeded in the 1960s only by that of Japan, while the system of racial discrimination becomes more effective and pervasive; H. Wolpe, 'Class race and the occupational structure' in The Societies of Southern Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Volume 2, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1970-71, p. 98.

surrounding Vietnam, the 1968 May Days, as well as the widespread anti-Imperialist movement which was supported by local liberation movements.⁷⁴ They absorbed many of the ideas embedded in the revival of Marxism in Europe which was reflected in the Annales School, French Structuralist Marxism, British Marxist history, the American 'new' Left, and in the rising influence of individual scholars like Gramsci, Althusser, Poulantzas, together with scholars like Genovese (with his sophisticated analysis of race and class), Barrington-Moore and Wolf in America.⁷⁵

These influences made the revisionist scholars of South Africa critical of liberal analysis, and spurred on their enthusiasm for an economic and class analysis of the South African past. The Latin American underdevelopment theory, as well as the swing in Africanist work towards examining underlying economic processes (as an attempt to explain the continuing poverty of African states despite Independence) also pointed these scholars in the direction of economic and class analysis.⁷⁶

Frederick Johnstone (1970), Stanley Trapido (1971), Colin Bundy (1972), Harold Wolpe (1972) all emphasised class above race as the central determinant behind the course of events in South Africa.⁷⁷ Underlying structural processes, relations of production and conflict between classes became the key concepts for analysing South Africa's past. Capital accumulation was seen to be the main driving force of change in South African history. The collaborative nature of the relationship between capitalist development and the racial policies of the state was highlighted. In fact, the state was often seen as an instrument of the

⁷⁴ The leadership of the ANC in the late 1960s and early 1970s was to speak out about the greed and resultant disunity of Imperialist forces, Adelaide Tambo Preparing for Power: Oliver Tambo Speaks, London, 1987; also T. Lodge, 'Charters from the past: the African National Congress and its historiographical traditions', Radical History Review, 46/7, 1990.

⁷⁵ S. Marks, 'South African studies since World War Two', in C. Fyfe ed. African Studies since 1945, London: Longman, 1976. p.189

⁷⁶ Marks, *Ibid*, p. 189; Marks, *The historiography*, p. 167.

⁷⁷ F.A. Johnstone, Class Race and Gold: a Study of Class Relations and Racial Discrimination in South Africa, London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1976; S. Trapido, 'South Africa in a comparative study of industrialisation', Journal of Development Studies, 3, 1971; C. Bundy, 'The emergence and decline of a South African peasantry', African Affairs, 71, 1972.

capitalist class.⁷⁸ Legassick was among the first of these scholars to speak of this relationship. In a seminal study on the frontier, he suggested that racial repression took different forms in South Africa at different times; he argued that present day 'apartheid' should be explained not by reference to earlier racial attitudes but by the underlying economic forces and, in particular, the industrialization process within the country.⁷⁹ Wolpe was to suggest that 'segregation and apartheid ... are essentially products of the domination of capital in South Africa'.⁸⁰

These 'early statesmen' as they have been called, concentrated primarily on the role of the mining industry to make their point about the complicity of capital in establishing the racial system. Johnstone, for instance, argued that the capitalist economy was essentially coercive and exploitative, was governed by the needs of the mining industry for vast quantities of cheap labour, and was, thus, primarily responsible for creating the particularities of the racial system in South Africa. Capital was seen to conserve the elements of segregation that were instrumental to its logic of accumulating profit. Therefore, phenomena such as the colour bars (instituted between 1910 and 1926) which were called for by the white workers in the mining industry are not the result of the racial prejudice of those workers, but can be seen as an outcome of the mining capitalists' attempts to manipulate divisions among the workers in an effort to ensure that the majority of workers remained unskilled and heavily exploited. The white workers' call for the colour bars was seen as a response to the insecurities of their class position. Certain of the fundamental cornerstones of racial segregation, such as the formation of the 'reserves', the migrant labour system, the colour bars in industry, the

⁷⁸ Legassick, 'Legislation, Ideology', p. 14; L. Legassick, 'South African Forced Labour', industrialization and racial differentiation, in R. Harris, The political Economy of Africa, New York, Wiley, 1975; H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour', p.429.

⁷⁹ He based many of his insights on the new works on slavery in America; M. Legassick, 'The frontier tradition in South African historiography' in S. Marks and A. Atmore (eds.) Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa. London : 1980, p.50; M. Legassick, 'South Africa: Forced Labour', p.250; Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour', p.429.

⁸⁰ Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour': pp. 432, 434.

underdevelopment of the reserves and African farm lands, were shown to be not the result of racial backwardness on the part of Africans or racial prejudice on the part of whites, but were mainly caused by the incessant demands of the mining industry for cheap labour.⁸¹ As Wolpe proposed, the reserves served to subsidise the labour costs of the mining industry by providing 'a portion of the means of reproduction of the migrant labour force'. According to Johnstone, what the liberals did not recognise was that 'the massive experience of the mass of the people in modern South Africa, was the super-exploitation of black labour by a racially structured capitalism, and that this, rather than ethnic groups, political parties, constitutions and so on, should be a starting point of analysis'.⁸²

Wolpe went further than the other scholars by suggesting that the needs of capital and not racial prejudice were responsible for the system of segregation. His study of the reserves indicated that the Apartheid state, acting in the interests of capital, ensured that the reserves (pre-capitalist structures) were preserved, and that the supply of cheap labour continued despite the collapse of the labour reproducing function of the reserves that followed the decline of the pre-capitalist mode of production. In this sense, apartheid is not seen to be 'irrational' for capital - but strongly functional.⁸³ Apartheid was seen as the political expression of capitalist development in South Africa.

⁸¹ Marks, 'The historiography', p. 169; F. Johnstone, 'White prosperity and white supremacy in South Africa today', African Affairs, LXIX, 1970, 125-140; F. Johnstone, 'Class conflict and colour bars in the South African gold mining industry' in The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1971; M. Legassick, 'South Africa: Capital accumulation and violence,' Economy and Society, 3, 1974, pp. 253-91; S. Trapido, 'South Africa in a comparative study'; H. Wolpe, 'Industrialism and race in South Africa' in S. Zubaida ed. Race and Racialism, London: Tavistock 1969; H. Wolpe 'Capitalism and cheap labour', pp. 425-456.

⁸²F. Johnstone, 'Most painful'; F. Johnstone, Class, Race and Gold; See also A. Atmore and N. Westlake, 'A liberal dilemma: a critique of the Oxford History of South Africa', Race, 14, 1972, pp. 107-36.

⁸³H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and cheap labour', p.432; R. Deacon, 'Marxism and History', pp. 26,27; Johnstone, 'White prosperity and white supremacy'; Trapido, 'South Africa in a comparative study'; Bundy, 'The emergence and decline'.

the revisionists' ambiguity towards race analysis

It is easy when considering the central thrust of the work of the early statesmen, to categorise them as class analysts. Nevertheless, none of these scholars could really escape from the salient concept of race.

According to Deacon, 'in fact the concept of race retained a remarkable degree of autonomy upon the terrain of the early Marxist approach'.⁸⁴

Murray, too, noted that the early Marxists could not deny 'the salience of "rival nationalisms" in the evolution of South African social reality'.⁸⁵

A possible explanation for this is that their work is, to some degree, given its form and definition by its rejection of both the Afrikaner nationalist and the liberal paradigm. To some extent, therefore, even in its very rejection of that work, it remains, as Deacon noted, 'on the conceptual terrain and within the "problematic" of that analysis'.⁸⁶

These revisionist scholars were also influenced by contemporary liberation ideology which, certainly as far as the Black Consciousness movement and the ANC were concerned, placed the concept of Africanism and national racial oppression above the concept of class oppression.⁸⁷ The revisionist scholars were influenced by liberation ideology, as well as the phenomenon of national resistance which accompanied it. As Shula Marks noted of Legassick and Trapido (and these comments can refer to Marks, herself): 'They left room in their work for the resistance they experienced in the 1950s'.⁸⁸ Nasson commented that it is inevitable that contemporary

⁸⁴ Deacon, 'Marxism and History', p. 21.

⁸⁵ M.J. Murray, 'The triumph of marxist approaches in South African social and labour history' in Journal of Asian and African Studies, XXIII 1-2, 1988.

⁸⁶ Deacon, 'Marxism and history', p. 29; H. Wolpe, 'A Comment on the poverty of neo-marxism in Journal of Southern African Studies, 4,2, 1978; It was virtually impossible for them to disregard race altogether when so many previous writers had given so much emphasis to it - see P. Walsh's study of racial consciousness, The Rise of African Nationalism in SA, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1971.

⁸⁷ B. Nasson, 'The unity movement', p. 192. The 'two stage theory of revolution' which was called for by the ANC and SACP and which proposed a democratic national revolution first, followed by a socialist movement, also emphasized racial liberation before that of class. Halisi, 'Popular Struggle', p. 391; R. Deacon, 'Marxism and history', pp. 26,27.

⁸⁸ S. Marks, 1989. Interviewed by G. K. Tatham, Cape Town, July 1989.

political commentary and debate consciously spills over into historiography.⁸⁹ Thus, even though these scholars were primarily concerned with the concept of class, it was impossible for them to avoid considering the phenomenon of race in the form of national racial oppression and national racial resistance.

There was an element of uncertainty as to when the capitalist mode of production became dominant. These scholars took an historical perspective, seeing the change between modes of production as an historical process. As a result, they could not explain racial discrimination wholly in terms of the logic of capitalism: they made some reference either to earlier colonial relations of domination or, as Wolpe did, to the articulation of two different modes of production as a form of internal colonialism.⁹⁰

Capitalism, then, was not seen to create segregation. Rather, the racial conditions were already there, stemming from early colonial relations. Legassick, for instance, in his challenge to the frontier tradition in South African historiography, did not refute the relative autonomy of racial attitudes or the ideology of race. Mining capital was seen to capitalise on an already existing situation. Thus, Johnstone argued that the fact that 'non whiteness equalled rightlessness equalled powerlessness' stemmed from original colonial racial relations. Mining capital found an easy solution in these already existing racial conditions and exploited the powerlessness of Africans by paying cheap wages. It then attempted to entrench these conditions so that Africans remained politically and economically powerless. Thus, with past Colonial relations in mind, these scholars argued that class relations came to be defined by previous racial relations, so that 'the main contradiction in South Africa [came to be] the relation of production between the white capitalist class and the non-white working class'.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Nasson, 'The Unity movement', p.199.

⁹⁰ Marks, 'The historiography', p. 168.

⁹¹ Wolpe, 'Class, Race and the occupational structure', in The Societies of Southern Africa in the Centuries, vol. 2, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1970-71, p. 102.

Although it was recognised that class divisions were the most important determinant of group interests, it was acknowledged that these were defined to some extent by past racial relations. Johnstone, for instance, argued that 'capitalist class interests were not to be maximised with impunity, other white interests were to be safeguarded and secured; and in exchange for marginal constraints on their particular interests the different white classes could continue to reap the benefits deriving to them from their collective colonial domination over the non-white population'.⁹² The specific form of class relations were also seen to be 'defined by the content of Apartheid'.⁹³ Wolpe argued that:

the non-white sectors of other classes which operate within a different set of class relationships from the non-white working class may have their situation ordered in terms of Apartheid. This creates, within limits, an identity of interests between the non-white sectors of different classes.⁹⁴

These references to past colonial and racial relations of domination and resistance are relatively scarce, and are often mediated by such comments as: 'the interests of different classes within a particular racial group tend to become contradictory and the outcome at any time depends on the changing power situation'.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, the references to race reveal that the early Marxists had not managed to limit themselves wholly to a class analysis of South Africa's past.

Apart from the influence of local liberation philosophy and the salience of race within the liberal problematic, these scholars were also historians and, therefore, could not develop theory without a strong grounding in historical evidence. Race remained a phenomenon that could not be explained away in terms of class. Davenport, playing the role of the conciliatory liberal, suggests that the South African revisionists like Marks, Trapido and their students 'took advantage of Marxist research

⁹² Johnstone, 'Class conflict and colour bars', p. 120.

⁹³ Wolpe, 'Race, class', p. 102.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 103.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 103.

methods but do not seem to have been dominated by its ideology'.⁹⁶ Perhaps some, if not all, of these factors can serve to explain the early Marxist scholars' complex approach to the concepts of race and class. It will be shown that there is, in fact, strong continuity between their work and the Marxist social history which was to come later, both in their class and race analysis, as well as in their recognition of class and national struggles.

Understanding the History Workshop in terms of the structuralist/agency debate

Marxist social history in South Africa emerged within this revisionist paradigm. However, some scholars placed its emergence in terms of a structuralist/agency debate taking place within the revisionist paradigm in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Murray described Marxist scholarship in South Africa as being divided into two distinct poles: the 'structuralists' 'influenced by Althusser, Poulantzas and Balibar', and the 'social historians' influenced by 'E.P. Thompson, George Rude, and Eric Hobsbawm'.⁹⁷ He outlined the changes involved:

Imperceptibly at first, the focus of social and labour studies in South Africa shifted away from broad-based structuralist accounts set within South African political economy to historically specific topics and subject matter' in which even the 'selection of source materials changed in tandem from official commissions of inquiry and governmental documentary sources to primary archival materials and oral histories'.⁹⁸

Belinda Bozzoli, too, depicted the rise of Marxist social history as a reaction to structuralist analysis which was seen to 'bludgeon South

⁹⁶ T.R.H. Davenport, 'Radical revisionist (Marxist -Neo Marxist historiography', Inaugural Lecture, University of Rhodes 1977, pp. 3, 8; Prof. J. Benyon; a revision by Prof. Davenport of the Neo Marxist section of the report "Tussengroep verhoudinge soos weerspieel in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie'.

⁹⁷ Murray, 'The triumph', p. 79.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

African reality into conformity with an imported model' and was guilty of 'theoreticism, structuralism and catechism'.⁹⁹

What becomes increasingly obvious is that many scholars describe historiographical developments in South Africa in terms of the historiographical developments of the British Marxist debate, what has been termed the 'structuralist/ culturalist' debate, without regard to the 'uniqueness and specificity' of what has happened in South Africa. It appears that as far as describing historiographical developments, South African reality has been 'bludgeoned into conformity with an imported model'.¹⁰⁰

the British Marxist historiographical debate and its implications for understanding South African historiography

Doubtless there are many similarities between what happened in Britain and what happened in South Africa. It is necessary, therefore, to undertake a short diversion into the British Marxist historiographical debate to establish its implications within the South African context.

The debate began in the 1950s and underwent a re-awakening in the mid-1970s. The British Marxist historians were represented by scholars like E.P. Thompson, Hilton, Hill, Hobsbawn; those British Marxist scholars strongly taken with, although holding certain reservations about, French Structuralist Marxism and Althusserian thought were represented by scholars such as Hindess, Hirst and Richard Johnson.¹⁰¹ The debate came to resemble an acrimonious divorce, and it was easy to categorise the scholars into two distinct poles instead of recognising that neither side was very united and, in fact, that there were scholars who changed sides or who vacillated between both types of analysis.

⁹⁹ Bozzoli, 'Challenging Local Orthodoxies', Social Dynamics, 6,2,1981. p. 54.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁰¹ The debate was played out in New Left Review in the History Workshop Journal 1979, and in books like Thompson The Poverty of Theory and Anderson, Arguments within English Marxism.

Certainly, because the debate represented two different disciplines (philosophy/sociology and history), and these, in turn, followed different epistemological approaches, there were strong similarities with the South African historiographical situation. The second generation Marxists of South Africa (those who were termed 'structuralists'), Morris, Williams, Kaplan, Davies, O'Meara, generally, were not historians but followed in the disciplines of sociology and political science.¹⁰² They, like the British structuralists, were to place the greatest emphasis on theoretical practice. In fact, they were fairly hostile to history as a method of inquiry and, in particular, the associated method of induction (the framing of the enquiry and drawing of evidence in terms of the facts available). They believed, like the British structuralists that 'facts are never given, they are always produced'.¹⁰³ Instead, they advocated that knowledge could only really be achieved via the creation of theoretical propositions which are developed essentially through deductive reasoning. Theory was, therefore, used to define the area of study, to set the boundaries of empirical enquiry and to subject explanatory concepts to the test. To some degree, theories could be defined and self validated without any reference whatsoever to empirical evidence.

the South African structuralists

The South African structuralists, like the British structuralists, conceptualised the historical process theoretically and describe economic relations independently of the way they were experienced or perceived by ordinary people. Concepts, such as mode of production and class, were seen as structures which existed by definition. The mode of production was seen to define the position of classes. Class struggle was recognised as being central to the reproduction of relations of production. However, class struggle was seen to occur 'within the processes of production and

¹⁰² Morris, interview, September 1989.

¹⁰³ Anderson, Arguments within English Marxism, Verso, 1980, p. 7; E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory, p. 218; although the term 'structuralism' is useful, it is at the same time deceptive and has been rejected by Althusserians.

circulation'. It existed within the mode of production and was subject to the mode of production.¹⁰⁴ Thus, class struggle was seen not as the 'causal prius' of reproduction or change, rather it was seen that:

in both reproduction and transformation - maintenance and subversion - of a social order, mode of production and class struggle are always at work. But the second must be activated by the first for it to achieve its determinate effects, which on either ground will find their maximum point of concentration in the political structure of the state.¹⁰⁵

Like Althusser and, more particularly, Poulantzas, these scholars were pre-occupied with the structures of domination and, in particular, with the powers of the state and its influence in reproducing a social formation.

Thus, on a theoretical level, the South African 'structuralists' could insist that capitalism became the dominant mode of production at a very clear-cut time - as early as the creation of the mining industry. Theoretically, they could also insist that the capitalist mode of production determined completely the relationship between the two modes of production, proposing that capitalism, in fact, destroyed the pre-capitalist mode of production and replaced it with a 'travesty' which existed only for the benefit of capitalism.^{106a} Having established the dominance of the capitalist mode of production, it was natural to assume that all struggle was within that mode, in the relations of production. The concept of colonial/racial domination, therefore, could be erased and race became subsumed to class.¹⁰⁷ Apartheid could then be explained only in terms of the inner logic of the capitalist mode of production and the state's response to that logic, and, particularly, to the logic of whichever fraction of capital gained hegemony at any particular time. Thus,

¹⁰⁴ Althusser, L., Essays in Self Criticism, London: NLB, 1976, p. 50.

¹⁰⁵ p. Anderson, Arguments within English Marxism, London: Verso, 1980, pp. 55,56.

¹⁰⁶ Williams, 'An analysis of South African capitalism - Neo Ricardianism or Marxism?' Bulletin of the Conference of Socialist Economists, 4, 1, 1975, p. 31; R. Deacon, 'Marxism and History', p. 33.

¹⁰⁷ Thus the Liberation theory of two stages of revolution was discarded by these scholars in favour of socialist struggle as the means of overcoming Apartheid.

segregation, in the form of the reserves, was explained purely in terms of their labour reproductive function for the mining industry.¹⁰⁸ Influx controls were the response of the state to the particular needs of the newly dominant manufacturing sector of capital after 1945.¹⁰⁹ To the South African 'structuralists', racial laws and changes to them over the years were explained in terms of: a dominance of foreign (mining) capital in the early 1900s; the seizure of hegemony by national capital (manufacturing or agriculture) in alliance with the white workers in 1924 (this alliance explained the statutory protection of white labour); the loss of agricultural capital's hegemony in 1939; and the victory of an alliance of white labour, agriculture and the petty bourgeoisie in the National Party victory of 1948.¹¹⁰ Even Legassick and Wolpe followed suite by showing Apartheid to be the result of attempts by the state to control and manage the industrial reserve army, which they understood to be generated, largely, by the rising, organic composition of capital.¹¹¹ Thus, Apartheid was seen to be more than just functional to capital; and its very existence was related to the demands of capital accumulation and the effects of state policy in that regard.

These structuralist scholars paid very little attention to class struggle. Like Poulantzas, their work tended to be politicist, concentrating more on the effects of the rise to hegemony of different fractions of capital, state policy and state interventions.¹¹² Class struggle in the form of struggle between capital and labour hardly featured

¹⁰⁸ M. Morris, 'Capitalism and apartheid: a critique of some current conceptions of cheap labour-power'. In T. Adler, ed. Perspectives on South Africa : A collection of working papers, Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, 1977. pp.59-61; M. Williams, 'An Analysis'.

¹⁰⁹ M. Morris, 'Capitalism and Apartheid', p. 73.

¹¹⁰ R. Davies, D. Kaplan, M. Morris, D.O'Meara, 'Class struggle, and the periodisation of the state in South Africa', Review of African Political Economy, 29, 1984.

¹¹¹ Deacon, 'Marxism and History', p. 33.

¹¹² Davies et al. 'Class struggle'.

in their analysis.¹¹³ Although they recognised class struggle and espoused the view of a socialist revolution, nevertheless, like the British theorists, they believe that changes could really be initiated only by changes in the mode of production, itself: for example, changes in the mechanisms of capital accumulation or the contradictions of capital bringing about an economic crisis.¹¹⁴ In fact, agency, intention and human will were seen to play very little part in the social process. People were seen, merely, to be the 'bearers' of the relations of production, the victims of structural processes. History was portrayed in their works as 'a process without subject'.¹¹⁵ Shula Marks noted of the South African structuralists view of the black dominated classes: they 'were as much dominated in the structuralist texts as their authors saw them in reality'.¹¹⁶ Their work displayed a tendency to 'revert to functionalism, to lose sight of the complexities of social formations, to display mechanical notions of the workings of society and to become pre-occupied with the concept of conspiratorial manipulation and control by the state'.¹¹⁷

the Wits History Workshop and the British marxist social historians

The Marxist social historians in South Africa on the other hand, consciously followed a different political epistemological and theoretical approach. This approach was represented by the Wits History Workshop. Knowledge of the theoretical implications and issues emerging from the

¹¹³ D. Innes and M. Plaut, 'Class struggle and economic development in South Africa: The inter-war years'. In The Societies of Southern Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, vol. 9, 1979, p. 51; R. Johnson also used the term 'humanism'; R. Williams Marxism and Literature, Oxford, O.U.P.1977, p. 123.

¹¹⁴ Anderson, Arguments, p. 191.

¹¹⁵ Althusser, Politics and History : Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hegel and Marx, 2nd ed. London: N.L.B. 1972, p. 183; Althusser, Reading Capital, translated by Ben Brewster. London: Verso, 1979, pp. 112, 252; K. McClelland, 'Some comments on Richard Johnson, Edward Thompson, Eugene Gerovese, and socialist-humanist history', History Workshop 7, 1979, p.110

¹¹⁶ . Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa : Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal, Johannesburg :Ravan Press, 1986.

¹¹⁷ Johnson, 'Critique of Edward Thompson', p.96.

British Marxist debate are useful for understanding the development and direction taken by Marxist social history within South Africa. The driving interest in 'history from below' and in the experiences of ordinary people was a central feature of British Marxist social history.¹¹⁸ The majority of these scholars were historians whose epistemology was governed by their interest in experience, leading, inevitably, to a 'listening' approach to historical evidence.¹¹⁹ According to Thompson, such an approach means that the scholar assumes:

that the evidence which he handles has a "real" determinant existence (independent of its existence within the forms of thought), that this evidence is witness to a real historical process and this process (or some approximate understanding of it) is the object of historical knowledge.¹²⁰

The 'listening' approach demanded of its own methods of enquiry which advocated a wariness of theory and its tendency to ignore historical specificity. Such an approach called instead for a dialogue between evidence and theory in which historical conceptualisations are to be regarded as 'expectations rather than rules' to be tested and reconstructed by historical evidence.¹²¹ As Thompson remarks, without the listening approach the historian 'must sit in a waiting room outside the philosophy department all his life'.¹²²

The emphasis on human agency, lived experience and consciousness reflected an assumption that 'men are active and conscious makers of history, not merely its passive victims and indices'.¹²³ The British Marxist historians, thus, allowed for both agency as well as structure in

¹¹⁸ H.J. Kaye, The British Marxist Historians: an Introductory Analysis, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1984, pp. 209-215; E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory and other essays, London: Merlin Press, 1978. pp. 280-281.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Edward Thompson in RHR, 1976, p. 15; Gregor McLennon, "Ideology and consciousness; some problems in marxist historiography", CCS Stencilled Occasional Paper No. 45, 1976, in R. Johnson in History Workshop Journal, 6, 1978.

¹²⁰ Thompson, The Poverty. pp. 28-9.

¹²¹ Ibid. pp. 237, 248, 249; H.J. Kaye, The British Marxist Historians, p. 113.

¹²² Thompson, The Poverty, pp. 28-9.

¹²³ Editorial introduction, Past and Present, 1 February, 1952, p. 1.

the historical process. This is translated into their view of productive relations in which these relations were seen to be more than economic: the economic is seen as the 'special ether which defines the specific gravity of everything found in it'; and, at their source, the social and cultural were seen to be immersed as 'constituents of the productive relations themselves'.¹²⁴ In their observation of the relations of production in its 'totality' as 'social relations', these historians considered political and cultural forms and relations (such as, social and cultural organisation, forms of coercion, and property relations) as being of equal importance to the economic relations in composing and structuring the relations of production.¹²⁵ Linked to this idea, was the concept of culture and ideology having a certain independence of their own, and not being purely functional for capital or for the dominant group. These ideas were translated into the concept of hegemony as was understood by Gramsci as 'not a stage reached but an arena of struggle which is constantly being redefined'.¹²⁶ Thus, the making of class was seen to involve:

a situation which contained both subjective experiences and objective determinations as people experience their determinate situations within the "ensemble of the social relations" with inherited culture and expectations, and [how?] they handle those experiences in cultural ways.¹²⁷

In this way, economic reductionism was avoided where people were shown to be 'the ever baffled, ever resurgent agents of unmastered history' ... 'part subjects, part objects, the voluntary agents of our own involuntary determinations'.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Thompson, 'The peculiarities', pp. 291, 294; E. Wood, 'The separation of the economic and the political in capitalism,' New Left Review, 127, May-June 1981, pp. 77-80; E.P. Thompson, 'Eighteenth Century English Society: Class struggle without class?' Social History, 3, May, 1978, pp. 149-150.

¹²⁵ Thompson, 'The Peculiarities', pp. 291-294.

¹²⁶ Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p. 22; James Joll, Gramsci, Glasgow: Fontana, 1977, p. 85; A. Gramsci, Prison Notebooks, p. 407.

¹²⁷ Thompson, 'Eighteenth Century English Society' pp. 149-50; McClelland, 'Some comments', p.112.

¹²⁸ Thompson, The Poverty, p. 280.

The above ideas were translated into the British Marxist historians' 'class struggle analysis'. Instead of seeing classes and class struggle activated, simply, by the mode of production, and that mode developing despite class struggle, these historians saw class struggle as integral to the historical process, itself. Experience, consciousness and agency were central to that process. Thus,

people find themselves in a society structured in determined ways (crucially but not exclusively, in productive relations); they experience exploitation (or the need to maintain power over those whom they exploit); they identify points of antagonistic interest; they commence to struggle around these issues and in the process of struggling they discover themselves as classes. They come to know this discovery as class consciousness.¹²⁹

In this sense, class is 'present at its own making' and that making is an active process 'which owes as much to agency as to conditioning'.¹³⁰ The result of class struggle is seen to have the potential for 'the consequent restructuring of relations of power, forms of domination and of social organisation'.¹³¹ In this sense, a mode of production is seen to work through class struggle. The British Marxist historians could be seen to be describing a concrete historical process instead of an abstract conception of mode of production, and their emphasis on experience, therefore, accounts for the difference. Thompson proposed that 'experience' was the missing link. He noted, 'it is through experience that structure is transmuted into process'.¹³²

In attempting to describe 'the real historical process', these scholars recognised that class did not always develop in ways which, theoretically, may be proper. Thompson, for instance, rejected the concept that class could exist only when industrialisation had taken place. He argued that an historian who was sensitive to evidence could find that class experience existed even where class consciousness and, hence, class

¹²⁹ Thompson, 'Eighteenth Century', p. 151.

¹³⁰ Thompson, The Making, p. 9.

¹³¹ E.P. Thompson, 'Folklore, anthropology and social history', Indian Historical Review, 3, January 1977, pp. 247-266.

¹³² Thompson, The Poverty, p. 362.

was not directly present; and that class struggle could influence the historical process even before classes were fully formed. In other words, 'class and class consciousness are always the last not the first stage in the real historical process'.¹³³

The British Marxist debate developed into a mud-slinging match in which the 'historians' accused the 'theorists' of working within a 'self-generating conceptual universe which imposes its own reality upon the phenomena of material and social existence';¹³⁴ of 'banishing humanism from Marxism altogether';¹³⁵ of reductionism and economic determinism;¹³⁶ and of reducing the concepts of mode of production and class to 'transfixed', 'dehistoricised', 'inelastic' categories.¹³⁷ The 'structuralists' accused the 'historians', in turn, of becoming pre-occupied with culture, experience and consciousness, and suppressing analysis which used mode of production and productive relations as concepts;¹³⁸ of revealing class purely as a relationship of exploitation between people, a 'collective intersubjective relationship' - and not showing class relations as embedded in economic relations;¹³⁹ of abandoning the ground of 'determinations' in favour of a 'simple dialectic between suffering and resistance, whose whole movement is internal to the subjectivity of the class'.¹⁴⁰ Both sides tended to simplify the opposing side's politics, epistemology and theoretical approach and ignored the wide

¹³³ Thompson, 'Eighteenth Century', p. 151.

¹³⁴ Thompson, The Poverty, p. 13; R. Johnson, 'Critique of Edward Thompson', p. 85.

¹³⁵ R. Williams, Marxism and Literature, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 123.

¹³⁶ Johnson believed that the critics actually mistook Althusserianism for what was in fact the 'old mutual enemy economism', Johnson, 'Critique of Edward Thompson', p. 83.

¹³⁷ Thompson, The Poverty, p. 242.

¹³⁸ B. Hindess and P. Hirst, Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, p. 148; R. Johnson, 'Critique', pp. 79-81.

¹³⁹ Anderson, Arguments, p.33,34,39,82; Johnson, 'Critique of Edward Thompson', p. 98.

¹⁴⁰ Johnson, 'Critique of Edward Thompson', p. 89.

variety of complementary work within each camp, as the work of those scholars who vacillated between sides. The British Marxist debate never reached a satisfactory conclusion and has been described as 'a pathological divorce ... between those who analyse particular situations (historians ...) and those concerned to develop theory'.¹⁴¹

This debate was transposed on to South African soil by scholars who recognised the similarities in the issues of debate. Thus, Bozzoli wrote of 'the strong hold over radical scholarship in this country of an Althusserian and/or structuralist method of analysis' with its 'anti-historical bias', subordinating history to the 'rigorous demands of theoretical concepts of considerable complexity', emphasizing 'theoretical rather than historical work'. She depicted two types of approach, that which 'focuses on the lives of ordinary people', as opposed to that which focuses on abstracted structures and concepts.¹⁴² Murray, in turn, embraced the proportions of the British Marxist debate when he criticised the South African Marxist social historians for attempting to distance themselves from the 'structuralist' paradigm and, in the process, overemphasizing 'the unique, the unusual, and the forgotten', 'anointing "experience" and "culture" with undeserved theoretical privilege bordering on conceptual autonomy while simultaneously down-playing the structural context within which popular struggles have taken place'.¹⁴³

South African historiography - decolonised

However, a problem with implying a comparison between the British Marxist debate and the apparent tensions between some Marxist social historians and structuralists in South Africa was, that all the facets of the British debate were assumed to be the same for the South African situation. The grounds on which this is argued are: firstly, the strength of the South

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁴² Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', pp. 3,4.

¹⁴³ Murray, 'The triumph of marxist approaches', p.88.

African structuralist school was assumed;¹⁴⁴ secondly, the division into two extreme poles became automatic; thirdly, the epistemology and theoretical approaches of the opposing ideas were automatically simplified; fourthly, the blurring between the divergent approaches was ignored; and fifthly, the debt owed by Marxist social historians to structuralist Marxist analysis was not acknowledged. Further, developments within South African historiography were automatically connected with overseas developments, while, in the main, the local context was ignored. Some of these points will be considered in greater detail.

The first point which concerns the fact that the local context was ignored is supported by Bozzoli's assumption that structuralist work was an overseas transplant, which she termed 'Althusserian'. Because of Bozzoli's concentration on international trends of thought, she assumed that structuralist work 'arrived and implanted itself in what was virtually virgin territory in the mid 1970s' achieving 'a remarkable and continuing hold over the thinking of many'.¹⁴⁵ This point of view exaggerates the impact of structuralist thought within the country and ignores the work generated within the country, itself. A consequence of suggesting that structuralist was 'colonised' work and consisted of 'concepts' being 'applied' and becoming 'implanted' in the country, is that conquest and illegitimacy were implied; and the debt which Marxist social historians owed to structuralist thought for an understanding of South Africa's past became concealed in the general dismissal of their work. The development of South African Marxist social history is portrayed in terms of its antagonism to structuralism and is seen in these polemical either/or terms. These views have important implications for understanding the context in which South African Marxist social history developed.

Murray's view of 'two distinct poles' being formed within Marxist historiography in the late 1970s, together with Bozzoli's proposal that the intellectual transition occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s (owing

¹⁴⁴ Structuralism was growing in strength in the 1970s in Britain; K. McClelland 'Some comments on Richard Johnson', p. 102.

¹⁴⁵ Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p.3.

much of its impetus to the British History Workshop and the subsequent emergence of the Witwatersrand History Workshop) gave the impression that very little local direction was given to social history before that time. This assumption ignored the many works which dealt with agency and experience before that time, from early black writers who were not writing within the Marxist framework. These writers were Molema, Soga, Kadalie and Plaatje, as well as Dhlomo who described the experiences and resistance of Africans to segregation; later studies by Mbeki on the Peasants Revolt in the Transkei, and other ANC works by Mattera, Can Themba, Essop Patel and Miriam Tlali described working experiences; and the labour studies of the 1970s utilised oral testimony and primary archival research, considered agency, and looked into particular strikes and labour struggles, and attempted to grapple with the concepts of spontaneous worker uprisings versus organised trade union activity.¹⁴⁶ These studies paved the way and set the tone for the development of Marxist social history. The existence of these studies supported the argument that the Wits History Workshop was not the initiator of the Marxist social history movement, but should be seen rather in the light of promoter of research already in process.

¹⁴⁶M. Murray, 'The Triumph', p. 95; E. Webster, Essays in Southern African Labour History, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1978. T. Plaatje Mhudi, Lovedale: 1930; H.I.E. Dhlomo, Collected Works, edited by Nick Visser and Tim Copuzens, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1985; A. Luthuli, Let my People Go: an autobiography, University of Natal: Johannesburg: Collins, 1962; D.D.T. Jabavu, The Black Problem: papers and addresses on various native problems. Lovedale, Cape: Book Department, [1920], preface; C. Saunders, The Making, p. 110; Sol T. Plaatje Native Life in South Africa before and since the European War and the Boer Rebellion, London: P. S. King & Son n.d.; Although many of these works were written in the Christian Liberal humanist tradition and were restricted by their Eurocentric sources, nevertheless, these give insight into experiences of segregation and agency; Post-1940s Don Mattera, Memory is the Weapon, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987; Can Themba, The Will to Die. Cape Town, Heinemann, 1972; Essop Patel, ed. The World of Nat Nakasa. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1975; Miriam Tlali, Muriel at Metropolitan. Johannesburg: Longman, 1979; Naboth Mokgatle, Autobiography of an unknown South African, University of Natal: London: Hurst, 1971; Govan Mbeki, The Peasants Revolt, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, p. 284; Mbeki was influenced by Eddie Roux to think along Marxist lines (R. First Preface in Govan Mbeki SA; The Peasants Revolt. Harmondsworth, 1964, p. 12; Note Lodge on the limitations of the ANC intellectual tradition in describing resistance to agency: 'too frequently ... it has been employed to explain the history of organisations not people and of institutional alliances rather than social relationships'. (Lodge RHR, p. 184) T. Lodge, 'Charters from the Past: the African National Congress and its historiographical traditions' in Radical History Review, 46/7, 1990.

impact of structuralist thought in South Africa

What also tended to be ignored in the concept of a structuralist/social history polemic, was the continuing impact of liberal thought and criticism within the country which formed a strong testing ground for the epistemological approach of the 'structuralist' writers. Kallaway noted that Phyllis Lewson knew her subject well, as Morris found to his disadvantage when he delivered a paper to the Wits African Studies seminar and faced the challenges posed by Lewson.¹⁴⁷ The liberal views of epistemology which challenged the 'fitting of facts to the paradigm' and pointed to the 'intolerance of awkward realities that it breeds, as well as their insistence that 'the information which the discipline yields [is] too haphazard, too subjective, too tentative to be applied in the manner of scientific findings', posed a strong challenge to structuralism and, to some degree, influenced the development of Marxist social history within the country.¹⁴⁸

The existence of these local studies and local challenges meant that structuralist thought did not gain as dominant a hold within the country, as Bozzoli suggested. Structuralist thought gained the foothold that it did within the country because it was so relevant to contemporary South African concerns and not because it was an import into virgin soil. The scholars Morris, Kaplan, Davies and O'Meara's investigations in the mid 1970s, of the functions of the state were of importance to the Unions which were attempting to gain recognition and faced the constant threat of government interference in labour issues.¹⁴⁹ However the work of these structuralists came into immediate dialogue with the labour histories that were being produced within the country. Adler wrote of the effects of this dialogue on the Poulantzians:

¹⁴⁷ Kallaway, interview, June 1990.

¹⁴⁸ C. Webb, 'History in a Time of Crisis'. Inaugural Lecture, University of Cape Town, 1977, p.7; M. Lipton 'The Debate about South Africa', African Affairs, Vol. 78, 1979, p. 73; R. Elphick, 'Methodology in South African Historiography: A Defence of Idealism and Empiricism' (Seminar Paper, Univ. of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, p. 25.

¹⁴⁹ Webster, 'Ten years of the South African Labour Bulletin' p.xiii.

As some authors note in the introduction to their papers, their conclusions are tentative and, having been written some time ago, have already changed. This is indicative of the fluid and critical nature of the exchange which has yielded valuable new insights into the South African social formation.¹⁵⁰

The Poulantzian work formed part of the exchange and dialogue happening in South African studies in the mid 1970s. Marks referred to the elasticity of the academic world:

there were all sorts of different intellectual traditions which people made use of, and which were identified in some sense with Marxism. It depended what resonated with the particular problem you were trying to engage with.¹⁵¹

The Poulantzian works were by no means static constructs. They responded and changed in the process of debate and this became obvious in the turbulent debates amongst scholars attending the African Studies seminars at Wits in the mid 1970s.¹⁵² With this in mind, it can be argued that the development of a 'radical historical tradition' was not stifled by structuralist work implanting itself in 'virgin' territory but was an outgrowth of the dialogue and exchange between academics within the country.

In fact, there were very few scholars who took as extreme a stance as Bozzoli in her rejection of structuralism. She collapsed structuralism as epistemology and structuralism as analysis and in consequence condemned structuralism outright. However, much of the work written in the late 1970s, as is particularly obvious in the papers presented to the first History Workshop, managed 'to take the valuable elements of each tradition in a new and coherent combination which is

¹⁵⁰ Adler, 'Introduction' in Adler, Perspectives on South Africa.

¹⁵¹ S. Marks 'Marxism, liberalism and structuralism - a round table discussion', p.17; Bundy commented in the same discussion that academics should not be painted into a corner 'suggesting that there are big bad structuralists. As soon as we start talking about specific pieces of work we find that, for example, Dan O'Meara's piece on the 1946 strike is indeed sensitive to a whole range of dimensions. Morris' piece on capitalist agriculture, although it makes sweeping kinds of generalisations, does try to get down to working from a range of sorts of evidence, and examine class struggle'. C. Bundy interviewed in 'Marxism, liberalism', p.14.

¹⁵² Kallaway, interview, June 1990.

appropriate to our politics and our times'.¹⁵³ These works took account of the structures in society, the structures and the relations of production and the determinations of the economy, while, at the same time, attempting to avoid the traps of structuralism by drawing in the concepts of agency and experience.

The division into two poles concealed the structuralists contribution to the understanding of South African reality. The structuralists emphasised the understanding of events in terms of the relations of production. They destroyed the view of capital and of the state as monolithic entities.¹⁵⁴ They described the 'outer parameters' that guide what is subjective. As Lonsdale pointed out, 'Marxist structuralism, rightly understood, shows the limits within which political competition could ignore or manipulate necessity, not that politics was a function of economic structure'.¹⁵⁵ These scholars actually served to point the way to the studies of conquest, land alienation, struggle and resistance through their belief that capitalism could develop only when the producers operating within the pre-capitalist mode of production 'had been robbed of all their own means of production'.¹⁵⁶

structure or experience

The development of Marxist social history, therefore, cannot be depicted simply in terms of the concept of an either/or polemic, according to which we are forced to 'choose a sociology of structure or a sociology of struggle; become enmeshed in the machinery of 'function' or minimise conditions in favour of human praxis; construct logical and empty

¹⁵³ Johnson, 'Against Absolutism,' p.389.

¹⁵⁴ Davies et al. 'Class struggle and the periodisation of the state'.

¹⁵⁵ J. Lonsdale, 'South African historiography as seen from England' Social Dynamics, 9,1, 1983, p. 64; R. Johnson, 'Critique: Edward Thompson, Eugene Genovese, and Socialist-Humanist History', History Workshop Journal, 6, 1978, p.92.

¹⁵⁶ K. Marx, Capital, Ch. 26 'The secret of primitive accumulation' in K. Marx, Capital : a critique of political economy, Penguin, 1976. p.875; R. Johnson, 'Against Absolutism', p.389.

categories or fall back on the familiar method of hypothesis and "fact". As Wells noted: 'No-one says "but that is not quite the choice"'.¹⁵⁷

In reality, historical research in South Africa does not fit easily into absolutist categories. There were works within the country which were not Poulantzian but which concentrated on structures and the leverage exerted by the dominant group - such as Bozzoli's study of the English dominant class.¹⁵⁸ There was a parallel current of research into pre-industrial societies (or, rather, societies in transition) in South Africa which was strongly committed to historical materialism and which combined analysis in terms of broader, structural issues with an emphasis on conflict and process, experience and agency.¹⁵⁹ There were the local labour studies which ranged broadly in approach and subject matter. And even within those works that could be categorised 'structuralist' and 'social history', there was a broad range of approaches. Many works within Marxist social history have been shown to take account of both structure as well as agency. As Marks and Rathbone pointed out, the 'new' work represented a development out of, as opposed to a casting off, of structuralist insights. Freund noted in 1984, the 'reconstruction of an 'alternative' history is far from stably settled into a new paradigm' and, as a result, reflected great diversity.¹⁶⁰ Much of the 'new' work presented to the History Workshops owed a reasonably strong debt to 'structuralist' ideas. The contribution of structuralist thought to these works cannot be dismissed. As Shula Marks commented, 'to write a social

¹⁵⁷ J. Wells, 'Social history in South Africa: a review of some theoretical issues', BA Hons dissertation, UCT, 1985.

¹⁵⁸ B. Bozzoli, The Political Nature of a Ruling Class: Capital and Ideology in South Africa 1890-1933, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981; O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme.

¹⁵⁹ J. Guy, The destruction of the Zulu Kingdom : the civil war in Zululand, 1879-1884, London: Longman, 1979; P. Bonner, Kings, commoners and concessionaires: the evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth century Swazi state, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P. 1982; J. Peires, The house of Phalo : a history of the Xhosa people in the days of their independence, Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1981; W. Beinart, The political economy of Pondoland, 1860-1930, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1982; Marks, 'The historiography', p.171; Much of this research was conducted in the mid to late 1970s, although only published in the 1980s.

¹⁶⁰ B. Freund, 'Review of ISC' in R.A.P.E., 29, 1984, p. 29.

history without an analysis of these determinants ['the structure of the white state', 'the crucial power of international capital and settler agencies in the control of black destiny in South Africa'] is to imagine you can have flowers without roots or trunk'.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless large gaps existed in Poulantzian work as regards people's experience, consciousness and struggles. The History Workshop papers were to compensate for those gaps.

CONCLUSION

In contextualising the Marxist social history approach encouraged by the Witwatersrand History Workshop, we learn a great deal about the political and social context which gave rise to it, as well as the many different strands of thought that fed into its development. An attempt has been made to move away from an Eurocentric perspective which is so clear in much historiographical work. While recognising the strong links between the approach of the Witwatersrand History Workshop and that of the British Marxist historians and, particularly, the Ruskin History Workshop, an argument can be made that a pre-occupation with these connections tends to conceal the very real and immediate impact of pressures within South Africa. These pressures made a reconceptualisation of South Africa's history essential and ensured that the concepts so familiar to the British Marxist historians found fertile soil in South Africa.

The development of Marxist social history, too, demands to be set within its context of local historiographical traditions. By escaping from the extremely limiting categories of the race/class debate and the structuralist/social history poles (which, although useful for understanding South African historiography in a very general sense, tend to cover over the diversity of approaches and changes within traditions), an attempt has been made to draw out the many, diverse currents which contribute to the development of Marxist social history. These currents ranged from the

¹⁶¹ Marks, 'The historiography', p. 170.

early, rather limited, materialist analyses and rich empirical work of the liberal scholars Macmillan and de Kiewiet; the insights of an afrikaner historians P.J. van der Merwe; the experience and resistance studies of early black writers like Plaatje; the class analysis and resistance studies of local activists, such as Taylor, Jaffe and the Simonses; through to the complex race/class analyses of the revisionists of the early 1970s; the structural studies of what are termed the 'second generation Marxists'; and the local 1970s labour studies into living conditions and worker experiences. Although there is strong evidence of the impact of British Marxist historical thought, and the clarity of the context of the 1970s as race/class and the later structuralist/social history debate seem to justify the explanation of the rise of Marxist social history in terms of these phenomena, in Wolpe's words, (in another context) 'this is an instance where the very obviousness is that which stands in one's way'. That interpretation certainly hinders a fuller, more meaningful consideration of the wider theoretical and historical discourse feeding into Marxist social history in South Africa which, in turn, gives a better understanding of the inner nuances, shades and levels within that history.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Wolpe, 'Class, race', pp.99,100.

CHAPTER THREE
THE HISTORY WORKSHOP, STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE
IN THE MAKING OF HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

The papers that were presented to the History Workshop over the years built on previous interpretations of the South African past and at the same time provided new insights and explanations of the processes of South African history. The view from below embraced the history of ordinary people and, within certain structural constraints, saw them as the makers of history. This view incorporated local and regional history and empirical detail. It gave a more refined and nuanced understanding of broad processes, categories and concepts in South African history. As Bozzoli noted: 'By confronting experience the analyst finds his or her notions of what constitutes the relevant or appropriate set of abstractions and generalisations to be substantially challenged'.¹ The studies on labour, urban, and rural history which were presented to the History Workshop added new dimensions to our understanding of such broad concepts as 'class', 'mode of production', 'race', 'the state' and 'hegemony'.

A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF CLASS

The underlying concern of the majority of the History Workshop papers was with the effects of the penetration of capital and the effects of capitalism and industrialisation on economic, political and cultural spheres. A consideration of 'class' was central to these interests. 'The emphasis on class, class-as-relation and classes in struggle' reflected the Marxist orientation of the papers.²

¹ Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p.17

² Johnson, 'Critique Edward Thompson', p.86.

The papers which were presented to the History Workshop in 1978 displayed a stronger interest in the structural and economic features of classes than was the case in later years. However, it was evident that some papers suggested that there was more to a three-tiered class structure and a purely economic identification of classes. Bozzoli noted of the seminar discussions at that first History Workshop:

Time and again it emerged in discussion that the economic identification of classes is not the last word but merely the first, and that it is the political, social, cultural and ideological character of classes that renders them real and recognisable social categories.³

However, the economic identification of classes in the 1978 papers always remained primary. At a later date Bozzoli was to comment on the concept of class at the 1978 History Workshop that, 'in comparison with later times, this was in fact a relatively hollow notion, with less cultural and social content than was to emerge later'.⁴

Consequently, as these other identities were considered in more detail at later Workshops, a far more complex understanding of class emerged.

Non-class factors

In the tradition set by the earlier revisionist work, non-class divisions were poorly addressed in the 1978 Workshop papers. These papers did little to satisfy the Workshop's call for papers which considered race, ethnicity, religion, and gender in the labour force.⁵ Some scholars believed that ethnicity, for instance, would disappear in an urban setting. Coplan suggested that economic class identification took over from ethnic identification in an urban environment.⁶

³ Bozzoli, 'Popular history and the Witwatersrand', p.5.

⁴Bozzoli, 'Intellectuals, audiences and histories: South African experiences, 1978-1988' p.9, draft version of paper published in Radical History Review 46/7, 1990.

⁵ 'Seminars and Workshops', Africa Perspective 6, August 1977.

⁶ D. Coplan, 'The African performer and the Johannesburg entertainment industry: the struggle for African Culture on the Witwatersrand, LTP p.184.

pre-capitalist continuities

The majority of the 1978 township and culture papers concentrated on an urbanised setting and on a permanently proletarianised African population. Most of the papers implied that as Africans entered the urban setting there was an almost complete break with the rural areas and with pre-capitalist relationships. There was very little sense of the continuity or resilience of pre-capitalist forms or relations, or these taking on a new meaning in an urban environment.⁷

Although many of the papers referred to the collapse of the reserves to explain such things as the massive increase in the urban population, only Bonner's paper considered the complexities of the collapse of pre-capitalist African social formations.⁸ Thus, these papers presented no change from the dominant perspective of the majority of the labour history studies on South Africa in the 1970s which, following Wolpe's study, saw a complete break between the capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production.⁹

The perspective on the articulation of modes of production, as well as rural relations, had been considered in detail at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies seminars between 1977 and 1979. Amongst others, the work of Africanist trained scholars like Peires, Delius, and Beinart had not yet influenced local South African research. Much of the work considered the dissolution of pre-capitalist societies and touched on the ways in which that dissolution affected the course of industrialisation and

⁷ Ibid. p.184.

⁸ These complexities involved regional differences and variations as to the timing of the collapse of pre-capitalist formations. These differences affected the process of proletarianisation, the formation of classes and, hence, the particular course that the transition to capitalism took in South Africa.

⁹ Wolpe's study described the imposition of the capitalist mode, the destruction of the pre-capitalist mode, the conservation of the labour reproducing function of the reserves, the decline of the reserves and the spontaneous creation of a proletariat. H. Wolpe, 'The theory of internal colonisation: the South African case', in The Societies of Southern Africa in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Vol 5. Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1873-74. p.113.

urbanisation.¹⁰ Bonner's 1978 paper and the invitation to the 1978 Workshop, which called for an awareness of pre-capitalist continuities, intimated the direction future studies would take. As will be shown later, the influence of these Africanist scholars and the interest of the History Workshop committee ensured that a growing number of studies took past relations into account.¹¹

The History Workshop committee encouraged studies which saw the existence of both capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production at the same time. Bozzoli noted that such studies would reject the myth that the 'South African working class does not exist as long as there are pre-capitalist modes of production, and that the history of the working class only begins when the 'collapse of the reserves' ends'. After the 1978 History Workshop, the committee called for studies which recognised that the 'African working class begins to come into being when the first worker leaves the land, rather than when the last peasant comes into the towns'.¹² This perspective had important implications for our understanding of class. As Bozzoli noted:

Prior processes of dispossession, rural reconstruction and community formation underlie the creation of all strata of the urban working class, and research into urban groups may be pursued 'backwards' into the rural mainsprings of their march into the workforce. The social route they have taken into the cities must be an integral part of our understanding of how they behave there.¹³

Class was seen to be not yet fully formed but 'in the making'. Class consciousness was also displayed, at times, through ethnicity and other non-class forms of expression.

¹⁰ See the papers delivered between 1977 and 1980 and published in Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, London : University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

¹¹ This aspect was referred to in Chapter 5, p.15, of this thesis.

¹² Bozzoli, 'Popular history and the Witwatersrand', p.6.

¹³ Bozzoli, 'Class community and ideology', p.21. Also in 'History, experience and culture', p.10 Bozzoli noted 'We might ask whether the urban cultures portrayed by Koch and Moodie are genuinely 'emergent' and to what extent there is a residual character to them obscured by our lack of knowledge of rural struggles and culture'.

Papers presented to the later Workshops increasingly took the resilience of pre-capitalist relations into account. As a result, it became increasingly clear that nothing could be predicted. Thus, the formation of class in an urban setting could not be simply assumed. Some papers pointed to the resilience of rural relationships and identities even in an urban setting and how these sometimes dictated against class consciousness. Other papers revealed that it could not be predicted that classes would not form because of these rural ethnic identities. Brink, for instance, revealed that Afrikaner women preferred a party which expressed their class interests to one which expressed Afrikaner nationalist interests.¹⁴ At other times, ethnic identities and symbols were shown to sustain and bolster class consciousness.¹⁵

ethnicity

Whereas ethnicity had not been a major consideration in Marxist work in the 1970s, the profusion of studies which considered ethnicity in the Workshops after 1978 was a reflection of the growing awareness by academics of ethnicity and the manipulation of ethnicity. As Bonner and Lodge commented: 'Ethnic cultures and Identities possess a reality in South Africa which it would be myopic to ignore'.¹⁶ Not only was ethnicity manipulated by the dominant group for control purposes (a perspective which was evident in academic work in the 1970s), ethnicity was also utilised by ordinary people as a strategy for survival. For instance, La Hausse's paper on the ICU revealed how ethnicity was used in resistance.

¹⁴ E.Brink, 'Maar 'n klomp "factory" meide' : Afrikaner family and community on the Witwatersrand during the 1920s, CCC.

¹⁵ P. La Hausse, '"The message of the warriors". The ICU, the labouring Poor and the making of a popular political culture in Durban, 1925-1930', HTG.

¹⁶ P.Bonner and T.Lodge, 'Introduction', in P. Bonner et al. Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa, Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, Ravan Press, 1989.

non-class divisions intersecting with class divisions

Over the years, the papers which were presented to the Workshop took greater account of ethnicity, culture, religion and ideology; and it was often evident that these intersected with, and sometimes acted against, class divisions. Beinart, for example, revealed that in the Herschel district women's religious persuasions were to some extent correlated with their wealth and position in that society. Religious persuasion, in this sense, could be used to identify the class position of women in that district.¹⁷ In other papers, ethnic symbols were shown to be used by worker organisations like the ICU in their battle for worker rights.¹⁸ People may not be aware of class consciousness but they may articulate that consciousness through cultural, ethnic or religious vehicles of expression. These papers helped to facilitate an understanding of class in terms of its real conditions of existence which inevitably involved a consideration of the non-economic features of class struggle and class identity.¹⁹

There was a move away from the simple depiction of three classes in society. Many of the History Workshop papers revealed a far more complex layering of society. Studies, such as Delius and Trapido's considered the position of the oorlam overseers. Couzens paper discussed the niche in society which the liberals carved for themselves. Bozzoli suggested that:

ordinary people live in small groupings, both in urban and rural settings. Their identifications of themselves may not be as members of the enormous national classes but as members of some local, specific group.²⁰

¹⁷ The 'progressive' families who were settled in the missions and consisted of the professional elite did not participate in the boycott. Many of the African women who were active in the boycott left the Methodist church and joined the African Methodist Episcopal Church in Herschel in 1925. W. Beinart 'Women in rural politics: Herschel district in the 1920s and 1930s' CCC, pp.325-329.

¹⁸ H. Bradford, '"A taste of freedom" : capitalist development and response to the ICU in the Transvaal countryside', TCT.

¹⁹ Hofmeyr, I. 'The mad poets: an analysis of an early sub-tradition of Johannesburg literature and its subsequent developments', LTP, p.119. (A class can consist of a broad alliance of people who adhere to a particular world-view).

²⁰ P. Delius and S. Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams': the creation and transformation of a servile class', TCT; T. Couzens 'An Introduction to the History of football in South Africa' TCT; B. Bozzoli in 'Class, community and ideology', p.5.

The majority of the History Workshop papers looked at these smaller groups and sub-classes in society and not just at the major classes.²¹

community

Marxist social studies in South Africa increasingly indicated that it was pointless to try to separate class and non-class factors. As a result, the committee of the History Workshop became interested in the concept of community. This was clear at the 1984 History Workshop which was entitled 'Class, Community and Conflict'. Community, as a concept, seemed to reflect South African realities to a far greater degree. The interest in the concept of community had been inspired, partly, by British and American scholars, such as Stedman-Jones, Cumbler and Foster, who in the early and mid-1970s had produced path breaking research into the interrelationships of community and class consciousness. However, the South African concept of community differed radically from the portrayal of it in some of those British and American Marxist works - where there was a strong sense of particularly united working class communities displaying strong working class consciousness and culture.

In South Africa, where people were so recently proletarianised, where strong residual rural, cultural and ethnic links remained, where workers generally lived far from their place of work, and where working class communities were often forcibly displaced, working class consciousness did not develop as it had in certain urban areas in Britain.

Instead, as Bozzoli notes, papers like those of Krut, Brink and Witz 'seem to reveal that on every level the forces promoting the development of a non-class consciousness have been greater than those promoting class awareness'.²² South African reality clearly indicated that class consciousness was integrally tied up in other forms of consciousness. Often these other forms appeared closer to the surface. Beinart reflected on people's 'Africanist' as well as 'religious consciousness'; La Hausse

²¹ Bozzoli suggests that there were attempts to 'compare and contrast the class experiences of the largest classes with those of the smallest.' Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p.35.

²² Bozzoli, 'Class, community and ideology', p.36.

commented on workers sense of nationalism and its symbols; Bradford considered gender consciousness; Brink examined both socialist and nationalist consciousness; Clynick looked at racism. Underlying all of these factors, there was also a sense of class. What is evident is that class could take on the different robes of ethnicity, nationalism, socialism, and racism depending on the time and the place and the people involved. The concept of 'community' was better able to consider all these facets and to give a more comprehensive reflection of the force of, and particular pattern taken by, class conflicts in South African society.

Consideration of non-class forms of consciousness and actions revealed that in similar situations people may respond in very different ways. These revelations posed a challenge to structuralist interpretations which tended to assume an automatic, obviously class-conscious response. Bozzoli noted that the gap between economic class and reality, as experienced and as expressed, was too big for people's responses to be predictable. The scholars attending the Workshop were interested in depicting that reality and in giving consideration to the actual responses by people, as opposed to the presumed responses by people.

The concept of community helped scholars to avoid analysing South Africa's past in terms of the unrealistically broad categories of race and class. Community facilitated a move away from an economic perspective by allowing easier access to the consideration of non-class forms of unity and co-operation. Yet the concept of community also made allowance for the consideration of race and class. A community defined by space could be a particular township. Here, class consciousness was shown to be blurred to some extent by the racial oppression felt by all classes in the township.²³

race and class

Many of the History Workshop papers on urban history attempted to grapple with the concept of race. This was partly a response by academics to the increasing evidence of Black Consciousness and the part it played in the

²³ Coplan, 'The African performer', p.186.

Soweto risings. The impact of the 1976 Soweto risings and the resulting focus on townships, which drew attention to the alliances forged at times between the African petty bourgeoisie and the African working class, ensured that the concept of race could not be ignored or submerged completely under class. In many respects, these papers adopted the early Marxist approach to race and class - but went further. Wolpe wrote that Apartheid 'creates within limits an identity of interests between the non-white sectors of different classes'.²⁴ These Workshop papers were concerned with: how a racially structured capitalism affected relations between a white capitalist class and an African working class; and how a racially-structured capitalism affected the formation of classes and relations between classes within the African population itself.²⁵

Some scholars did give a certain autonomy to race. Proctor for instance referred to the resilience of the impact of colonial relations of domination.²⁶ The papers suggested that the residual impact of colonial domination meant that 'class formation among the African population took place under conditions which structurally differentiated it from the white population'. In other words, 'class formation and advancement within the black population as a whole took place within limits rigidly defined by white class interest and took a particularly stunted form as a result'.²⁷ The scholars who recognised this referred to structural differentiation in attempts to explain why alliances were forged at times between the African

²⁴ Wolpe, 'Class, race and the occupational structure', p.103.

²⁵ The early Marxist scholars had been interested in race in terms of 'the main contradiction in South Africa...the relation of production between the white capitalist class and the non-white working class'. 'Seminars and Workshops', Africa Perspective, 6, 1978.

²⁶ A. Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city ; A history of Sophiatown, 1905-1940', LTP, p.51.

²⁷ Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city', pp.51,71. The African petty bourgeoisie as a class were incredibly stunted under racial laws. Ghetto conditions of township blur divisions between classes; see T. Couzens, 'Nobody's Baby: Modikwe Dikobe and Alexandra, 1942-1946', TCT, p.99; Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city', pp.56,79; K. Sole, 'Class, Continuity and Change in Black South African Literature, 1948-1960', TCT, p.162.

petty bourgeoisie and working class.²⁸ However, in the 1978 Workshop papers, where a racial identity of interests was referred to, these references are often mediated by suggestions that these alliances were temporary, and true class interests would inevitably override them.²⁹

community and race

In later History Workshop papers, the research into communities increasingly challenged the broad category of race. The papers by scholars like Bonner (1978, 1984), Nicol (1984), Guy (1984) and Webster (1984), considered how rural identities and ethnic affiliations affected the grouping of people in an urban and work environment. These papers revealed the many divisions within racial groups: divisions of education, skill, power and language were shown even within ethnic groups. These scholars increasingly moved away from broad concepts in their attempt to depict actual lived reality in South Africa.

community and class

Community studies revealed the existence of many divisions within society. A community could be defined by a certain coherence, for instance religious beliefs, or by political affiliations. Knowledge of such communities revealed that there are stratifications within particular broad classes. For instance, the middle class in South Africa is shown to be divided up into religious, ethnic, and politically affiliated groups. Often these stratifications are shown to relate back to people's cultural origins. Examples of these stratifications are the Jewish community in South Africa, and Afrikaner nationalists. Sometimes these non-class interests may override class interests, and a segment of the middle class may align itself with a segment of the working class to further its own non-class as well as its own class interests. Krut's paper on the Jewish community is a

²⁸ Coplan, 'The African performer', p.189. Middle-class Africans embrace African nationalism.

²⁹ Wolpe, 'Class, race and the occupational structure' p 103.
Sole, 'Class, continuity and change', pp.156,157,162.

splendid example. South African reality was increasingly shown to be incredibly complex and the study of communities reflected that complexity far better than did the broad categories of race and class.

gender and class

A further non-class division which was not fully addressed at the 1978 History Workshop was that of gender. The need for histories of women and women's movements had been voiced at the conference on the History of Opposition in South Africa at Wits in 1978. At the 1978 History Workshop, only Gaitskell and van Onselen's papers considered women and women's resistance,³⁰ while a few papers mentioned women in terms of their numbers and the type of employment open to them.³¹ However, women were seen as appendages to the real action which was between different classes. Very few of these papers moved beyond the early Marxist treatment of gender which saw women purely in terms of their reproductive function for capital.³² Such a functionalist explanation did not cover many forms of women's oppression or of their resistance. In this respect, the papers did not initiate any change from previous studies.³³ Perhaps the absence of gender studies was a consequence of there being no strong feminist movement in South Africa at the time.

However, the number of studies which considered gender relations in analysing society began to increase rapidly. By the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of theses, papers and books which considered gender

³⁰ D. Gaitskell, 'Christian compounds for girls: church hostels for African women in Johannesburg 1907-1970'; HW, 1978; C. van Onselen, 'The witches of suburbia: domestic service in the Witwatersrand 1890-1914', HW, 1978.

³¹ For an example, see Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city', p.53.

³² Ibid., p.62.

³³ B. Bozzoli, 'Feminist interpretations and South African studies', University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies seminar, October 1981.

relations had been produced.³⁴ Many of these studies had a similar orientation to that followed by the History Workshop although not all were Marxist histories.³⁵ Certain Working Groups on Women were established at various South African Universities at that time. Some of these groups made contact with the History Workshop.³⁶ From small beginnings in the early 1980s, the number of works at the History Workshops which considered gender relations was to increase rapidly.³⁷ These developments could be seen to be a delayed reaction to a burgeoning of women's studies internationally in the 1970s.

The committee of the History Workshop certainly played a very strong role in encouraging these developments not only through the particular emphases they put on the themes for the triennial conferences but also in their individual capacities. The aim of certain committee members corresponded with those of initiators of women's studies groups to 'redress the imbalance ... which has resulted from a neglect of women's position in society in general and in South Africa in particular'.³⁸ Bozzoli and Callinicos, not only encouraged researchers in the area of gender studies but themselves researched and published works in the mid and late 1980s

³⁴ C. Walker, 'Women in twentieth century South African politics: the Federation of South African Women; its roots, growth and decline', MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1978; C. Kros, 'Urban African women's organisations and protest on the Rand from the years 1939-1956', BA Hons. dissertation, University of Witwatersrand, 1978.

³⁵ D. Gaitskell, 'Female mission initiatives: black and white women in the Witwatersrand churches 1903-1939', unpublished Phd. thesis, University of London; J. Cock, Maids and Madams, Johannesburg 1980; J. Cock and E. Emdon, 'Let me make history please': The story of Johanna Masilela, child-minder', CCC; J. Wells, 'The Day the town stood still : women's resistance in Potchefstroom, 1912-1930', TCT ; J. Wells, 'Why women rebel - a comparative study of South African women's resistance in Bloemfontein 1913 and Johannesburg 1958', JSAS 10 (1) 1983; C. Walker, Women and Resistance in South Africa, London, 1982; E. von Heyningen, 'Prostitution and the contagious diseases acts. The social evil in the Cape colony 1868-1902'. In C. Saunders et al (eds) Studies in the History of Cape Town, vol. 5, University of Cape Town, 1984.

³⁶ Working group on women - proposed outline, E. Preston-Whyte and H. Hughes, Durban: February 1980, 1981 Workshop Papers Box File, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

³⁷ J. Wells, '"The day the town stood still"'; H. Bradford, '"We are now the men": women's beer protests in the Natal countryside, 1929', CCC; Beinart, 'Women in rural politics'.

³⁸ 'Working Group on Women - proposed outline', February 1980.

which were considered to be 'relevant to the preoccupations of the History Research Group'.³⁹

The papers which were presented to the Workshop, like those of Eales', Bradford's and Beinart's considered women in different roles to the purely reproductive. Women were shown not only in their resistance to the state but also in their attempts to confront patriarchal dominance. Some of these papers considered domination in terms of relations between the sexes. As Beinart commented about his work:

There are a few suggestions in the interviews that it was a time of breaking taboos governing younger women, an assertion of their independence against parents, as well as an assertion in the political sphere of wives against husbands, as well as the state.⁴⁰

Bradford wrote about economically independent women in Natal involved in beer brewing who challenged and resisted restrictions on them in terms of gender as well.⁴¹

Some papers considered how gender relations changed with the penetration of capital. These considerations provided insight into 'the role that women play in maintaining, developing and changing the societies of which they are a part'.⁴² Beinart and Bradford's studies revealed how changes in the organisation of family labour in response to the penetration of capital meant that some women gained increasing independence as a result of their growing control over the means of production.⁴³ Women and men were shown to have experienced the processes of dispossession and proletarianisation very differently.⁴⁴ Women were often the last to be

³⁹ B. Bozzoli, 'Migrant women and South African social change: Biographical approaches and social analysis', African Studies 44 (1) 1985; B. Bozzoli, 'The Widow of Phokeng', Staffrider July 1984; Bozzoli, Women of Phokeng; L. Callinicos, 'Memories of a Poor White Childhood', Staffrider, 6,3, 1986.

⁴⁰ W. Beinart, letter to B. Bozzoli from University of Bristol, 4 July 1984, History Workshop offices, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

⁴¹ Bradford, '"We are now the men"'.
 42 'Workshop on women - proposed outline', February 1980.

⁴³ Beinart, 'Women in rural politics', p.325; and H. Bradford, '"We are now the men"', p.310.

⁴⁴ Bozzoli, 'Class, community and ideology', p.21.

proletarianised and their bitter struggles to keep their access to the means of production were described. Often by means of beer brewing and holding on to goat herds women were able to retain some vestiges of independence from complete proletarianisation. Bradford noted, 'female worlds were less thoroughly transformed by capital inroads'.⁴⁵ Consideration of gender as a historical dynamic revealed that gender relations played an essential role in the formation and duration of societal structures. Knowledge of gender relations added to our understanding of the particular path taken by proletarianisation and capitalist development in the country and the experience of that process by the people involved.⁴⁶ These studies gave a new and more informed perspective on the processes of capitalist development and of industrialisation and proletarianisation in South Africa.

Studies which consider the relations of power between the sexes and changes to those power relationships have thrown new light on life as experienced by ordinary people in urban areas: the types of employment people have taken, and the pattern and force of their resistance to the erosion of their hold on economic independence. Women were shown to be active participants in history, and recognition of this has been vital to a more comprehensive understanding of the processes that make up South Africa's history. Bozzoli was one scholar who recognised the new interpretations gender analysis would give to history:

For the development of an encompassing general theory to take place, it is necessary that there be a revolution in the consciousness of writers on South Africa, for minds to be expanded to take account of the importance of 'domestic struggle' to our understanding of this complex society, of the consciousness of the people within it, and of the historical and material bases of patriarchal power.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Bradford, '"We are now the men"', p.296,310.

⁴⁶ see also Bozzoli, B. 'Marxism, Feminism and South African studies', Journal of South African Studies, 9,2,1983.

⁴⁷ Bozzoli, 'Feminist interpretations', p.34.

A re-appraisal of class

The focus on communities, culture, ethnicity and gender amongst other class forces allowed for the recognition of greater complexity of alliances and of divisions and strata not only between classes but within classes.⁴⁸ The class divisions within African society, the divisions and strata within classes, the changing alliances between classes, the changing constitution of classes all pointed to a far more complex understanding of the concept of class. The committee of the History Workshop specifically set out to pursue that complexity, and in doing so 're-appraise the concept of "class"'.⁴⁹ In the invitation to the 1987 Workshop the committee stated:

The conference aims to pursue further some of the themes developed in earlier conferences - for example, that of the relationships between factors with an apparently non-class character ... such as gender, culture and community ... and class itself'.⁵⁰

class in the making

Attempts to understand class in terms of its real conditions of existence outside of the workplace encouraged a move away from a theoretical conception of class as a static structure or category towards seeing it as a relationship 'embodied in real people in a real context' which alters its constitution over time and according to changed circumstances.⁵¹ The 1978 papers submitted by Proctor, Sole and Hofmeyr traced the changing constitution of classes over time as well as the changing alliances between

⁴⁸ Sole, 'Class, continuity and change', p.145. Sole pointed to strata within the African petty bourgeoisie - the traditional and the new petty bourgeoisie. Many papers pointed to strata within the working class; the proletariat, those involved in independent economic activity, the lumpenproletariat. A further division was determined by the time of arrival in the city. Stadler noted that squatters were drawn predominantly from the latest arrivals in the city. A. Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfields: Squatter movements in Johannesburg, 1944-1947', LTP p.29.

⁴⁹ History Research Group, Second Annual Report.

⁵⁰ 'History Workshop Fourth Triennial Conference and Open Day Call for Papers', History Research Group, Second Annual report.

⁵¹ Thompson, The Making, preface.

classes in different circumstances.⁵² Class was portrayed as an historical relationship as opposed to a timeless construct.

agency and initiative

Over the years, the studies of townships and of alternative cultural activities also changed the conception of class in the sense that the study of the making of class came to be seen as 'a study of an active process, which owes as much to agency as to conditioning'.⁵³ The move by many of the papers to studies outside of the workplace greatly facilitated the increasing emphasis on agency. While broad studies of political economy and the creation and control of the labour force as well as the studies of particular companies, conditions of work and strikes were far more likely to emphasise control or agency only in the form of immediate reaction to immediate economic circumstances, studies of the space of the township were more likely to reveal classes involved in their own making.

'Space' was an important concept in these studies. The space of the township was seen to inform the consciousness of people living within it.⁵⁴ 'Space' influenced the forms of resistance resorted to, the objects targeted for attack, as well as the transience or permanence of the resistance movements.⁵⁵ In these township studies, space was often used in the sense of 'liberated zones'. In this sense, it was connected to the concept of 'freedom' and 'resistance'. Independent economic activity and alternative cultural forms of expression were able to thrive in the

⁵² Proctor traced the changing face of the working class as it progressed through the non-racial, undeclared areas to the segregated controlled locations. Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city'. Sole pointed to the changing alliances of the petty bourgeoisie in changed circumstances. Sole, 'Class, continuity and change'. Hofmeyr showed how classes changed their form as their situation changed. Hofmeyr, 'The mad poets', p.124.

⁵³ Thompson, The Making, preface.

⁵⁴ Couzens, 'Nobody's baby', pp.98-99.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.98; For locations and squatter movements see Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfields', pp.35,37,38; Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city', pp.52,53.

unproclaimed areas and African locations and, as such, stimulate the growth of working class identity and consciousness.

Concepts of agency and resistance were central to the papers which considered the 'space' of the township. Within that 'space' cultural forms of expression were seen to play 'an important organisational, recreational and symbolic role'.⁵⁶ Alternative cultural expression was shown to play a part in creating identity, in alleviating distress and in subverting processes of 'regularisation' and 'domination'.⁵⁷ The defence of space allowed freedom: to be involved in independent economic activity⁵⁸; to develop alternative cultural forms of expression which created and cemented an identity of interests; to form alliances; and to participate in protest activities. All these activities contributed to the process of the 'making of class', with 'making' as the operative word. The urban history papers which concentrated on space and on people's attempts to remain economically independent challenged what had been a prevalent view in the 1970s that dispossession automatically implied that people were completely cut off from the means of production and that a fully-fledged proletarian class developed.⁵⁹

The studies of townships and cultural activities went further than most 1970s labour studies in emphasising agency and the making of non-mining African classes as an active process. By emphasising spontaneous forms of resistance as well as the cultivation of oppositional cultures they also challenged the view established in many labour studies that the history of ordinary people can be seen only through the actions of the leadership and their organisations.⁶⁰ Bozzoli believed that organisations

⁵⁶ Coplan, 'The African performer'.

⁵⁷ Ibid. p.183.

⁵⁸ H. Sapire, 'The stay-away of the Brakpan Location, 1944', CCC, pp.369-381; Bradford, 'We are now the men'.

⁵⁹ Bradford, 'We are now the men'.

⁶⁰ Cohen revealed that there was not always unity between the leadership and the people in his paper; R. Cohen, 'Albert Nzula; The road from Rouxville to Russia', LTP.

and leaders were shaped by the membership. She argued that 'the history of the oppressed will fail if it becomes the history of organisations, leaders and 'lines' - it will succeed if it becomes the history of the people from whom organisations may or may not emerge; to whom leaders may or may not be responsible and for whom 'lines may or may not possess appeal'.⁶¹ These papers concentrated on the actions of the people themselves.

control

Despite the emphasis on agency in these studies, the papers did not ignore the aspect of control. Space, for instance, also served a controlling function, in government control and administration of township space and in attempts to stifle alternative social and cultural expression.⁶² Classes were shown not only to make themselves but also to be made by the constraints imposed by capital, and by the state at a central and local level.⁶³ However, these studies took the emphasis on control which was found in many labour studies and suggested that agency and control formed a 'dialectically interacting process' in the making of class.⁶⁴

HEGEMONY

The emphasis on agency in these papers gave a new perspective to the concept of hegemony. Many labour studies in the 1970s placed great emphasis on control by capital and the state. These studies inferred that hegemony was a state which could be achieved. The papers on townships and alternative cultural forms which were presented to the History Workshop

⁶¹ Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p. 34.

⁶² Stadler, 'Birds in the cornfields', p 24; Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city', p 55.

⁶³ Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city', p.61.

⁶⁴ Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p.17.

over the years 1978 to 1987, suggested that hegemony was a process, an arena of struggle.

Papers at the 1978 History Workshop, such as Sole's, did not deviate much from the early Marxist and the Poulantzian view of the state as an instrument of the capitalist class functioning to secure and promote the interests of capital and acting to reproduce the position of classes.⁶⁵ The Poulantzian concept of different fractions of capital achieving hegemony at different times effecting changes in racial laws was also often utilised in these papers.

The ambiguities of state power

There were certain important new dimensions added to the concept of the state and the concept of hegemony. Some papers questioned the power presumed to the ruling group. For instance, Rich's 1981 paper threw in doubt the strength of a ruling class ideology, by revealing that such ideologies often had to be bolstered by ideologues, for example, John Buchan.⁶⁶ Proctor and Stadler, amongst other scholars, challenged the idea that laws passed by the dominant group took immediate effect. These papers considered the resistance of people as well as the different interest groups affecting the shaping of policy.⁶⁷ Certainly, the study of townships, which focused attention on smaller details as opposed to broader theory revealed more about the precise workings of the state. In a broad sense, the Poulantzians had attempted to link racial policies to the changes in hegemony of fractions of capital. As a result they tended to underemphasise the autonomy of the state.

On the other hand, the studies of townships, which looked at the development and implementation of state policy 'on the ground', revealed a

⁶⁵ Sole, 'Class, continuity and change', p.166.

⁶⁶ Rich, P. 'Milnerism and a ripping yarn': Transvaal land settlement and John Buchan's novel 'Prester John', 1901-1910, TCT.

⁶⁷ H. Sapire, 'African Settlement and Segregation in Brakpan 1900-1927', HTG; H. Sapire, 'African urbanisation and struggles against municipal control in Brakpan, 1920-1958', Ph.d. thesis, University of Witwatersrand; Stadler, 'Birds in the cornfields'.

more complex situation. These studies revealed that struggles between local and central state reflecting different class interests played a central role in affecting the particular path that Apartheid took at a local level. Thus, as Proctor showed, although influx control was in the statute books, it was not applied by the central state when industry was in need of labour. This policy was strongly contested by local government, who bore the costs of housing; and the constant battle between local and central government over the issue determined how the policy was implemented.⁶⁸

The Marxist social history studies often saw a greater autonomy on the part of the state, showing it to be not a unity, a 'thing' which acts under organisational direction from a fraction of capital which has achieved hegemony, but rather a 'relation', or more precisely, 'a condensate of a relation of power between struggling classes'.⁶⁹ The divisions between central and local state and different forms of capital (commercial, mining and industrial) and their access to the local and central state resulted in very haphazard formulations and implementations of laws.⁷⁰

Studies were also beginning to challenge the view that the struggles of ordinary people had very little effect on the status quo. The 1978 papers by Bonner and Davies gave a great deal more weight to worker action initiating a crisis in the hegemony of capital than had previous explanations, for example, that of Johnstone.⁷¹ By emphasising the pivotal effects of worker action, these papers (and more particularly Bonner's) expose another side of capital and the state - not only of being manipulative, but also of responding and reacting, often in defensive ways,

⁶⁸ Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city', pp.62,65.

⁶⁹ N. Poulantzas, The Crisis of Dictatorships, Portugal, Greece, Spain, London: NLB, 1976, p.92; N. Poulantzas, 'The capitalist state; a reply to Miliband and Laclau', New Left Review, 95, 1976.

⁷⁰ R. Tomasselli, 'Indian flower sellers of Johannesburg: A history of people on the street', TCT, pp.219,220; E. Koch, '"Without visible means of subsistence": Slumyard culture in Johannesburg 1918-1940', TCT, p.153.

⁷¹ R. Bonner, 'The 1920 Black Mineworkers Strike : A preliminary account', LTP; R. Davies, 'The 1922 strike and the political economy of South Africa', LTP; F. A. Johnstone, Class, Race and Gold, London: Routledge, 1976.

to the struggles of workers. Stadler and Proctor's papers for instance gave hints at this facet of the state.⁷²

Certain History Workshop papers on labour history challenged the structuralist assumption of the hegemony of the state dictating the divisions and groupings of people in the mines and the towns. The papers by Bonner, Nicol, Webster and Guy gave some insight into the effects which previous relations and identities had on the way in which people group in the workplace.⁷³ In many respects these papers complemented Greenberg's study of the state. His study which emphasised struggle, as well as the influence of pre-capitalist forms in a capitalising economy, overturned economic interpretations. In the earlier studies, capital, alone, was seen to mould the policies the state adopted on segregation.⁷⁴

Hegemony and co-option

The perspective on hegemony also informed views of co-option and ideological incorporation. Many papers considered the attempts by the state to achieve hegemony in an ideological sense through co-option of the African middle classes. The Poulantzians had considered the part capital had played in the attempted co-option of the working class. The focus on the townships drew attention to the different interests of the African middle and working classes and the state's attempts to manipulate these. Possibly the increasing sensitivity to the state's blatant attempts at co-option via the establishment of 'homelands' in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as well as the attention drawn by the Soweto risings to the paid officials of the state's control over township resources made this subject

⁷² Stadler, 'Birds in the cornfields', p.33; Proctor, 'Class struggle, segregation and the city', p.64.

⁷³ Bonner, 'The 1920 black mineworkers' strike'; M. Nicol, '"Joh'burg Hotheads" and the "gullible children of Cape Town": The Transvaal Garment Workers' Union's assault on low wages in the Cape Town clothing industry, 1930-1931, CCC; E. Webster, 'Workers divided : Five faces from a hidden abode', CCC; J. Guy and M. Thabane, 'The Ma-Rashea : A participant's perspective', CCC.

⁷⁴ Bozzoli, '"Challenging local orthodoxies"', p.55.

more pertinent. However, the concept of co-option was given a different focus. Hyslop's paper on Educational Politics 1955-1976 revealed that the attempts by the state to co-opt through the manipulation of ethnicity was at times met by mistrust and organised confrontation. Hyslop noted 'the degree to which school committees and school boards could function in this regard depended directly on the strength or weakness of organised black political opposition'.⁷⁵ Hyslop also noted that, to be successful, any attempt at co-option would have to attract the grassroots leadership and this would happen only if these leaders believed that their economic and political needs were being met.⁷⁶

False consciousness was another Marxist notion which underwent change. The insights produced in papers such as those by Guy and Thabane (1984), Nasson (1987), and Edwards (1987), amongst others, challenged the idea of false consciousness. These papers celebrated the existence of strong oppositional cultures and ideologies. Underlying these studies was the assumption that consciousness of any sort would be absorbed only if it held meaning for the people affected by it.

The same view applied to the concept of culture. The History Workshop papers did not view culture only as a tool in the hands of the politically and economically dominant group with which to manipulate the subordinate group into submissiveness. Many of the papers which dealt with culture at the early Workshops did tend to emphasise attempts by dominant groups to control the cultural symbols and activities of people. However these, and more so, the later papers presented to the Workshop, revealed that cultural dominance could not be taken for granted. Scholars were increasingly dealing with culture, as the famous American Marxist social historian Genovese had done in his work Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made.⁷⁷ Papers, like those of Delius and Trapido, considered cultures

⁷⁵ J.Hyslop, 'School Boards, school committees and educational politics : Aspects of the failure of Bantu Education as a hegemonic strategy, 1955-1976', HTG, p.217; P. Bonner and T. Lodge, 'Introduction', p.15.

⁷⁶ Hyslop, 'School boards, school committees'; Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction', p.16.

⁷⁷ Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll, p.xvii.

which were resistant and alternative - such as that of the oorlams, the servants of the boer community. Hofmeyr and Van Onselen looked at the resistant cultures of ordinary white people.⁷⁸ Koch's work on slumyard culture and Lodge's study of the gangs of Sophiatown were examinations of truly oppositional cultures.⁷⁹ None of these papers saw the power of the dominant group as secure and established. A process of constant struggle and constantly mutating cultures was mapped out. Many of those studies which concentrated on oppositional cultures did not lose sight of the constant attempts by powerful groups to manipulate those cultures for their own ends.⁸⁰ Nor did these papers lose sight of the fact that cultures were deeply rooted in class. Again these papers were seen to inform the concept of hegemony as a constant process of struggle. However, there was the tendency within a few papers towards the romanticisation of peoples' struggles. This was counter to structuralist interpretations of cultural hegemony. Samuel pointed out that by emphasising brave struggles of people, these studies, at times, neglected to take account of the ways people 'have become accomplices in their own subjection'.⁸¹

Hegemony was seen as a relationship which was constantly mutating depending on the changing strengths of the sides involved. These Gramscian concepts of hegemony were being re-discovered and were promoted especially by History Workshop committee member Belinda Bozzoli.⁸²

⁷⁸ Hofmeyr, 'The mad poets'; C. van Onselen, 'The Main Reef Road into the Working Class: proletarianisation, unemployment and class consciousness amongst Johannesburg Afrikaner poor 1890-1914', HW, 1981; see S. Grey, '"Piet's progress': Douglas Blackburn's satire on capitalist penetration of the Transvaal in the 1980s', TCT.

⁷⁹ Couzens, 'An introduction to the history of football'; T. Lodge, 'The parents' school boycott, 1955'. Lodge did not see schools as the mere ciphers of ideological control; he saw a process of struggle in schools.

⁸⁰ Couzens, 'An introduction to the history of football', p.212.

⁸¹ Samuel, People's History, p.xix.

⁸² Bozzoli acknowledged her debt to Gramsci, see her comments in Bozzoli, 'History, Experience and culture', pp. 1,7; and in B. Bozzoli, The Political Nature of a Ruling Class : Capital and Ideology in South Africa 1890-1933, London : Routledge 1981.

CONCLUSION

The majority of the papers that were presented to the History Workshop over the years reflected a Marxist social history orientation. These studies were often local studies which considered experience, agency and consciousness and how these interacted with broader structures and processes. Bozzoli and Delius spoke of studies which involved a 'blending of Africanism, revisionism, and localism'.⁸³ Such studies gave a whole new perspective structural interpretations to history and in particular the concept of class. The interest in some papers in the residual influence of pre-capitalist relations revealed that classes could not be assumed to be formed but should rather be seen to be in the making. These papers also revealed that there were many non-class forces in play acting against and sometimes with class. At times these non-class forces could be used to identify class and class consciousness. The papers suggested that South African society was far more complex than a simple three-tiered class structured society. The growth in studies of communities ensured a far less economic interpretation of South African society. These studies portrayed the complexity of a society with its intersecting class and non-class forces. The emphasis on agency, consciousness and culture, which was encouraged by the committee of the History Workshop threw into question the previous assumptions about the state and the concept of hegemony.

Hegemony was increasingly shown to be a struggle and a process which was dictated by the strengths of both sides. The presumed power of the state was challenged by studies which pointed not only to the struggles of ordinary people but also to the divisions of interest between local and central government. The Marxist social historians were interested in history, in what actually happened. Their research into the concrete material reality of South African urban, rural and labour history inevitably meant that theoretical and abstract methods of analysis came to be challenged. New, less 'colonised' interpretations were given to broad Marxist theories and concepts.

⁸³ Bozzoli and Delius, 'Radical History and South African society', p.30.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP, LABOUR HISTORY AND SOCIAL HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

The Marxist social history orientation had its most apparent impact on labour history which eventually split and followed two very different directions. One section continued to use structural analysis and the other followed the social history route of the History Workshop. Jon Lewis argued in the 1990 Radical Historical Review that:

a bifurcation has developed in South African radical historiography: while labour history focuses on the workplace, industrial relations, and working class organisation, social history considers the fate of the working class and other oppressed groups outside of industrial production.¹

The 1978 History Workshop reflected a phase of transition in South African radical historiography in which labour history remained a dominant concern. The split between labour history and social history in the 1980s became obvious in the 1981, 1984 and 1987 History Workshops. There is evidence of a rise of social history concerns within labour history at the 1978 and at subsequent Workshops. The History Workshop committee could be seen to have played an active role in encouraging these concerns. It actively pursued a social history orientation. It should not be forgotten however that some forms of labour history actually helped to contribute to the development of social history. The intent of this chapter is to: consider in what way certain forms of labour history contributed to the development of social history; to trace the beginnings of the split between labour history and social history; and to consider the role played by the History Workshop, both in encouraging the growth of social history within labour history and in steering social history along a course different to that of labour history.

¹ J. Lewis, 'South African labor history: A historiographical assessment', Radical History Review, 46/7, 1990 p.213.

THE EXPANSION OF LABOUR HISTORY IN THE 1970S

Labour history studies had flourished in South Africa in the 1970s following the massive growth in the trade union movement and labour struggles from October 1972. The creation of the Academic Advisory Panel of the Institute of Industrial Education (hereafter cited as IIE), the publication of the Labour Bulletin, the conference on Southern African Labour at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1976 (cited hereafter as the Wits Labour Conference), the books on labour by Johnstone and Van Onselen and the publication of three seminar collections edited by Adler, Bonner, and Kallaway, respectively, were proof of a rapid expansion of labour studies in South Africa.² Durban and Johannesburg were the main centres of academic activity in the labour movement through TUACC in Durban and the Industrial Aid Society in Johannesburg. Many of the contributors to these labour studies were closely aligned to the labour movement. Richard Turner in Durban and Sheldon Leader in Johannesburg, for instance, were central figures. The result of this academic participation was that many of the labour studies which were produced reflected two sets of concerns: interests which were more historically based and less concerned with formal action and organisation, and the more immediate concerns of the labour movement and, in particular, of TUACC which had a strong workerist thrust. Webster noted of the latter 'what they are interested in ... is the organisation and structures of the unions and the problems of unions and management's response to them'.³

Most labour histories during the 1970s were confined mainly to studies of labour institutions, workplace organisation, trade union disputes, leadership, and union policy and practice. These histories reflected the workerist stance that unions were forced to adopt as a result

² van Onselen, Chibaro; Johnstone, Class, Race and Gold; Adler, Perspectives on South Africa; P. Bonner (ed.), Working Papers in Southern African Studies; University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute, Johannesburg, 1977; P. Kallaway ed., Contemporary Southern African Studies, vol. i and vol ii Johannesburg: Faculty of Education, University of Witwatersrand, 1978.

³ Webster, interview, October 1989.

of extreme state repression. Unions were forced to dilute their ties to national organisations such as the COSATU and the African National Congress (cited hereafter as the ANC) and to concentrate on internal organisation and purely worker issues as a matter of survival.⁴

Nevertheless, there were some studies which looked beyond institutional labour history to workers' social conditions and life experiences, worker consciousness and worker resistance both within the workplace and outside.⁵ The articles published in the Labour Bulletin in 1974 and 1975 and the papers presented to the African Studies Institute seminars at Wits as well as those presented to the Labour Conference at Wits in 1976 reflect the variety and range within labour histories. Articles ranged from examinations of individual worker strikes and organised unionism through to informal worker resistance. Certain papers concentrated on worker consciousness while others concentrated on the political economy and on the structures of Apartheid. While the majority of papers reflected a strong interest in the creation and control of the labour force there were some papers, for instance Charles van Onselen's social study on 'South Africa's lumpenproletarian Army', which looked at people's consciousness and resistance outside of the workplace.⁶

⁴ Bozzoli and Delius, 'Radical history and South African society', p.23.

⁵ van Onselen, Chibaro; C. van Onselen, 'Worker consciousness in black miners - Southern Rhodesia 1900-1920', seminar paper, University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Seminar, April 1973.

⁶ Individual worker strikes and organised unionism: M. Kirkwood 'The Defy dispute: questions of solidarity,' SALB 2, 1, 1975. Informal worker resistance : P. Kallaway, 'Black responses to an industrialising economy: "labour shortage" and native policy in Griqualand West, 1870-1900', Paper read at the Conference on Southern African Labour History, University of Witwatersrand, 1976. Worker Consciousness: I.R.Phimister, 'African worker consciousness: origins and aspects to 1953'. Paper read at the Conference on Southern African Labour History, University of the Witwatersrand, 1976. Structures of Apartheid and Political Economy: P. Richardson, 'The role of the State in the Labour market for the gold mines: the case of Chinese labour, 1903-7'; Paper read at the Conference on Southern African Labour History, University of Witwatersrand, 1976; P. Rich. 'The allocation of labour and the evolution of Apartheid ideology in South Africa 1939-1960'. Paper read at the conference on Southern African Labour History, University of Witwatersrand, 1976; C. van Onselen, 'South Africa's lumpenproletarian army "Umkosi Wa Ntaba" "the regiment of the hills" 1890-1920'. Paper read at the Conference on Southern African Labour History, University of the Witwatersrand, 1976; and published in Institute of Commonwealth Studies Collected Seminar Papers, 7, 1976; SALB 4, 1 & 2 devoted a large amount of space to the view from the shop floor and gave a comprehensive perspective on worker views and experiences.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL HISTORY THEMES WITHIN CERTAIN LABOUR STUDIES

It was within South African labour history during the 1970s that many social investigations of workers took place and many of the themes of social history were pursued. The Institute for Industrial Education book on the 1973 strikes, the papers published in the Labour Bulletin and those presented to the Wits Labour Conference, revealed an interest in working and living conditions, wage and subsistence levels, worker experience, workers as human beings, worker consciousness and, in Richard Turner's words, 'workers as independent centres of action'.⁷

The effects of the Durban strikes, the 'awareness among blacks of their potential power and among whites of blacks' potential power', had significant consequences for the way academics viewed workers.⁸ As Marks noted 'in the mid 1970s the re-awakening of the African working class brought to a head the limitations in the existing literature which ignored African agency'.⁹ The worker victories, combined with the indecisiveness of state action, served to undermine the assumption that Africans were powerless victims of an all powerful state.

The struggles by African workers prompted a growing realisation among academics that workers, particularly African workers, would be the main agents for bringing about change in South Africa.¹⁰ Academics also looked beyond the institutions to the people, themselves. As the subtitle to the IIE book on the Durban strikes suggested, workers were seen increasingly by academics as 'human beings with souls'.¹¹

Academics began to see the labouring classes as 'centres of action', and there was a rise of interest also in conditions in the workplace and in

⁷ R. Turner, The Eye of the Needle: towards a participatory democracy in South Africa, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1980 p.85.

⁸ Ibid., p.121.

⁹ Marks, 'The historiography of South Africa', p.173.

¹⁰ Turner, The Eye, p.112.

¹¹ Institute for Industrial Education, The Durban Strikes, Durban, Johannesburg: IIE, 1974.

living conditions. The Students' Representative Councils at Universities such as Natal and Cape Town formed a Wages Commission which had strong links with the Unions, and which investigated and publicised information on workers' struggles, workers' salaries and work conditions. Worker advisory projects, such as the General Factory Workers Benefit Fund in Natal and the Urban Training Project in Johannesburg, worked on similar issues.¹²

The character of the Trade Union movement, too, influenced academic thought. The movement strongly emphasised democracy, and the unions were constituted from their base with an avoidance of visible leadership. This prepared academic minds for a history from below approach which looked at ordinary people and not just the leadership.¹³ The spontaneity of the 1973 strikes, which lacked visible organisation and leadership, drew academic attention towards worker consciousness and the view that there may be class consciousness despite there being no worker organisation.¹⁴

Certainly, class, as a concept, was central to most labour studies at this time. This was because most white academics were alienated by the Black Consciousness Movement and tended to draw closer to TUACC and, later, the FOSATU unions which emphasised class above race. It was here that white academics felt more comfortable. As Callinicos noted 'they had no qualms about being white. They said it was class and not race that mattered'.¹⁵ The sense of the relevance of class-based analysis was to continue in the History Workshop social history studies throughout the 1980s.

There was a growing awareness by academics of the communities in which the workers lived. Charles van Onselen's study of the lumpenproletariat looked inside workers' communities at the ethnic, cultural and political identities of the workers and the lumpenproletariat.

¹² Bulletin 1 of the Wages Commission, Students' Representative Council, University of Natal, Durban, 6 December 1971, C. Bundy's box file in his keeping; Lodge, Black Politics, pp.327,8.

¹³ Lewis 'South African Labor History', p.318.

¹⁴ van Onselen, 'Worker consciousness'; P. Bonner, 'The decline and fall of the ICU: a case of self destruction', SALB 1,6, September 1974; Phimister, 'African worker consciousness'.

¹⁵ Callinicos, interview, October 1989.

These labour studies opened up new social areas of research revealing the complexities and many gradations within workers' experiences.¹⁶

Following the 1973 strikes the interest in worker experience and action inspired some academics to collect oral material on the underclasses. Eddie Webster, for instance, who was to become an early member of the History Workshop committee, questioned African workers on their attitudes towards certain leaders.¹⁷ Interviews of African and Indian workers were collected by the I.I.E. for their book on the 1973 strikes.¹⁸ Labour studies, therefore, initiated the use of new methodologies in the studies of the underclasses.

The labour movement also gave some attention to histories of a popular nature written for working people. These xeroxed books and pamphlets produced by the IIE and other organisations were the precedents to the History Workshop's popularising initiatives. As the act of popularising is so closely associated to the writing of social history it can be argued that, labour histories set the scene for the growth of social history concerns.¹⁹

Partly as a result of state repression of the Unions in the mid 1970s, the Labour Bulletin became a university based academic journal and there was a gradual move from studies of specific organisations and institutions towards studies which looked at unorganised protest and informal resistance.²⁰ According to Webster, the growing academic character of the Labour Bulletin resulted in 'an increasing preoccupation with the rank and file as well as with the leaders, the unorganised as well as the

¹⁶van Onselen, 'South Africa's lumpenproletarian army'.

¹⁷E. Webster 'A profile of unregistered union members in Durban', SALB 4,8, August 1977.

¹⁸IIE The Durban Strikes.

¹⁹Callinicos, interview, October 1989; Bonner, interview, October 1989.

²⁰Two editors of the South African Labour Bulletin were detained in terms of the 'Terrorism and Suppression of Communism' Acts in December 1975, and 26 Unionists were detained - Webster, 'Ten years of the South African labour bulletin', p.xiii.

organised'.²¹In other words, these labour studies came to reflect much of the subject matter of social history.

Thus, although most academics wrote labour history with the belief that only well organised and large-scale labour action could serve as a serious challenge to state power and as a result they concentrated primarily on the state's attempts to control labour and on organised worker action, there was much in labour history which did develop and nurture some of the central characteristics of social history. These studies looked beyond the institutions to the people and their experiences, their living conditions and their consciousness. It cannot be assumed, therefore, that the History Workshop initiated the development of social history concerns, these had been initiated within labour history itself.

THE 1978 HISTORY WORKSHOP: A TRANSITION PERIOD IN SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

The strength of labour history

The papers presented to the 1978 History Workshop, reveal the extent to which social history developed out of labour studies. Lewis implied that in South Africa the development of social history occurred with the decreasing interest in labour and workplace studies. He attributed the rise of social history in the late 1970s to the influence of the culturalist studies of scholars like E.P Thompson and other British Marxist social historians.²² Saunders, along with Lewis, identified the rise of social history with 'historical research into class formation in the countryside' produced by scholars like Guy, Bonner and, later, Peires and Delius.²³

²¹Webster, Essays in Labour History, p.2.

²² Lewis, 'South African Labor History' p.214; Saunders, The Making of the South African Past, p.184.

²³Ibid., p.182-3.

These scholars ignored what can be seen as the transition period which is manifest in the 1978 History Workshop. A study of social history in the 1980s without reference to the 1978 History Workshop would make it easy to overlook the strength of the labour studies tradition within the country, and, in particular, its contribution to the rise of social history. An examination of the papers presented to the 1978 History Workshop reveals that concurrent with the development of social history, the indigenous impulses of labour history remained very strong. Contrary to Lewis's proposal, the suggestion here is that it was the 'increased interest in the history of labour organisation and social relations in the workplace' in the early and mid 1970s which inspired and nurtured 'the rise of social history' or 'history from below' in South Africa.²⁴

In fact, it was following the Wits Labour Conference and the publication of the Labour Bulletin, as well as van Onselen's 1976 research, that a Workshop was launched in London with a strong social history emphasis. The aim was to examine 'the making of the African working class'.²⁵

Bonner suggested that the Wits Labour Conference had a strong influence on the 1978 History Workshop.²⁶ At this conference, papers ranged from: a study considering the origins of migrant labour, many on the creation and control of labour in the early part of the twentieth century, some which examined trade union organisation and class struggles, and conversely, Charles Van Onselen's social study of 'South Africa's lumpenproletarian army'.²⁷ Although the majority of the papers reflected a strong interest in the political economy and in the control of labour, there were some papers which adopted a 'from below' perspective to the

²⁴ Lewis, 'South African Labor History', p.214.

²⁵ Marks, 'The Historiography of South Africa', p.174.

²⁶ Bonner, Interview, October 1989.

²⁷ J Guy, 'The destruction of a pre-capitalist economy and the origin of labour supplies: The Zulu case; E.N.Katz, 'Early South African trade unions and white labour policy'; S.E. Friedman 'The decline of African trade unionism in the early sixties: Some indictments'; van Onselen, 'South Africa's lumpenproletarian army' - papers delivered at the University of the Witwatersrand, Conference on Southern African Labour History, 1976.

extent that they considered class struggle, African responses and the formation of worker consciousness.²⁸ Some scholars who were on the History Workshop committee had also been on the committee for the Wits Labour Conference.²⁹ Many of those who contributed papers at the Wits Labour Conference also participated in the History Workshop, for instance, Webster, Bonner, van Onselen and Richardson. In fact, many of the people serving on the first committee of the History Workshop had been closely involved in the labour movement. This serves to confirm that labour history was very closely linked to the development of a social history emphasis in South African historiography.

The History Workshop's role in encouraging social history studies of labour

Nevertheless, the 1978 History Workshop also marked the start of a split within labour studies. It was here that the evidence of the beginnings of a divergence between labour and social history became obvious. The History Workshop committee pursued the direction of social history. It encouraged studies which looked at township life, working class agency, culture and consciousness. Although the first book that was produced by the Workshop entitled Labour, Townships and Protest gave the impression that these latter studies were predominant by 1978, this was not actually the case. A study of all the papers presented to the History Workshop gives some indication of the state of Marxist historical research on the Witwatersrand at the time. The social history thrust, at that time, was very immature. Labour History studies predominated at the first Workshop. Nevertheless, the township and culture studies and those labour studies which adopted a strong social history perspective were signs of the new directions

²⁸ P. Kallaway, 'Black responses to an industrialising economy'; R. Moorsom 'Proletarianisation and the formation of worker consciousness: background to the contract workers' strike in Namibia, 1971-72'; I. R. Phimister 'African worker consciousness'; E. Webster 'Consciousness and the problem of organisation- a case study of a sample of African workers'; van Onselen, 'South Africa's lumpenproletarian army - papers delivered at the University of the Witwatersrand, Conference on Southern African Labour History, 1976.

²⁹ For instance Bonner, Webster and Kallaway.

historical research was to pursue in the 1980s, and the History Workshop expended much energy encouraging these studies.

theme and emphasis in the 1978 Workshop

The History Workshop played a vital role in spearheading the social history emphasis, both within labour history and in studies with no connection to labour history. The theme in the invitation to the 1978 History Workshop was 'The Witwatersrand: Labour, Townships and Patterns of Protest'. The decision to focus on labour reflected the academic preoccupation with labour history in South Africa in the mid 1970s. The suggestion that the theme of labour should cover the 'composition, development, organisation and control of the Rand labour force in mining and non-mining spheres' reflected directly the central concerns of labour historians in the mid 1970s.³⁰ However, the History Workshop committee encouraged certain directions of research within this labour history theme. They made a conscious attempt to encourage and stimulate an emphasis on working class agency, and consciousness and culture in labour studies. In the 1978 History Workshop invitation emphasis was given to history 'from the point of view of the subordinate classes'.³¹ The committee's intention was to encourage 'a systematic understanding of the structures of control, the patterns of organisation and the crystallisations of conflict within our local society and of how these dictate to and are dictated by ordinary men and women'.³² This history from below perspective represented a change from those labour studies with the more institutional concerns of labour history which include studies of specific organisations, leadership and organisation in the workplace.³³

³⁰ Proposal for a "History Workshop" on the social and economic history of Johannesburg. These concerns had been reflected in the papers at the Conference on Southern African Labour History. Bonner, 'introduction' in Bonner, Working Papers.

³¹ 'Seminars and Workshops', Africa Perspective, 6, August 1977, p.62.

³² Proposal for "History Workshop" on the social and economic history of Johannesburg'.

³³ Webster, Essays in Labour History, p.2.

The History Workshop committee also attempted to encourage a more complex understanding of the labour force. Studies were called for which revealed the 'composition, development, organisation and control of the labour force ... in all its different racial, ethnic, religious, sexual or national divisions'.³⁴ These studies made it necessary to understand the articulation of modes of production. It would be necessary to understand the way 'different reserve areas broke down economically at different times, releasing labour over a lengthy period'.³⁵

The Workshop encouraged studies which considered the way in which the 'conservation/dissolution of pre-capitalist forms' affected the grouping of people in the cities; and the forms, whether nationalist, racial or ethnic, through which they articulated their class exploitation.³⁶ Peires, Delius, Harries, Beinart, and Bonner, all, had been working, in one form or another, in the area of the articulation of modes of production; and, in this regard, many papers had been presented at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (hereafter cited as ICS) seminars in London between 1977 and 1979.³⁷ Bonner could be seen to have played a particularly strong role among the History Workshop committee in promoting the awareness of the pre-capitalist influence on the composition of, and stratifications within, the labour force.³⁸ Van Onselen's work Chibaro did the same.³⁹ In this sense, the History Workshop encouraged research which revealed the

³⁴ 'Proposal for a "History Workshop" on the social and economic history of Johannesburg'; Bozzoli, 'Popular history and the Witwatersrand', p.5; 'Seminars and Workshops' in Africa Perspective, 6, August 1977.

³⁵ G. Moss, 'Introduction', in Conference on the History of Opposition, p.iv.

³⁶ Bozzoli, 'Popular history and the Witwatersrand', p.5. Similar studies had already been presented see G. Mare, 'Class conflict and ideology among the petty bourgeoisie in the "homelands": Inkatha, a study', paper presented at the Conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978.

³⁷ see the papers in the Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, University of London: Institute of Commonwealth studies, 1977-1979.

³⁸ Bonner, 'The 1920 Black mineworkers' strike', pp.273-298.

³⁹ van Onselen, Chibaro, chs.3, 4.

complexities and many gradations of experience amongst workers: for instance, their ethnic and family affiliations, and how these affected migrancy and their resulting grouping in the urban areas and the workplace.

At the 1984 History Workshop, the papers by Guy, Nicol and Webster considered how rural networks dictated stratifications in work settings. The committee, by encouraging studies such as these, encouraged the development of new, more socially oriented areas of study within labour history.⁴⁰ Certainly, it appears that Africanist history was making its impact felt in Labour History. Bonner and Lodge commented on the prospects these developments had for labour history: 'A whole underworld of research almost certainly awaits the researcher who explores the transformation and creation of ethnic identities on the mines on the Rand'.⁴¹

The emphasis given by the History Workshop committee to 'non-mining spheres' in their preparation for the first History Workshop could also be regarded as an attempt to introduce new perspectives into labour history. Committee members encouraged a change in labour studies away from a preoccupation with the mining industry on the Witwatersrand. They believed that this preoccupation and the view of the Witwatersrand as the 'play within the play' had served to conceal that which was local, specific and unique to the Witwatersrand.⁴² It was the committee's intention to stimulate the production of local history studies. Thus, by encouraging studies which were not confined to the mining arena the focus would shift away from the perspective of the 'play within a play' and, in that way, a more local perspective would emerge. The direction of Van Onselen's own work, away from organised labour and the mines to studies of

⁴⁰These areas of study were not exclusive to those attending the History Workshop: scholars not attached to the History Workshop had also researched these areas, for example, J. Clegg 'Ukubuyisa isidumba-"bringing back the body"', In P. Bonner (ed.) Working Papers in South African Studies, II.

⁴¹ Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction', p.12.

⁴²Bozzoli, 'Popular history and the Witwatersrand', p.3; F. Johnstone 'The labour history of the Witwatersrand'- lecture delivered at the University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop 1978.

lumpenproletarian gangs and domestic labour, was very important in this refocussing.⁴³The change of direction outside the sphere of the mines changed the former, strongly institutional focus and encouraged studies which had already been broached by some earlier labour histories - which gave a broader perspective on workers' lives and experiences by looking at aspects affecting their lives outside of the mining spheres and even the workplace, itself.

In fact, the History Workshop committee placed a great deal of emphasis at that first Workshop on the study of workers outside of their place of work. Workers in their communities, their living conditions, the local authorities to which they were subject, their cultural forms of identity and how they used these in resistance, and the different forms of protest to which they resorted, became important subjects of study. The initial themes for the Workshop proposed by Bozzoli and van Onselen were 'Working class life and culture: patterns of domination, subordination and creativity' and 'cultural studies of particular groups and classes'.⁴⁴The History Workshop did not necessarily initiate these studies - there was evidence that many scholars were beginning to research those areas. At the first meeting of the History Workshop committee note was made that there seemed 'to be a tendency to examine the nature of the working class in a more general sense, to explore its composition, development and control in the Rand in general'.⁴⁵Nevertheless, the committee encouraged these

⁴³C.van Onselen, 'The witches of suburbia': domestic service on the Witwatersrand 1890-1914', University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, seminar paper, February 1978; van Onselen, South Africa's lumpenproletarian army'. Note: the 'play within the play' refers to works which tend to assume that what happened on the Witwatersrand had an impact on South Africa's class and racial structure as a whole.

⁴⁴'Proposal for a "History Workshop" on the social and economic history of Johannesburg.'

⁴⁵History Workshop 2, Report of First Meeting, History Workshop File 1978, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand. p.2. The committee noted at this first meeting 'Charles van Onselen, for example, is interested in its earliest social history. Franco Frescura was mentioned as being interested in Vrededorp; Duncan Innes, it is thought, is interested in the 'non-mining working class' on the Rand at a later stage; John Lewis is interested in the Garment Worker's Union both in Germiston and on the Rand as a Whole; Unsworth was also mentioned as a student of the GWU. Phil Bonner was interested in the labour market on the Rand during World War 1.'

aspects, and the Workshop gave a certain degree of legitimacy to the new directions.⁴⁶

At the 1984 History Workshop, a number of labour papers were presented which went outside the workplace to describe workers within their community settings. Brink's paper on the Garment workers and the Afrikaner community; Wits's consideration of the Independent Labour Party; Swilling's on the politics of working class struggles in Germiston, all, took the workers' community into account. As mentioned above, it was the rise of community politics in the early 1980s which encouraged this academic trend.⁴⁷

Two people closely associated with the Workshop promoted the studies of workers outside of the workplace were Charles van Onselen, who was interested in the working class on the Rand, and Phil Bonner, who was encouraging students to examine areas such as the genesis of Soweto, bus boycotts and squatter movements, independent schooling and church movements in townships, such as Soweto and Klipspruit.⁴⁸

As far as 'patterns of protest' were concerned, a new dimension was added to the concept of protest and struggle through the committee's suggestion that these studies could range 'from transport strikes and squatters' movements to cultural nationalism'.⁴⁹ The committee consciously attempted to broaden the canvas from the narrow 'traditional' concerns of labour history with organised protest and trade union struggles at the workplace, as well as those early labour studies which focussed on organised nationalism and which concentrated on particular organisations

⁴⁶Ibid,,. C. van Onselen plus a number of students; D. Innes was working on the working class outside the mines on the Rand; J. Lewis was studying the Garment Worker's Union in Germiston and on the Rand; P. Bonner was encouraging students in these spheres.

⁴⁷ L. Witz, 'A case of schitzophrenia: the rise and fall of the Independent Labour Party', HW, 1984; Brink "'Maar 'n klomp 'factory meide'"; M. Swilling 'The politics of working class struggles in Germiston, 1979-1983, HW, 1984.

⁴⁸ Proposal for a "History Workshop" on the social and economic history of Johannesburg.

⁴⁹ Invitation to History Workshop, 1978, File 1978, History Workshop Offices, University of the Witwatersrand.

and parties.⁵⁰ The concentration on protest also represented a change from Poulantzian studies which, although dealing with class struggle, had largely centred on capital/ state relations and on the manipulation of the labour force by certain fractions of capital and the state - rather than with the struggles of the workers.

The theme, 'The Witwatersrand: Labour, Townships and Patterns of Protest' in which the emphasis was put on local history, unorganised labour, workers' lives outside of the workplace, and patterns of protest outside of organised activities, reflected the interests of certain prominent members of the History Workshop committee. The political realities within the country, as well as certain developments overseas in historiographical research and the new interests of local scholars, shaped and nourished those directions. However, the encouragement of social history which was so clear in the choice of theme as well as papers for the book Labour, Townships and Protest, reflected in part only the actual state of historical work on the Witwatersrand at the time.

The state of labour history on the Witwatersrand

At this point, it is necessary to consider what the current state of historical work was on the Witwatersrand in 1978. This work is reflected largely, although not wholly, in the range of papers presented to the 1978 Workshop.⁵¹ The papers presented to this Workshop reflected the interest and emphasis on labour history which predominated throughout the 1970s.⁵² The majority of papers (eighteen out of thirty-two) concentrated on the

⁵⁰ Webster, Essays in Southern African Labour History, p2, on traditional labour concerns; examples of early labour studies: E. Roux, S.P. Bunting: a political biography, Cape Town: the Author, 1944; B. Bunting, Moses Kotane, South African Revolutionary: a political biography, London: Inkululeka, 1975; C Kadalie, My Life in the ICU: the autobiography of a black trade unionist in South Africa, London: Cass., 1970.

⁵¹ The History Workshop largely reflected the state of Marxist and social history on the Witwatersrand. There were many scholars from Afrikaans Universities who did not attend, as well as many liberal historians who felt that the History Workshop retained a rather exclusive invitation list and focus. Refer to my Questionnaire below.

⁵² Kallaway, interview, June 1990.

sphere of production and relations of production.⁵³ Of the eight seminars held, five dealt with the subject of labour: 'Domestic labour and Rand Capitalism', 'White workers on the Rand', 'Structures of Control', 'Early Labour Organisation', and 'Social Control in the Work Place'.⁵⁴ The range of these labour papers revealed that labour history 'on the ground' in South Africa encompassed a very broad spectrum of interests. Some papers reflected the immediate concerns of the labour movement. They were concerned with particular companies and organised labour such as the report on the labour dispute at the Heinemann Electric Company. Other papers were concerned with the political economy and the major processes of the creation of labour and the structures of control. Many papers were strongly in the Poulantzian mould with high theoretical content. Yet others adopted an historical and empirical focus. Some papers highlighted worker experience and informal unorganised resistance and emphasised workers' ability to force the hand of capital and the state.⁵⁵

However, the majority of papers on labour history which were presented to the Workshop concentrated on the mines and on organised labour (approximately eight papers on the mines and five on trade unions). The emphasis in many of the seminars was on control and structures of control. Of the eight seminars held, four contained the word 'control' in the theme: 'Structures of control', 'Township protest and control', 'Social control in the workplace', and 'Early townships protest and control'. Issues of control and the role of the state were still of central importance to the Unions which were then trying to gain recognition. These papers at the History Workshop reflected the very strong preoccupation of labour history throughout the 1970s, that is, an interest in the political economy, in the processes of the creation and control of labour by capital and the state.

⁵³Note: There were 35 papers. The papers of Hallett, Saunders and Maree papers did not deal with the Witwatersrand area and so will be excluded from discussion.

⁵⁴History Workshop Newsletter, no.2(n.d.); File 1978, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand.

⁵⁵See 1978 History Workshop papers, Appendix C.

The choice of papers for the book Labour, Townships and Protest

A study of the papers chosen for the book entitled Labour, Townships and Protest reveals that the committee, or those involved in the publication, were specifically choosing papers which followed a social history orientation. The book is not really representative of the papers delivered to the Workshop. The book gave priority to the 'township' and 'culture' themes. Of the eleven papers published only five were on labour while six papers were published on workers' lives outside of the workplace, in the townships, and cultural alternatives to hegemony. Three sub-themes were chosen for the book: 'Township life and patterns of Protest'; 'Cultural alternatives to Hegemony' and 'Worker experience and action'. Here, the emphasis lies in the concepts 'protest', 'cultural alternatives', 'experience' and 'action'.⁵⁶

Of the labour papers which were published in the book Labour, Townships and Protest, all reflected academic concerns with 'slower more painful historically based analyses of major processes of class formation, struggle and interaction', as opposed to research which was subject to the more immediate concerns of the labour movement.⁵⁷ These papers also reflected academic concerns with the rank and file and the unorganised. Agency, resistance and ordinary workers feature in these papers. Burke and Richardson's paper, for instance, focussed on industrial health and workers' experience of conditions on the mines. However, Johnson's paper on socialist organisation of black workers on the Rand dealt with informal labour organising and activity on the Rand not necessarily confined to the mines. Despite their approach from two very different angles, the papers of Bonner and Davies highlighted class struggle and recognised the significance of agency. Davies paper, although very much in the Poulantzian mould, emphasised the importance of the 1922 strike in affecting class

⁵⁶Bozzoli, Labour Townships and Protest.

⁵⁷Bonner, 'The 1920 black mineworkers strike.' None of the papers on individual labour disputes are included. Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p.2.

alliances underpinning the state and the strike's contribution to the change in hegemony of different fractions of capital in 1924. Bonner emphasised the major significance of the 1920 black mineworkers' strike in 'forcing the hand of capital and the state' and suggested its implications for the 1922 white mineworkers' strike. He dealt with the daily experience and consciousness of ordinary workers and their informal/unorganised forms of resistance.⁵⁸

The papers published in the book broadly represented the interests of many of the members of the History Workshop committee such as Bozzoli, Bonner, David Webster, Pearson and Kallaway. The research on workers' experience and consciousness, on unorganised informal protests and struggles, on human agency and on culture did have certain roots in some labour history studies in the 1970s. However it was the dominant interests within the committee which ensured that the social history perspective was encouraged.⁵⁹

The book Labour, Townships and Protest which was edited by Belinda Bozzoli leaned towards social history concerns. In fact, as Peter Kallaway pointed out, it was Bozzoli and Van Onselen who were dominant figures in all the seminars at the 1978 History Workshop and Bozzoli's concerns tended to be reflected in the book. These concerns could also be attributed to a waning interest in labour. As Kallaway noted, the timing of the 1978 History Workshop was important - it was a time when labour interests were exhausted and people were 'getting sick of just one damn union study after another'.⁶⁰ The papers which were chosen for the book represented the seeds of what was to develop, at a later stage, into the social history perspective so evident in the 1980s.

⁵⁸ Webster, Essays p.2; Bonner 'The 1920s black mineworker's strike'; G. Burke and P. Richardson, 'The migration of miners Phthisis between Cornwall and the Transvaal, 1876-1918', LTP; See also Cohen's study of the career of Nzula which looked at political activity within and outside of organisations like the ICU and ANC; R. Cohen, 'Albert Nzula: the road from Rouxville to Russia', LTP; R. Davies 'The 1922 Strike and the political economy of South Africa', LTP.

⁵⁹ Eddie Webster was the only member of the committee who continued to be interested in institutional labour history. Webster, interview, October 1989.

⁶⁰ Kallaway, Interview, June 1990.

THE DIVERGENCE OF LABOUR HISTORY AND SOCIAL HISTORY STUDIES IN THE 1980s

After 1978, labour history took a different path to that taken by social history. The split between social history and labour history began to widen through the 1980s. There was evidence within South African historiography of a continuation of a certain segment of labour history that was confined to studies of industrial relations, labour disputes and trade union organisation. However, these studies were pursued within the sociology departments at different universities. Possibly, the State of Emergency in 1985 and 1986 stifled researchers attempts to investigate strike activities. Paul Stewart, who had begun researching for the History Workshop's 'Working Lives' project found that, as a result of the State of Emergency, 'access to Shop Stewards in general, and specific factories in particular was proving extremely difficult to obtain'.⁶¹

By comparison the History Workshop committee took a different direction as was evident at the 1981, 1984 and 1987 History Workshops. Not only did the number of labour history studies, which were presented to the History Workshop's, decline over the years but those that were presented were mainly social history labour studies.

At the 1978 Workshop, half the seminars and at least half the papers focussed on labour history.⁶² At the 1981 History Workshop only one out of eight seminars and only one fifth of the papers focussed on labour.⁶³ There was less emphasis on control. There were very few papers on individual strikes and on labour organisation. Papers on consciousness, community, culture and oral history were beginning to appear to a greater extent.⁶⁴

⁶¹ History Research Group Second Annual Report, 1 October 1985-30 September 1986, History Workshop offices, University of the Witwatersrand. p.9.

⁶² Four seminars out of eight - 'White workers on the Rand'; 'Early labour organisation'; 'Structures of control'; 'Social control in the workplace'; approximately 18 out of 35 papers focussed on labour history.

⁶³. Approximately nine papers out of nearly 50 papers.

⁶⁴ M. Goldberg, 'Worker consciousness: a formulation and a critique, HW, 1981'; A. Sitas 'The drought in the city-hostels and metalworkers on the East Rand', HW, 1981; D. Moodie 'Mine culture and miner's identity on the South African Gold Mines', HW 1981; E. Webster 'The colour of craft: changing forms of job protection among members of the Ironmoulder's Society, 1944-1968' TCT.

At the 1984 History Workshop, only five out of the sixteen seminars focussed on labour issues.⁶⁵ The majority of these labour history papers reflected the rapid growth of social history interests. The seminar 'Working Lives', strongly emphasised oral history and biography.⁶⁶ In that seminar, as well as in most of the others with a labour history orientation, workers were seen as part of their communities and not just as labour in the workplace.⁶⁷ In the seminar entitled 'Rural Resistance', emphasis was placed on popular protest and resistance. There was also a growing interest in unorganised and spontaneous protest as opposed to trade union institutional protests.⁶⁸ In fact, there was only one study on an organised strike. This study was written by Bonner and Lambert and did not necessarily fit into the mould of the institutional labour histories which had been so dominant in the 1970s.⁶⁹ The committee's criticism of institutional labour history was clear in Class, Community and Conflict. In the introduction Bozzoli quotes Hobsbawm:

I had a rather strong prejudice, and I still have, against institutional labour history, history of labour seen exclusively as a history of the parties, leaders and others of labour, because it seems to me quite inadequate - necessary, but inadequate. It tends to replace the actual history of the movement by the history of the people who said they spoke for the movement. It tends to replace the class by the organised sectors of the class, and the organised sector of the class by the leaders of the organised sector of the class.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ 'Rural Resistance'; 'Working Lives'; 'Poor White Struggles against Proletarianism'; 'Union Organisation and Struggles 1920-1940; 'Union Organisation and Struggles since 1945'

⁶⁶ Papers presented at that seminar were: J Cock and E Emdon 'Childminders in Soweto: A Face from the Hidden Abode; S Gordon, 'Robert Ramathoke Seise'; P. Stewart, 'The story of Mandlenkosi Makhoba'; E. Webster, 'Cast in a racial mode: five faces from a hidden abode'.

⁶⁷ In seminar 'Union organisation and struggles, 1920-1940' see E. Brink '"Maar 'n klomp factory Meide": The Role of the female Garment Workers in the Clothing Industry, Afrikaner Family and Community on the Witwatersrand during the 1920s'; In the Seminar 'Union organisation and struggles since 1945' see M. Swilling 'The politics of working class struggles in Germiston'; In 'poor white struggles against proletariansim' see R. Morrell '"A Community in Conflict" The poor whites of North Middleburg, 1900-1930'.

⁶⁸ H. Bradford 'Lynch law and labourers, the ICU in Umvoti, 1927-28; HW, 1984; L. Witz 'A Case of schitzophrenia'; Swilling 'The politics of working class struggles'; Brink '"Maar 'n klomp factory meide".

⁶⁹ R. Lambert and P. Bonner, 'Batons and bareheads: The Strike at Amato Textile, February 1958', HW, 1984.

⁷⁰ E. Hobsbawm, 'Interview', in H. Abelove et al (eds) Visions of History, p.31; Bozzoli, 'Class, community and ideology', p.1.

By 1987, within the History Workshop, the diminishing interest in labour history studies was clearly apparent, concurrent with a growth of social history within those labour studies which were presented. Of the twenty two academic seminars only five were on labour, with a few labour history papers scattered among some of the seminars. While there was a seminar entitled 'Organised Struggle in the Forties and Fifties' only two papers on mineworkers' strikes were presented.⁷¹ Issues of race, nationalism and class, culture, ethnicity, gender, family, consciousness, oral history, biography, and a new perspective on working class leadership, were considered in the labour history papers and these issues were the subjects of discussion at the seminars.⁷²

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP BOOKS - A PARTICULAR ORIENTATION

The choice of papers in three books published by the History Workshop, Town and Countryside in the Transvaal (1983), Class, Community and Conflict (1987) and Holding their Ground (1989), reflects an orientation towards the life experiences and consciousness of people in communities not confined to the workplace. For example, in Town and Countryside only two works were published that mention the workplace. These were Dunbar Moodie's 'Mine

⁷¹T.D.Moodie, 'The moral economy of the black miners' strike of 1946', HW, 1987; W. James 'Grounds for a strike: South African gold mining in the 1940s', HW, 1987.

⁷²Race: see seminar 'Race, Class and Registered Trade Unions'. Ethnicity: A Sitas 'Ethnicity, violence and class Leadership in Durban'. New perspectives on working class leadership: J. Maree 'Harnessing Intellectuals: Tensions between democracy and Leadership in the Independent Trade Unions'. Oral history: R. Lambert 'Oral History and the South African Congress of Trade Unions- problems of interpretation in a Politicised present', B. Hirson 'Whatever did happen at Jagersfontein? Or Diamonds are Forever' But Gold is For Now'; Culture: see Seminar 'Changing Worker Culture': A. von Kotze, 'First World Industry and Third World Workers: The Struggle for Workers Theatre in South Africa'; A. Sitas 'The Flight of the Gwala Gwala Bird: Class and Populism in the Natal Worker Cultural Locals'; V. Erlman 'Singing Brings Joy to the Distressed: The Social History of Zulu Migrant Workers' Choral Competitions'. Gender and Family: G. Jaffee 'Women Commuter Workers of the Thusanang Sewing Project: Their Group Identity, Households and Consciousness'; E. Brink 'Only Decent Girls Get Employed: The Respectability, Decency and Virtues of the Garment Workers on the Witwatersrand during the Thirties'; A. Van Niekerk 'Changing Patterns of Worker Accommodation: Ziebediela Citrus Estate, 1926-1953'.

Culture and Miners Identity on the South African Gold Mines', and Eddie Webster's 'The Colour of Craft Changing Forms of Job Protection among Members of the Ironmoulders Society 1944-1968'.⁷³ In Class, Community and Conflict there was only Nicol's paper on the 'Transvaal Garment Workers Union', while Eddie Webster's paper 'Workers Divided', looks not only at the worker's in the workplace but also considers their racial, ethnic, and regional backgrounds as well. In Holding Their Ground, no paper was published which dealt with the workplace and industrial relations within the workplace.⁷⁴

Most of the labour history papers published in the books reflected social history concerns. In Town and Countryside, there was Delius's study of a servile class on the highveld, Bradford's reflections on the ICU, and Brink's paper on young Afrikaans female workers on the Witwatersrand.⁷⁵ These papers took account of workers within their communities. Some studies contributed to the knowledge of how workers' relations and conditions in the rural areas affected their movement to the towns, the way they proletarianised, the jobs they took, their organisation at work and their resistance strategies. Other studies considered workers' morality, consciousness and culture. These papers revealed that worker consciousness could be present, despite an 'absence of associations and organisations which manifestly articulate worker interests'.⁷⁶

Some papers examined the making of a working class and early labour struggles and unorganised resistance. Studies of popular action outside of the workplace also considered forms of resistance other than organised strike action, such as, informal acts of protest in the form of insolence,

⁷³D. Moodie, 'Mine culture and miner's identity'; E. Webster, 'The Colour of Craft'.

⁷⁴Nicol, 'Joh'burg Hotheads'; E. Webster 'Workers divided: five faces from a hidden abode'; CCC.

⁷⁵Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams'; Bradford 'A Taste of Freedom'; E. Brink, 'Maar 'n klomp "factory" meide'.

⁷⁶van Onselen, 'Worker consciousness', p.2; Webster, *Essays in Southern Africa Labour history*, p.8,9.

laziness and desertion. Oral history and narrative life histories, too, became increasingly important.⁷⁷ Labour histories acknowledged by the Workshop committee as being 'relevant to the preoccupations of the History Workshop' reflected social history concerns.⁷⁸

POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY ISSUES AFFECTING THE DIVERGENCE

Bonner, in an interview, explained the divergence between the History Workshop with its social history approach and that of labour history. He noted that at the 1978 History Workshop the committee publically identified with TUACC (which was to become FOSATU in 1979).⁷⁹ Eddie Webster was among those scholars who moved between the labour movement and the History Workshop. Bonner was involved in FOSATU News. Callinicos had been an organiser in the Metal and Allied Workers Union in Durban in 1974 and 1975. As Callinicos noted of that time, 'academics tended to notice the labour movement' and 'we all had links with FOSATU unions'.⁸⁰ However, in 1980-81 the History Workshop committee was influenced by the Popular Democratic movement. As a result, there was an increasing interest in communities and in the lives of ordinary people outside of the workplace. The split between institutional labour history and the social history of labour became more

⁷⁷ Webster, 'Workers Divided'; Lewis, 'South African Labor History', p.218.

⁷⁸ B. Bozzoli, 'Migrant Women and South African Social Change: biographical approaches and social analysis, African Studies, 44,1, 1985; Callinicos, Working Life, Ravan Press; T. Lodge, 'Moses Mathida 1923-1986', SALB 2, June- July 1986, pp. 119-122; Pearson and Kallaway, Johannesburg: Images and Continuities; Webster 'Workers divided'; L. Witz, with E. Koch, 'Johannesburg's history as Gold Reef City prefers to portray it', Weekly Mail May 2-8 1986; see History Research Group, Report for Three Years October 1984- July 1987.

⁷⁹ Bonner, Interview, October 1989.

⁸⁰ Callinicos, interview, October 1989; Kallaway too, noted that although he was not involved in the labour movement as such, he could not help knowing all about it and having a close connection through the environment in Durban and Johannesburg - 'every party that you went to you met FOSATU leaders' - Kallaway, interview, June 1990.

obvious with the workerist versus populist conflict in the early 1980s.⁸¹ Institutional labour history was aligned to the Congress tradition and was nurtured in the sociology departments. The committee of the History Workshop aligned itself more with the social history approach with its concerns with wider political and community issues.⁸² Politically, the year 1982 was problematic for the History Workshop committee as its members were criticized by certain people connected to the UDF for being predominantly white and intellectual. The committee increasingly attempted to be non-partisan and non-sectarian. At the same time, the unions were establishing their independence from white academics by employing their own education officers. All this inevitably meant a further move by the History Workshop away from the labour movement. The papers which were published in the Workshop books tended to reflect that movement.

Sitas pointed to the rise of other developments together within and outside of the labour movement which were beginning to interest academics and involve them in the study of communities outside of the workplace.

Now for us there was a creative period from 1978 to 1982 ... those were incredible years ... incredible because firstly, you had the labour movement beginning to enter proper campaigning and at the same time appealing to the community for support and, being involved somewhere in between that, as an academic and a human being - it was an incredible time of opening up and uncertainty. There were no strict dogmas or anything like that. We tried to relate to what was happening. In 1979 was the Fattis and Monis boycott. In 1980 the meat boycott. There were educational campaigns. There was the rise of community organisations ... the anti-Republic thing and so on until the arrest and death of Neil Aggett - that was an incredible period. It was a period immediately after the Wiehahn commission. We were really making gains. The 1970s reflected Trade Union protest and Soweto. The late 1970s and early 1980s reflected community protest as well as a strong black consciousness thrust.⁸³

According to Webster, 'Unions were drawn into wider political community issues'.⁸⁴ These developments explain why the focus began to

⁸¹Bozzoli described this as 'a perceived tension between those trade unions with and those without a community dimension -that is, unions which espouse general causes not always concerned with the workplace, and those which do not'; Bozzoli, 'Class, community and ideology', p.5.

⁸²Lodge, Interview, June 1988.

⁸³A. Sitas, Interview, 1989

⁸⁴E. Webster, Interview, Wits 1989

shift in later Workshops away from workers in the workplace, class analysis and relations of production to studies of workers within their communities, the organisation of communities and an awareness of racial oppression and its links with class.

The broadening of focus happened because trade unions were putting pressure on academics to help to explain work relations at a time when these were becoming more obviously related to issues outside of the workplace.⁸⁵ As Hyslop was to note 'the re-emergence of mass political movements certainly made people interested in the history of political organisations and the social basis of resistance'.⁸⁶ The papers of Bonner (1978, 1984), Sitas (1981) and Lambert (1984) are examples of the move in labour history towards a wider social and political perspectives.⁸⁷ Even the most 'workerist' of those labour histories which concentrated on the institution of labour began to show signs of taking account of aspects of life outside of the workplace. Nevertheless, these labour history studies did not necessarily lose their essential focus which remained on the institution of labour, work relations, union struggles and the process of work.⁸⁸

Eddie Webster, who was more involved in the sociology of work and social relations at work and trade unions, became less active in the History Workshop in the mid 1980s and in 1987 resigned from the History Workshop Committee to concentrate on his research interests. He felt that there was not enough of a structured relationship between the History Workshop and the 'struggles and organisations of working people'. Part of

⁸⁵COSATU was broader in scope than FOSATU had been in that to some extent COSATU encircled both 'workerist' and 'nationalist' strands although these had a very strained, tense relationship.

⁸⁶Hyslop, interview, October 1989.

⁸⁷Bonner, 'The 1920 Black Mineworkers' Strike'; Bonner and Lambert, 'Batons and Bareheads'; A. Sitas, 'The Drought in the City'; Moodie, 'Mine culture and miner's identity'; Sitas, 'Culture and production: the contradictions of Working Class Theatre in South Africa'; A. Sitas, 'African Worker Responses on the East Rand to Changes in South Africa's Metal Industry 1960-1980', unpublished Ph.d. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983.

⁸⁸R. Lambert, 'Political Unionism and Working Class Hegemony' in Labour, Capital and Society, 18,2, 1985; R. Lambert and E. Webster 'Political Unionism in Contemporary South Africa', in Cobbett and Cohen, Popular Struggles in South Africa.

the reason for his resignation was that he felt the History Workshop 'began to downplay the interests of work and trade unions and followed a theoretical shift away from a more traditional understanding of class in terms of relations of production towards a more culturalist view'.⁸⁹ He pointed to Van Onselen's work which reflected the preoccupations of the History Workshop as a study which 'moves towards the more marginal groupings' and 'which focusses on the unmaking of class - people who try to become self employed'. Webster noted that 'this is the kind of intellectual position that took us in the direction of social history rather than labour'.⁹⁰ He recognised the decline of institutional labour history and agreed with Murray about 'how puzzling it is that there is so little focus on things like the labour process and labour movement in radical South African historiography in spite of its Marxist claims'.⁹¹ Even Bonner pointed to the growing lacunae in labour history: 'there is still the strong need to cover South Africa's organisational history'.⁹² At the same time, Eddie Webster recognised that studies of organisational labour needed an historical perspective. He noted in his letter of resignation from the Workshop: 'I hope we will be able to do things together in the future around such issues as worker organisation - issues that can only be dealt with through an understanding of historical processes'.⁹³

The division between institutional labour history and social history has continued into the 1990s and Lewis has called for the erosion of, what he believes to be, an 'artificial "division of labour" between labour history and social history'. Lewis hoped that there would be a 'breaking

⁸⁹ Webster, interview, October 1989.

⁹⁰ Ibid.; Delius had a different impression of the History Workshop's involvement. In 1989 he noted, 'But labour is still very, very important and I think the History Workshop certainly in one sense of its activities is still very strongly to be able to interact with worker organisations and respond to demands from worker organisations'. Delius, interview, October, 1989.

⁹¹ Webster, interview, October 1989.

⁹² Bonner, interview, October 1989.

⁹³ E. Webster, letter of resignation, 25 February 1987, History Workshop, Minutes of Meeting File, History Workshop Office, University of the Witwatersrand.

down of these imposed barriers between the organised working class and other sections of the oppressed'.⁹⁴

CONCLUSION

The direction taken by the History Workshop on labour studies, in part, is a reflection of developments within South African historiography in the mid to late 1970s. Scholars began to respond to the new questions which emerged from the changing political context in which unions were being drawn into the wider political community. The transition process was slow. The range of the papers at the 1978 Workshop reflected the upheavals that occur in any period of transition. It is a story of existing modes of recording history responding to new issues, yet being partially conserved; while, at the same time, other modes of thought more responsive to a changing base penetrate, expropriate, and at a later stage begin to monopolise the process.

The 1978 History Workshop represents an early phase in this process in which there was much dialogue between the differing modes. Poulantzian work, trade union linked labour studies, academically-oriented labour studies, social and cultural analyses are all evident in the 1978 History Workshop, as well as dialogue between them. It was clear, however, that the aims and intentions of the History Workshop committee were to encourage and spearhead the thrust of social history. This is reflected in the subsequent History Workshops and the choice of papers for Labour, Townships and Protest and other History Workshop books. Although there were many traces of social history in some earlier labour studies these were to gain momentum through the efforts of the History Workshop Committee. The result was that labour studies began to develop in two different directions during the 1980s. However, even the social history of labour declined as an area of importance in the Workshop's priorities as those areas more amenable to social history analyses were developed further.

⁹⁴Lewis, 'South African Labor History', p.231.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP AND URBAN HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

In contrast to labour history studies, Marxist social history studies in the field of urban history proliferated during the 1980s. 'Townships' formed part of the theme of the 1978 Workshop. The committee chose many papers on the history of townships for the Workshop's first academic book Labour Townships and Protest. In fact, the committee could be seen to have encouraged urban history studies right through the 1980s. The themes for the subsequent Workshops reflect this orientation: 'Town and Countryside in the Transvaal' (1981), 'Class Community and Conflict' (1984) and 'The Making of Class' (1987). Perhaps the emphasis, by the committee of the History Workshop, on the lives of ordinary people ensured that the areas of focus would be those where the fastest growing concentrations of these ordinary people lived, in the urban areas.¹ Or, perhaps, the Workshop committee were following the growth of a major trend within South African academic circles towards that of urban history. This chapter will trace the extent to which the History Workshop reflected the development of urban history in South Africa as well as the particular role it played in shaping certain directions in South African urban history from the late 1970s and through the 1980s.

Urban history spans subjects like health, housing, transportation, education, religion, local government, planning, communities, culture, ethnicity, racial and religious divisions, in fact, anything that deals with the physical, psychological, social, operational, demographic and spatial aspects of an urban area. Urban history may include subjects of study within urban areas, and a consideration of the relationship between an urban area and its hinterland - or between two different urban areas -

¹ By the 1980s well over half of the African population were urbanised. A. Bernstein, 'Focus on the cities; towards a new national agenda', Social Dynamics, 15, 1, June 1989, p.99.

or between the central state and a particular urban area or areas. For the purpose of this study, the definition of what constitutes urban history will be slightly broader than that taken by Saunders who felt that, 'to fall within "urban history" a work must have an urban focus, and be concerned with what is peculiar to the urban experience'.² In fact many of the issues referred to in this chapter could be more adequately described as social history. In some papers the urban studies focus is incidental to the main subject, which is social history and the consideration of the life experiences of ordinary people.

INFLUENCES ON URBAN HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Saunders suggested that 'in South Africa the development of urban history has been extremely closely intertwined with current concerns'.³ In the late 1970s, two conferences were held which were strongly orientated towards the lives of ordinary people in urban areas: these were the Wits History Workshop, and the Conference on Cape Town History.⁴ Academic attention had been drawn to the urban areas as a result of: the 1976 risings which swept through townships and threatened the whole structure of apartheid; the rise of black consciousness and cultural groups in the urban areas; the growing participation of communities in work-related boycotts, such as the Fattis and Monis boycott and educational protests. The early years of the 1980s were characterised as a time in which there was a rapid growth in the number of community organisations and youth groups in the townships.⁵ The

² Saunders, 'Methodological issues', p.5.

³ C. Saunders, 'The Struggle for District Six in the Context of Urban History in South Africa', paper presented at the University of Cape Town, Cape Town History Project Workshop, November 1991.

⁴ Both conferences were held in 1978; the Conference on Cape Town History led to the publishing of the book by C.Saunders ed. Studies in the History of Cape Town, vol.1, Cape Town: UCT, History Department, 1979.

⁵ M. Matiwana, and S. Walters, The Struggle for Democracy: A Study of Community Organisations in Greater Cape Town from the 1960s to 1985, University of the Western Cape: Centre for Adult and Continuing Education, 1986.

UDF began campaigning vigorously in 1983 and obtained a broad urban support base. Rob Morrell noted of academic orientations at that time, 'the UDF has had an impact on the way things are happening'.⁶ Eddie Webster also referred to, 'a different atmosphere after the UDF'.⁷ These years also saw growing pressure on influx control legislation as informal settlements mushroomed like boils outside the major urban areas spewing crises of health, housing, poverty, and unemployment.⁸

Possibly the growing interest in urban history in South Africa could be attributed partly to the attention attracted by the expansion of the 'new' urban social studies in America and Britain since the 1960s. Bundy affirmed this:

I think there is another group of historians who were influential on some of us - a group of people around urban, social and oral history, tied up with the History Workshop collective in Britain. Jim Dios, Raphael Samuel, Paul Thompson ... It was about underclass experience, struggles.⁹

These scholars, mentioned by Bundy, conducted social history studies of the lives and experiences of ordinary people and non dominant groups, such as immigrants or groups with particular religious and cultural affiliations. Culture, community, leisure, struggle, education, locality, family, oral history became the issues to be researched and debated in urban history in America and Britain.¹⁰ Much of this 'new urban history', however, was quantitative in nature.

⁶ R. Morrell, Interview, by G. K. Tatham, September 1989, University of Natal, Durban.

⁷ Webster, Interview, October 1989.

⁸ Over the years a number of studies looked at squatter communities: Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfields', Koch, 'Without Visible Means of Subsistence', P. La Hausse, 'The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902-1936', HW, 1984; P. Maylam '20th Century Durban: Thoughts on its regional specificity, and some reflections on a recent Workshop', HW, 1984; I. Edwards, '"Swing the Assegai Peacefully?" "New Africa, M'Kumbane, Co-operative Movements and Attempts to Transform Durban Society in the late 1940s.', HTG.

⁹ Bundy, 'Round Table Discussion', p.17.

¹⁰ K. Conzen, 'The New Urban History: defining the field, in Gardiner and Adams, Ordinary People and Everyday Life; John T. Cumbler, Working Class Communities in Industrial America: Work, Leisure and Struggle in Two Industrial Cities 1880-1930, (Westport Conn: Greenwood Press, 1979; In Birmingham a strong cultural studies programme was established; see Clarke et al, Working Class Culture.

EARLY URBAN HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICA

Within South Africa, urban history developed at a very slow pace. According to Saunders, there were very few urban studies written before the 1960s. Macmillan's study of social processes in Grahamstown, Hattersley's study of Pietermaritzburg, Swanson's and Davenport's studies of segregation and apartheid in urban areas, Welsh's chapter for the Oxford History on urban migration and the growth of towns, and the Rand Afrikaans University research project on Afrikaners in and around Johannesburg were among the few.¹¹ In the 1970s, very few urban studies were published.¹² However, the situation began to change in the late 1970s and the History Workshop, although not necessarily the initiator, responded in an innovative way in attempting to draw the new studies together.

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN URBAN HISTORY

The report of the first meeting to organise the Workshop is illuminating to the extent that it reveals that the committee was responding to a trend which was already occurring.

Townships ... seems to be the dominant theme amongst suggested papers. Perhaps Soweto has something to do with it, but there are a number of people working on, or planning to work on, this subject. Among those mentioned were Charles van Onselen, an MA student called Kagan, one of Tim's students working on Sophiatown, Coplan on Township music. Peter mentioned that some UCT students were working

¹¹W.M. Macmillan, Economic Conditions in a non-Industrial South African Town: A Preliminary survey, (Grahamstown: Grocott and Sherry, 1915); A. Hattersley, Pietermaritzburg Panorama: A survey of One Hundred Years of an African City, Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1938; M. Swanson, 'The rise of multiracial Durban: Urban history and race policy in South Africa 1830-1930', Ph.d thesis, Harvard University, 1965; Swanson, 'Urban origins of separate development', Race, 10, 1968; Swanson, 'Reflections on the Urban History of South Africa', in H. Watts, ed., Focus on Cities, University of Natal, Institute for Social Research, Durban, 1970; T.R.H. Davenport, 'African Townsmen? South African (Natives) urban areas legislation through the years', African Affairs, 68, 271, 1969; Davenport, 'The Triumph of Colonel Stallard', South African Historical Journal, 2, 1970; D. Welsh, 'The growing towns', in Wilson and Thompson, Oxford History of South Africa vol. 2; a publication from this workshop many years later was, E.L.P Stals, Afrikaners in die Goudstad, vol.1 and 2, Pretoria: H.A.U.M., 1978.

¹²John Western wrote about forced removals in Cape Town in his book Outcast Cape Town, Cape Town, Human and Rousseau, 1981.

on townships too, which may bring in a comparative dimension. Moreover Phil seemed keen to encourage his students to explore this subject: the origins of Soweto, and a study of Klipspruit were both mentioned, while more generally it was suggested that the subjects of independant schools, squatters and transport boycotts/strikes etc. were all valuable themes to be pursued by students. The subject of separatist churches, mentioned by Tim, seems also to relate to this category, while Dave Lewis was mentioned as a possible contributor to squatters.¹³

As Bonner noted in an interview: 'The Workshop was responding to new approaches rather than having a new focus'.¹⁴ Nevertheless, they were to spearhead these directions. It was obvious from the above report how many members of the committee supported the concept of township studies.

Other workshops were held which reflected the growing interest in urban studies. Apart from the Conference on Cape Town History, which has already been mentioned, and the subsequent publication, further urban studies were presented at the biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society in July 1981.¹⁵ A Workshop was held in Durban in 1983 on 'African Urban Life in Durban in the 20th Century'.¹⁶ An increasing number of students from different areas, and, particularly, the Witwatersrand, were begining to work on urban history.¹⁷ Hyslop recognised the widespread

¹³HW 2, Report of First Meeting, 1978 Workshop File, HWO, Wits, p.2. The academics mentioned here are Tim Couzens, Peter Kallaway, Phil Bonner.

¹⁴Bonner, interview, October 1989.

¹⁵Saunders, Studies in the History of Cape Town Vol. 1; P Maylam, 'Strategies of control and evasion: African urban history in South Africa 1900-1950', paper presented at the University of Durban Westville, 8th biennial conference of the South African Historical Society, July 1981.

¹⁶ see I. Edwards, 'Living on the smell of an oil rag: African life in Cato Manor farm in the late 1940s', paper presented at Workshop on African Urban Life in Durban in the 20th Century, Durban, 1983.

¹⁷ Bozzoli referenced these works in 'Popular history and the Witwatersrand', van Onselen 'South Africa's Lumpen-proletarian Army: van Onselen, 'Randlords and Rotgut 1886-1903'; T. J. Couzens, 'Sebokeng, Doories and Bra Jiggs: Research in South African Literature,' in New South African Writing Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1977; and Couzens, 'A short History of The World (and other black South African Newspapers)', Inspan, 1, 1978; T. Adler 'Class Struggle in Doorfontein: The History of the Jewish Workers Club' paper presented to the Conference on Southern African Labour History, Johannesburg, April 1976; I. Hofmeyr, 'The Marabi Dance', Africa Perspective, 6 August 1977; T. Lodge, 'The African National Congress in the Rand Townships 1955-57', Africa Perspective 8, July 1978; D. Gaitskell, 'Laundry, Liquor and Playing Ladish: African Women in Johannesburg 1903-39,' unpublished paper University of Witwatersrand; J. Kane-Berman, 'The Pupils Revolt' paper presented to the University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Seminar, 1977; D. Coplan, 'Cultural Politics: Black Performing Arts in Johannesburg' paper presented to

nature of this trend: 'I think there have been similar trends in terms of the social history development in Cape Town and here (Wits) and to some extent in Natal'.¹⁸

The interest in township and in culture and community studies was partially influenced by the rapid growth of cultural groups in the townships in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Many grassroots plays were produced with township themes by companies such as the Junction Avenue Theatre Company and Workshop 71. The Black Consciousness movement was emphasising the importance of black culture. It was instrumental in encouraging the growing number of cultural groups which formed in the townships in the mid to late 1970s. Black Theatre such as The People's Experimental Theatre and Workshop 71 formed part of this growth. A number of magazines were produced such as the Staffrider magazine, which began publication in March 1978 'in an attempt to provide a forum for the cultural groups that were emerging out of the townships. It was obvious that grassroots movements were making academics more aware of community and culture.¹⁹As Sitas noted:

what I saw when I was working at grassroots is that workers, hostel workers, urban workers had performance traditions through which they expressed themselves.

He added 'a lot of us were into reviving those urban routes and the History Workshop was sort of supporting some of these activities'.²⁰The

the University of the Witwatersrand African Studies Seminar 1977; E. Koch, 'The Development of a Police Force on the Witwatersrand 1886-1906' Africa Perspective 8 July 1978; J. Lewis, 'The Germiston By-Election of 1932: the State and the White Working Class During the Depression', paper delivered to the University of the Witwatersrand African Studies Institute, 1978.

¹⁸J. Hyslop, Interview, October 1989.

¹⁹A. W. Oliphant, 'Staffrider Magazine and Popular History: The Opportunities and Challenges of Personal Testimony,' in Radical History Review 46/7, 1990 p.358.

²⁰A. Sitas, Interview, January 1990. Workshop '71 Theatre Company plays include: 'utlanga'; 'Survival'; 'Small Boy'. Workshop '71 Theatre Company in R. Mshengu Kavanagh, South African People's Plays, London: Heinemann, 1981. pp125-127. Junction Avenue Theatre Company plays include: 'The Fantastical History of a Useless Man' (1976), 'Randlords and Rotgut' (1978), 'Dikitsheneng', 1980, 'Security', 1979. M. Purkey, 'Introduction to "Sophiatown", in Sophiatown: a play created by Junction Avenue Theatre Company, Cape Town: David Philip & Junction Avenue Press, 1988, pp. ix, x.

emerging interest in cultural forms of expression as reflected in some of the papers presented to the first History Workshop was a result of more than just an interest derived from Genovese and some British Marxist historians. This interest was largely inspired by what was happening at a grassroots level in South Africa.

THE 1978 HISTORY WORKSHOP

At the 1978 Workshop, the central theme was 'Labour, Townships and Protest'.²¹ However three out of eight seminars focussed on townships: 'Early townships, protest and control', 'Townships protest and control post 1950', 'Cultural alternatives to hegemony', while at least one third of the 35 papers focussed on urban subjects.²² The 'history from below' focus in these urban history papers was limited because they centred mainly on one segment of the underclasses - Africans in urban settlements. Studies of Sophiatown and Alexandra as well as squatter movements from Orlando and Pimville featured among them.

An organisational and economic focus

It is obvious from the seminar titles that there was a strong emphasis on control in many of the papers. The majority of the papers focussed on state legislation and the government's attempts to control and administer the lives of ordinary people. Possibly, this reflects a transition period in the breaking away from a 'history from above' focus. In fact in many respects these studies, in particular Stadler's and Proctor's, represented very little change from the institutional focus of many labour histories in the 1970s, except that they focussed on townships instead of the

²¹'Labour, Townships and Protest'.

²²Approximately 13 out of 35 focussed on urban subjects

workplace.²³In studying protest and resistance movements, their main interest was in the organizational forms, in the structure, shape, and leadership of these movements. The papers were concerned with organised established communities, organised regulated squatting, and political organisations.²⁴The assumption was made that organisation was essential for implementing change and that the character of organisation would affect the course and outcome of particular struggles. The papers had not managed to break away from the focus on organization found in many labour studies.

Some of the papers were quantitative in nature. Couzens, for instance, wrote of Stadler's paper:

Professor Stadler's paper presents an overview, tries to give the total picture of the squatters' movement. It, for instance, quotes population figures, overall economic figures, Governmental position, etc.²⁵

Both Proctor's and Stadler's papers emphasised living conditions, the cost of subsistence, the standard of living (and included mortality figures and facilities available to people).²⁶These scholars' sources were archival documents. Very few papers presented to the History Workshop in 1978 used oral testimonies to gain an inside view of events and experiences.

The early township papers portrayed townships rather simplistically. By concentrating mainly on control, they emphasised the outer pressures which forced people of whatever class to unite against external forces. They referred to the crowded, segregated aspects of townships and the involuntary moulding mechanisms which tended to level internal divisions. Although there were a few papers which focussed on culture and leisure activities, even those papers depicted culture as a weapon - consolidating common experiences as a means of resistance. There was also an obsession

²³ Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfields'; Proctor, 'Class Struggle, segregation and the city'.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Couzens, 'Nobody's Baby, Modikwe Dikobe', p.99

²⁶ Proctor, 'Class Struggle Segregation and the City', pp.21, 28; Stadler, 'Birds in the Cornfields', pp. 72-74.

with the manipulation of culture by the dominant group and the influence of the political economy in culture. The repressive environment of the late 1970s could explain that orientation. 'Culture' was also attached rather mechanically to 'class'.²⁷ Many of the papers, including those of Stadler and Proctor, revealed what Bozzoli and Delius recognised a 'a powerful connection to a degree of economism which a Gutman or Thompson might well have found unacceptable'. Bozzoli suggested that this economism was a result of the legacy of basic materialism and 'workerism' which 'the first neo-Marxists' had left in their wake.²⁸ Possibly the strong tradition of labour history in the 1970s had something to do with this view. Consciousness and culture were also seen as important only when these were associated with movements and organisations.

THE 1981 HISTORY WORKSHOP AND URBAN HISTORY

At the 1981 Workshop, the concept of urban history appeared strongly in the theme Town and Countryside in the Transvaal. Of the eight seminars, two were on urban subjects. These were: 'Life and Culture in the Towns' and 'Urban Organisation and Resistance'. Approximately one third of the 46 papers centred on urban subjects.²⁹ In fact, the committee appeared to give even more emphasis to urban topics and this shift can be seen in the choice of papers for the book. Two large sections out of four sections in the book were devoted to urban life and at least two thirds of the papers chosen for publication had an urban setting.

²⁷Bozzoli and Delius, 'Radical History and South African Society', p.29; Coplan, 'The African Performer', Sole, 'Class, Continuity and Change', Hofmeyr, 'The mad Poets', Koch, '"Without Visible Means of Subsistence"'.
²⁸Bozzoli and Delius, 'Radical History and South African Society', p.43.

²⁹ There were approximately 18 out of 46 papers on urban subjects.

A broader perspective

The theme 'town' in the 1981 Workshop embraced a broader perspective than the theme 'township' in the 1978 Workshop. As a result, papers did not deal only with African urban history. There were some papers which considered English speaking white workers in urban areas and some dealt with the Afrikaner poor.³⁰ At this stage the Workshop committee could be seen to adopt a broader approach to the study of ordinary people by encouraging studies which did not look only at the African poor but also at ordinary people in all racial categories in urban areas. This trend continued. By 1984 the committee's attempt to encourage a non-racial historiography was even more obvious. Bozzoli noted, in an interview for The Star, 'looking at black and white together makes it possible to explain things which would otherwise remain mysteries'.³¹

Culture and experience

The emphasis on 'control' which was so prevalent at the first Workshop was not found in the 1981 seminar titles. Interest waned in the structures of control which had been so obvious in the 1970s and the 1978 History Workshop. Instead, there appeared to be an increasing interest in culture, leisure activities, daily life experiences and the resistance of ordinary people. The obvious rise in interest in these areas can be seen in the fact that Bozzoli devoted a large part of her introduction in Town and Countryside in the Transvaal to discussing culture and experience.³² Many of these papers represented a further development from those presented in 1978 in the sense that culture was not portrayed nearly as economically or linked so closely to class, although the interconnections remained.

³⁰Webster, 'The Colour of Craft', Tomaselli, 'Capitalist Penetration: Popular Response- Images in Afrikaans cinema' HW, 1981; Van Onselen 'The main Reef Road into the Working Class'.

³¹The Star 31/7/87

³²Bozzoli, 'History, Experience and Culture'.

Culture was not merely studied as an economistically determined weapon to be used in resistance, or as an ideological imposition from above.

Papers took account of strong, peculiarly, urban cultures. Ordinary people's cultural activities, their music, leisure activities, sports, family and support group activities and charitable organisations were examined. Koch's paper on slumyard culture, Moodie's on mine culture, Couzen's on football, Peires' on black rugby and Unterhalter's on African responses to modern medicine, were amongst these papers.³³ At the 1987 History Workshop, too, there was a strong emphasis on culture and leisure activities. Nasson's work could be seen to be a celebration of 'a robust and boisterous working class'.³⁴ Although these papers focussed on oppositional and alternative cultures they did not ignore the attempts by the dominant groups to manipulate and control these cultures. However, there was an increasing recognition that these attempts did not always succeed.³⁵ The Marxist orientation of the works remained, in the sense that, culture was inevitably viewed 'from a perspective which ties it inextricably to the conflicts between classes; to the attempts by some to dominate others, and to the responses of the subordinated to these attempts'.³⁶

Looking back from 1990 at the development of cultural studies, Jeppie was to note that one shortcoming with the studies of culture was that despite the growth of studies of cultural organisations and practises, there remained an enormous gap in the literature of the cultural forms and practices of political parties and organisations in urban areas.³⁷

³³Koch, 'Without visible means'; Couzens, 'An introduction to the history of football in South Africa'; Tomaselli, 'Indian flower sellers of Johannesburg: J. Peires, 'Facta Non Verba: towards a history of black rugby in the Eastern Cape'; 1981, HW; B. Unterhalter, 'Some responses of South African urban blacks to modern medicine'; 1981, HW.

³⁴Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction', p.5.

³⁵Lodge, 'The Parents, School Boycott'.

³⁶Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p.22.

³⁷S. Jeppie '"Liberators make merry"? The Left and Popular Culture in inner Cape Town c. 1939-1960', University of Cape Town, History Department Seminar, 1990, p.1.

Oral history

With the expansion of studies on culture, came a growth in the number of oral histories. Admittedly, there were very few of these oral histories in the urban history papers, even at the 1981 Workshop. Yet the interest of the committee (and certainly Bozzoli's interest) in this area is obvious. In her introduction to Town and Countryside, Bozzoli wrote nearly eight pages on the uses to which experiential testimony could be put. She commented on the 'qualitative, ideological, interpretative and factual uses of experiential data'.³⁸ Koch's paper on slumyard culture made use of oral testimonies. At the same time, there was also evidence of attempts to write narrative biographies, or at least, to discuss narrative fiction which depicts reality (as Stephen Gray did on Blackburn's satire 'Piet's Progress, and Rich did on Buchan's novel 'Prester John'). Possibly, it was the influence of those academics working on literary studies, Tim Couzens among them, which inspired historians and other academics to enter the field of narrative biographies as an aid to illuminating history.³⁹ Certainly the interdisciplinary nature of the History Workshop encouraged the development of exciting new methodologies and insights in South African historical work. Thus, literary studies (which considered particular novels, the time of their setting and what they reflected of the author's values and responses to issues like capitalist penetration) are discussed alongside history. Bozzoli noted that it was the concern of the Workshop 'to avoid the separation of literary and cultural studies into an academic ghetto of their own'.⁴⁰

Oral history and studies of culture inevitably led to a move from studies of the organised to studies of the resistance of the less

³⁸ Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p.10. At this point in time most of her references are to rural history studies. It appears that oral history was growing faster as a methodological source in rural studies at this time.

³⁹ T. Couzens, 'Keeping the runway clear: Ethelreda Lewis', HW, 1984; T. Couzens, 'The struggle to be independent: a history of the black press in South Africa, 1836-1960; HW, 1990; T. Couzens, 'Literature: black South African writing 1850-1960; Gray, '"Piet's Progress": Douglas Blackburn's Satire'; P.Rich, '"Milnerism and a Ripping Yarn"'.

⁴⁰ Bozzoli, 'Popular History and the Witwatersrand', p.10.

organised, the less visible, the unregulated sectors of society. In the introduction to Town and Countryside, Bozzoli devoted a fair amount of attention to the concept of resistance - 'resilience as resistance', 'heritages of resistance' and 'styles of resistance'. These trends were to continue in social urban history studies right through the 1980s and into the 1990s.⁴¹

Gender studies

As mentioned earlier, studies which considered gender relations and women's roles in the making of history were very slow to develop. A detour must be made at this point to establish what happened to gender analysis studies over the period of the 1980s. In 1981, the History Workshop committee had purposefully set out to encourage studies which examined the position of women in both urban and rural history.⁴² Bozzoli had noted in a letter to Sheila Rowbotham: 'This time we are making certain that the Workshop examines the position of women in South Africa'. However, at that Workshop, there were as yet very few papers which considered women. Wells' work on 'Women in Resistance in Potchefstroom 1912-1930' was amongst the few.⁴³

The growth in the number of researchers who took gender analysis into account was evident in Class Community and Conflict. At least four papers were published which considered women, gender relations and family life.⁴⁴ In that book, Bozzoli devotes a section in the introduction to, 'the salience of gender'.⁴⁵ At the 1987 Workshop, the papers of Sapire, Eales

⁴¹p. Bonner, 'Family, crime and political consciousness on the East Rand, 1939-1955', HW, 1987, P. Bonner, 'An evil Empire: Russians on the Reef 1947-57', HW, 1990; P. Bonner, 'The Politics of black squatter movements on the Rand 1944-1952', in Radical History Review 46/7 1990 pp.89-115.

⁴²Proposed 'History Workshop', 1981 (n.d.) 1981 Workshop papers Box File.

⁴³B. Bozzoli letter to S. Rowbotham, 20 June 1980, (History Workshop papers Box File), 1981 History Workshop papers, HWO, Wits.

⁴⁴Brink, '"Maar 'n klomp Factory Meide", Nicol, '"Joh'burg Hotheads" Cock and Emdon, 'Let me make history please'; Couzens 'Keeping the Runway Clear: Ethelreda Lewis'.

⁴⁵She refers to the papers of: Bradford, Beinart, Cock and Emdon, and Brink. Bozzoli, 'Class, community and ideology', pp.22,23.

and La Hausse and Edwards (amongst others) considered women as agents in history. Further, in their introduction to Holding the Ground, Bonner and Lodge discussed gender and class. This, no doubt, was the response to the committee's specific call for papers on gender relations. A theme proposed by Bozzoli was 'Households, Gender and Class, with thoughts on how classes are formed'.⁴⁶At the 1990 History Workshop, a whole seminar was devoted to discussions of gender 'Gender, Text and Politics'. This seminar was chaired by Shula Marks and was very well attended.⁴⁷In 1991, a conference was held in Durban entitled 'Women and Gender in Southern Africa'. Many academics who had previously given papers to the History Workshop attended along with other scholars throughout the country.⁴⁸These developments reflect the mushrooming of women's studies in South Africa in which the History Workshop played an essential part.

Urban areas and their hinterlands

The theme Town and Countryside in 1981, incorporated within it the concept of an interrelationship between urban areas and their hinterlands or rural areas. Of course, this included the migration of people from these rural areas to the cities - in other words, the course of urbanisation and industrialisation. However, scholars writing on urban subjects were, as mentioned earlier, rather slow to consider the urban segment within the context of the region as a whole. Questions such as why people moved, who

⁴⁶History Workshop Committee Meeting 8 November 1985. History Workshop Minutes of Meeting File, HWO, Wits. February 1986 Fourth Tri-ennial Conference and Open Day call for papers, HRG Report for the three years 1984-87. Studies of Households and Gender include W. Beinart and P. Delius, 'The Family and early Migrancy in Southern Africa', unpublished seminar paper, University of London, African History Seminar 1979; Bozzoli, 'Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies'.

⁴⁷1990 HW Conference Programme. My attendance and observation of it. It was one of the best attended sessions.

⁴⁸B. Bozzoli, 'Life Strategies, household resilience and the meaning of informal work: some women's stories'; G. Minkley, 'Married to the beer: Gender and Class in the East London locations, c.1927-1963'; J. Seekings, 'Gender ideology and youth politics in the 1980s'; J. Wells, 'The rise and fall of "motherism" as a force in black women's resistance movements'; I. Edwards, 'When we stopped praying for our men': The ANCWL, the Cato Manor revolt of June 1959 and silly success stories'; papers delivered at the University of Natal, Durban Conference on 'Women and Gender in Southern Africa', 1991.

moved and what were the consequences of their moving (not only for themselves but also for those already established in urban areas) were not central concerns on many academic urban history agendas. At the 1978 History Workshop, Bonner's work on the 1920 black mineworker's strike was among the very few papers which considered the fact that a person's origin affected relationships with others in an urban/labour setting. Later, at the 1981 Workshop, there was evidence of a greater, although as yet rather limited, number of scholars who took account of migrations from rural areas when considering the permanence or transience, the heterogeneity, the social mobility and the density of the population within urban areas.⁴⁹

The committee of the History Workshop recognised the need for, and called for studies which took these rural connections into account. The number of these studies was certainly on the increase as was evident at the 1984 Workshop. Papers such as Guy and Thabane and Pinnock's on gang culture, considered how past relations in rural communities became transformed in an urban setting and affected the views people had of their own identities. Testimony to the growth of 'history from below' studies were: van Onselen's paper in 1981 and those papers by Witz, Clynick and Brink in 1984 on white communities. These papers took into account the resilience of past rural relations and how these manifest themselves in urban relationships.⁵⁰

Subsequent to the 1981 Workshop, Van Onselen published his two volume work on the Witwatersrand. Urban history became established as a major field in South African historical writing and this trend was increasingly obvious at the subsequent History Workshops.⁵¹

⁴⁹Wells, 'The day the town stood still'. Wells 1981. She considers the independence and resilience of the sharecropper life, and how this 'heritage of resistance' had its impact on those in the urban area. Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and oorlams', also explain certain urban characteristics as being a result of the oorlam heritage.

⁵⁰van Onselen 'The Main Reef Road into the Working Class'; Wits, 'A case of schizophrenia', Brink, 'Maar 'n klomp 'factory meide'; T. Clynick, 'Community politics on the Lichtenburg alluvial diamond fields, 1926-1929', CCC.

⁵¹van Onselen, New Nineveh and New Babylon.

THE 1984 HISTORY WORKSHOP

The 1984 Workshop entitled Class, Community and Conflict included at least two thirds of the 51 papers on urban themes.⁵² Of the 16 seminars, four seminars focussed on urban topics, while a further eight had a distinctly urban bias. The urban seminars included themes such as 'Community, Culture and Afrikaner Society'; 'Ethnicity, Ideology and The State in the 20th Century'; 'Comparative Urban Perspectives'; 'Working Lives'; 'Social History of the Witwatersrand'; 'Poor White Struggles against Proletarianism', 'Union Organisation and Struggles 1920-1940', 'Townships, Regulation and Resistance'; 'Working class Culture'; 'Gangs'; 'Union Organisation and Struggles'. The number of papers and seminars on urban history reflects the tremendous growth in this field in the early and mid 1980s.

A comparative perspective

The focus of the 1984 Workshop was broader than the previous two Workshops. As the committee reported in 1984, 'our theme was more embracing, our participants from a wider circle, our concerns more focussed'.⁵³ They added: 'We attempted to introduce a comparative perspective into our discussions by widening our scope from a Witwatersrand or Transvaal focus ... to one which was nation wide'.⁵⁴ Many scholars from other parts of the country had, over the years, put pressure on the History Workshop to extend and include studies from other regions. Even at the first Workshop, scholars like R. Hallett, C. Saunders, J. Maree, S. Hindson and R. Moorsom sent in papers which were not on the Witwatersrand.⁵⁵ In 1981, there was

⁵² Approximately 33 out of 51.

⁵³ HW Report for Three Years ended December 31st, 1984. p5.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.5.

⁵⁵ C. Saunders, 'The Creation of Ndabeni: urban segregation, social control and African resistance' HW, 1978; J. Maree, 'African and coloured squatters in the Cape Town region, HW, 1978, R. Hallett, 'Policemen, pimps and prostitutes: public morality and police corruption, Cape Town 1902-1904', HW 1978; S. Hindson's paper was on Pietermaritzburg, and R. Moorsom's was on the

more pressure from academics at other Universities.⁵⁶ La Hausse noted of the History Workshop before 1984:

It was very regionally bound - the Transvaal. I was probably well placed to pick up on that because I was in Durban and I was in Cape Town, so I felt very strongly about that ... I felt it was too narrowly defined just in those terms.⁵⁷

The comparative perspective facilitated by this broader focus encouraged much fruitful discussion and illuminated many new areas of study in different urban areas. This was noted in the 1984 Workshop report, where 'regional comparisons were developed in new directions'.⁵⁸ Comparative perspectives were introduced not only in the seminar on 'Comparative Urban Perspectives', but also in other seminars, such as that on Union Organisation, in which the Garment Workers in Cape Town and in Johannesburg were discussed.⁵⁹

Community studies

For 1984, another perspective introduced was that of community. The committee had called for papers with a view of communities from below and from within. Apart from studies of African communities within townships, papers were presented on Afrikaner family and community, English speaking

Eastern Cape.

⁵⁶J. Peires, 'Facta Non Verba: Towards a History of Black Rugby in the Eastern Cape', HW, 1978.

⁵⁷P. La Hausse, interview October 1989. La Hausse presented an urban history paper at the 1984 Workshop. He joined the committee by 1987. P. La Hausse, 'The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902-1936', HW, 1984.

⁵⁸HW Report for Three Years Ended December 31st, 1984. p.6

⁵⁹'Comparative urban perspectives' and 'Union organisation and struggles, 1920-1940': N. Garson, 'The Cape franchise in action: the Queenstown by-election of December 1921'; A. Mabin, 'Class as a local phenomenon: conflict between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth' in the 19th Century'; P. Maylam, '20th Century Durban: thoughts on its regional specificity and some reflections on a recent Workshop'. Some other papers which were presented with a focus outside the Witwatersrand were: D. Gilfoyl, '"A Concurrence of interests?": businessmen, proletarians and housing in Springs, 1948-1960'; D. Pinnock, 'Stone's Boys and the making of a Cape Flats Mafia'- all papers HW 1984.

whites, Jewish communities, women within communities, communities identified by culture, gangs within communities.⁶⁰ In fact, the whole emphasis changed from the 1978 'history from below perspective' which dealt centrally with Africans and depicted them as united against a common enemy, to one which saw ordinary people in every hue. As Bozzoli noted, these community studies sought:

in the tradition of W.M. Macmillan, to retrieve from the controlling orbit of old-style white nationalist historiography the past of ordinary white people.⁶¹

These community studies emphasised to a far greater extent the divisions and stratifications within urban societies. Certain studies looked inside communities to show cleavages and divisions. Divisions apart from class such as gender, ethnic, racial, religious, or regional, were also recognised. In this regard, a whole section in the book Class Community and Conflict was devoted to the subject 'Cleavage and Unity in Urban African Communities'.⁶²

The interest in the concept of community formation in South Africa, as mentioned in chapter 3, was promoted by scholars trying to grapple with aspects of South Africa's history which could not be explained easily by reference to class and class consciousness (such as Afrikaner nationalism).⁶³ The History Workshop, specifically, chose to focus on the concept of community in an attempt to introduce a framework for viewing South Africa's history that was not limited to race or to an economic class analysis. However, the suggestion has been made that the Workshop was merely responding to a growth in the number of studies of communities amongst academics.

⁶⁰E. Brink 'Maar 'n klomp 'factory meide': R. Krut, 'The making of a South African Jewish community in Johannesburg', CCC., T. Clynick, 'Community politics on the Lichtenburg alluvial diamond fields, 1926-1929', CCC.

⁶¹Bozzoli, 'Class, community and ideology', p.29.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³D. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme, Johannesburg, 1983; I. Hofmeyr, 'Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and 'ethnic identity', 1902-1924', HW, 1984; H. Giliomee, 'The development of Afrikaans Ethnicity c. 1850-1915, HW 1984.

Many papers dealt with the destruction and dispossession of communities, such as Sophiatown, Doornfontein and Vrededorp. Other papers considered the reconstruction of communities.⁶⁴ All these papers, to some extent, recognised people as agents in their attempts to resist the destruction as well as in their efforts to rebuild communities. By 1987, the emphasis was more positive and dealt not so much with the destruction but rather with the defense by people of their communities.⁶⁵

Community studies ensured that a more complex view of townships and urban areas evolved. No longer did studies merely look at the more involuntary mechanisms affecting township creation. Scholars looked for factors in the history of townships that made each unique and different. These factors included: economic cycles, the demands of different forms of capital, prospects for employment and for independent economic activity, the administration by local government of townships, and the effects of past traditions and relationships on people's lives in urban areas. The list is all-encompassing. The concept of community was able to cover research into all these voluntary and involuntary factors and this resulted in a far more complex view of urban areas.

A continuation and extension of the history from below theme

At the 1984 Workshop, emphasis on culture, experience, on oral history and on biographies was apparent. In the call for papers for the 1984 Workshop the committee emphasised the need to re-evaluate the concept of class through taking account of oral testimony, culture, gender relations and individual life stories.⁶⁶ Two seminars were devoted to culture:

⁶⁴ Sapire, 'The stay-away of the Brakpan Location, 1944'; T. Lodge, 'Political organisations in Pretoria's African Townships, 1940-1963', CCC.; D. Pinnock, 'Stone's boys and the making of a Cape Flats Mafia', CCC.

⁶⁵ La Hausse, 'The message of the warriors', I. Edwards, 'Swing the Assegai Peacefully'; 'New Africa, Mkumbane, the Co-operative movement and attempts to transform Durban society in the late 1940s'. These scholars wrote about initiative and cultural alternatives.

⁶⁶ History Workshop Fourth Triennial Conference and Open Day Call for Papers, in History Research Group, Second Annual Report, October 1985-September 1986.

'Community, Culture and Afrikaner Society' and 'Working Class Culture'. Ordinary people's experiences featured strongly in the seminars 'Social History of the Witwatersrand', 'Poor White struggles against Proletarianism', 'Townships, Regulation and Resistance', as well as in the seminars 'Working Lives' and 'Gangs', which included many biographies. The biographies which were presented were based mainly on oral histories.⁶⁷

As far as the biographies were concerned, the Workshop committee 'made a special plea for papers to be presented on life histories of individuals'.⁶⁸ This was in keeping with the strong social history emphasis of the Workshop committee on consciousness and the experiences of ordinary people. Certain individuals on the committee played an important part in encouraging the writing of biographical histories. Lodge, for instance, admitted his interest in biographical and narrative studies. He referred to the great narrative work by John Womack, Emilio Zapata and the Mexican Revolution, as having had a significant impact on his direction of study.⁶⁹ Likewise, Van Onselen had just written, or was in the process of writing, a biographical work about Nongoloza Mathebula, the central figure in 'Regiment of the Hills'.⁷⁰

THE 1987 HISTORY WORKSHOP AND URBAN HISTORY

The continuing growth in the study of urban history became more obvious at the 1987 Conference. This increase reflected the general increase in urban

⁶⁷ Cock and Emdon, 'Let me make history please': Webster, 'Workers divided': J. Guy and Motlatsi Thabane, 'The Ma-Rashea: A Participant's Perspective', CCC. Lodge in his paper 'Policital organisations in Pretoria's African Townships; uses the autobiography of Mokgatle and Mphahlele.

⁶⁸History Workshop Report for Three years ended Dec 31st, 1984 p.5.

⁶⁹T. Lodge, interview, June 1988.

⁷⁰C. Van Onselen, ' The Small Matter of a Horse': the life of 'Nongoloza' Mathebula, 1867-1948, Johannesburg, Ravan, 1984.

history studies in South African historiography.⁷¹ Of the 22 academic seminars more than half dealt with distinctly urban issues.⁷² Among these were: 'Transforming Urban Culture'; 'Control of the Poor'; 'Contemporary Struggles in Natal'; 'Black Intellectuals between the Wars'; 'Youth, Culture and Organisation'; 'Working Class Leadership'; 'Family, Identity and Consciousness'; 'Capital and the State'; 'Liberalism and Social Reform'; 'Oral History Case Studies'; 'Imperialism and the Making of Class'; and 'Changing Worker Culture'. The committee noted that there was 'a marked continuity with and progression from the 1984 Conference'.⁷³

Developments in urban history - continuity and progression in social history themes

At the 1987 Workshop there was continuity in the emphasis on the social history of the underclasses. People's experiences, culture, consciousness and struggles continued to remain high on the agenda of the majority of these papers. Oral history grew apace. Apart from the fact that one seminar was devoted to 'oral history case studies', Bonner and Lodge mentioned that oral testimony was 'used in most papers' in the book Holding Their Ground. Nasson's oral history of popular leisure and class expression in District Six was published in the book. The interest in these studies is confirmed by the fact that the journal Social Dynamics devoted a whole edition to the theme of 'exploring experiential testimonies' and five papers, which had been presented at the 1987 History Workshop, were printed in that journal.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Scholars like: J. Cole, Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression 1976-86, Johannesburg, Ravan, 1987; I. Edwards, 'Mkhumbane our home: African shantytown society in Cato Manor Farm, 1946-1960', Ph.d. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1989.

⁷² These exclude the seminars and papers dealing with popularisation.

⁷³ Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction'.

⁷⁴ Social Dynamics vol.13 No.2 1988: J. Peires 'Piet Draghoender's Lament'; J. Starfield, 'Not Quite History: The autobiographical writings of H. Selby Msimang and R.V. Selope Thema and the Writing of History'; D. James, 'Land Shortage and Inheritance in a Lebowa village'; A. Van Niekerk, 'Changing Patterns of Worker Accommodation, Ziebediela Citrus Estate 1926-1953: The Dynamics of External Restraint and Self-Discipline'.

The growing interest in oral history could be attributed partly to the number of oral history collection centres set up around the country which greatly facilitated the work of historians in this regard. The African Studies Institute at Wits; The Killie Campbell Library's collection centre; UCT's Western Cape Oral History Project were amongst these centres.

Narrative and life histories were integral to this surge of interest in oral history studies.⁷⁵ As Bonner and Lodge remarked 'narrative ... "enables" the expression of people's experience'.⁷⁶ Lodge's proposal for the 1987 Workshop gave prominence to biography: 'Great Men and Ordinary People - biography and South African historiography'.⁷⁷ An increasing number of papers were using the life stories of individuals - often the middle, economically independent leaders of the poor - to illuminate particular historical episodes or periods and people's experiences of that time.⁷⁸ Members of the History Workshop committee produced and published a number of biographical and oral history studies in the late 1980s and these studies were given recognition in the History Workshop's Reports because of their relevance to the preoccupations of the History Workshop.⁷⁹

There was continuity and progression as far as the concept of community was concerned. As it had at the 1984 Workshop the emphasis at the 1987 Workshop tended to remain on community. Scholars increasingly showed an awareness of divisions within societies, between communities and even

⁷⁵As an example see T. Keegan, 'Exploiting the Contradictions: The Life Story of Ndame Makume', HW, 1987.

⁷⁶Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction', p.6.

⁷⁷Minutes of Meeting, History Workshop committee meeting 8 November 1985, theme proposed for 1987 Workshop, HW minutes of Meeting File, HWO, Wits.

⁷⁸Keegan, 'Exploiting the contradictions'; A. H. Jeeves, 'William Genmill and the South African Expansion 1920-1950', HW 1987; J. Krikler, 'William Macmillan and the Working Class', HW 1987; A. Manson, 'The Life of Chief Moila 11 of the Hurutshe, c 1795-1875: The Role of Chiefly Power in an age of Reconstruction'; R. Morrell, 'Pipping a Little Game in the Bud - Pixley Isaka ka Seme, Land Purchase and Rural Differentiation in the Eastern Transvaal', HW 1987; J. Peires, 'Piet Draghoender's Lament'; M. Orkin, 'Contesting Prevailing Discourse: Nongquase and the Girl who killed to save', HW 1987.

⁷⁹ Report for Three Years October 1984- July 1987: Bozzoli, 'Migrant Women and South African Social Change': Lodge, 'Moses Mathida 1923-1986', Bozzoli, 'The Widow of Phokeng', Staffrider, July 1984; L. Callinicos, 'Memories of a poor white childhood', Staffrider 6,3, 1986; Webster, 'Workers divided'.

within communities. As a result of these studies, Bonner and Lodge commented that 'a highly heterogenous set of communities established themselves on these semi-rural grey areas next to Brakpan and other Reef Towns'.⁸⁰ La Hausse, who joined the committee by 1987, was one scholar who looked at the divisions within and the unity of communities and cultures in Durban.⁸¹

Of course, studies of culture were linked closely to those of communities. At least three seminars had culture themes and many papers considered culture.⁸² A few, such as Nasson's and Edward's papers, celebrated people's culture as a means of self expression, opposition, protest and initiative.⁸³ However, an increasing number of scholars who considered culture began, again, to draw strong links between culture and the manipulation of culture by political groups or movements. Manipulation was seen both in the sense of the manipulation by the state as well as in the sense that resistance movements such as the ICU needed to take hold of cultural symbols in order to attract and keep a following.⁸⁴ The same principles applied to ethnicity.

Ethnicity was considered in many papers in terms of the concepts manipulation, adjustment and resistance. In fact there were very many contemporary studies, most of which centred on Natal, which examined ethnicity and culture.⁸⁵ The violence and the strong presence of ethnic

⁸⁰ Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction'.

⁸¹ La Hausse, 'The Message of the Warriors'.

⁸² 'Transforming Urban Culture'; 'Youth Culture and Organisation'; 'Changing Worker Culture', seminar subjects, in revised programme 1987 Conference 'The Making of Class', History Research Group, Report for Three Years Oct 1984- July 1987; Edwards, 'Swing the Assegai Peacefully'; La Hausse, 'The Message of the Warriors', Bonner, 'Family, Crime and Political Consciousness'; Sitas, 'The Flight of the Gwala Gwala Bird'.

⁸³ B. Nasson, '"She preferred living in a cave with Harry the Snake Catcher": towards an oral history of popular leisure and class expression in District Six, Cape Town, 1920-1950s', HTG; Edwards, 'Swing the assegai peacefully?'.

⁸⁴ La Hausse, 'The Message of the Warriors'.

⁸⁵ D. Bonnin, 'Two Generations of Worker Leadership: The Histories and Traditions of the Sarmcol Workers'; HW 1987; M. De Haas, 'Culture Class and Consciousness in Contemporary Natal'; HW 1987; H. Hughes 'Violence in Inanda, 1985', HW 1987; Sitas, 'The Flight of the Gwala-Gwala Bird'.

mobilisation in Natal could be seen to have sparked off this academic development. As Iain Edwards noted:

left wing historians were sick and tired of the way people were using ethnicity. Buthelezi - the Natal Indian Congress - whatever ... and we thought it was time. I think the violence also had a part to play in it.⁸⁶

Contemporary studies

Contemporary events caused a proliferation of studies of similar happenings in the past and of topical political crises. The 1987 Conference hosted sixteen papers on present day issues. This represented a remarkable change from the 1984 Conference and reflected what Bonner and Lodge described as, 'a welcome new vigour in the field of contemporary studies'.⁸⁷ Lodge and Witz were amongst those committee members whose work reflected contemporary concerns.⁸⁸

Education and youth

Further developments also initiated by contemporary events, were increasing numbers of papers dealing with education as well as with youth. These developments followed the campaigns of the National Education Crisis Committee and other groups around education in the mid 1980s. Apart from the interest in people's education, the academic papers revealed that there was a gradual rise of interest in youth and educational issues - mainly expressed by members of the committee. Lodge's paper on the 1955 school

⁸⁶Edwards, interview, September 1989.

⁸⁷Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction', p.1; S. Jeremy, 'The origins of political mobilisation in the PWV Townships, 1980-1984', HW 1987.

⁸⁸The History Workshop Committee claimed these works as reflecting the pre-occupations of the Workshop. Lodge 'Political Organisation in Pretoria's African township'; T. Lodge 'Political Mobilisation during the 1950s', in S. Marks and S. Trapido, The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in the 20th Century South Africa, London: Longman, 1987; L. Witz, with R. Morrell and P. Crankshaw, 'Deportation, detentions and disturbances: notes towards a contemporary history of the Universities of Bophutatswana and Transkei', paper presented to the Association of Sociology of Southern Africa' July 1986; L. Witz, 'Misplaced Ideals? The Case of UNIBO': a reply to J.F. de Graaf', in Reality, July 1986.

boycott was presented in 1981; Chisholm's and Krut's papers, both of which considered education, were presented at the 1984 conference. Callinicos' paper on popular history and people's education was published in Class, Community and Conflict.⁸⁹ In 1987, there were Bonner and Glaser's papers on youth and crime and Hyslop's two papers on African education and boycotts between 1955 and 1976.⁹⁰ At the 1990 Conference a whole seminar, chaired by Hyslop, focussed on Bantu Education with Beale, Murray, Kros and Campbell presenting papers. These papers were additional to those on youth and education presented under the 'Youth, Migrancy and Criminality' seminar.⁹¹

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP AND URBAN HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICA - AN ASSESSMENT

Saunders wrote that, 'by 1990 there was a sizeable academic literature on urban history in South Africa'.⁹² Despite the fact that the papers presented to the triennial conferences do not account for the total picture of urban history studies in South Africa, nevertheless, from a study of these conferences, certain generalisations can be made about the state of urban history in the 1980s. It is obvious that there was an increase in

⁸⁹ Chisolm and Krut were not committee members; Lodge, 'The Parents' School Boycott 1955'; R. Krut, 'The Making of a South African Jewish Community in Johannesburg 1886-1914', CCC; L. Callinicos 'The People's Past: Towards Transforming the Present', CCC; L. Chisholm, 'Themes in the Construction of Free Compulsory Education for the White Working Class on the Witwatersrand 1886-1907', HW, 1987.

⁹⁰ Bonner, 'Family, Crime and Political Consciousness'; C. Glaser, 'Students, Tsotsis and the Congress Youth League: Youth Organisation on the Rand in the 1940s and 1950s', HW 1987; Hyslop, 'School Boards, School Committee's and Educational Politics'; J. Hyslop, 'A Preface to People's Education: Reflections on the 1955-6 School Boycotts (African School Boards 1955-76)', HW, 1987.

⁹¹ E.M. Beale, 'The Task of Fort Hare in terms of the Transkei and Ciskei'- Educational policy at Fort Hare in the 1960s', HW, 1990; B. Murray, 'Wits, Students and Apartheid 1948-1959', HW, 1990; C. Kros, 'Deep Rumbblings': Z K Matthews, Witness to the Eiselen Commission of Inquiry into Native Education 1934-1949', HW, 1990; J. Campbell, 'African- American Education in South Africa: A History of the Wilberforce Institute', HW, 1990; L. Chisholm, 'Education, Punishment and the Contradictions of Penal Reform: Alan Paton and the Diepkloof Reformatory 1934- 1948', HW, 1990; C. Glaser, 'When are we going to fight? Tsotsi's, Youth Politics and the PAC on the Witwatersrand during the 1950s and early 1960s', HW, 1990.

⁹² Saunders, 'Methodological Issues', p.17.

interest in urban history. The new works were often inspired by contemporary crises, such as the growth of massive squatter settlements, local urban administration crises, education, youth rebellion and crime. If any predictions were made for the direction of urban history studies in the future, the suggestion is made that the violence on the Witwatersrand in 1990 and 1991, linked to the existence of hostels within communities there, will provide a strong incentive for research into subjects such as migrant workers, ethnicity, the manipulation of ethnicity by various power groups, violence and the relationships between hostel dwellers and more settled, permanent communities.

Many of the urban history studies produced in the late 1970s and early 1980s embraced a social history orientation with an emphasis on history 'from below' which included studies of culture, consciousness, people's experiences. Oral history and narrative biographies formed an essential part of this emphasis. Perhaps the fact that the majority of those scholars who presented papers to the History Workshop saw themselves firstly as social historians and only, secondly, as urban historians that contributes to the lack of real direction in the field of urban history in South Africa.

The numerous articles presented to the History Workshop over the years contributed substantially to our understanding of urban life and processes within urban areas in South Africa. Some of the works by the committee members which are in keeping with the preoccupations of the History Workshop, have achieved international acclaim.⁹³ Many facets of urban life have been illuminated. These studies include: life and the activities of different groups of people within urban areas; different interest groups and their differential access to local government and the state and the effect these have on shaping urban policy; the relationships between certain urban areas and their hinterlands; the differences and similarities between cities; and the relationships between different urban areas have all been subjects of study. While other urban areas have had sections of their history covered, the larger urban centres, such as the

⁹³Van Onselen, New Babylon, New Nineveh.

Witwatersrand, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town have been more comprehensively studied.⁹⁴ The Wits History Workshop and the Cape Town Urban History Project appear to be leading the field in encouraging the growth of urban history - the former particularly, in Marxist social history in urban studies.

Certain methodological problems and lacunae need to be confronted and overcome if urban history is to develop as a maturing field of study. Firstly, there is the problem pointed to by Saunders, that some of the urban history studies are strongly empiricist and microscopic in focus. Many of these studies consist of narrative and descriptive chronicles of events and everyday experiences in localised areas.⁹⁵ Some of the scholars have lost sight of the structural context and of central underlying processes.⁹⁶

Further problems are segmentation and compartmentalisation. Although the History Workshop committee has attempted to encourage a non-racial historiography, many papers tend to consider one segment of an urban population with little attempt to consider the interrelationships with other sections of the populace, or to consider the urban population or the urban experience as a whole. In some papers, only one segment of an urban area is examined and little attempt is made to relate that segment to the city or the region as a whole.⁹⁷ It appears that the penetrating effects of

⁹⁴ Garson, 'The Cape Franchise in Action; Mabin, 'Class as a Local Phenomenon: Conflict between "Cape Town" and "Port Elizabeth"'; Sapire, 'African Settlement and Segregation in Brakpan 1900-1927'; R.E. Pretorius, 'Banishment: Germiston's answer to Opposition in the Natalspruit Location, 1955-1957', HW, 1987.

⁹⁵ Saunders, 'Methodological Issues', p.17.

⁹⁶ For instance M. Tayal's study of the period does not give government policy enough attention M. Tayal, 'The 1913 Natal Indian Strike', HW, 1984; W. James, 'Materialist history, materialist theory: A response to Charles van Onselen, Social Dynamics, 9,1, 1983, p.16,; J. Henderson, 'The New International Division of Labour and Urban Development in the Contemporary World System' in D. Drakakis-Smith ed. Urbanisation in the Developing World, London: Routledge, 1986, p.63 writes 'It is imperative to embed the city in its wider structural context'.

⁹⁷ The interest in squatter settlements and townships has meant that there have been little if any studies of what happened in the 'tree-lined avenues' this has been a virtual complete turn around from the time Van Onselen criticised the 'timid historians' who 'tip-toed through the tree-lined avenues of the northern suburbs'. Van Onselen, New Babylon, p.xv.

Apartheid have made their mark on the writing of urban history in South Africa.⁹⁸ However, because urban history studies in South Africa could still be considered to be in their infancy, these initial, partial studies are necessary before more substantial total studies can be pursued.⁹⁹ The same criticism could be made about the comparative studies of urban areas. Individual studies need to be undertaken first. However, we are reaching the stage in which comparative research and research into the interrelationships between cities within a broader framework is now urgently needed.¹⁰⁰

Much more research is needed. There is also a need now to tie up the ends and produce more comprehensive syntheses of urbanisation and urban life. Scholars have begun to show an impatience for a greater coherence and synthesis in urban history. Saunders, for instance has called for more 'adequate general histories' of urban centres 'taking them from their establishment to recent times, treating them comprehensively and integrating the various strands of their development into one holistic and rounded synthesis'.¹⁰¹ In this instance the Cape Town History Project is leading the field. At the 1990 History Workshop a number of scholars voiced the need to consolidate future studies so that a more comprehensive synthesis of the process of urbanisation and urban life in South Africa emerges. It remains to be seen whether or not the History Workshop will respond to these challenges.

⁹⁸ J. Butler, 'Housing in a karoo dorp: a survey of sources and examination of developing segregations before the Group Areas Act, 1950', in South African Historical Journal, 1987, p.248.

⁹⁹ Saunders wrote, 'What is happening is that, piece by piece, knowledge is being assembled, in what is necessarily a collective enterprise'; Saunders, 'The struggle for District Six in the context of the Cape Town History Project', p.6.

¹⁰⁰ More studies like Maylam's are needed. P. Maylam, 'The rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid; African Affairs, 89, 1990.

¹⁰¹ Saunders, 'Methodological Issues', p.23.

CHAPTER SIX

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP AND RURAL SOCIAL HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Just as the History Workshop had played an important role in the directions pursued in labour and urban history in the late 1970s and 1980s so, too, did it influence the development of a 'dynamic, innovative and expansive Marxist tradition' in rural studies in South Africa. Agrarian history had been a rather thin and underdeveloped field in the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s. It comprised a few conceptually weak Afrikaner Nationalist rural studies and a rather diffuse number of liberal agrarian works.¹ In the 1980s, this field of research expanded phenomenally mainly as a result of the research interests of the Marxist social historians. The work of these scholars was presented and debated at the History Workshops over the years. The works tended in general to reflect the preoccupations of the History Workshop in the sense that they followed a Marxist social history direction.

The purpose of this chapter is to consider why agrarian studies developed into such a strong and vibrant field in South African historiography and to trace the developments within Marxist social history in agrarian studies over the years of the 1980s. The part that the History Workshop played in encouraging and facilitating these directions will also be considered.

¹ For example: P. Naude, 'Boerdery in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek, 1858-1899', 2 vols., unpublished D. Litt. thesis, University of South Africa, 1954; G. J. Lamprecht, 'Die ekonomiese ontwikkeling van die Vrystaat van 1870-1899', unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Stellenbosch, 1954; D. J. Jacobs, 'Die ontwikkeling van landbou in die Vrystaat, 1890-1910', unpublished D.Litt. et Phil. thesis, University of South Africa, 1979; C. Eloff, quoted by C. Bundy, 'Assessing the Harvest: Some Perspectives on South Africa's Rural History (19th and 20th Centuries)', paper given at National Conference of the South African Historical Society, Cape Town, January 1985.

THE INFLUENCE OF INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH TRENDS

Africanist research

The rapid increase in interest in rural studies in the 1980s amongst South African researchers can be explained by a number of phenomena. It was partly a result of the effects of a cumulative interest in Africanist history which had begun in the early 1970s in South Africa. This interest followed after an expansive growth, internationally, in the 1960s, of peasant studies as well as Africanist history.² Africanist history emphasised African potential, initiative, and resistance. At that stage South African scholars also had a foretaste of international comparative peasant studies. Bundy noted the effect of these interests on the South African researchers at Oxford in the years 1978 and 1981:

* At the same time there was also a weekly seminar for at least part of the academic year at Oxford called 'From Peasants to Proletarians' and that was multidisciplinary. There were people talking about Italian rural history and Indian rural history. There was quite a strong steady South African/ African rural history presence at that seminar. Another thing which our group was drawing on for ideas, as an intellectual base, was hearing other people or reading the Journal of Peasant Studies. There was quite a strong sense for those of us who were there of being collectively involved in rural history.³

Most of the South African scholars were researching and working under the revisionist flag. Among these scholars were Beinart, Delius, Harries, Peires, Bundy, Guy and Bonner. They were making advances in the exploration of nineteenth century African societies. Initially, they made an impact overseas by contributing to research projects such as Marks and Atmore's project: Town and Countryside: the transformation of African societies in Twentieth Century South Africa; as well as Stanley Trapido's research group at Oxford (1978 to 1981).⁴ They were also to make an impact on local South

² C. Bundy, interview by G.K.Tatham, 1990, UCT.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Marks and Atmore's project was financed by the Ford Foundation, 'Proposal for a History Workshop on social and economic history of Johannesburg', 1978 Workshop file, Box File 1981; Meeting History Workshop 1980 (n. d.), Minutes of meetings and Agendas; Among Trapido's collective research group of rural researchers at Oxford were Colin Bundy, Robin Palmer,

African research. As Keegan reflected, the interest in peasant studies which was popular amongst South African scholars abroad in the late 1970s, as well as all the research being conducted in that field, influenced the direction of his research into sharecropping on the highveld - just as it must have influenced many other South African scholars into writing about rural issues.⁵ However, the majority of those scholars mentioned, returned to South Africa in the early 1980s to make significant contributions to the respective History Workshops at Wits during the 1980s. The research that began on a small scale gradually evolved into a powerful current of scholarship in rural issues in South Africa.⁶

These Africanist scholars were particularly interested in the workings and the interaction of nineteenth century African societies and their articulation with the immediate colonial economy, as well as the world economy.⁷ The shift in emphasis in Africanist work was obvious. At the Conference on the Social & Economic History of Southern Africa at Oxford, in 1974, the debate on modes of production had strong structuralist overtones. However, at the later seminars at the Institute of Commonwealth studies, both the African History Seminars and the Societies of Southern Africa Seminars, the emphasis, at times, fell on 'the relatively little explored economic and political transformations in the rural areas' over

Peter Delius, Peter Richardson; C. Bundy, interview May 1990; T. Ranger, 'Growing from the roots; reflections on peasant research in central and southern Africa, JSAS, 5, 1, October 1978, p. 121.

⁵ T.Keegan, telephonic interview by G. K. Tatham, 25 May 1992.

⁶ T. Ranger, 'Towards a usable African past?' in Fyfe, *African Studies*, p. 17; Marks, 'South African studies', p. 186; Bundy, interview, May 1990.

⁷ These works were later published as books: W. Beinart, The Political Economy of Pondoland 1860-1930, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982; J. Peires, The House of Phalo: a history of the Xhosa people in the days of their independence, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981; P. Delius, The Land Belongs to Us, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983; P. Bonner, Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires: the evolution and dissolution of the nineteenth century Swazi state, Cambridge: CUP, 1983; Delius, interview, October 1989; Kallaway, interview, June 1990; Bundy, interview, May 1990.

the period of capitalist penetration by merchant as well as industrial capital.⁸

These scholars drew on the Africanist advances of the liberal school in the 1960s, the materialist concerns of South African scholars in the early 1970s, the conflict theorists in British political anthropology, the Marxist economic anthropologists in France, as well as the more recent development in Marxist work on Africa. As a result of these respective influences their work took account of several factors. These were: the struggles over power and resources within societies, 'the nature of power and the loci and form of conflict in non-capitalist societies', the articulation of different modes of production and the varying impact of the effects of mercantile capital on different pre-capitalist societies.⁹ They also became concerned less with the strengths than with the limitations of the effect of capital and the metropole state on pre-capitalist structures.¹⁰

⁸ S. Marks, preface, Collected Seminar Papers in The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries, 9, University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1977-1978; W. Beinart, 'Economic Change in Pondoland in the Nineteenth Century'; P. Delius, 'Migrant Labour and the Pedi before 1869'; P. Harries, 'Labour Migration from the Delagoa Bay Hinterland to South Africa 1852-1895' in Collected Seminar Papers, 7, 1975-1976; T. Keegan, 'Peasants, Capitalists and Farm Labour; Class Formation in the Orange River Colony, 1902-1910' in Collected Seminar Papers, 9, 1977-78; B Hirson, 'Rural Revolt in South Africa 1937-1951'; J. Peires, 'Continuity and Change in Ciskei Chiefship'; P. Bonner, 'Classes, the Mode of Production and the State in Pre-Colonial Swaziland' in Collected Seminar Papers, 8, 1976-1977.

⁹ J. Peires, Before and After Shaka, Grahamstown: Insstitute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, 1981, pp. 1-25

¹⁰ Bonner and Delius for instance, were influence by the conflict theorists and the French Marxist anthropologists. The conflict theorists in British Political anthropology emphasised struggles over power and resources within societies; the Marxist Economic anthropologists in France looked at 'the nature of power and the loci and form of conflict in non capitalist societies' and the articulation of modes of production; the more recent Marxist work in Africa was more concerned with the limitations of the effects of capital and the metropole state on pre-capitalist structures.

THE LOCAL POLITICAL CLIMATE

Apart from the influence of international historiographical trends, by the late 1970s and 1980s, internal developments within the country ensured that academic attention in South Africa was increasingly drawn to struggles over land in the South African countryside. Struggles in the countryside were placed on the academic agenda as a result of state interventions in the countryside, the awareness drawn to this by extra parliamentary groups, and local struggles against these state policies.

Throughout the 1970s the government passed a number of laws aimed at controlling people in the rural areas. Over the years, the amendments to the Native Trust and Land Act (1936) represented an attempt on the part of the state to abolish labour tenancy and squatting.¹¹ Morris noted that by 1976 labour tenancy had 'to all intents and purposes been abolished'.¹² Platzky and Walker referred to the fact that labour tenancy was abolished completely in 1981 and thousands of tenants were evicted from white farms.¹³ In terms of the 1975 Government consolidation plans in which Black Spots were to be removed, over one million people were to be relocated. The Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions served to victimise Africans without urban residence rights. Those commissions drew a division between town and countryside and suggested that the unemployed and the recent arrivals should be sent to the relocation areas. The Bantu Laws Amendment Act passed in 1978 tightened up on influx control and ensured the removal of unemployed and informal sector Africans back to the rural areas.¹⁴ As

¹¹L. Platzky and C. Walker, the Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa, Johannesburg: Galvin and Sales, 1985, p. 318.

¹²M. Morris, 'Capitalism and Apartheid: a critique of some current conceptions of cheap labour-power' in Adler, Perspectives on South Africa, p. 71; G. Maré, African Population Relocation in South Africa, Johannesburg: SAIRR, 1980, p. 9.

¹³Platzky and Walker, The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa, pp. xxix, 320; Farm tenants were the largest single category moved and threatened with removal.

¹⁴Maré, African Population Relocation, p. 10.

national and international attention was drawn to the South African government's implementation of its Apartheid programme, so the relationship between town and countryside became an increasingly important subject on the academic agenda.¹⁵

Incidences of rural resistance to relocation were brought to the attention of the press by the many different rural action groups which formed in the 1970s.¹⁶ Conferences and Workshops were held. For instance the Workshop in Grahamstown in 1982 held by the Surplus People Project and Association for Rural Advancement on the topic 'Removals and the Law' focussed on rural issues.¹⁷ In the late 1970s and early 1980s the resistance of communities to removals were making headline news.¹⁸ Many of the regular contributors to the triennial History Workshops (scholars such as Harries, Peires and Bradford) were involved in one way or another in trying to highlight the plight of rural communities and to assist those communities through involvement in rural action groups such as the Surplus People Project.¹⁹ It was inevitable, therefore, that these issues would find their way into local academic research. Harries emphasised the effects of the contemporary local context on South African agrarian studies. He noted that the political climate was 'the major genitor' of the new historiography, and suggested that the 'forced population removals' were

¹⁵Platzky and Walker, The Surplus People pp. 389, 390, 400.

¹⁶ William Beinart had links with the Transkei Study Project; other organisations were: HAFNT (Help Action for the far northern Transvaal); EDA (Environmental Development Agency); AFRA (Association for Rural Advancement); The Black Sash Rural Development Project; The Grahamstown Rural Committee and SALDRU's Rural Action Project; as well as the national research project SPP which was begun in 1979. Maré, African Population Relocation, p.30; W. Beinart 'The Livestock Levy in the Transkei' University of Cape Town, Centre for African Studies, African Seminar Paper, 1977.

¹⁷SPP and AFRA, Removals and the Law, Grahamstown: SPP and AFRA, 1984.

¹⁸The Sunday Tribune, 8 April 1979, described a community's resistance to relocation from the Woodstock Dam site: 'they do not understand why they should go just because the white man wants their land'.

¹⁹SPP Reports, Forced Removals in South Africa, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, (1983).

'resuscitating studies of the causes of land alienation'.²⁰ Keegan noted that it was really in the early 1980s that academics became acutely aware of the government's relocation policies and the effects of these on people's lives.²¹ This awareness was reflected in their work. For instance, Harries' research on the Makuleke people was a history of a relocated community.²²

LOCAL RESEARCH INTO RURAL HISTORY

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a flood of local rural histories reflected the growing interest in struggles in the countryside, conditions on the farms and rural experiences. This current emerged in eddies and waves in local publications and journals, at local seminars such as the University of the Witwatersrand African Studies Seminar, and at local conferences such as: the Farm Labour Conference organised by the Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) in 1976; the History of Opposition Conference at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1978; the papers researched and written for the second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa (research for which began in 1980).²³ In July 1979 the Nguni Workshop at Rhodes invited studies of nineteenth century rural societies.

The threat of the relocation of people under the Apartheid policy encouraged academics to start oral history projects such as the African

²⁰ p. Harries 'Modes of production and modes of analysis: the South African case', Canadian Journal of African Studies, 19, 1, 1985, p. 31.

²¹ Keegan, telephonic interview, May 1992.

²² p. Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal: reconstructing the history of a relocated community through oral testimony and song', CCC.

²³ Bonner, Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires, preface. The journals include: Africa Perspective, Inquiry, Journal of South Africa Studies, Reality, South African Labour Bulletin, Work in Progress, South African Outlook.

Studies Institute project at Wits which began with predominantly rural studies.²⁴

A feature of this current of local research was that it favoured a 'history from below' perspective which embraced studies of the resistance of subordinate groups in society. Many of the books and articles produced in the late 1970s on forced removals and relocation, contained case studies which dealt with the resistance of communities and the impact of relocation on communities.²⁵ At the History of Opposition Conference, a number of papers concentrated on nineteenth century pre-capitalist societies and their forms of resistance and methods of coping with the penetration of mercantile and industrial capitalism. The social and ideological resistance of African converts to dispossession was also a subject of consideration.²⁶

At the Farm Labour Conference, well over half the papers presented were micro area studies. The research methodology included direct observation, interviews, case studies and field work. The research into the Second Carnegie Inquiry considered 'the process of impoverishment' and attempted to gain 'a real inside understanding and participation of those communities that have to endure poverty'.²⁷

What emerged from these local, empirically based studies and local conferences, such as the Nguni Workshop, was a recognition of the need to 'circumvent ... problems of jargon, language and conceptual definition arising out of relatively recent formulations of South African history'. Realisation grew of the need to overcome economistic and formula-based interpretations which concentrated on 'articulating modes of production,

²⁴ Harries pointed to the emergence amongst academics of a growing awareness of the need to collect from people their memories of daily life before it was disrupted by their removal. Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal', p. 94.

²⁵ SPP, Bibliography on Relocation of People in the Eastern Cape, UCT, African Studies Library, 1981; Harries, 'A forgotten corner', p.130 for references of these works.

²⁶ Conference of the History of Opposition in South Africa, University of the Witwatersrand, 1978.

²⁷ F. Wilson and M. Ramphela, Uprooting Poverty: The South African Challenge, Cape Town: David Philip, 1989, p. 3.

hegemony, and stages and phases of capitalist development'.²⁸As Moss noted:

the complexity of historical developments and phenomena confronted analysts with the need for language and concepts flexible and complex enough to schematise an even more complex reality. A set of concepts would need to be continually adaptable by those who use them.²⁹

Liberal scholars also responded to their concern that scholars were tackling theory when they did not have 'the basic material on certain crucial facts'.³⁰Others scholars called for historians in the country to 'concentrate on developing theory according to the empirical material they were working through rather than on continually trying to adopt overseas trends'.³¹At the 1978 History Workshop, for instance, there was criticism of Guy's attempts to transplant Meillasoux into Swaziland History. At the time, Kinsman called for more empirical studies and noted the need to 'look at societies in great detail'.³²

Certain scholars at the 1978 History Workshop voiced their concern that the use of the concept 'collapse of the pre-capitalist mode of production' was being used too freely to explain the plight of Africans, and a call was heard at that Workshop for the need to take into account 'the complexities of the destruction of pre-capitalist black social systems, over time, by region and according to the economic condition of the social formation as a whole'.³³

²⁸ These views followed a growing perception that international theoretical tendencies often had a very temporary life. The vivid self-pulverisation of Hindess and Hirst, whose theories of modes of production had held a great deal of sway at the Lesotho Workshop in 1976 had its effect. B. Hindess and P. Hirst, Mode of Production and Social Formation: An Auto-Critique of Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production, London: Routledge, 1977.

²⁹ G. Moss, 'Introduction', in Development Studies Group, eds., Conference on the History of Opposition in Southern Africa, University of Witwatersrand, 1978, p.ii.

³⁰ M. Wilson quoted in J. Peires, 'Introduction', Before and After Shaka, Grahamstown: Institute of Social and Economic Research, reprinted 1983, p.18

³¹ J. Cobbing quoted in Peires, 'Introduction', p.11

³² M. Kinsman, telephonic interview by G. K. Tatham, 25 May 1992.

³³ Bozzoli, 'Popular History and the Witwatersrand', p.6

THE HISTORY WORKSHOP AND RURAL HISTORY

The History Workshop became the driving force behind agrarian research in the country. While the Workshop did not initiate the 'History from below' focus in agrarian history studies, it gave impetus to that focus. It provided a haven for the disparate intellectual currents. It absorbed and encouraged the awakening interest in 'agrarian' research of the early 1980s and provided a forum at which new ideas and research could be presented and discussed.³⁴ By attracting high profile academics, both from overseas and within the country, the Workshop gave a certain legitimacy to the new directions in research. Many scholars who had completed or were in the process of writing their doctorates (for instance Delius and Bradford), found the Workshop to be an important forum for subjecting aspects of their work to rigorous scrutiny and debate. Bozzoli commented how the milieu at Wits University of which the History Workshop was an integral part, helped her in the initial research and drafting for her book on Phokeng.³⁵ That same milieu must have encouraged many other researchers. The History Workshop helped to catapult research in agrarian history, and particularly that with a Marxist social history slant, into the position where it stands today, as a major sub-field in South African historiography.

The 1981 History Workshop

At the first History Workshop at Wits in 1978, agrarian and rural studies did not feature in the theme 'Labour Townships and Protest' nor in any of the seminars. Only one or two labour history papers lightly touched on these issues in their consideration of labour migration and migration

³⁴ T. Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa: A Reply', Journal of Southern African Studies, 15, 4, October 1989.

³⁵ Bozzoli, Women of Phokeng.

routes.³⁶The emphases at that Workshop were on labour and urban history, focussed on the Witwatersrand urban area.

By the time of the 1981 History Workshop, the situation as regards rural studies changed significantly. The theme at that conference, 'Town and Countryside in the Transvaal', focussed, in part, on rural history. Many of the scholars who were sponsored by the History Workshop or the University to attend the conference contributed papers on rural history.³⁷ Approximately one third of the forty six papers presented dealt with rural/agrarian issues.³⁸Of course a few labour history papers dealt with migrancy and recruiting from the rural areas.³⁹Four of the eight seminars had rural themes: 'Class and State in 20C Agriculture', 'Agricultural Commodities and Capitalist Penetration', 'Class Relations in Pre-20C Agriculture' and 'Rural Resistance'. Many of the scholars who participated in this Workshop (among these were Delius, Trapido, Bonner, Keegan, Harries and Bradford) had some Africanist training or at least a strong interest in rural history. The History Workshop should not be seen as the initiator of the countryside focus in South African historiography at this time, as Van Onselen commented, it was current research, particularly in Marxist social history, which influenced the direction that the History Workshop took. The History Workshop acted as a forum to gather the diverse research interests in rural history and give a 'shape and focus' to those interests.⁴⁰

Marxist agrarian history took certain directions over the years of the 1980s. At the 1981 History Workshop the concerns initiated by the

³⁶ J.K. McNamara 'Migration Routes to the Gold Mines and Compound Accomodation 1889-1912', HW, 1978.

³⁷ Rich, 'Transvaal Land Settlement and John Buchan's novel'; W. Beinart 'Cape workers in German South West Africa, 1904-1912: Patterns of migrancy and the closing of options on the southern African labour market', HW, 1981; Trapido and Delius, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams' 1981; M. Dikobe, 'Dispossessed', HW 1981 Report, File 1981.

³⁸ Approximately 16 of the 46 papers.

³⁹ Beinart 'Cape Workers in German South West Africa'; A. Jeeves, 'Competitive Recruiting and Labour Piracy in South East Africa 1900-1921', HW 1981.

⁴⁰ C. van Onselen, telephonic interview by G. K. Tatham, 25 May 1992.

political events within the country were very clear. At the seminars 'Class and State in Twentieth Century Agriculture' and 'Agricultural Commodities and Capitalist Penetration', the emphasis was on the effects of the penetration of capital and of segregatory and Apartheid legislation on African people.⁴¹The papers in these seminars considered: dispossession, types of labour bondage, and the growing restrictions on the access African people had to land. Sharecropping featured in two of the papers at the time when labour tenancy was a crucial issue of the day.⁴²There was a whole seminar on rural resistance. The majority of these rural history papers dealt with societies and groups in the process of being transformed by the penetration of capital.⁴³

a class emphasis

The book Town and Countryside arising from the 1981 Conference partly reflected the orientation of the conference as well as the direction of rural studies in the country. Of the four sections in the book, one large section, 'Class Relations in the Countryside' was devoted to rural issues. As in the seminars, so in this section, the emphasis was on the concept of class, namely the making and transformation of classes.⁴⁴Some of the seminars and titles of the papers reflect the interests in class at the time. These were: 'Class Relations in the Countryside', 'Class and State in twentieth century agriculture', 'Class relations in pre-twentieth century agriculture'; 'the Creation and Transformation of a Servile Class' and

⁴¹T. Keegan, 'The sharecropping economy, African class formation and the 1913 Natives' Land Act in the Highveld maize belt', TCT; Nkadimeng and Relly 'Kas Maine: the story of a black South African agriculturalist', TCT; Dikobe, 'Dispossessed'; R. Morrell, 'Beef compound contracts and cold storage: the struggle for control of the meat producers exchange', HW, 1981; P. Lewson and J. Dagut 'Profile of a Transvaal Highveld Farmer and his Labour 1945-1980'; see also in seminar: 'Class Relations in Pre-Twentieth Century Agriculture'; S. Will, 'From Pastoralists to Proletarians: The struggle for land in the Zoutpansbergin the 1880s', HW, 1981, Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams' in seminar Class Relations in Pre-Twentieth Century Agriculture'.

⁴²Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine'.

⁴³Dikobe, 'Dispossessed'; Keegan 'The Sharecropping Economy'; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine'; Will, 'From Pastoralists to Proletarians'.

⁴⁴The seminars were: 'Class and State in twentieth century Agriculture'; 'Class relations in Pre-twentieth century Agriculture'. The section in the book was titled: 'Class Relations in the Countryside'.

'African Class Formation'. Although the concept of class was dealt with in greater complexity than Morris had done in his agrarian studies, nevertheless, there was a tendency to try to view most processes in terms of class relations.

Although the History Workshop committee in 1981 set out to encourage studies which took account of the cultural aspects of rural life in the Transvaal 'in the fields of art, literature, music and architecture', very few of the rural papers which were presented at the 1981 Workshop dealt with these areas, or with ethnicity, in any detail.⁴⁵ To some extent, the committee's approach to culture and cultural forms followed in the wake of a growth of cultural studies in African history.⁴⁶ Harries' paper in 1984 was amongst the very few rural history studies which considered culture and ethnicity. However, from 1987, studies which considered cultural forms began to increase. In this regard, the work of scholars like Beinart and Harries had some impact on South African rural historiography. These scholars presented work not only to the triennial History Workshops but published elsewhere as well.⁴⁷ However, it was obvious that, whereas in urban history studies great strides had been made in studies of culture and cultural forms, in rural history studies the development of this research was slower.

⁴⁵ Shula Marks had conducted some research into ethnicity and cultural symbols. S. Marks, 'Natal and the Zulu Royal Family and the Ideology of Segregation', JSAS, 4, April 1978.

⁴⁶ L. Vail and L. White, 'Plantation Protest: The History of Mozambican Song', JSAS, 5, 1, 1978; 'Tawani Machelero! Forced Rice and Perceptions of Power in Colonial Mozambique', American Historical Review, 88, 4, 1983; K. Alnaes, 'Songs of the Rwenzururu Rebellion', in P.H. Gulliver, ed. Tradition and Transition in East Africa, Los Angeles: Calder and Boyars, 1969; P. Coole and M. Doornbos, 'Rwenzururu Protest songs', Africa, 52, 1, 1982; L.W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 5-30, 55-81, 190-298; as well as various articles in Journal of Peasant Studies, 1974-1976, and the History Workshop Journal 1980-1982; Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal', p.130.

⁴⁷ C. Hamilton, 'Traditions of Origin and the Ideological Appropriation of the Past in the Early Zulu Kingdom', HW, 1987; P. Harries 'The Roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language Construction in South - East Africa', HW, 1987; P. Delius 'The Ndzundza Ndebele: The Experience of Indenture and the Making of Ethnicity' HW, 1987; W. Beinart 'Conflict in Qumbu: Rural Consciousness, Ethnicity and Violence in the Colonial Transkei 1880-1913', JSAS, 8, October 1981; P. Harries 'The roots of Ethnicity: Discourse and the Politics of Language Construction in South East Africa', African Affairs, 346, January 1988.

The 1984 History Workshop

The growth in interest in rural history was more evident at the 1984 History Workshop, where the theme set did not specifically call for studies with a rural perspective. Approximately one third of the seminars were on agrarian or rural issues and just less than one third of the papers focussed on these issues.⁴⁸ However, in the book Class Community and Conflict which emerged from the conference, only two out of the nine sections dealt with rural issues. It was apparent from this selection that the major interest of the Workshop committee remained on urban issues - despite the rapid growth in rural history studies.

a broader focus

While the earlier History Workshop's focussed on Transvaal studies, the 1984 History Workshop embraced a broader perspective.⁴⁹ The studies ranged from the Transvaal Highveld through to the Kat River Settlement in the Cape Colony, the North Western Orange Free State, the South Western Cape and the Natal countryside. The committee of the History Workshop specifically set out to encourage comparative work on a regional basis. They decided they would ask contributors for 'work on popular struggles, local histories, analyses of local industrial and political configurations in the Eastern and Western Cape, Natal and on the Rand in particular'.⁵⁰ Lodge and Bonner commented that: by 1987, 'there was a much more even spread of contributions across all regions of south Africa'.⁵¹ The broader perspective allowed for interesting comparisons to be drawn between regions, and illuminated the rich complexity with which capitalist

⁴⁸Five out of 16 seminars and approximately 15 out of 51 papers.

⁴⁹Despite the Transvaal focus at the 1981 Workshop many of the rural studies presented at the 1981 History Workshop dealt with rural issues in other regions: Harries on South East Africa; Lau on Great Namaqualand; Newton-King on Graaff-Reinet; Kinsman on the Southern Tswana; Will on the Zoutpansberg.

⁵⁰Memorandum from B. Bozzoli to Bonner, Van Onselen, Lodge, Pearson, Callinicos, E. Webster and D. Webster 19 August 1982, in History Workshop Minutes of Meeting File, HWO, Wits.

⁵¹Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction', p. 1.

penetration took place. The result was that scholars found it increasingly difficult to generalise about the transition to capitalism in the countryside.

local, individual and experiential

The committee of the History Workshop specifically made a call for local, regionally based studies because of the growing acknowledgement of the gaps in empirical knowledge on South Africa. In these studies local specificities of struggle and agency were considered important while the broader questions of the state and capitalism just formed the stage set.⁵² Although none of the studies specifically set out to consider the process of capitalist development in the way that Morris had, the empirical findings which were produced provided important insights into the specific processes of class formation and capitalist development in the countryside.⁵³ In other words these studies served to provide 'the most basic building blocks' from which a 'history of capitalist development' could be constructed.⁵⁴ Without such building blocks, Bradford believed, it was impossible to construct such a history.

The individual perspective, which had been introduced at the 1981 History Workshop (for example Kas Maine's life story) also made more complex any attempt to generalise about the transition to capitalism in the countryside and the way it affected peoples lives.⁵⁵ The individual perspective was introduced via life histories which took the form of narratives, and there was a definite increase in the number of these

⁵²T. Keegan, 'Crisis and Catharsis in the Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture', African Affairs, 336, 1984, pp. 371-398; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine'; J. Peires, 'The Legend of Fenner-Solomon', CCC; Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal', CCC.

⁵³They avoided conceptualising modes of production and other models of analysis. Delius and S. Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams', p. 65.

⁵⁴H. Bradford, initial draft of paper to be published as 'Highways, Byways and Cul-de-Sacs: the transition to agrarian capitalism in revisionist South African history', in RHR, 46/7, 1990.

⁵⁵Kas moved from being a sharecropper to being a wage labourer, and back to sharecropping in his later years.

studies.⁵⁶ Experiential testimonies were a greater utilised resource in rural history than they were in urban history. Probably, this was due to the influence of the Wits African Studies Institute Oral History Documentation project which tended to focus on rural areas and which inspired many researchers by the oral material it had collected.⁵⁷ By 1984 Delius had joined the committee, and he, together with Van Onselen and Bozzoli, felt that 'the life history interview is one of the most potentially fruitful areas for oral research in South Africa'.⁵⁸ Beinart, who had contributed papers at both the 1981 and 1984 History Workshops, suggested that 'life histories are important in exploring the broader social structures'.⁵⁹ The interest of committee members with regard to oral testimony and life history is obvious from the book Class Community and Conflict, where papers were specifically chosen which utilised this methodology.⁶⁰

a social history perspective: ethnicity, locality and resistance

The seminar subjects at the 1984 History Workshop reveal the direction agrarian research was taking in the 1980s. The seminars with rural themes included 'Ethnicity, Community, and Ideology in the Nineteenth century'; 'Accumulation and Dispossession in a Regional and Individual Perspective'; 'Rural Resistance'; 'Migrancy and Rural Transformations'; 'Ethnicity, Ideology and the State in the Twentieth Century'. The class emphasis appeared to be usurped by an interest in ethnicity. The penetration of capital was now viewed in terms of 'accumulation and dispossession' on a

⁵⁶p. Delius, 'Abel Erasmus: Power and Profit in the Eastern Transvaal', HW, 1984; Peires, 'The Legend of Fenner Solomon'; Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal'.

⁵⁷Keegan, telephonic interview, May 1992. Keegan had been partly inspired by this project.

⁵⁸p. Delius, 'Report on research on the nineteenth century history of the Pedi', Unpublished Seminar Paper, African History Seminar, University of London, 1977.

⁵⁹Beinart quoted in P. La Hausse, 'Oral history and South African historians', p. 347.

⁶⁰Peires, 'Fenner Solomon'; Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal'.

regional basis and from an individual perspective. In this seminar, a new translation was made of the old interest in the penetration of capital. These scholars who presented work, avoided generalisation and looked at the actual mechanics of dispossession by focussing in on individual traders and merchants, revealing how merchant capital penetrated societies which previously had been little touched by capitalist relations. The transformation of the countryside was no longer seen in broad generalisations but in the actual process of the transformation as local acts of accumulation and dispossession were described. It was apparent that the individual perspective was gaining ground in rural research. In fact, Keegan, Delius and Peires, the scholars who contributed to this seminar, played a dominant role in producing work which challenged Morris' interpretation of the transformation in the countryside. Their challenge will be given further consideration in Chapter seven.

gender and religion

Of course, resistance was a contemporary concern as well and a whole seminar entitled 'Rural Resistance' was devoted to this subject. Four papers were presented in the seminar on 'Rural Resistance'. Four papers were presented in that seminar, and it was obvious that Bozzoli's hopes for an emphasis on women in history were being fulfilled. Both Beinart and Bradford focussed on gender relations and on women in resistance. The History Workshop committee's encouragement of this work is obvious from the choice of papers for the book for both Beinart's and Bradford's papers were published. Other papers, such as Harries' study, began to highlight women's lives and struggles.⁶¹

As it was in the sphere of rural history that women's history was to flourish, so, too, in the field of rural history were the beginnings of a consideration of religion. In connection with the African Studies Institute and rural history van Onselen noted in an interview in 1990 that historians should be looking at areas such as 'christianity and consciousness', the significance of separatist churches' and the central issue of consciousness

⁶¹Bradford, 'We are now the men'; Beinart, 'Women in Rural Politics'; Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal'.

which he believed had been largely ignored.⁶² Beinart, in his 1984 paper on the Herschel District, had dealt with the 'new independent churches'. He looked at the Africanist and separatist tendencies in politics and churches. The History Workshop committee had in an oblique way suggested that people's religious beliefs as well as their cultural forms needed analysis, and that these considerations should interact with an understanding of class. Nevertheless, as van Onselen's call makes obvious, studies of religious consciousness were sparse right through the 1980s. In August 1992 a conference on Christianity was held at the University of the Western Cape which was attended by a number of historians. This is indicative of the growth in religion as an area of research.

studies of nineteenth century societies

By 1984, further areas of research in which there was growing interest were studies of nineteenth century societies and the articulation and interaction between African societies and the colonial and capitalist economies. The focus of the earlier Workshop's, and particularly the 1978 Workshop, had been clearly on the twentieth century. Just prior to the 1981 History Workshop, Marks' and Atmore's book, Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa was published which featured many works by Africanist scholars like Bonner, Beinart, Bundy, Trapido and Delius. At the 1981 History Workshop there was one seminar entitled 'Class Relations in Pre-Twentieth Century Agriculture'. Bonner and Guy chaired the session and Delius, Trapido, Harries, Kinsman and Newton-King participated.⁶³ It was clear that many scholars who had been researching and presenting papers overseas on rural issues were now returning to stimulate South African research in those areas.⁶⁴ Internationally renowned scholars, like Trapido and Guy, gave added significance to the local work of researchers like Kinsman and Newton-King.

⁶²C. van Onselen, interview by K. Ward, 20 September 1991, University of Witwatersrand.

⁶³B. Lau and S. Will also participated.

⁶⁴Delius and Harries were amongst those scholars.

As the seminar entitled 'Class relations in pre-twentieth century Agriculture' makes clear, class relations as a theme appeared at the forefront at the 1981 History Workshop. Academics gave new perspectives to class in nineteenth century societies. Largely as a result of the influence of the French Anthropologists, scholars like Meillasoux and Godelier, many of the studies presented at this seminar, attempted to look at: structures of domination and exploitation in nineteenth century societies; the internal productive relations of African communities; and to consider how these related to the later formation of class.⁶⁵ Nevertheless some of these nineteenth century studies gave a more sophisticated view of class relations as a result of their empirical findings. These scholars looked at kinship networks, at gender based divisions of labour, at political lines of domination. All these factors revealed that there was more to just an economic identification of classes.

At the 1984 History Workshop there were two well-attended seminars which dealt with nineteenth century societies. These were 'Ethnicity, Community and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century' and 'Accumulation and Dispossession in a Regional and Individual Perspective'. These studies continued to look at divisions within nineteenth century societies. As mentioned in Chapters four and five the class emphasis was being increasingly complicated by the introduction of other issues. For instance, studies which took ethnicity into consideration were on the increase.⁶⁶ Bozzoli was interested in considering the force of ideology within African societies.⁶⁷ Kinsman mentioned that Hamilton and Wright's paper was the most closely related to the seminar topic 'Ethnicity, Community and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century', in the sense that they looked at groups within the so-called Zulu kingdom which were at times hostile or resistant and at other times made alliances with that kingdom. They challenged the whole notion of Nguni by suggesting that there were a whole

⁶⁵History Workshop Programme (n.d.), 1981 File, HWO, Wits.

⁶⁶ One such study was S. Meintjies, 'Law and authority on a 19th century mission station in Natal', CCC.

⁶⁷Kinsman, telephonic interview, May 1992.

variety of different ethnic groups in the larger ethnic category, the Zulu kingdom, and that existing ethnicities change in different contexts.⁶⁸

The 1987 History Workshop

The main theme for the 1987 Workshop, 'Class, Locality and Culture in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century South Africa', reflected the rising interest in nineteenth century rural history studies. Lodge and Bonner commented of the 1987 History Workshop that 'contributions on pre-colonial and nineteenth century South African history were far more numerous than before'.⁶⁹ Five well-attended seminars dealt with nineteenth and early twentieth century rural themes, confirming the enormous expansion in rural research. These seminars included: 'The Construction of Chiefly Power and Class in Early Societies'; 'Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ethnicity'; 'Narrative in Rural Settings'; 'Rural Struggles' and 'Imperialism and the Making of Class'. In addition to these a further seminar was entitled 'Popularising the Pre-Colonial Past'.

The trends within nineteenth century rural history initiated at earlier Workshops developed further at the 1987 Workshop. Papers considered the articulation between pre-capitalist societies and penetrating capital in its different forms. Some scholars examined structures of exploitation and domination within nineteenth century societies. Often individuals lives reflected broader processes of class formation and capitalist development.⁷⁰ Consideration was also given to the making of ethnicity and ideology, as well as their transformation within societies.⁷¹ Resistance, the process of dispossession and the consequences of incomplete dispossession were also themes which appeared. All these areas of research were considered within the broad framework of transformation in the

⁶⁸Hamilton and Wright, 'The making of the Lala: ethnicity'.

⁶⁹Bonner and Lodge, 'Introduction'.

⁷⁰A Manson 'The Life of Chief Moila 11 of the Hurutshe, c. 1795-1875: The Role of Chiefly Power in an Age of Reconstruction', HW, 1987.

⁷¹Hamilton, 'Traditions of Origin'; Harries, 'The Roots of Ethnicity'; Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele'.

countryside as a result of the penetration of capital. The consideration of nineteenth century societies brought new perspectives to the understanding of that transformation.

An interesting development at the 1987 Workshop was the number of rural papers which looked at white classes in the countryside. Among these were: Clynick's paper 'Rural Class Formation and Poor Whites, 1910-20s'; Grundlingh's study of the '"poor white" woodcutters in the Southern Cape Forest Area, c. 1900-1939'; and Bottomley's research on the Orange River Colony.⁷² These studies may have been inspired by Keegan's research which had been presented to the triennial History Workshops over the years and which exposed the heterogeneity within white classes on the highveld.⁷³ The insights into heterogenous groups and classes amongst the whites in the countryside, provided by the papers gave increased insight into the process of transformation in the countryside. This process will be explained in more detail later.

The 1990 History Workshop

The recognition of class divisions amongst white farmers, as well as local and regional differences affecting their farming practices and labour needs, was discussed at 1990 History Workshop seminar entitled 'Agricultural Transformations'. This discussion was an example of how rural studies were increasingly taking into account local, regional, class, gender and other divisions. Interestingly every issue was debated and very few scholars reached concensus during that seminar. Whatever transformations there were in the countryside were seen to be incredibly complicated. At this particular seminar, for instance, the debate centred

⁷²A. Grundlingh '"God het ons arm mense die Houtjies gegee": Towards a History of the "poor white" Woodcutters in the Southern Cape Forest Area, c. 1900-1939', HW, 1987; J. Bottomley 'Political Resurgence in the Orange River Colony, and the Brandfort Congress of 1904', HW, 1987.

⁷³One such study was his paper 'The Sharecropping Economy', HW, 1981; Bottomley suggests that 'only recently and largely as a result of the work of Timothy Keegan' has the view that 'everyone was of the same social standing' been overturned; Bottomley, 'Political Resurgence in the Orange River Colony', p. 1.

on the Native Affairs Department and its policies. Scholars debated what the NAD's interests were, whose interests it represented, what policies it had towards foreign and local migrants, how the implementation of its policies differed according to region and according to the divisions and differing demands of white farmers as well as the differing local and national events and pressures which moulded its policies.⁷⁴ Morris' research and broad sweeping generalisations about the transformation of the countryside were no longer relevant.

At the 1990 History Workshop, the rural papers tended to concentrate on the Twentieth Century. This was a result of the choice of theme 'Structure and Experience in the making of Apartheid' which was clearly a twentieth century theme. Of course, the theme of Apartheid included rural history papers which dealt with the reserves. The topic of one seminar was 'Resistance and Society in the Reserves'. Again resistance, community, culture, class formation, and rural transformation were items on the agenda at that seminar, and at the seminars entitled: 'Agricultural Transformations'; and 'Orality, Literacy and Popular Culture'.

CONCLUSION

Certain generalisations can be drawn on the papers on rural history which were presented to the History Workshops over the years from 1978; if not about the state of rural history in general in South Africa, then certainly about the state of Marxist social studies in the field of rural history. Judging from the volume of scholarship which increased over the years that the History Workshops were held, it was apparent that rural history became a vibrant, dynamic field of research in its own right. Of course this was an essential development taking into consideration that, until the mid-

⁷⁴The papers presented to this seminar were B. Freund, 'The Rise and Decline of the Indian Peasantry', HW, 1990; B. Mazower, 'Problems in Paradise: The Farm Labour Shortage in the Natal Midlands, 1940-1951', HW, 1990; H. Bradford, 'Getting Away with Slavery: Capitalist Farmers, Foreigners and Forced Labour in the Transvaal, c.1920-1950, HW, 1990; R. Morrell, 'Differential access to the State: White Farmers in the Natal Midlands, 1900-1930', HW, 1990.

twentieth century, the majority of people in South Africa lived in rural areas. Nevertheless, despite this enormous growth, rural history did not match the expansion of Marxist social studies in urban history. The number of seminars devoted to urban issues compared to those devoted to rural history issues at the 1990 History Workshop confirms this trend.

The rural history which was written during the 1980s reflected many contemporary concerns in the sense that many papers dealt with issues of: dispossession (although often in the much more distant past); resistance to dispossession; cultural and ethnic symbols used in resistance; and in attempts to reconstruct lives following dispossession. Rural history in South Africa also reflected the influence of international trends in the study of rural societies. The interest in the articulation of nineteenth century societies with capital; the consideration of relations of domination and exploitation within nineteenth century societies; studies of cultural symbols and rituals and their changing forms and functions within these societies as they were affected by penetrating capital; were all subjects which were influenced by, and in turn, were to influence international developments in rural history. The findings of many of these studies had their own lessons for Marxist theory and this resulted in a reformulation of our understanding of the transformation to capital in the South African countryside.

The methodology of the majority of these papers on rural history which were presented to the History Workshop was clearly that which embraced a 'from the bottom up' approach. Many of these studies made ordinary people the central subject of study, whether they were African sharecroppers, poor white farmers, African communities threatened with removal or 'inboekselings' held in a bondage of labour. These works focussed on how ordinary people lived in the rural areas, their social relations, their family networks, their ethnic, religious and cultural symbols, their sense of community, what forces impinged on them in the countryside, and how they responded to those forces. Apart from court records and newspapers, oral History proved to be a valuable source of information. Narrative life histories were found to be useful in gleaning information from informants, as well as for examining and explaining the

effects of broader processes and structures. The 'from the bottom up' approach was encouraged in the many local and regional studies presented to the History Workshop over the years; a direction of study for which the committee of the History Workshop made a special call. This approach to the study of rural areas has had an impact on our understanding of rural transformation.

However, a problem with rural history studies in South Africa is that these studies tend to be separate from urban studies. Some rural history studies have been concerned with the effects of the penetration of capital on rural societies. Others have considered migrancy from the rural to the urban areas. While these studies do take cognisance of the metropolitan-rural connection, there is a need for more research to be done on the interdependence and interaction between urban areas and their hinterlands. The call for research could consider the impact of urban lifestyles and consciousness on rural areas as migrants return home; or the effects on rural resources of massive retrenchments of migrant workers from the mines. Certainly a balanced blended history which considers the connections between rural and urban life in greater detail could produce interesting findings which will enhance our understanding of past and present historical processes in South African history.

Despite certain lacunae, rural history in South Africa has developed substantially over the past one and a half decades and, the History Workshop, as a forum for encouraging debate amongst Marxist social historians, has played a leading role in that development - not only in the sense that committee members have produced worthwhile studies but also by providing a forum for the discussion and presentation of new research.^{75A} A simple survey of the rural history papers presented to the History Workshops over the years reveals how new areas of research have been investigated, producing new insights into regional differences, local particularities, local conflicts and struggles, divisions of labour based

⁷⁵ 'List of publications by committee members relevant to the preoccupations of the History Workshop', Report for three years Oct 1984 - July 1987; Bozzoli, 'Migrant Women and South African Social Change; P. Delius et al., eds., Putting a Plough to the Ground, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986.

on gender, age, religion, culture and other distinctions, local forces of accumulation and dispossession, discrepancies between legal documentation and actual reality, as well as the lived experiences of people in rural areas. Recently, certain scholars, like Keegan, have made attempts to pull the disparate threads of rural studies together.⁷⁶The resulting insights have seriously criticised structuralist interpretations of the transformation in the countryside.

⁷⁶ T. Keegan Rural Transformations in Industrialising South Africa, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986; T. Keegan, 'The Making of the Rural Economy, From 1850 to the Present' in Z.A. Lonczacki et al., eds., Studies in the Economic History of Southern Africa, 2, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1991.

CHAPTER SEVEN
UNDERSTANDING AGRARIAN CHANGE

INTRODUCTION

It was in the agrarian sphere that whatever hostilities there were between the 'structuralists' and the Marxist social historians developed into a full scale war.¹ Large claims were made by some Marxist 'social' scholars, among them Bradford, Keegan and Bozzoli, to have provided a re-interpretation of the South African past and to have contributed to the creation of theory more applicable to the particular South African situation. Many of those who made the claims had links with the History Workshop at Wits, either as members of the committee or as scholars regularly attending and presenting papers at the Triennial gatherings. Bozzoli asserted that local evidence could and should be a 'source of theorising'. Bradford, who had attended the 1981, 1984 and 1990 History Workshops, spoke of 'serious challenges to previous theoretical constructs and categories' and of a reworking of categories in the light of evidence'.² Keegan mentioned that 'research on lower levels' can 'enrich, test and modify the other rather crude conceptualisations provided by some of the writers of the 1970s'.³ The force behind these re-interpretations was an approach to history which embraced local historical detail and which, according to Bundy, shifted 'away from explanation stressing external constraints to those emphasising internal contradictions, forms of

¹ This was reflected in the Morris/ Murray versus Keegan assaults. Keegan, who had attended the 1981 and 1984 History Workshops, attempted to pull the threads of Marxist social studies in agrarian history together. Keegan, Rural Transformations; Keegan, 'The Making of the Rural Economy'.

² Bradford, 'Highways, Byways and Cul-de-Sacs', pp.76,81.

³ T. Keegan, 'Mike Morris and the social historians: a response and critique', Africa Perspective, 1, 7&8, 1989, p.1.

struggle and forces for change'.⁴ This was an approach which the History Workshop specifically encouraged. Those academics associated with the History Workshop claimed to have changed insights significantly into agrarian relations and the agrarian transformation. In order to consider the value of the claims made by these scholars, it is necessary to establish from what premises they worked, what interpretations they worked against, and what new interpretations they provided.

A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION - BUNDY AND MORRIS

The works of Bundy and Morris provided the foundation to the work of Marxist agrarian history scholars of the late 1970s and 1980s. Where the earlier revisionists set their sights centrally on the question of industrial capital and its relationship to Apartheid, Bundy and Morris placed studies of agrarian change decisively on the agenda. Both scholars took Wolpe's concept of the articulation of modes of production further in analysing agrarian change. However, both placed great emphasis, as Wolpe had done, on the effects of the capitalist mode of production. The works of Bundy and Morris had different trajectories and, hence, both had a differing impact on the agrarian terrain.

Bundy's concept of underdevelopment in explaining agrarian change

In his study of the South African peasantry in the mid to late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Bundy was strongly influenced by André Gunder Frank and the concept of underdevelopment. He believed that theory provided an important conceptual contribution to explaining:

the incorporation and subordination of peripheral (colonial economies) to those of metropolitan (imperialist) centres of capitalist development, the transformation of pre-capitalist economic

⁴ Bundy, The Rise and Fall, 2nd ed., preface.

and social structures, and also the processes whereby 'external' dominance and 'internal' dependence are maintained and reproduced.⁵

His work was criticised at a number of levels. In many ways, his premise fell into the traps of most work which applied the theory of under-development.⁶ His work failed to take account of the internal dynamics and class divisions within pre-capitalist African societies. It tended to give the balance of power between the articulating forces of pre-capitalist and capitalist modes of production, to the latter; and all subsequent analysis proceeded from this initial pre-supposition. Bundy commented in 1988:

the real cost of these analytical deficiencies was that they inhibited or distorted the treatment of subsequent processes. A shaky grasp on the dynamics of pre-capitalist society inevitably weakens any attempt to theorise its articulation with capitalist colonial society.⁷

Morris's explanation of agrarian transformation

Morris also gave very little attention to the workings of pre-capitalist societies. His primary concern was with a much later period, that in which Apartheid was dominant. His central aim was to explain the link between the development of the apartheid state and capitalist agriculture. Morris's argument, which was aimed to destroy the liberal thesis, was encapsulated in his words:

⁵ Bundy, The Rise and Fall, preface. Bundy suggested that the decline of the peasantry, which he believed occurred mainly between 1890 and 1913, was a result of: State legislative intervention to satisfy industry's demand for cheap labour; the commercialisation of agriculture; the lessening access peasants had to markets; as well as the increasing tax burdens made on peasants as they became increasingly absorbed into the national economy. The 1913 Land Act was seen as the determining blow to the African peasantry. pp.v-vi

⁶ Cooper delineated these traps: "it substitutes a grand teleology for analysis of causation and process, it gives the market a deterministic role in the world economy and either ignores production processes or treats them as mechanical derivatives of world market structures; it fails to consider the distinctive class structures of non-European societies and the various means by which upper classes restructured themselves so as to meet the demands of world markets; and it leaves the struggles of cultivators, peasants and workers against capitalism as little more than transitory and futile gestures in the face of the inevitable course of the world economy". F. Cooper, 'Peasants, capitalists and historians: a review article' Journal of Southern African Studies, 7,2, April 1981, 284-314, p.288.

⁷ C. Bundy The Rise and Fall, 2nd ed., preface.

it is totally misleading to see Apartheid ... as a return of a 'feudal system' of extra-economic coercion in the countryside. On the contrary, as the outcome of a determinate class struggle, it signalled the victory of capitalist farmers over direct producers (labour tenants), as the end of a phase transition, it ushered in a new stage in the development of capitalist agriculture.⁸

For Morris, it was important to establish when capitalism became dominant in agriculture - for if one could not there would be no way of escaping the liberal explanation that it was the ideology of pre-capitalist frontier farmers and not capitalism that was responsible for the development of Apartheid in South Africa.⁹ Morris believed that this transition to capitalism occurred in the 1920s.

Although Morris argued that the transition 'from the dominance of one mode to another, that is, the specific "road" that will be taken can only be the outcome of a concrete class struggle', he, nevertheless, paid minimal attention to that struggle. He depicted the transition occurring 'both by a distinct political break - the direct intervention of the state against the squatter peasantry which transformed them into labour tenants', and by 'a number of quite imperceptible transitions as labour tenancy was itself internally transformed'. When Morris spoke of the 1913 Land Act he assumed that the central means of production in the form of land was placed almost completely in the hands of white farmers. He spoke of the 'elimination' of the labour tenant system. Thereafter, any struggle he referred to was seen to be that between classes within the capitalist mode of production: - a struggle which affects the path of development of capitalism in South Africa.¹⁰

Essentially, Morris's concern was with structures: the structural contradictions between agriculture and mining capital; the structural conditions of agriculture - relating to production output; the pattern of

⁸ See M. Morris 'The Development of Capitalism in South Africa', Journal of Development Studies, 12, 3, 1976; and M. Morris, 'The Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture: Class Struggle in the Countryside', in M. Murray, ed., South African Capitalism and Black Political Opposition, Cambridge, Mass: Schenkman, 1982, p.338.

⁹ M. Morris, 'Social History and the Transition to capitalism in the South African countryside', Africa Perspective, December, 1987.

¹⁰ M. Morris 'The Development of Capitalism', pp.250,257,258,265.

land ownership and occupancy. To Morris, class struggle was 'rooted in the structural conditions'.¹¹ Africans were merely victims of these processes. Morris spoke of Africans as being, 'ignored, prevented and left isolated as a moment in the course of history - then a possible object of political practice, now only an object of analysis'.¹²

The commanding heights

Both Morris's and Bundy's works can be placed alongside much of the revisionist work of the early and mid 1970s.¹³ Those scholars, Trapido, Legassick, Johnstone, and Wolpe contributed a good proportion of their work to considering the effects of the demands of capital and the interventions of the state. Trapido, Legassick and Bundy saw the state as embodying the alliance of maize and gold. By contrast, Morris and Lacey depicted conflict between maize and gold. Nevertheless, Morris and Lacey both saw the state as acting in an instrumental fashion for that fraction of capital which attained hegemony.¹⁴ Thus, agrarian transformation was seen in terms of the demands of capital and the effects of state policy and laws.¹⁵

¹¹Morris, 'The Development of Capitalism', 1982, p.276.

¹²Ibid.

¹³ Although Bundy was to note of his own work that it 'was - and unrepentantly still is - an exercise in the recovery of an underclass history, of "restoring history to those who have had it taken away from them"'. Bundy, The Rise and Fall, 2nd edition, preface.

¹⁴ M. Legassick 'South Africa: capital accumulations and violence', in Economy and Society 3, 1974; Bundy, The Rise and Fall, 1979, chp 8; M. Morris 'The State and development of capitalist social relations in the South African countryside: a process of class struggle', unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Sussex, 1981, chapter 3; Davies, et al., 'Class struggle and the periodization of the state' chapters 1, 4, 5; M. Lacey, Working for Boroko, The Origins of a Coercive Labour System in South Africa, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981, introduction, chp.1 and 4.

¹⁵ Although scholars were to criticize both Bundy and Morris for their pre-occupation with macro-forces as well as their broad generalisations over different regions and their lack of subtlety and empirical precision, it should be remembered that these works were products of their place and time. Both Morris and Bundy were researching and writing in the early and mid 1970's before the rise of extra-parliamentary groups and struggles in the countryside and at a time when the rationalisation and capitalisation of agriculture and

Transformation hinged on particular laws like the 1913 Land Act. African resistance was treated as futile and transitory. Beinart and Delius were to note of these works:

the view from the commanding heights of capital and the state, and a dependence on information generated within central government departments and commissions helped shape the manner in which changes in the countryside were examined and explained.¹⁶

However, research conducted by Bundy and Morris laid the broad parameters and focused historian's attention on the essential elements of the transition in the countryside. Often, these elements of transition were not perceptible in the empirical evidence available to historians.¹⁷ Only once the work of Bundy and Morris were published were new strategies formulated by some Marxist scholars: initially, that of a reconnaissance mission, followed by a full-scale frontal attack against a recently-defined enemy - structuralism.

QUESTIONING THE USEFULNESS OF IMPORTED THEORIES

Rejecting the concept of articulating modes of production

Beinart, Bonner, Delius and Trapido, scholars who were to become strongly associated with the History Workshop's preoccupations, rejected the

the intervention of the State in this regard was particularly obvious. It should also be taken into account that a central concern of these works was to challenge the liberal thesis. They were therefore forced to take a wide sweeping approach as a necessary starting point for the historiographical transition in agrarian studies. As Bundy described his work 'its scope is broad and its purpose essentially that of an initial survey'. His aim was to create a broad framework for understanding the transformation in agriculture in South Africa. Mare, 'African Population Relocation' p.11; Bundy, The Rise and Fall, 2nd ed., preface.

¹⁶Beinart and Delius 'Introduction', p.14.

¹⁷Phil Bonner noted of the usefulness of theory 'certain kinds of issues don't crop up in the material we have at our disposal in a very regular way ... If you're looking at the material in a totally empirical way, you could simply miss them because their relevance doesn't strike you. What this does is to focus your attention on a certain cluster of components in the society which you interpret as being significant' in J. Peires, ed., Before and After Shaka, p.7.

structuralism inherent in the analysis of the articulation of modes of production. They were influenced strongly by Terence Ranger's ideas in his review of Roots of Rural Poverty.¹⁸ As a result they concentrated centrally on the internal dynamics of pre-capitalist societies and the precise articulation between those societies and the broader political economy.¹⁹ Many of their ideas were presented at the different History Workshops, together with the work of other scholars, such as Kinsman, Wright, Hamilton and Spiegel.²⁰

Basically, these scholars attempted to overturn the metaphor of the articulation of modes of production.²¹ In their analyses, the nineteenth century African societies were depicted as 'the axis around which major developments turned'. In other words, the balance of power between the articulating forces was reconsidered. Instead of emphasising the interests of the state, the needs of capital, and the functionality of pre-capitalist forms to the state and capital and seeing pre-capitalist structures being destroyed in their substance while their forms were utilized by the dominant capitalist mode of production, the studies revealed a different dynamic. Pre-capitalist structures and networks were seen to be resilient, and this endurance had an impact on the particular path of development taken by capitalism.

In this regard, scholars like Wolpe and Morris and their capital logic explanations were criticised for being too functionalist. The whole

¹⁸Ranger, 'Growing from the roots'

¹⁹ Delius, The Land Belongs to Us, p.6; G. Kay, Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis London, 1975; Keegan, 'Mike Morris and the Social Historians' p.5.

²⁰ Bonner and Guy chaired the Seminar at the 1981 History Workshop entitled 'Class relations in pre-twentieth century agriculture'; Delius and Trapido 'Inboekselings and Oorlams'; Kinsman, 'Notes on the Southern Tswana Social Formation'; Hamilton and Wright, 'The Making of the Lala'; T. Keegan 'White Settlement and Black Subjugation on the South African Highveld: The Tlokoa Heartland in the North Eastern Orange Free State, ca. 1850-1914' HW, 1984; M. Kinsman 'The Impact of the Difaquane on Southern Tswana Communities, with special reference to the Rolong', HW, 1984; J. Sharp and A Spiegel 'Vulnerability to Impoverishment in South African Rural Areas: Locating the failure of Kinship', HW, 1984.

²¹p. Harries 'Modes of Production', p.35.

concept of articulating modes of production was challenged. The studies of pre-capitalist societies revealed that, with the penetration of capital (often mercantile), certain pre-capitalist relations were dissolved while others were more resilient and remained, resulting in 'combinations and permutations of the fixed elements in particular modes of production' in any particular society.²² The existence of these 'combinations' tended to destroy the idea of a simple sequence of modes of production, such as, 'slave-feudal-capitalist'. As Freund noted:

once the mode of production is no longer able to process social reproduction in any distinctive way, is it really meaningful to discuss social relations in terms of an 'articulation' between distinct spheres circulating autonomously around their own stars?²³

At further levels, too, the concept of 'mode of production' was questioned - in the sense that there is no basis for a simple transition to take place from one mode of production to another, - and also in the sense that the base does not completely determine the superstructure. Scholars began to question whether social relations and material determinations, and the path of historical transition, could be placed into the schematic framework as Morris had described. These studies began to reveal that the formation of African societies and states and the complex relationships within these societies could not be explained simplistically by sole reference to relations of production. Firstly, it was shown that in pre-capitalist societies 'production is not essentially determined by the law of value and the fetishism of commodities'. In other words, a pre-capitalist mode of production 'cannot be comprehended entirely in terms of the extraction of a qualitatively specific surplus'.²⁴ Kinship was shown to structure pre-capitalist modes of production, and these kinship and other relations of dominance and subordination were explained only by material means. As a result, it was argued that it was extremely difficult to see

²² B. Freund, 'The Modes of Production Debate in African Studies', Canadian Journal of African Studies, volume 19, 1, 1985, pp.25 & 26.

²³ Ibid. p.2.

²⁴ Freund, 'The Modes of Production Debate', p.26.

where a non-capitalist mode declined and a capitalist mode took over, and also to predict the path of historical transition. Further, the concept of class struggle would be ill-defined unless there was clarity on whether or not the kinship ties which bound a person to a pre-capitalist mode of production had been severed and the worker was seen to be a free wage labourer fighting a proletarian battle. If scholars could not define class struggle adequately then the route of transition from one mode of production to the next could not be clearly predicted.²⁵

A declaration of war

In the early 1980s, a strong attack was launched led by scholars like Bozzoli against work based on an epistemological approach which placed theory on a level which could not be tested by evidence.²⁶ In 1980, Bozzoli declared war on the 'three deadly sins of theoreticism, structuralism and catechism' which she believed were driven by 'the pervasive, some might say insidious, influence of Poulantzas and (an important distinction) his local followers'.²⁷ In this regard, she may have exaggerated the 'pervasive influence' of Poulantzian thought and structuralism within South Africa.²⁸ Nevertheless, Bozzoli's attack represented the development of a strong current against structuralism. Bozzoli lambasted the work of scholars who used 'concepts generated by Marxists in other countries and at other historical moments' and 'applied' these concepts to the South African situation. She proposed that 'every society has its own lessons for Marxist

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶ Morris, 'Social History and the Transition to Capitalism', p.17; Morris, 'The Development of Capitalism', 1976, p.198.

²⁷Bozzoli, 'Challenging Local Orthodoxies', p.54.

²⁸ Although Keegan did admit that Morris' work did have a profound influence on his thought at an early stage - the evidence of the debates, discussions and papers presented at local academic seminars such as the ASI seminars at Wits as well as local conferences and the numerous local currents belies this 'pervasiveness'. Morris' research was criticized. Kallaway, interview, June 1990.

theory and, in fact, the unique and unusual system existing in South Africa should be a source of theorising'.²⁹

Subjecting Morris to critique

In the rural history studies which were presented to the History Workshop over the years, there emerged growing criticism of Morris's analysis of the transition to capitalism. Individually, these rural history studies did not form a coherent argument. These studies covered a wide range of images of rural areas, which made generalisations difficult. Yet, collectively, the evidence which was produced presented a strong challenge to Morris's interpretations. In their particular respects, all these works were to challenge Morris's view of the transition to capitalism in agriculture. All dealt to, some extent, with 'rural protest, class relations and the transformations wrought by the penetration of capitalist relations'.³⁰

Scholars challenged Morris's studies on the following points: what preceded capitalism in the countryside; when capitalism could be said to become the dominant mode of production in the countryside, and on what basis; how the transformation took place; whether or not capital was centrally related to the expansion of internal markets following the mining revolution; whether there were other processes affecting transition and whether capitalist accumulation was an inevitable, continuous process carried out by commercially minded landlords.³¹

NEW EVIDENCE, NEW UNDERSTANDINGS AND FUNDAMENTAL REVISIONS

The Marxist social historians were less concerned with defining where one mode of production declined and another took its place than with tracing

²⁹Bozzoli, 'Challenging local orthodoxies', p.54.

³⁰Invitation in the 1981 History Workshop, 1981 Box File, HWO, Wits.

³¹The latter view of capitalism and the landlords was a view which the liberals as well as Morris had embraced - although from very different paradigms. F. Wilson, 'Farming, 1866-1966', in M. Wilson and L. Thompson, eds., The Oxford History of South Africa, vol.2 1971, p.104-171; M. Murray, 'The Triumph of Marxist Approaches', p.84.

the specificities, complexities and particularities of transformation in the countryside based on their empirical findings. Many of the local History Workshop studies introduced a longer-term perspective than Wolpe or Morris had done. Some of these scholars, such as Delius and Trapido (1981), Newton-King (1981) and Kinsman (1981), considered developments in South Africa in the 1800s.³² This long-view perspective had an influence on the way subsequent processes were perceived. A wider perspective was also introduced in the sense that these studies did not concentrate only on Africans on white farms, as Morris had done.³³ Some papers, such as those of Delius' (1987) and Clynick's (1987), examined processes in the reserves; and others, such as that of Keegan (1981), took account of land owned by large companies and not being used for commercial agricultural production.³⁴ This wider perspective altered the picture of capitalist development in the countryside.

The 'Bittereinders'

Morris was challenged by a diverse group of scholars, whom Bradford labelled the Bittereinders, about his conception of when the transition to the dominant mode of production occurred. Some of these scholars had presented their findings at the History Workshops over the years. Some focused on the evidence that Africans continued to retain access to the means of production; others suggested that labour tenants were not free to sell their labour, while others suggested that coerced labour inhibited a free labour market. The latter scholars argued that the labour tenants in

³²Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams'; Kinsman, 'Notes on the southern Tswana Social Formation'; S. Newton-King, 'Some Thoughts about the Political Economy at Graaff-Reinet in the late Eighteenth Century', HW, 1981.

³³Many of Morris' conclusions were drawn from Neveling's study of coloured workers on white farms. J.C Neethling and C. H. Neveling, 'Wages of Natives on Farms', Farming in South Africa, vol.5, No.54, (1930). C. H. Neveling, 'Farm Labour in South Africa', Journal of the Economic Society of South Africa, IV, 2, 8; Morris, 'The Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture', 1976; and 'The Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture', 1982.

³⁴Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele'.

⁴ these situations could not be seen as proletarian and, therefore, the transition to the capitalist mode of production must have occurred later.³⁵ Some 'bittereinders' were criticised for failing to understand that labour fetters and extra economic restrictions were central to the development of capitalism in South Africa; and for failing to understand that it is possible for labour power to be a commodity despite restraints on the labourer's freedom to move. Nevertheless, their arguments had the effect of throwing doubt on Morris's clear, uncomplicated schematising about when the pre-capitalist capitalist mode declined and when the capitalist mode emerged.³⁶

Did feudalism precede capitalism?

There were other studies which challenged the theories as to what preceded capitalism. Those rural history studies which took account of nineteenth century societies questioned what had been a widely accepted view (and, in particular, one which Morris expounded), that is, that feudalism or semi-feudalism existed prior to capitalism's emergence as the dominant mode of production.³⁷ Possibly, the new work was influenced by recent observations

³⁵ Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams', pp.55-63; Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele' pp. 233-238; Bradford, 'Highways, Byways and Cul-de-Sacs', p.80; Morrell, 'A Community in Conflict: The Poor Whites of North Middleburg, 1900-1930'; Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom' p.129; Bradford spoke about the greater extraction of labour from tenants by circumscribing movement and intensifying labour obligations. On O'Meara. 'Progressive farmers faced with tenants struggles and resistance found they had to implement restrictions on tenants movements to increase the profitability of their farms. Bradford 'Highways, Byways and Cul-de-Sacs', p.80.

³⁶ See Murray's arguments in M. Murray, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa: A Critique of the 'Social History Perspective' in Journal of Southern African Studies, 15, 4, October 1989, p.663. Among the Bittereinders are: R. Ainslie, Masters and Serfs London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973; M. Lipton, Capitalism and Apartheid Aldershot: Penguin, 1985; Moodie, 'Class Struggle in the Development of Agrarian Capitalism'; S. Greenberg Race and State in Capitalist Development, Johannesburg: Ravan, 1980 p.71; R. Miles, Unfree Labour under Capitalism: An Anomalous Necessity? London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987; H. Bradford, A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924-1930 New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987; Also see M.Murray and C. Post, 'The "Agrarian Question", Class Struggle and the Capitalist State in the United States and South Africa', The Insurgent Sociologist 11, 4, 1983, pp. 50-57.

³⁷ W. Macmillan, The South African Agrarian Problem; F. Wilson, 'Farming 1866-1966' in M. Wilson and L. Thompson, The Oxford History of South Africa, vol.2.; van Onselen, Chibaro, van Onselen did to a certain degree challenge

in Africanist work: that capital was being exchanged and accumulated well before colonisation took place.³⁸

Trapido was one of the first scholars to reveal how capitalism penetrated into the countryside well before the mineral revolution - in the form of commercial production near the Cape Town port. He considered the effect this development had on settler expectations of farming.³⁹ Delius and Trapido, in their 1981 History Workshop paper, revealed how Boer communities became involved in processes of primitive accumulation - by hunting, trading, speculating in land and stock farming - on the outskirts of a mercantile capital which was directed mainly by British Imperialism.⁴⁰ The papers of Delius (1981, 1984, 1987), Hofmeyr (1987) and Peires (1984) reflected on the penetration of mercantile capital through individuals like D.J. Coetzee, J. Abel Erasmus, Fenner Solomon and Scholefield, all of whom became involved in a variety of land transactions and labour deals through granting easy credit and encouraging debt.⁴¹ Some scholars considered the spread of the legal mechanisms of mercantile capital into the interior, at a local level.⁴² Driven by the demands of mercantile trade, dispossession and the expropriation of the means of production like cattle were also

the concept of Feudalism replacing it with 'quasi feudal'. Simons and Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa, Bundy, The Rise and Fall, 1979.

³⁸H. Slater, 'Peasantries and Primitive Accumulation in South Africa: Southern Africa Research in Progress', Collected Papers, 2, University of York: Centre for Southern African Studies, 1977, pp.82-94, 86-7, 89; S. Marks and S. Trapido 'Lord Milner and the South African State' History Workshop Journal, 8, 1979.

³⁹Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams'. Trapido had written an earlier piece 'Reflections on land, office and wealth in the South African Republic, 1850-1900' in Marks and Atmore, Economy and Society.

⁴⁰Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams', pp. 55, 65; Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.676.

⁴¹Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele' (Scholefield), p.232; I. Hofmeyr, 'Turning Region into Narrative: English storytelling in the Waterberg', HTG, pp.272-274; Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams', p.67; Peires, 'The Legend of Fenner Solomon', p.75; Delius, 'Abel Erasmus: Power and Profit in the Eastern Transvaal', HW, 1984.

⁴²Peires, 'The Legend of Fenner Solomon', p.70.

shown to have occurred through conquest.⁴³ Delius (1987) pointed to the re-orientation of communities in response to the penetration of mercantile capital.⁴⁴ This evidence dispelled the notion that the South African economy was feudal and proposed, instead, that the economy be viewed as 'a frontier economy being shaped under the dominance of merchant capital, operating very unintensively on the margins of the world capitalist economy'.⁴⁵

Results of mercantile penetration on the agricultural economy of South Africa were a growing concentration of landholding as well as the increasing commercialisation of land. Many of the History Workshop papers had revealed that primitive accumulation based on mercantile capital revolved centrally around appropriating land and labour through dispossession.⁴⁶ Keegan believed, therefore, that mercantile capital actually established the pre-conditions for productive capital, for:

insofar as productive capital is firstly a relationship or surplus appropriation, a property relationship, it requires the large scale availability of labour power as a commodity, and the concentration of productive resources (most importantly land at first) in the hands of the holders of wealth'.⁴⁷

By creating these pre-conditions, the period of mercantile capital penetration could in no sense be described as feudal or semi-feudal.

Sharecropping - unproductive and feudalistic relic or active and commercialised?

A number of History Workshop papers challenged Morris's depiction of sharecropping as a feudalistic relic from a pre-capitalist past. In Morris's

⁴³Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele', p.231.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Keegan, 'The origins of agrarian capitalism', p.676.

⁴⁶Peires, 'The legend of Fenner Solomon' was amongst them.

⁴⁷Keegan, 'The origins of agrarian capitalism', p.673.

view of feudalist relations, Africans were bound to the land, had control over their own labour power, paid rent for their access to land and produced for subsistence and not necessarily for exchange. He believed that sharecropping as a form of labour tenancy 'retarded the increasing productivity of agricultural production'.⁴⁸ On the other hand, the papers of Keegan and Nkadimeng and Relly (1981) suggested that sharecropping arose in the process of the penetration of capital and was an active response by Africans to that penetration. Sharecropping was depicted as a 'highly commercialised relationship' which 'arose in response to the emergence of markets at Kimberley and ... (or) the Rand'.⁴⁹ Africans were seen to adopt 'new technology, changes in family labour organisation and new attitudes to productive activity'; and, in this sense, sharecropping emerged as 'commercialised and relatively large scale cash crop production'.⁵⁰ Seen in this light, sharecropping (one of the dominant forms of labour relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) was certainly not a feudal type relationship. This view of sharecropping also suggested that not all changes within agriculture were initiated by state legislation and the workings of Capital. As Beinart and Delius suggested, 'in some areas the transformation of agrarian production also came from below, fuelled by the activities and accumulations of the peasantry'.⁵¹

Boer landowners or cheque-book farmers?

Morris was also challenged on his depiction of how the transition to capitalism occurred and who was largely responsible. According to his view capital accumulation and 'exploitation in agriculture in the twentieth

⁴⁸Morris, 'The Development of Capitalism', 1982, p.285.

⁴⁹Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.109.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp.110,111.

⁵¹Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.35. Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', p.97; Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy'.

century was taking place by means of the generalised production of agricultural commodities primarily for the internal market', directed by powerful boer landowners.⁵²

Among other scholars, the papers of Nkadimeng and Relly (1981), Keegan (1984) and Morrell's (1984 and 1990) produced evidence to suggest that the development of capitalism in agriculture was encouraged by men who had made their money in mining and industry, as well as by the new settlers who arrived in the early twentieth century - bringing with them money and ideas from Europe. In a sense, these scholars reformulated an early argument made by Macmillan that it was not the Boer landowners but the 'cheque book' farmers who hastened capitalist development in agriculture.⁵³

Dispossession and proletarianisation - uneven and irregular

Theoretically, Morris established that the mode of production was capitalist by the 1920s. He argued that capitalists controlled the means of production and the means of labour by that time. Labour had become a commodity and the wage form was dominant. He, therefore, proposed that despite people's experience and their consciousness being 'permeated with a peasant class ideology'. these 'peasants' were actually proletarians. Morris depicted change from one mode of production to another as a relatively smooth uncomplicated transition to capitalism, although he did recognise certain regional differences. Two central assumptions underlying his work were that: generally, Africans were dispossessed in practice as well as in law by the 1920s; and African resistance to attacks on their

⁵²Morris, 'The development of capitalism', p.258.

⁵³ Keegan, 'White settlement and Black subjugation'; Morrell, 'A Community in Conflict'; Others outside of the History Workshop included: T. Kirk, 'The Cape Economy and the expropriation of the Kat River Settlement 1846-53', in Marks and Trapido, Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa; Keegan, Rural Transformations in Industrialising South Africa spelt this out very clearly. H. Slater 'The Changing Patterns of Economic Relations in Rural Natal:1838-1914' Institute of Commonwealth Studies, Collected Seminar Papers, 3, 1971-1972; S. Dubow, 'Land, Labour and Merchant Capital in the pre-industrial rural economy of the Cape: the experience of Graaff-Reinet district (1852-72)', Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, UCT, 1982.

access to the means of production, had very little impact and were futile. As a result of these factors, when the markets expanded and capitalists needed to increase productivity on the farms, the transition to the dominance of the capitalist mode was seen to happen swiftly. Perhaps Morris's views can be explained, in part, by the evidence he used. He concentrated centrally on white owned farms, and the data of farm wages on which he based his conclusions were for coloured workers only. Coloured workers were often the most dispossessed of workers.⁵⁴

Over the period of 1978 to 1990, the History Workshop committee encouraged studies with a longer term view and a local and regional focus.⁵⁵ Evidence which arose from the History Workshop papers suggested that the transition to capitalism was a far more complex process. The various local history papers revealed the peculiarities of different regions in terms of diverse political economies based on particular markets, distinct ecosystems and different cultures, class structure and struggles.⁵⁶ Bundy noted of these differences that 'the detailed regional studies have begun to capture the particularity and diversity of agriculture's uneven development'.⁵⁷

The regionally-based papers revealed the irregularity of the penetration of merchant capital. Thus, where Newton King proposed that by

⁵⁴ Morris, 'The development of capitalism' p.258 and 292; Delius and Trapido 'Inboekselings and Oorlams'.

⁵⁵ The committee of the History workshop decided to encourage studies which gave consideration to 'the concept and realities of uneven development'. HW Minutes of Meeting 19 August, 1982, Minutes of Meeting File, HWO, Wits. They also encouraged those studies which had a local focus embracing 'the different local experiences of proletarianisation, gender hierarchies, cultural development, ethnic composition, capital formation and struggle' as well as 'different regional manifestations of resistance'. HW 1984 Invitation and HW 1984 Application for funds (draft), Minutes of Meeting File. HW 1984, HWO, Wits.

⁵⁶ Hofmeyr, 'Turning Region into Narrative', p.277. Note: It was only really in 1984 that a regional comparative perspective was introduced to the History Workshop when it widened its canvas to include other regions apart from the Transvaal. In earlier Workshops scholars had drawn attention to the importance of recognising regional and chronological variation. (Letter from Prof. J. Butler to Bozzoli, 12 June 1980, 1981 Workshop Papers Box File, HWO, Wits.

⁵⁷ Bundy, The Rise and Fall, 2nd ed., preface.

1800 the Khoisan were almost completely dispossessed and their labour power had become a commodity in the Cape under capitalist contractual legislation, other scholars argued that a far slower and more uneven penetration of mercantile capital took place inland. Of course, the erratic penetration of mercantile capital would result in a varied process of dispossession.⁵⁸

The uneven penetration could be explained, partly, by the different responses of various societies to the penetration of capital. The success of mercantile capital to transform pre-capitalist structures depended on the strengths of those societies involved.⁵⁹ Trapido and Delius (1981) pointed to the rather fragile balance of power between boer communities and African societies. They suggested that the dispossession of African societies did not necessarily occur very easily or in some cases at all.⁶⁰ Some African societies were seen to retain their economic systems relatively intact for many years.

Delius noted in his 1987 History Workshop paper: 'the ability to conquer was not necessarily synonymous with the capacity to dispossess'.⁶¹ Even where landownership changed hands the implications were not necessarily that the land would be occupied by the new party. Often large tracts of land held for speculative purposes by land companies or mining capital were occupied by African chiefdoms and communities.⁶² The existence of African communities living in the reserves, as well as large numbers of

⁵⁸S. Newton-King, 'The labour market of the Cape Colony, 1807-28' in S. Marks and A. Atmore, Economy and Society, p.198.

⁵⁹Much recent work on Africa was emphasising the more tenuous balance of power between merchant capital and pre-capitalist societies. Keegan, 'The Dynamics of Rural Accumulation in South Africa', pp.628-9.

⁶⁰See Harries, 'A forgotten corner', on the Makulele community which remained semi-independent right up until 1969, pp. 93, 96. Also see Hofmeyr, 'Turning Region into Narrative' on the semi-independence of the African communities in the Waterberg, p.266.

⁶¹Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele', p.228.

⁶²Hofmeyr, 'Turning Region into Narrative', p.266; Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele'; Keegan, 'White settlement and Black Subjugation'.

Africans living on rented land served to slow the process of the commoditisation of African labour power. According to Beinart, 'capital and the state - and these were not uniform categories - had only limited power to shape social relationships in those areas which were left under African occupation'.⁶³

Keegan was to conclude from these studies that:

the processes of primitive accumulation were not completed for a long while yet, for not only did colonial land claims have to be turned into de facto control over the land by individual owners and lessees (a process that could not be taken for granted) but a labouring force had to be forged out of those pre-capitalist agriculturalists living on the land'.⁶⁴

Kinsman noted that some Marxist social historians, in particular Keegan, recognised that while 'there was legal dispossession, people were not dispossessed in reality'.⁶⁵ Thus, incomplete processes of primitive accumulation and dispossession would inevitably imply a very uneven and complex transition to capitalism. Morris was not in a position to comprehend the full complexities of the transition in the countryside without an adequate knowledge of these prior processes.

Resistance

Although many of the writers of these History Workshop rural papers recognized that the process of dispossession, and the attempts to create a large wage labour force, were far stronger and more rapid following the discovery of minerals and the growth of industrial capital, their conclusions, however, were modified by their awareness of people's struggles to retain their access to the means of production. Keegan, Nkadameng and Bradford's papers (1981) suggested that the struggles that were being waged in the countryside in the 1920s and 1930s, mainly, were not between fully-developed classes within the capitalist mode of

⁶³Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele', p.230.

⁶⁴Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.677.

⁶⁵Kinsman, telephonic interview, May 1992, Cape Town.

production; the struggles were often waged over the processes of primitive accumulation by people who were outside the emerging productive system who were attempting to retain their access to the means of production.⁶⁶

Resistance was a central concern of many of the rural history papers presented to the History Workshop in the 1980s. People's resistance to dispossession, to attacks on their access to the means of production and the varying outcomes of this resistance were to ensure that a wide variety of labour relations were formed in the countryside. The 'class expressions of rural people' were considered to be an important 'shaping factor in South African history'.⁶⁷ This perspective gave a different view of the particular route taken in the transformation of the countryside.

Many History Workshop papers on rural history considered the resistance of Africans to attempts to force them to become proletarians. Beinart revealed how Africans clung to their independent access to resources such as land, implements and cattle. He revealed how women in rural areas called for an end to evictions and to attempts by officialdom to reduce their stock.⁶⁸ Bradford wrote of the collective resistance of Africans which often took the form of squatting illegally on crown lands.⁶⁹ Keegan and Nkadineng examined how Africans made use of the uneven development of capitalism between farms and between regions by moving to areas where their demands for access to land were more likely to be met. The threat of 'trekking' placed pressure on farmers in need of labour to make compromises. Keegan also revealed how Africans responded to the increasing demands of farmers for higher productivity by using their entrepreneurial skill at sharecropping thus safeguarding their access to land while increasing profits for the farmers. Sharecroppers were often portrayed as 'taking advantage of the weaknesses of legislation and

⁶⁶Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy'; Nkadineng and Relly, 'Kas Maine'; Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom'.

⁶⁷ Beinart and Delius 'Introduction', p.48; Bradford, 'A taste of freedom', p.139.

⁶⁸Beinart, 'Women in Rural Politics', pp. 335, 338.

⁶⁹Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom' p.130; Bradford, '"We are now the men"', p.300.

practices', and as often, strongly resisting attacks on their access to the means of production.⁷⁰ Beinart, as Bundy had done, showed how in certain areas African farmers were improving and expanding their farms and living off their produce. Bradford mentioned the many forms of individual resistance in the countryside, such as desertion and laziness, and noted that, because of the structural constraints within agriculture, individual forms of resistance were the most widespread. National movements like the ICU were seen to have played a central role in calling for a return of land and for national autonomy.⁷¹ Resistance in these different forms resulted in a very complex topography of relations of exploitation.⁷²

The internal dynamics of pre-capitalist societies

Certain studies concentrated less on individual forms of resistance and more on the internal dynamics of resistance of 'pre-capitalist' societies. Delius and Trapido were to suggest that the resulting labour relations were determined just as much by the latter as by the demands of merchant and productive capital. Their work challenged the view that the capitalist mode of production penetrated and turned pre-capitalist relations into a travesty while capital determined the path taken. Labour relations entered into on the farms were dependent to a large extent on the relations between the farmers and adjacent African societies. Where the latter were conquered and dispossessed farmers wielded greater control, however where these societies remained strong African labourers had a far better bargaining position. This meant that labour relations entered into were slightly more favourable to the African labourers. In other words, these Africans, at times, were permitted to retain some control over the means of production,

⁷⁰ Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', pp. 90, 91, 100; Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', pp. 97, 122.

⁷¹ Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', p.139.

⁷² Beinart, et al., Putting a Plough to the Ground, pp.431,444.

like cattle and land.⁷³The papers of Delius and Trapido, as well as that of Nkadimeng, took into account the interconnectedness between the locations/reserves, communal land, rentier land and the farms which served to give Africans greater bargaining power - as long as alternative options such as rental, migrant labour, moving between farms, or moving to communal land remained open.⁷⁴They saw the transformation in the countryside as a more 'uneven, gradual and sporadic process', in which the balance of power was not wholly in the hands of the white farmers.⁷⁵

They pointed to a whole range of labour relations that existed from coerced full-time labour, to coerced, seasonal labour to contract labour paid in kind.⁷⁶

The internal dynamics of pre-capitalist societies were seen to hinder the complete commoditisation of labour power.⁷⁷Certain papers, such as those of Keegan (1984) and Beinart (1984), pointed to the way Africans struggled to retain their hold on the rural economy by holding on to, even if it was in altered form, 'the extended, kin-based, multigenerational community as the fundamental unit of production and of social life in their lineage system'.⁷⁸These studies rejected the view associated with

⁷³Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele'; Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams', pp. 54, 62, 72; Bonner, Kings, Commoners and Concessionaires.

⁷⁴Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams'; Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele'; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', pp. 95, 97; Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.37.

⁷⁵Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.119.

⁷⁶Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams', p.63; Hofmeyr, 'Turning region into narrative', pp. 266, 272.

⁷⁷HW Final Programme 1981 File, HWO, Wits. It is problematic to use the word pre-capitalist for societies already reorientating in response to the penetration of capital.

⁷⁸Keegan, 'The origins of agrarian capitalism', p.678; Beinart, 'Women in rural politics', pp.340, 343; Delius, et al. 'Putting a Plough to the Ground', pp.431,434; Bradford, 'A taste of freedom', pp.135,140; Harries, 'A forgotten corner of the Transvaal'.

structuralist writing that ethnicity and chieftaincy were a creation of the state in its attempts to fragment a nationalist consciousness. Many of the Workshop papers revealed quite clearly that ethnicity and chieftaincy were central vehicles for the expression of African resistance and opposition. As Beinart noted of his and Bundy's work in Hidden Struggles: 'popular movements are intricately bound up with reassertions of new forms of chieftaincy and identity'.⁷⁹ Many papers presented to the History Workshop reflected on the role of chiefs in their control over migrant labour, and in resistance. The internal dynamics of these societies were very important considerations in any attempt to trace the development of capitalism in the countryside.⁸⁰

Some papers, such as those of Nkadimeng and Relly (1981), considered how elders clung to certain pre-capitalist forms of relationships which ensured that they retained a degree of control over the labour of the youth. For example, Kas Maine, the sharecropper, still exercised a certain degree of control over his children's labour in the 1930s and 1940s.⁸¹ The perpetuation of these relationships of course prevented labour power becoming completely commoditised. At other times chiefs relied on migrant labour for patronage and pressed young men to work.⁸² The way these societies re-orientated themselves to cope with the penetration of capital affected the particular path that the transformation took. The particular mobilisation of family labour meant that many African families were able to remain on the land while bywoners were the first to leave the farms.

⁷⁹Beinart letter to Bozzoli, 20 May 1985, 1984 Correspondence File, HWO, Wits.

⁸⁰Harries, 'A forgotten corner'; Beinart, 'Women in rural politics'; Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele'; Beinart CCC.

⁸¹The township studies revealed a flight of youth to the towns in the 1930's and 1940's reflecting that up until the elders had as yet retained considerable control over the labour power of the youth. See Dikobe, 'Dispossessed', p.52 about the flight of the youth.

⁸²Migrant labour was shown to be partly inspired by the demands of chiefs for gains and patronage. Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.25; Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams'; Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele'.

Nkadimeng and Relly (1981), Keegan (1981) and Bradford (1984) and Beinart considered household production and gender relations in rural societies. The effects of these studies on our understanding of how classes came to be constructed and how the transformation in the countryside took place has already been discussed.⁸³

These studies which took account of the internal dynamics of African communities: the control by elders over labour and surpluses; the changing position of women in labour relations, portrayed a process to full proletarianisation which was far more complicated and drawn out than Morris's mode of production analysis could comprehend.

The insights provided into labour relations by these studies presented a challenge to Morris's idea that, in general, people were proletarianised by the 1920s. Bradford believed that people's experience, consciousness and economic relationships were interrelated. She argued from the evidence that labour tenants, who were more interested in reclaiming access to land than in making wage demands, could not yet be seen as proletarians.⁸⁴ These History Workshop papers placed more emphasis on people's perceptions of their exploitation and on their struggles against exploitation than Morris had done. This perspective, of course, gave a different perspective to the transformation in the countryside. According to Bradford, 'the vast majority of Blacks in the Transvaal were, after all, partially proletarianised, and their interests straddled those of peasants and workers'.⁸⁵

⁸³Chapter three of this study

⁸⁴Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction' in W. Beinart et al. eds. Putting a Plough to the Ground, p.48; Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', p.139.

⁸⁵Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', pp. 116, 118; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', pp. 91 and 92; Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', pp. 131, 139, 144; Beinart, 'Women in Rural Politics', pp. 333, 338, 340, 353, 354; and Harries, 'A Forgotten Corner', p.129. Bradford quotes Lenin - 'a landholding, horseowning peasant subject to co-ersed labour was not most usefully conceptualised as a proletarian in a capitalist economy' VI Lenin 'the development of Capitalism in Russia', Collected Works vol.3 Moscow, 1964 and Agrarian Programme p219,225,227,291-2; Bradford, initial draft of 'Highways, Byways and Cul de Sacs,' p.5.

Divisions amongst the farmers

Those studies which took account of the uneven accumulation of capital and the resulting divisions amongst the farmers were also to reveal that the transformation was far more protracted, untidy and slower than the parliamentary legislation implied.⁸⁶ The agrarian studies presented to the History Workshop adopted a regional perspective which revealed different climatic conditions, productive processes and needs of different areas which resulted in a very uneven accumulation process for capital.⁸⁷ The unevenness was also seen to be a result of rising land values and easy credit. Morris had argued that these rising land values forced farmers to pay wages to their labourers and to rely on more intensive cultivation. Morris, generally, tended to see farmers as a rather homogenous, monolithic group - a powerful landlord class.⁸⁸ However, Keegan in his 1981 History Workshop paper, noted that land values and credit also led to rising indebtedness which forced some poorer farmers to rely on sharecropping.⁸⁹ Apart from an uneven distribution of wealth among farmers, there were also divisions in terms of political affiliation and association, language, class and access to labour as well as differential access to the state.⁹⁰ Morrell revealed that wealthier farmers had a greater influence over state decisions than small farmers.⁹¹ The divisions among farmers revolved around conflicts over access to labour. Large landholders allowed tenants to live

⁸⁶Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.122.

⁸⁷Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', pp. 128, 130.

⁸⁸Morris, 'The development of Capitalism in South African agriculture', pp. 261, 265.

⁸⁹Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.112.

⁹⁰Keegan, 'White settlement and Black subjugation'; Delius, 'Abel Erasmus'; Morrell, 'A community in conflict'.

⁹¹R. Morrell, 'Differential access to the state: white farmers in the Natal Midlands, 1900-1930', HW, 1990.

on their land, whilst poorer farmers demanded the dispersal of Africans from those large farms as well as from the reserves. Wealthier, progressive farmers demanded that wages be paid to labourers and that the practice of sharecropping should cease. Conversely, the poorer farmers relied on sharecropping and in certain areas, like the eastern highveld and middleveld of the Transvaal, these farmers were unable to pay cash wages at all in the 1920s.⁹²

Legal dispossession and actual dispossession

Studies like those of Keegan and Morrell, revealed that in the early decades of the twentieth century and, particularly, after the passing of the 1913 Land Act there was a general move to a wage labour system along a particular line through the Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal midlands and Eastern Cape. However, this trend was by no means uniform and the dominance of this practice was questionable. The impact of the Land Act was not seen to be sudden and intense - it was not seen to transform all labour relations. The impact was shown to be strongest in the Orange Free State.⁹³ However, in other areas, sharecropping continued. Keegan noted that 'as long as some farmers continued to depend upon sharecropping for their survival, their black tenants were assured of survival in one or other alternated form'.⁹⁴ He revealed how poorer farmers circumvented the 1913 Legislation by inventing new forms of payment. They divided fields in half or sold the produce and gave a portion of the profits to the sharecropper. In effect, the old form of sharecropping continued under another name.⁹⁵

⁹²Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.130; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', p.116.; Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams', p.116.

⁹³Keegan, Rural Transformations.

⁹⁴Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.119.

⁹⁵Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.120.

Macmillan's earlier insight that 'the poor farm was still the rule' in the 1920s was shown to have substance.⁹⁶

sharecropping

According to Keegan (1981) sharecropping on many Orange Free State farms was still widely observed 'as late as the 1930s'; particularly, in the northern Free State which encouraged a movement of people there because sharecropping relations were proliferating. Sharecropping was shown to have continued in the Cape and Transvaal right through to 1949 which proved to be a bumper year.⁹⁷ The scholars who contributed papers to the History Workshop emphasised, far more than Morris had done, the uneven implementation of the Land Act in different regions. The papers demonstrated that local, empirically based studies which exposed the attempts of poor farmers to circumvent the legislation, and the resistance of sharecroppers to their increasing constraints, gave a very different picture of agrarian transformation than that which could be assumed from the legislation and official statistics.⁹⁸

Keegan suggested that:

if the history of South Africa's countryside demonstrates anything it is that legislative edict and administrative fiat have little force in shaping the substance and context of class struggle unless the material conditions are also propitious. The struggle was conducted in the countryside and not in parliament.⁹⁹

Studies which took account of regional variations, the uneven penetration of merchant capital, the non-uniformity of dispossession, the effects of collective as well as individual forms of resistance and the

⁹⁶W.M. Macmillan Complex South Africa, pp.76-77.

⁹⁷Nkadineng and Relly, 'Kas Maine' p.100; Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.38.

⁹⁸Statistics of Department of Agriculture for Native Economic Commission; Morris, 'The development of capitalism in South African Agriculture', 1982, p..259.

⁹⁹Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.122.

divisions within the landowning bloc, all served to paint a topography of very varied and diverse labour relations between regions, between farms, within farms and even within an individual's lifespan.¹⁰⁰ Lacey's argument that the forms of labour tenancy and segregation were in a state of flux in the early decades of the twentieth century, reflected the findings of the agrarian scholars. These findings revealed a great diversity of relations of exploitation on the land.¹⁰¹ The period of the 1920s inherited a whole range of forms of labour relations: some based on compulsion and control; others involving fully-commoditised labour; others in which tenants continued to retain a portionable access to the means of production. These studies undermined Morris's claim that by the 1920s surplus labour was '(generally) being appropriated indirectly through the sale of labour power as a commodity' and the 'wage form was dominant'. Instead, the studies revealed far greater complexity and ambiguity in the transition process from labour tenancy to the dominance of wage labour.¹⁰²

The ambiguities of state power

A very different perspective of the state was given by these History Workshop papers. This was despite the fact that a whole seminar at the 1981 Conference was given over to a discussion of 'Class and state in Twentieth Century Agriculture', which suggested that 'class' and 'state' continued to rank high in importance in interpretations of the transition in agriculture. The view given of the state revealed the greater complexity in

¹⁰⁰ Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.113; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine'.

¹⁰¹ Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.42; Lacey, Working for Boroko.

¹⁰² Morris, 'The development of capitalism in South African agriculture', 1982, p.258; Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy'; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine'; Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa', p.674. Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.33.

the transition process than the view given by Morris.¹⁰³ Morris had seen the state in a very functionalist interventionist light. The state was seen strongly to support the landlord class. Legislation 'was used to maintain the political and economic subservience of the peasants to the landlord class while the estate was transformed into a capitalist enterprise'.¹⁰⁴ The Land Act which halted land purchase by Africans achieved 'its principal object of creating a supply of farm labourers for white landowners'.¹⁰⁵ State intervention was centrally responsible for the transition process in agriculture. The extent of the state's power was questioned by the scholars contributing papers to the History Workshop. Many of these studies were concerned with the workings of the local state. The scholars were aware that 'for the mass of the ordinary people, the law manifests itself not as a parliamentary statute or an appearance in court, but in the form of a lease, a contract, a bond, a debt or a title deed'.¹⁰⁶ Peires added, it is at the local level ... in the legal rather than the political sphere - that the great landed, industrial and mercantile interests directly confront those who are attempting to defend their land, their labour, and the products of their labour.¹⁰⁷

Many papers considered the impact of the law and law agents at a local level.¹⁰⁸ Some papers, such as those of Peires, Delius and Keegan,

¹⁰³Much literature was being written on the State which went beyond the functionalism and instrumentalism inherent in Morris' work. S. Marks and S. Trapido, 'Lord Milner and the South African State', History Workshop Journal, 8, 1979; B. Bozzoli, The Political nature of a Ruling Class, London: 1981; S. Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development, Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1980; D. Hindson, 'The role of the Labour Bureau in South Africa' in D. Hindson, ed. Working Papers in Southern African Studies, volume 3, Johannesburg: Revan Press, 1982; D. Yudelman, The Emergence of Modern South Africa, Cape Town: David Philip, 1984; D. Innes, Anglo-American and the Rise of Modern South Africa, Johannesburg: David Philip, 1984).

¹⁰⁴Morris, 'The development of capitalism in South African agriculture', 1982, p.266.

¹⁰⁵Ibid. p.249.

¹⁰⁶Peires, 'The Legend of Fenner Solomon', p.88.

¹⁰⁷Ibid. p.67.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

pointed to the rapid and wide expropriation of land by local officials using state power. Other papers revealed the inefficiencies and weaknesses of the local state.¹⁰⁹ Knowledge of the workings of legislation at a local level also inevitably led to the awareness of resistance to legislation at a local level, such as farmers' circumvention of laws which did not suit them and tenants' blatant rejection of laws as to where they could live.¹¹⁰ Decisions made by the local state authorities were shown to be as much influenced by the local situation (which involved people's resistance and conflict) as they were by directives from the central state. Delius, in his work on Abel Erasmus, revealed different and, at times, conflicting interests between the local and the central state as a result of different compulsions acting on these structures.¹¹¹ These studies demonstrated that legislation passed in Parliament was not so cut and dried when implemented at a local level.

SOCIAL HISTORY IN A STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

The concern with the local state and local struggles meant that, in some of the studies, a consideration of the workings of the central state was sometimes neglected.¹¹² However, the majority of the papers took account of the structural conditions and constraints on farm workers which served to curtail their resistance.¹¹³ Harries dealt with regional, national and international pressures and social, political or economic structures shaping life at a local level. Keegan wrote of the structural constraints

¹⁰⁹Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams'; Peires, 'The Legend of Fenner Solomon'; Keegan, 'White settlement and Black subjugation'; Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa', p.675.

¹¹⁰Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy'.

¹¹¹Delius, 'Abel Erasmus'.

¹¹²Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.16.

¹¹³Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', p.138.

pushing 'households ever deeper into relations of surplus extraction'. However, all these papers placed a far greater emphasis on individual choice, will and agency than earlier Marxist scholars had done. People's responses to situations and the effects of their responses were investigated.¹¹⁴

Although Keegan, Bradford and Delius, amongst other scholars, recognised that state legislation favoured white farmers, Keegan, in particular, recognised that state legislation could not 'artificially engineer' changes on the ground unless the conditions were right.¹¹⁵ Keegan realised that the effectiveness of state legislation regarding the implementation of an act like the Land Act depended on the extent of the capital base in agriculture. Because this base was weak, the impact of the legislation was seen to be uneven and slow.¹¹⁶ The divisions amongst the farmers due to the unevenness of the capital base served to limit the state's influence as well as its ability to intervene.¹¹⁷ Instead of suggesting that productive relations were changed as a result of state legislation, these scholars considered exactly how productive relations actually came to be transformed. The process was shown to be far slower and more erratic than that suggested by the passing of a single act of Parliament at a particular time.

DIFFERENT FACTORS BEHIND THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Apart from the Land Act, a number of factors were shown to lead to the increasing control of white farmers over the means of production. Scholars

¹¹⁴Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.110; Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom' p.138; Harries, 'A Forgotten corner of the Transvaal', p.128.

¹¹⁵Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', pp.119,120.

¹¹⁶Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.119.

¹¹⁷Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.39.

like Keegan, Bradford, Nkadimeng and Hofmeyr pointed to the fact that it was not direct state intervention in terms of legislation which affected the course of the transition. Rather, it was the more subtle intervention of the state in terms of providing finance, establishing railway links, providing access to exclusive co-operatives as well as to experimental stations, and, most importantly, financial aid for mechanisation after World War 2. This intervention gave white farmers greater opportunities and access to productive technology which gradually ensured that the means of production were driven into their hands.¹¹⁸ Nkadimeng and Relly in 1981 noted 'tractors were indeed a symbol of the modernisation and mechanisation which heralded the decline of sharecropping in the western Transvaal'.¹¹⁹ Further factors were also shown to advantage whites in terms of access to the means of production. Trading stores encouraged debts on the part of African farmers.¹²⁰ The Anglo-Boer War and the ensuing forced stock reduction left many African farmers without access to productive resources and forced many to rely on producing crops commercially.¹²¹ The droughts and bad harvests after World War 1 combined with the limited access African farmers had to credit, caused many to lose their land and to sell their labour in order to survive.¹²²

The 1913 Land Act would have had limited impact were it not for the closing of the arable frontier which resulted in increasing pressure on the

¹¹⁸Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', p.120. Keegan emphasised that it was the Masters and Servants clauses above all else which tilted the balance most. Hofmeyr, 'Turning Region into Narrative', p.268; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', pp. 96 and 98; Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy' pp.115 and 117; Morrell, 'A community in conflict'; Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', p.128; Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.684.

¹¹⁹Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', pp. 100 and 101; Delius, 'The Ndzundza Ndebele', p.227.

¹²⁰Beinart, 'Women in Rural Politics', p.334.

¹²¹Bradford, 'Women's Beer Protests', p.300; Nkadimeng and Relly, 'Kas Maine', p.93.

¹²²Beinart, 'Women in Rural Politics', p.325; Harries, 'A Forgotten Corner of the Transvaal', p.96. The establishment of Game Reserves such as the Xingwedzi Game Reserve resulted in the dispossession of Land

land, both on white farms and in the reserves, forcing Africans into a poor bargaining position.¹²³ The arrival of many white settlers in the 1920s added to the pressure on the land and served to increase land values.¹²⁴ Of course, the expanded internal markets had the effect of encouraging farmers to try to raise the productivity of the land; however, the effects of these incentives, regionally, were erratic.¹²⁵ The expansion of world markets in wool, maize and wattle also encouraged farmers to increase productivity.¹²⁶ These studies revealed that there were many other factors apart from expanded internal markets and state intervention behind the transformation in the countryside. State legislation was ineffective until material conditions began changing and white farmers gained the upper hand as far as control of resources and the means of production were concerned. These material conditions were affected by many factors which developed at different times, and the effects of legislation varied in different regions resulting in a very complex and prolonged process of transition.¹²⁷

A CHALLENGE TO ASSUMING THE INEVITABILITY OF THE TRANSITION

Basing his assumptions on the European model of the transition to capitalism, Morris had assumed that the transformation to capitalism in agriculture was inevitable following the mineral revolution. However, Keegan challenged this assumption. He referred to the situation in Chile in Latin America, where the presence of mining capitalism did nothing to

¹²³Bradford, 'Women's Beer Protests', p. 300; Keegan, 'The Sharecropping Economy', pp. 118, 119.

¹²⁴Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', p.130; Hofmeyr, 'Turning Region into Narrative', p.268.

¹²⁵Bradford, 'A Taste of Freedom', p.129.

¹²⁶Ibid., p.128.

¹²⁷Beinart and Delius, 'Introduction', p.32, 39.

encourage a change to capitalism in the countryside. Keegan believed that the particularities of the South African situation needed to be analysed to explain the emergence of capitalism in agriculture in South Africa. Basing his theory on the insights produced in many of the History Workshop papers, he described the process of transition as follows. The large numbers of settlers arriving in the 1920s brought with them from England ideological models about mechanised farming and the validity of paying wages to labourers. With the easy credit and the rise in the value of farms, many white farmers lost their land and their white bywoners were forced to move to the towns. At the same time, African communities were able to re-organise their family labour, and African sharecroppers prospered. Landless Africans moved to community land. A 'common culture of poverty' was formed among dispossessed whites, all of whom had access to political power via the vote. The state came under pressure from this constituency to establish an advanced, racially ordered capitalism in rural as well as urban areas.¹²⁸ The only way this could be achieved was to encourage the expansion of the capitalist base in agriculture and nurture an economy which would ensure 'profits and wealth and privilege on an ever expanding scale'.¹²⁹ Keegan argued that the development of capitalism in agriculture and the process of proletarianisation could not just be assumed, it had to be explained in terms of South Africa's historically specific situation. This explanation would take account of local, economic, cultural and ideological forces in the country (where whites only enjoyed access to political influence); the internal dynamics of African societies; and the strength of the state in ensuring, mainly through the provision of credit, that productive resources and access to the means of production were placed in the hands of white farmers.¹³⁰

¹²⁸Delius and Trapido, 'Inboekselings and Oorlams', p.59. Delius and Trapido, 'Introduction', p.43.

¹²⁹Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.683.

¹³⁰Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', pp. 682-684.

'THE ANGRY DIVIDE'¹³¹

The new work presented a number of challenges to Morris's interpretation of agrarian transformation. He was accused of twisting the evidence to fit his theory.¹³² Scholars condemned what they interpreted as his 'Eurocentric theorising' which could not deal adequately with the particularities of the South African situation.¹³³ Morris was seen to interpret history in terms of determined processes and cycles while failing to recognise the effects of human agency and the complexities of social interchange.¹³⁴

Murray and Morris responded to the attack on the 'structuralists' with their own offensive. The social historians were condemned for elevating experience and consciousness above analyses of relations of production; and for adopting an 'anti-theoretical bias' which resulted in a rejection of 'a priori premises in favour of a posteriori generalisation'. They were criticised, too, for dealing inadequately with macro forces.¹³⁵

Both sides, in the process of condemning over-simplify the opposing sides epistemology as well as their findings.¹³⁶ Morris was accused of taking very little account of the contradictions and complexities of the transformation process.¹³⁷ He was accused of seeing capitalism 'simply in terms of the presence or absence of wage labour'; whereas, in fact, a closer examination of his work, reveals that the whole process of

¹³¹Taken from W.G. James and M. Simons, eds. The Angry Divide: Social and Economic History of the Western Cape, Cape Town: David Philip, 1989.

¹³²Keegan, 'Mike Morris and the Social Historians', p.11.

¹³³Keegan, 'The Dynamics of Rural Accumulation in South Africa', p.633.

¹³⁴Keegan, Rural Transformations, p.xvi.

¹³⁵Murray, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.664; Morris, 'Social History and the Transition to Capitalism', p.10. Morris was quoting A. Levine et al., 'Marxism and Methodological Individualism', *New Left Review*, 162, 1987 p.78; Keegan, 'Mike Morris and the Social Historians', p.2.

¹³⁶The sides were not so clearly defined.

¹³⁷Keegan, 'The Dynamics of Rural Accumulation', pp. 628-650.

capitalist development is far more complex.¹³⁸ Murray criticised the 'social' historians' work as representing historical phenomenology, based on the revelations of the human experience and unmindful of structures, the other side of the coin to the 'great man' approach.¹³⁹ Murray, mistakenly, conflated much of what constituted the 'new' social history in America which was preoccupied with minutiae, with that of the South African Marxist social history.¹⁴⁰ Keegan responded by accusing Murray of 'simply condemning history as a discipline, as a profession, as a methodology, as an epistemology' and added 'historians have a right to object'.¹⁴¹

Morris spoke of the conceptual haziness of the South African Marxist social historians. Concepts such as 'primitive accumulation', capitalism, and class were used, sometimes, in a flexible and vague way and not related to 'historically specific forms of social labour that imposed particular

¹³⁸The protagonist failed to point out that he did recognise regional patterns. He suggested that the process he was analysing was 'an historical process' and as such was more complex than that outlined in theory. M. Morris, 'The development of capitalism in South African Agriculture', p.248. He made clear at the outset that:

there is a clear distinction between an object in theory and a concrete object. It is not a matter of specifying a structural combination and then identifying it in the same manner in the concrete social formation. Ibid., p.252.

Quoting Poulantzas, he added: 'a mode of production does not reproduce itself or even exist in the pure state, and still less can it be historically periodised as such'. N. Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Society, London: New Left Books, 1975, p.23. Many scholars misunderstood his argument to mean that he saw the 1920s as the time when the transition to capitalism was completed. As a result they condemned it for being too simplistic and free of the complexities. In actual fact he was attempting to argue that by the 1920s a particular line was traversed in which the process agriculturalists were involved in 'was governed and determined by the laws of capital'. He did not say the process was completed, it had just become dominant. Morris, 'Social History and the Transition to Capitalism', p.17.

¹³⁹Murray, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa', p.652; Morris, 'Social History and the Transition to Capitalism', p.9; Keegan 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa: A Reply', p.667.

¹⁴⁰Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.667; E. Fox - Genovese and E. Genovese, 'The Political Crisis of Social History: Class Struggle as Subject and Object', in E. Fox-Genovese, Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism (New York, OUP, 1983).

¹⁴¹Keegan, 'The origins of agrarian capitalism in South Africa', p.667.

conditions on commodity production and circulation'.¹⁴² These social historians were seen to identify class in terms of class experience and consciousness, to reduce class relations to those of relations of exploitation and domination between groups which inevitably took the form of racial conflict.¹⁴³ Morris criticised these historians' inability to give theoretical content to class, which forced them to rely on the liberal concept of race as their central explanatory variable behind agrarian transformation.¹⁴⁴ He referred to Keegan's statement that 'the role of ideology and white self-image in providing the impetus behind the reshaping of rural society was not inconsiderable'; and suggested that Keegan's interpretations tended to 'overlap with an uncritically received liberal paradigm'.¹⁴⁵

In examining communities, the findings of some History Workshop papers on rural history tended to use an overarching concept of poverty and in doing so merged 'class' with 'community' and 'the people'.¹⁴⁶ Murray accused those scholars of concentrating on surface evidence and of having no desire to penetrate that surface to analyse the deeper processes and dynamics of society.¹⁴⁷ Those historians were condemned for using a framework of vague generalities, in which considerations of resistance and accumulation took precedence over analysis of the relations of production

¹⁴²Murray, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.660; S. Newton-King, 'Primitive Accumulation and the Cape Frontier - A Case of Mistaken Identity?', paper presented to the workshop on pre-colonial history, University of Cape Town, 1986.

¹⁴³Murray, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.653.

¹⁴⁴Morris, 'Social History and the transition', pp.15,16; Murray, 'The origins of agrarian capitalism'.

¹⁴⁵Ibid. p.657; Keegan, 'The dynamics of rural accumulation', p.650.

¹⁴⁶Beinart to Bozzoli 20 May 1985; 1985 Correspondence File, HWO, Wits.

¹⁴⁷Murray, 'The origins of agrarian capitalism', pp. 656, 663, 664.

or the particular ways in which surplus labour was extracted.¹⁴⁸ Murray believed that the Marxist social historians were impoverished of the conceptual tools necessary for analysing the transition to capitalism. Without being able to identify what exactly is meant by capitalism in terms of who owns what and how surplus value is extracted, Morris argued 'we have no idea of when the transition to it occurred, what stages it went through and when the forces of capitalism became dominant in the countryside'.¹⁴⁹ Murray pointed out that the lack of definition in terms of relations of production by South African Marxist social historians meant that their analyses of transition in the countryside did not form a coherent argument and were reduced to 'sheer heterogeneity, random difference, and a co-existence of a host of distinctive forces whose effectivity if undecidable'.¹⁵⁰ Murray argued that they did not posit 'a genuine Marxist alternative'. While those scholars may have enriched the historical tapestry with greater detail, Murray believed that instead of reaping a new conceptual harvest as they claimed, they sowed conceptual famine.¹⁵¹

'ON THE GROUND' - A DECOLONISED VIEW

Certainly those 'social' historians did not add much to the debate over the transition to capitalism. They were more interested in struggle, regional diversity and social differentiation, and in how productive relations were transformed 'on the ground'. Their studies were more concerned with tracing

¹⁴⁸Morris, 'Social history and the transition to capitalism', p.17; Murray, 'The Origins of agrarian capitalism', p.659.

¹⁴⁹Morris, 'Social History and the Transition to Capitalism', p.15.

¹⁵⁰Murray, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', p.659, quoting F. Jameson, 'Post Modernism or the Logic of Late Capitalism', New Left Review, 146, 1984, p.57; Krikler quoted in Bradford, 'Highways, Byways and Cul-de-Sacs', p.83.

¹⁵¹Morris, 'Social History and the transition to Capitalism', pp. 9, 14; Murray, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', pp. 645, 647.

rural changes in terms of the resistance of Africans to attacks on their independent access to the means of production and the penetration of capital through the accumulation of resources than they were in determining the exact time of the emergence to dominance of the capitalist mode of production.¹⁵²

However, their findings suggested that capitalism in South Africa did not develop according to the European model or even a variant of that model where it developed 'in the womb of the old mode of production' (feudalism) and matured rapidly into a system of relations of production.¹⁵³ They revealed that South Africa was a society of conquest. It was penetrated by metropolitan capital and, as such, was linked to the world economy. Capital accumulation within that world economy had utilized many different modes of exploitation. As a result, it was more relevant in the South African situation to place analytical priority on 'the larger processes of capital accumulation and class formation that define capitalism as a world system', than on 'the narrow mode of exploitation'.¹⁵⁴

Aside from taking account of metropolitan world capital, the particular way in which South African agriculture developed also demanded different terms of analysis. Conquest and metropolitan capital implied a 'phase of primitive accumulation in a colony of settlement whereby capital was being generated and local bourgeoisie were being formed, but in which investment in capitalist enterprise was, as yet, at a very immature

¹⁵²Murray, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism', pp. 664,5. The subtitle to Beinart, et al., Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural SA, reveals where their interests lay. Without a fundamental agreement about exactly what was meant by capitalism, it was inevitable that there were very different views as to when the capitalist mode of production became dominant. Morris, 'Social History and the Transition', p. 15.

¹⁵³Eric Wolf pointed these differences out in his book Europe and the People without History, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

¹⁵⁴Keegan, 'Mike Morris and the Social Historians', p.9.

stage'.¹⁵⁵ This meant that while the dominant group was accumulating capital from trade, hunting and land speculation and not from production, the subordinate groups had to fight to retain access to the means of production and many were forced into coercive labour relationships. The unevenness of the penetration of metropolitan capital resulted in more mature productive relations in coastal port areas, and varied transitional relations of production further inland. Relations further inland, as many History Workshop papers on rural history suggest, were characterised right through the early decades of the twentieth century by many factors. These were the existence of some resilient pre-capitalist structures; the persistence of sharecropping; the survival of some African communities; the rental of land on a clandestine basis by wealthier African tenants; as well as fully fledged proletarian labour. The 1920s inherited a situation in which no easily identifiable mature, dominant set of productive relationships was evident.¹⁵⁶

Scholars saw the transition taking the form of a gradual reorientation of pre-capitalist structures towards fully mature, productive relations. However, this process was slow and uneven. There was no distinct break in the 1920s.¹⁵⁷ Basing his conclusions on the evidence provided by many of the History Workshop papers, Keegan argued that a 'metropolitan model' which tended to see a definite transition in the form of a phase or stage in which the capitalist mode of production replaced the non-capitalist mode would gloss over 'the fundamental dynamics of the pre-industrial economy' and minimise the complexities and ambiguities of the agrarian transformation.¹⁵⁸ Such a model saw capitalism as existing only in a situation in which the means of production and labour had been transformed into commodities. Keegan believed that such a perspective

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p.9.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p.9

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p.12.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p.9.

proved 'incapable of apprehending conceptually the substantial differences between the historical dynamics of rural South Africa in the colonial nineteenth century and Feudal Europe'. He argued that the development of capitalism in South Africa needed to be understood as a 'multi-layered phenomenon with a complex history'.¹⁵⁹

Considering the factors of conquest, metropolitan capital and the resilience and resistance of pre-capitalist structures in the unique South African situation, Keegan proposed that,

if we accept the analytical priority of the larger processes of accumulation, dispossession and struggle and accept that the dominance of capital is compatible with a wide range of agrarian productive relations, we can avoid the futile exercise of trying to fit enormously ambiguous and contradictory transitional relations and struggles into the mould of either the "quasi-feudal" or the proletarian model. To seek points of transition, to seek to define precisely at what point tenancy changes from being a feudal to a predominantly and essentially capitalist relationship (as Morris does) is to do violence to the real historical processes involved.¹⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

Morris's primary concern had been with the period of late industrialisation. His perspective spanned a shorter term than many of the social historians. He paid very little attention to the period before industrial capital. Seen from that perspective, the Prussian path seemed a very suitable analogy. In the period of late industrialisation many similar patterns were evident. Capitalist transformation could be seen to take place 'from above' in a 'late-industrialising economy in which capitalism arrived ready-made in the form of large scale industrial production, with a strong state exercising heavy extra-economic coercion over a peasantry transformed into a proletariat'.¹⁶¹ It was, therefore, easy for Morris to postulate that South Africa 'in an earlier period displayed similar

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p.10.

¹⁶⁰ Keegan, 'Mike Morris and the Social Historians', p.12.

¹⁶¹ Keegan, 'The origins of agrarian capitalism in South Africa', p.680.

characteristics to the Prussian model', in terms of a semi-feudal economy prior to the dominance of the capitalist mode of production.¹⁶²

On the other hand, the History Workshop scholars probed the dynamics of pre-capitalist societies and the response of these societies to the penetration of mercantile capital. These scholars had a local and 'from below' perspective which exposed: the dynamics of resistance; the complexity of the workings of the law; the diversity between regions; the ambiguities of local political economies; the diversity of pre-capitalist relationships; the inner dynamics and divisions within the white farming community; the ambivalence of state power in the face of these divisions; the variety of forms of labour relations; the experience and consciousness of people facing increasing demands on their productivity; and the entrepreneurial responses of Africans to changing situations. In tracing the complexities and specificities of agrarian change on the ground, these studies undermined certain key pillars of Morris's thesis, in particular, his conception of what preceded capitalism.

These criticisms had important consequences for understanding subsequent processes of capitalist development, such as when and how and why the capitalist mode of production became dominant in the countryside. Although these studies did not specifically set out to challenge Morris nor did any of them individually present a coherent alternative thesis, nevertheless in 1989 Keegan worked from the base of the cumulative knowledge provided by these works and set up an argument which not only challenged Morris's theory substantially but also provided substantial revision and correction. With knowledge of the particularities of capitalist development in South Africa, he proposed alternative models to that of the Prussian path, such as the merchant paths of east Elbian Germany or the haciendas of Latin America.¹⁶³ He created an alternative theory of capitalist development in South Africa based on the evidence

¹⁶² Morris, 'The Development of capitalism in South African agriculture', p.266.

¹⁶³ Keegan, 'The Origins of Agrarian Capitalism in South Africa', pp. 683, 684.

presented by the agrarian Marxist 'social' historians, often in forums such as the Triennial Wits History Workshops. This theory 'traversed the South African terrain more effectively' and proved the point that:

It is South Africa's history that should be able to educate Marxists about the articulation of race and class, the nature of ethnicity and nationalism, the character of ghetto society, the subordination of women, the complexities of proletarianisation, the nature of underdevelopment and a hundred other social problems so starkly and brutally displayed in this society, as much as the converse.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴Beinart, et al. Putting a Plough to the Ground, p.49; Bozzoli, 'Challenging local orthodoxies', p.54.

Conclusion

This study reflects on Johnstone's comment of 1979: 'Quite what all this [a more pluralistic Marxist approach] would mean as far as the future of South African studies is concerned is not clear.'¹ An assessment has been made of the Marxist social history approach in South Africa. The Witwatersrand History Workshop has been a useful vehicle for that assessment.

Over the fifteen years of the Workshop's existence many changes took place in political, economic, social, and inevitably, historiographic spheres. The Workshop was formed in response to the demand for, new interpretations of South Africa's past. Its objectives were to 'recreate Witwatersrand history from a grassroots perspective'.² Its agenda was twofold: to encourage Marxist social history and to popularise the findings. The triennial workshops catered for an academic constituency at the conference and a popular constituency during the 'open' days. The group's popularising activities and links with union and community groups were seen to complement their 'history from the bottom up' approach. Their dual approach inevitably led to problems, and, at times the Workshop was accused by worker groups of being elitist.

Marxist social history, as associated with the History Workshop, did not develop in a vacuum. The economic, political and social situation in South Africa, wider international research trends, and local historiographical forerunners were, to some extent, responsible for the emergence and particular characteristics of Marxist social history in South Africa. The race/class and social history/structuralist framework aside, Marxist social historians utilised, reconceptualised, and built on, the foundations provided by their predecessors.

¹ Johnstone, "Most Painful to Our Hearts", p.5.

²Bozzoli, 'Popular history and the Witwatersrand', p.3.

The basic underlying premise of Marxist social history was, 'if you are not able to understand real individuals, you cannot understand what is universal and general'.³ That approach, which manifest itself in many papers presented to the triennial workshops, offered various challenges to broad Marxist categories such as 'class', 'mode of production', 'the state' and 'hegemony'.

Building on the social history foundations established by some local labour histories of the 1970s the Workshop encouraged a social history of labour. The emphasis on the unorganised and the spontaneous, workers outside their place of work, workers' experiences and their cultural milieu, took those scholars in a direction different to, what were, traditional labour concerns - the relations and forces of production at the workplace, the leadership of union groups and organised struggles. However, changes in South African politics and the changing priorities of the Workshop meant that labour studies, and even the social history of labour declined in importance as urban history grew.

At first the urban history papers, which were presented to the Workshop, reflected an economistic, quantitative and institutional focus. However, over the years, and due in part, to the efforts of the Workshop committee, social history concerns became well established. Culture, resistance and experience were central themes. Oral histories and biographies were increasingly in evidence. With the growth of community studies, as reflected at the 1984 Workshop, social history analyses of urban history increasingly took account of gender, ethnicity, locality, race and nationalist awareness, and religious affiliations amongst other factors; and these were shown to intersect intricately with class experiences. Contemporary crises placed youth and education issues on the agenda.

Like urban history, although by no means on the same scale, Marxist rural histories proliferated in the 1980s. The Workshop, although not necessarily the initiator of these studies, played no small part in

³ Quoted by Bozzoli, 'History, experience and culture', p.43; Antonio Gramsci, letter to his sister-in-Law, in Lynne Lawner, ed. Letters from Prison by Antonio Gramsci, New York, 1973, p.136.

reflecting, as well as guiding that development. These works were affected by contemporary political developments as well as the international growth of peasant studies and Africanist research.

At first the broad processes of capitalist penetration and the development of classes in the countryside were central concerns of South African Marxist rural historians. The rural histories which were presented to the Workshop, however, increasingly reflected a growing concern with local details. Large scale processes were seen in terms of local and individual acts of resistance, accumulation and dispossession. Oral testimony and gender analysis among other methodologies, provided crucial insights into the experiences of ordinary people in the countryside, the forces which impinged on their lives, and the ways in which they coped with those forces. In the process previous interpretations of how the transformation in the countryside took place came to be challenged.

Many analyses of the South African past came under scrutiny. As Keegan commented:

It is in investigating the struggles and experiences, the culture and consciousness of the dispossessed and exploited, that we begin to see some of the fundamental motive forces of South African history at work in concrete terms...this kind of investigation of the history of the previously voiceless allows us to challenge hegemonic perceptions and interpretations of the past; and more than that provides us with the tools required to build new, alternative analyses of the dynamics of class formation, capital accumulation and the nature and role of the state.⁴

Marxist social history has contributed to our understanding of just how history happened in South Africa and, in Johnstone's words, 'if this makes things rather untidy, that is not "too bad for history" but "too bad for theory"'.⁵ However, even theory was shown to be not an unchanging given: it may be reconceptualised and recreated. The result may, in the end be not "too bad for theory" either.

One of the problems with social history analyses is the tendency to lose sight of underlying structural processes. At the 1990 Workshop, Beinart suggested that subjectivity in the majority of papers was perhaps

⁴ Keegan, 'Mike Morris', p.4.

⁵ Johnstone, '"Most Painful to our Hearts"', p.25.

overemphasised. 'The individual voice is given too great a space' and this has a fragmenting effect on the nature of analysis. The 1990 Workshop 'Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid' attempted to encourage the consideration of structure. However the avoidance of structural processes was clear, even in the discussions around broad developments such as the rise and fall of Apartheid.

Beinart also spoke of fragmentation, in the enormously wide range and diversity of topics, and, of a 'lost sequence', in historical terms. The disparate numbers of urban papers at the Workshops and the calls for new syntheses were testimony to that fragmentation. Beinart suggested that there may be a need now, with certain reservations, to revert back to 'old economic' history.⁶

Marks, on the other hand, was more optimistic about the directions in which Marxist social history was proceeding. She spoke of the explosion of well researched, intricate and empirical research in the country in the 1980s. Inevitably, that work would have a fragmenting effect. However there was 'something very positive in diversity'. The fragmentation of research reflected the times in which historians were writing. The 1980s was a hothouse for studies which considered the complexity of individual and group responses and the process of class formation and proletarianisation. At best the papers did engage with class analysis and broader structures. Scholars living and working in South Africa found themselves in very different circumstances to scholars in America and as such could not fail to be aware of broader structures and processes.⁷

Marxist social history in South Africa has its obvious problems, nevertheless, as Marks' suggested, it also has vast potential, and it has, with the obvious encouragement of the Wits History Workshop group, contributed substantially to our reconceptualisation of South Africa's past.

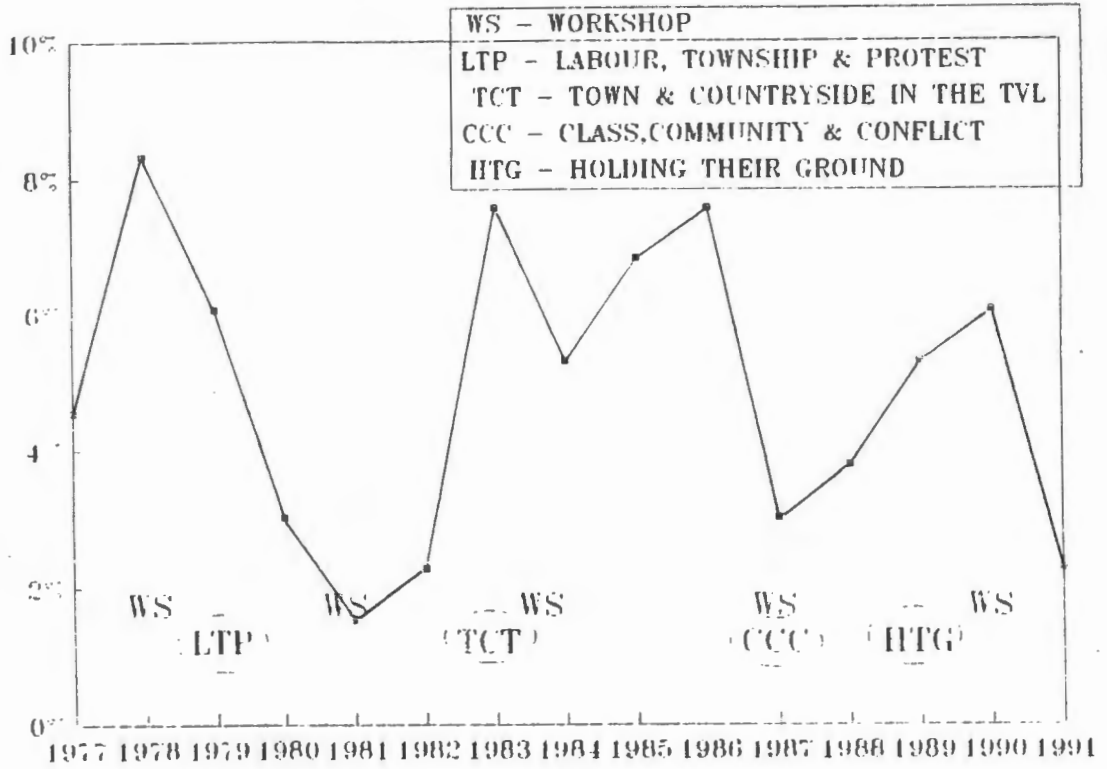
⁶ 1990 Plenary session

⁷ Marks 1990 Plenary session History Workshop

Looking back, over more than a decade, it is clear that the History Workshop played a significant role in the development of Marxist social history in South Africa. It did not merely reflect those developments. Without the Workshop the research would still have been done and similar paths would have been trod. Contemporary political crises and international research trends would have ensured that. However, the Workshop acted as a catalyst for that research. The triennial conferences, which were amongst the most well attended academic conferences in the country, and which attracted well known international scholars, served to legitimise local research interests. The Workshop gave the academics involved, a certain standing in the academic community. It's encouragement of the presentation of 'work in progress' and vigorous interdisciplinary debate, earned it the reputation of being a facilitator to major scholarly achievement. It catapulted the new lines of inquiry into oral history, community and gender studies, amongst other social history interests, not only by providing a forum for radical scholars from all over the country, but also: in the committee's encouragement of research students to pursue particular lines of inquiry; as well as in its obvious effect on academic thought and teaching. It provided a role model for other universities to make contact with the broader community and that contact too had its own lessons for Marxist social history.

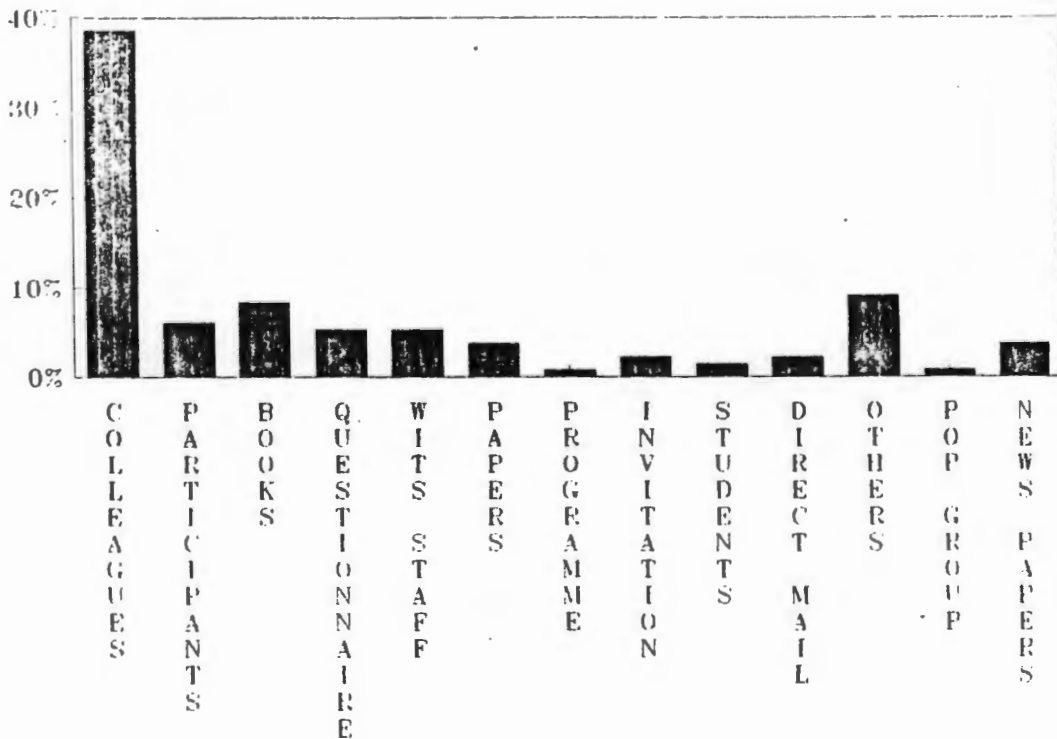
WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE IHW?

APPENDIX A i



WHERE DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE IHW?

A ii

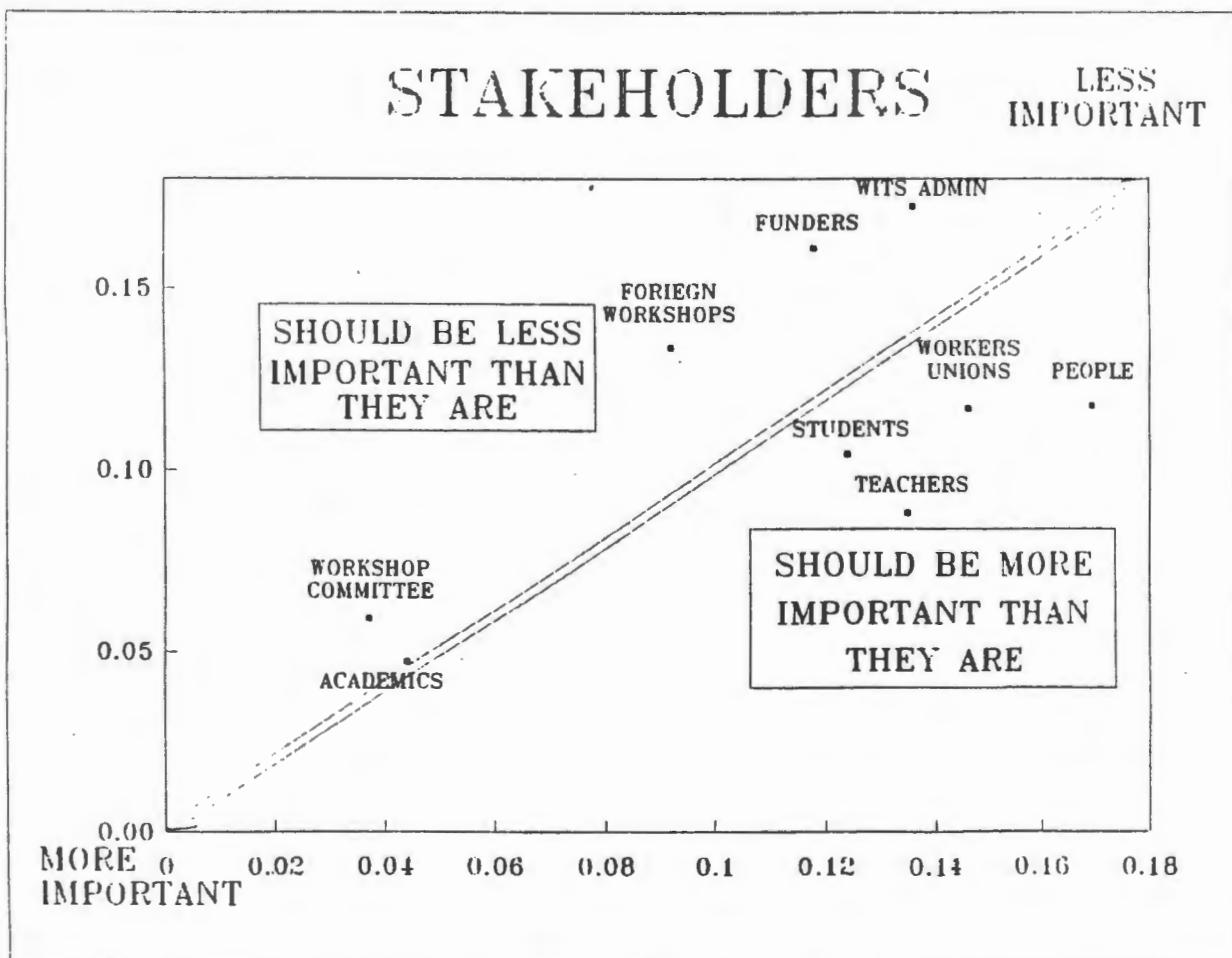


A iii

WHAT APPROACHES TO HISTORY IS THE HW ENCOURAGING?

SOCIAL HISTORY	:+++++
CULTURAL MATERIALIST	:+++++
HISTORY FROM BELOW	:+++++
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	:++++
ORAL HISTORY	:+++++
FEMINIST HISTORY	:++
POPULAR HISTORY	:+++++
RADICAL HISTORY	:+++++
BLACK HISTORY	:++
INTERDISCIPLINARY	:+++++
CONTEMPORARY HISTORY	:++
RETHINK STRUCTURE	:++
PROFESSIONAL CAREERISM	:+
MARXIST LENINIST TEACHI	:+
LESS STRUCTURE	:+++

A iv.



IS THERE DYSFUNCTIONALITY BETWEEN AIMS & PRACTISES?

INEFFETIVE POPULARISING	:+++
POPULAR vs ACCADEMIC	:+++++++
NIL BLACK PARTICIPANTS	:++
NO DYSFUNCTIONALITY	:+++++++
NO COHERENT APPROACH	:+
RHETORIC vs PRACTICE	:++

A v.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE HW'S MAIN AIMS?

RADICAL HISTORY FORUM	:+++++++
DEBATES	:+++++
POPULARISING	:+++++
ALTERNATIVE HISTORY	:+++++
PEOPLES HISTORY	:+++++
DEMOCRATISE HISTORY	:+++++
COORDINATE RESEARCH	:+++++
PUBLICATING	:++
SOCIALISING	:+
ENCOURAGE YOUNG ACADEMI	:+
SCHITZOPHRENIC	:++
CHANGE SOCIETY	:+++++
COMBINE EMPIRIC/STRUCT	:+

UNIVERSITY

	26	20%
FRIDGES	15	11%
NATAL	11	8%
UNIVERSITY	11	8%
FAU	11	8%
FRANCIS	11	8%
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U of Fort Hare	11	8%
U of Transkei	11	8%
U of Swaziland	11	8%
Other	11	8%
Victoria Univ	11	8%
No response	11	8%
1. DEPARTMENT	11	8%
HISTORY	42	31%
ECONOMIC HISTORY	4	3%
SOCIOLOGY	20	15%
ENGLISH	44	33%
ANTHROPOLOGY	11	8%
AFRICAN STUDIES	4	3%
Other	4	3%
No response	4	3%
2. FIELD	11	8%
Not Heard	11	8%
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50. APPROACH TO HISTORY	11	8%

WITH STAFF	7	5%
CONFERENCE PAPERS	5	4%
PROGRAMME	1	1%
INTERVIEW TO DEPT	3	2%
STUDENTS	1	1%
direct mail	3	2%
OTHERS	1	1%
popularising tips	1	1%
newspapers am on	5	4%
No Response	10	11%
4. INVOLVEMENT	16	14%
GIVEN PAPERS	25	19%
ATTENDED	10	8%
NONE	2	2%
POPULARISING SIDE	2	2%
STARTED IT	2	2%
No Response	-2	-17%
5. CHANGES IN DIRECTION	6	5%
GROWN	1	1%
NEW AREAS-URBAN	1	1%
-BIOGRAPHY	4	3%
-LITERARY	1	1%
-GENRE	1	1%
-ORAL HIST	5	4%
-LOCAL STUDI	1	1%
-ETHNICITY	1	1%
NONE FROM FV	1	1%
LESS IDEOLOGY	1	1%
AWAY FROM STRUCTURE	1	1%
POPULARISATION	6	5%
LESS TO PARTICIPATION	1	1%
MOVE FROM LABOUR	1	1%
WIDER THAN TFL	2	2%
INTELLIGENTIFICATION	2	2%
MORE EMPIRICAL	9	6%
str involvement stud's	1	1%
drawing attention his	1	1%
anti polarisation	1	1%
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culturalist	5	4%
No Response	25	19%
7. APPROACH TO HISTORY	21	16%
SOCIAL HISTORY	12	10%
CULTURAL MATERIALIST	36	27%
HISTORY FROM BELOW	5	4%
COMMUNITY PARTICIPAT	1	1%
ORAL HISTORY	10	8%
FEMINIST HISTORY	2	2%
FOR LIFE HISTORY	2	2%
NATIONAL HISTORY	1	1%

RESPONSE	NO	PERCENT
SENIOR	12	14%
ALL LEVELS	12	14%
new fiction for books	9	11%
junior	11	13%
No Response	47	58%
15. CRITICISMS		
INADQUATE POPULARIST	3	4%
TRADITIONAL CONFERENCE	3	4%
WORKSHOP UNAPPLICABLE	1	1%
RAID CENTERED	5	6%
INADQUATE THEORISTING	5	6%
FEW BLACK PARTICIPANTS	3	4%
CULTURE vs STRUCTURE	3	4%
CONDEMNATION	4	5%
EXCLUSIONISM	15	18%
others see exclusive	1	1%
previously exclusive	1	1%
OVEREMPHASIS ON WORKER	1	1%
few labour studies	1	1%
EMPIRICAL	1	1%
focus strong, too	1	1%
books not reflect cont	1	1%
academics cont justify	1	1%
audience partis	1	1%
academic vs pop	1	1%
cont too large	1	1%
advertising budget too	14	17%
too closed	11	14%
Incoherence	1	1%
borehole views	1	1%
need synthesis	1	1%
Anti view, anti insight	3	4%
radical one perspective	3	4%
Ideology & politics in	5	6%

QUESTIONNAIRE TO INVESTIGATE ACADEMICS KNOWLEDGE OF THE HISTORY WORKSHOP AT WITS UNIVERSITY

1. PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF:

Name:
Department:
University:

2. WHEN DID YOU FIRST HEAR ABOUT THE HISTORY RESEARCH GROUP/HISTORY WORKSHOP AT WITS?

3. HOW DID YOU FIRST COME TO HEAR ABOUT IT?

4. HAVE YOU BEEN TO ANY PREVIOUS CONFERENCES? IF SO, WHICH ONES?

5. WHAT HAS YOUR INVOLVEMENT BEEN IN THE WORKSHOP AND AT THE CONFERENCES?

6. HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY PARTICULAR CHANGES IN ITS DIRECTION AND ITS INTERESTS OVER THE YEARS? PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THESE.

7. WHAT APPROACHES TO HISTORY WOULD YOU SAY THE WORKSHOP IS ENCOURAGING?

8. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE HISTORY WORKSHOP? RANK THE ORGANISATIONS OR GROUPS THAT HAVE THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON THE ACTIONS AND PRACTICES OF THE HISTORY WORKSHOP. RANK WHAT THEY ARE AND WHAT YOU FEEL THEY SHOULD BE ON A SCALE OF 1-10 WHERE 1 IS THE MOST IMPORTANT AND 10 IS THE LEAST IMPORTANT. ARE / SHOULD BE

Table with 2 columns and 7 rows listing organizations like The Academics, The funders, The Central Committee of the History Workshop, etc.

9. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE HISTORY WORKSHOP'S MAIN AIMS?

10. DO YOU SEE ANY DYSFUNCTIONALITY BETWEEN ITS AIMS AND WHAT IT PRACTISES?

11. IN WHAT WAYS (IF ANY) HAS THE HISTORY WORKSHOP INFLUENCED YOUR THOUGHT?

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12. WHERE DO YOUR MAIN RESEARCH INTERESTS LIE? DO THEY RELATE IN ANY WAY TO THE INTERESTS OF THE HISTORY WORKSHOP?

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13. HAVE THE INTERESTS OF THE HISTORY WORKSHOP AND THE WORK IT HAS PRODUCED INFORMED YOUR TEACHING AT ALL?

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14. HAVE YOU GIVEN ANY OF THE BOOKS PRODUCED BY THE HISTORY WORKSHOP, SUCH AS B. BOZZOLI'S LABOUR TOWNSHIP AND PROTEST, TOWN AND COUNTRYSIDE IN THE TRANSVAAL AND CLASS COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT AS RECOMMENDED READING TO YOUR STUDENTS? IF SO, NAME THE BOOKS AND THE LEVEL AT WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN.

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15. WHAT CRITICISMS DO YOU HAVE OF THE HISTORY WORKSHOP?

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Appendix B

Committee of the History Workshop

Report for 1978

the committee consisted of

P. Bonner History
 B. Bozzoli Sociology
 L. Callinicos African Studies Institute
 T. Couzens History
 P. Kallaway Social Anthropology
 P. Pearson Sociology
 E. Webster

Report for 1981

the committee consisted of

Dr. P. Bonner
 Dr. B. Bozzoli
 L. Callinicos
 Dr. T. Couzens
 P. Kallaway
 P. Pearson
 E. Webster
 T. Lodge
 Dr. D. Webster
 Prof. C. van Onselen

Political Studies
 Social Anthropology
 African Studies Institute

Report for the three years ended December 31st, 1984

the committee consisted of

Prof. P. Bonner History
 Dr. B. Bozzoli Chairperson, senior lecturer Sociology
 L. Callinicos Research Officer, History Workshop
 Prof. T. Couzens Research Fellow, ASI
 Dr. P. Delius (new) Senior lecturer, History
 A. Easop (new) Khanya College, Johannesburg
 D. James (new) lecturer, Social Anthropology
 Dr. T. Lodge Senior lecturer, Political Studies
 P. Pearson lecturer, Social Anthropology
 Prof. C. van Onselen Director ASI
 Prof. E. Webster Sociology

Associate members

P. Kallaway Senior lecturer, Education Policy Unit, UCT
 A. Manson lecturer, School of Education, University of
 Bophutatswana

K. Shapiro Research Student, Southern African Research Program,
 Yale University.

Resignations

D. Webster

Report for three years 1 October 1984- 31 July 1987

The committee was as follows

Executive committee
 Prof. B. Bozzoli (Director)
 Prof. P. Bonner
 L. Callinicos
 Dr. T. Lodge

Full Members

Prof. T. Couzens (resigned 1987)

Dr. P. Delius

A. Easop

I. Hofmeyr (joined 1987)

J. Hyslop (joined 1987)

G. Jaffee (joined 1987)

D. James

P. La Hausse (joined 1987)

P. Pearson (resigned 1987)

Prof. C. van Onselen

Prof. E. Webster (resigned 1987)

Associate members

P. Kallaway

A. Manson

K. Shapiro

Report October 1987 to September 1988

Committee

Executive

Prof. B. Bozzoli (Chairperson, resigned August 1988)

Prof. P. Bonner (acting Chairperson)

L. Callinicos

Dr. P. Delius

Dr. T. Lodge

Committee

J. Hyslop

I. Hofmeyr

G. Jaffee

D. James

P. La Hausse

L. Wiltz (new member)

D. James

P. La Hausse

Report October 1988 to September 1989

Executive

Prof. P. Bonner (Chairperson)

L. Callinicos

P. Delius

I. Hofmeyr

Committee

J. Hyslop

G. Jaffee

D. James

S. Krige (new)

P. La Hausse

L. Wiltz

Senior research officer, History
 Research GroupLabour and Economic Research,
 Centre, JohannesburgSouth African Council for Higher
 Education (SACHED)

temporary lecturer, Education

Appendix C
The 1978 History Workshop
Full List of Papers

- Bonner, P.L. The 1920 black mineworkers' strike: a preliminary account.
- Bozzoli, B. Popular history and the Witwatersrand
- Burke G. and Richardson, P. The migration of miners' phthisis between Cornwall and the Transvaal, 1876-1918.
- Coplan, D. The African performer and the Johannesburg entertainment industry: the struggle for African culture on the Witwatersrand.
- Couzens, T. Nobody's baby: Modikwe Dikobe and Alexandra, 1942-1946.
- Davies, R. The 1922 strike and the political economy of South Africa.
- De Villiers, R. The state, capital and labour allocation: the Johannesburg municipality 1948-1962.
- Dikobe, M. The people overflow: a tribute to Schreiner.
- Dikobe, M. We shall walk
- Frankel, P. Status, group consciousness and political participation: black consciousness in Soweto.
- Freecura, F. Vrededorp-pageview: its development in relation to the organic growth of Johannesburg.
- Gaitskell, D. Christian compounds for girls: church hostels for African women in Johannesburg, 1907-70.
- Hallett, R. Policemen, pimps and prostitutes: public morality and police corruption.
- Hofmeyr, I. The mad poets: an analysis of an early sub-tradition of Johannesburg literature and its subsequent developments.
- Hughes, H. Dr J.M. Nhlapo and the editorship of the 'Bantu World', 1953-57.
- Johnstone, F.A. The labour history of the Witwatersrand in the context of South African studies and with reflections on the new school.
- Johnstone, F.A. The I.W.A. on the Rand: socialist organising among black workers on the Rand, 1917-1918.
- Katz, E. Phthisis and the white working class on the Rand.
- Maree, J. African and coloured squatters in the Cape Town region.
- McNamara, J.K. Migration routes to the gold mines and compound accommodation.
- Moodie, T. The rules are there to protect those in power only: structures of domination on a South African gold mine.
- Moroney, S. The development of the compound as a mechanism of worker control, 1900-1912.
- Nzula, A. The road from Rouxville to Russia.
- O'Quigley, A. The South African industrial federation: white trade unionism and the state, 1913-22.
- Proctor, A. Class struggle, segregation and the city: a history of Sophiatown, 1905-1940.
- Rich, P. Ministering to the white man's needs: the development of urban

segregation in South Africa, 1913-23.

Saunders, C.C. The creation of Ndabeni: urban segregation, social control and African resistance.

Sole, K. Class, continuity and change in black South African literature, 1948-1960.

Solomon, V. Merchants, migrants and metropolitan: Johannesburg and the shipping ring, 1902-1904.

Soudien, C. A brief history of the industrial workers of Africa.

Stadler, A.W. Birds in the cornfields: squatter movements in Johannesburg, 1944-1947.

Stein, M. The need for an industry by industry approach to the study of African trade unionism, with particular reference to the Witwatersrand in the 1930's and 1940's.

Tickin, D. Political intimidation by Rand mineowners with particular reference to the strange political career, 1902-1907, of Thomas Ratcliffe, a miners' spokesman.

Van Onselen, C. The witches of suburbia: domestic service on the Witwatersrand 1890-1914.

Van Heerden, A. Informal worker organisation: the effect of the Soweto riots.

1978 HW
SEMINARS

The academic seminars were divided into 8 different topics:

1. Domestic labour and Rand capitalism.
2. White workers on the Rand.
3. Structures of control.
4. Early labour organisation.
5. Social control in the workplace.
6. Early townships, protest and control.
7. Townships, protest and control post-1950.
8. Cultural alternatives to hegemony.

Appendix D
The 1981 History Workshop
'Town and Countryside in the Transvaal'
Full list of papers

- Archer, S. Pattern and structure of early manufacturing industry with special reference to the Transvaal.
- Belmart, W. Cape workers in German South West Africa, 1904-1912: patterns of migrancy and the closing of options on the southern African labour market.
- Bozzoli, B. History, experience and culture.
- Bradford, H. A taste of freedom: capitalist development and response to the ICU in the Transvaal countryside.
- Butler, J. Some comparisons of sources and issues in the Eastern Cape.
- Couzens, T. An introduction to the history of football in South Africa.
- De Jager, H. Missionaries, cultural transmission and the Afro-American experience.
- DeJuss, P. and Trapido, S. Inboekselings and Oorlams: the creation and transformation of a servile class.
- Dikobe, M. Dispossessed.
- Dikobe, M. Inside the new society.
- Edgar, R and Saunders, C. Segregation, self-help and ethnic identity: A.A.S. Le Fleur and the Griqua trek of 1917.
- Goldberg, M. Worker consciousness: a formulation and a critique.
- Gray, S. Piet's progress: Douglas Blackburn's satire on capitalist penetration of the Transvaal in the 1890's.
- Haines, R. Resistance and acquiescence in the Soutpansberg 1936-1945.
- Harrison, P. Slavery, social incorporation and surplus extraction: the nature of free and unfree labour in South East Africa.
- Harris, D. Prices, homes and transport.
- Hofmeyr, I. The political dimensions of South African literature: an analysis of images of town and country in turn of the century writing.
- Jeeves, A. Competitive recruiting and labour piracy in South East Africa, 1900-1921.
- Keegan, T. The sharecropping economy, African class formation and the 1913 Natives Land Act in the highveld maize belt.
- Keenan, J. The 'Quality of Life' in Soweto: some employment and income trends in 50 Soweto households (1978-1980).
- Kinsman, M. Notes on the Southern Tswana social formation.
- Koch, E. Without visible means of subsistence: slumyard culture in Johannesburg 1918-1940.
- Lau, B. The formation of great Namaqualand.
- Lewson, P. and Dagut, J. Profile of a Transvaal highveld farmer and his labour, 1945-1980.
- Lodge, T. The destruction of Sophiatown.
- Lodge, T. The parents' school boycott, 1955.
- Mantzaris, E.A. Syndicalism on the shopfloor: the Denver shop-stewards strike, Transvaal, November-December 1919.
- Modikwe, D. Inside the new society.
- Moodie, D. Class struggle in the development of agrarian capitalism in South Africa: reflections on the relevance of the Natives Land Act, 1913.
- Moodie, D. Mine culture and miners' identity on the South African gold mines.
- Morrill, R. Beef, compound contracts and cold storage: the struggle for control of the Meat Producers' Exchange.
- Murray, B. The liberal university: questions of discrimination at Wits 1922-1939.
- Newton-King, S. Some thoughts about the political economy of Graaff-Reinet in the late eighteenth century.
- Nkadimeng, M. and Rolly, G. Kaa Main: the story of a black South African agriculturalist.
- Peires, J. Facta Non Verba: towards a history of black rugby in the Eastern Cape.
- Rice, M. Fictional strategies and the Transvaal landscape.
- Rich, P. Millnerist and a rippling yarn: Transvaal land settlement and John Buchan's novel Prester John.
- Sitas, A. The drought in the city - hostels and metalworkers on the East Rand.
- Stadler, A. Food crisis in the thirties: a sketch.
- Stein, M. State liquor policy since 1880.
- Tayal, M. Indian passive resistance in the Transvaal 1906-8.
- Tomaselli, R. Indian flower sellers of Johannesburg: a history of people on the street.
- Tomaselli, K. Capitalist penetration: popular response - images in Afrikaans cinema.
- Unterhalter, B. Some responses of South African urban blacks to modern medicine.
- Van Onselen, C. The Main Reef Road into the working class: proletarianisation, unemployment and class consciousness amongst Johannesburg's Afrikaner poor, 1890-1914.
- Webster, E. The colour of craft: changing forms of job protection among members of the Ironmoulders' Society, 1944-1968.
- Wells, J. The day the town stood still: women in resistance in Potchefstroom 1912-1930.
- Willi, S. From pastoralists to proletarians: the struggle for land in the Zoutpansberg in the 1880's.
- Yudelman, D. Lord Rothschild, Afrikaner scabs and the 1907 strike: a state-capital daguerrotype.

1981 HW
SEMINARS**SEMINAR 1 : CLASS AND STATE IN 20TH CENTURY AGRICULTURE**

Chairman: J Butler
 Discussant: S Trapido

Dikobe, M. Inside the new society.

Keegan, T. The sharecropping economy, class formation and the 1913 Natives' Land Act in the highveld maize belt.

Moodie, T.D. Class struggle in the development of agrarian capitalism in South Africa: reflection on the relevance of the Natives' Land Act, 1913.

Nkadimeng, M and Relly, G. Kaa Mame: the life story of a sharecropper.

SEMINAR 2 : AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES AND CAPITALIST PENETRATION

Chairman : C Saunders
 Discussant: T Keegan

Lewsen, P. and Dagut, J. Profile of a Transvaal highveld farmer and his labour, 1945-1980.

Morrell, R. Beef, compound contracts and cold storage: the struggle for control of the Meat Producers' Exchange.

Stadler, A. Food crisis in the thirties: a sketch.

SEMINAR 3 : CLASS RELATIONS IN PRE-20TH CENTURY AGRICULTURE

Chairman : P Bonner
 Discussant: J Guy

Delius, P. and Trapido, S. Inboekelings and Oorlams: the creation and transformation of a servile class.

Harries, P. Slavery, social incorporation and surplus extraction: the nature of free and unfree labour in South-East Africa.

Kinsman, M. Notes on the Southern Tswana social formation.

Lau, B. The formation of great Namaqualand.

Will, S. From pastoralists to proletarians: the struggle for land in the Zoutpansberg in the 1880's.

Tabled

Newton-King, S. Some thoughts about the political economy of Graaff Reinet in the later 18th century.

SEMINAR 4 : RURAL RESISTANCE

Chairman : P Delius
 Discussant : W Beinart

Bradford, H. The ICU and the Transvaal rural popular classes in the 1920's: protest in the countryside.

Edgar, R and Saunders, C. Segregation, self-help and ethnic identity: A.A.S. Le Fleur and the Griqua trek of 1917.

Haines, R. Resistance and acquiescence in the Zoutpansberg: 1936-1945.

SEMINAR 5 : PROLETARIANISATION AND LABOUR MARKETS

Chairman : S Archer
 Discussant : P Harries

Beinart, W. Cape workers in German South-West Africa, 1904-1912: patterns of migrancy and the closing of options on the South African labour market.

Jeeves, A. Competitive recruiting and labour piracy in South-East Africa 1900-1921.

Tabled

Goldberg, M. Worker consciousness: a formulation and critique.

SEMINAR 6 : CLASS FORMATION AND CONFLICT IN INDUSTRY

Chairman : A Jeeves
 Discussant : P Bonner and T D Moodie

Archer, S. The pattern and structure of early manufacturing industry with special reference to the Transvaal.

Mantazaris, E. Syndicalism on the shopfloor: the Denver shop-stewards' strike, Transvaal, November-December 1919.

Webster, E. Accommodation or resistance? The response of the Iron Moulders' Society to technological change in the early apartheid period.

SEMINAR 7 : URBAN LIFE TODAY

Chairman : P Wilkinson
 Discussant : D Webster

Keenan, J. The 'Quality of Life' in Soweto: some employment and income trends in 50 Soweto households (1978-1980).

Sitas, A. The drought in the city - hostels and metalworkers on the East Rand.

Tomaselli, R. Johannesburg Indian flower sellers: a history of people on the street.

SEMINAR 8 : CLASS AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Chairman : B Murray
 Discussant : T D Moodie

Tayal, M. Indian passive resistance in the Transvaal: 1906-1908.

Van Onselen, C. The Main Reef Road into the working class: proletarianisation, unemployment and class consciousness amongst Johannesburg's Afrikaner poor, 1890-1914.

Yudelman, D. Lord Rothschild, Afrikaner scabs and the 1907 strike: a state-capital daguerreotype (1).

SEMINAR 9 : MEDICINE, EDUCATION AND WORKERS

Chairman : T D Moodie
 Discussant : J Butler

*Katz, E. (Title to be confirmed) - see in booklist

Murray, B. The liberal university: questions of discrimination at Wits 1922-1929.

Unterhalter, B. Some responses of South African urban blacks to modern medicine.

SEMINAR 10 : TOWNSHIPS, CONTROL AND POPULAR RESPONSE

Chairman : J Guy
 Discussant : B Bozzoli

Harris, D. Prices, homes and transport.

Lodge, T. The destruction of Sophiatown.

Lodge, T. The parents' school boycott: Eastern Cape and East Rand townships, 1955.

Stein, M. State liquor policy since 1880.

Wells, J. The day the town stood still: women's resistance in Potchefstroom, 1912-1930.

SEMINAR 11 : CAPITALISM AND LITERATURE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

Chairman : A Stadler
 Discussant : T Couzens and J Peires

Gray, S. Piet's Progress: Douglas Blackburn's satire on capitalist penetration on the Transvaal in the 1890's.

Hofmeyr, I. An overview of Transvaal literature in the mining era.

Rice, M. Fictional strategies and the Transvaal landscape.

Rich, P. Milnerism and a ripping yarn: John Buchan's Prester John and Transvaal land settlement 1902-1910.

SEMINAR 12 : ASPECTS OF POPULAR CULTURE

Chairman : S Trapido
 Discussant : C Van Onselen

Couzens, T. An introduction to the history of football in South Africa.

De Jager, H. Missionaries, cultural transmission and the American experience.

Koch, E. Without visible means of subsistence: slumyard culture in Johannesburg 1918-1940.

Tomasejli, K. Capitalist penetration and popular response: images in Afrikaans cinema.

Tabled

Peires, J. Facta non verba: towards a history of black rugby in the Eastern Cape.

SEMINAR 13 : METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES - A PANEL DISCUSSION

Chairman : E Webster
 Discussants: Sources and Method
 Popularising History L Callinicos and M Kirkwood
 C Van Onselen, M Beinart and J Butler

Tabled

Butler, J. Some comparisons of sources and issues in the Eastern Cape.

Appendix E
The 1984 History Workshop
Full List of Papers

- Beinart, W. Women in rural politics: Herschel district in the 1920's and 1930's.
- Bonner, P. and Lambert, R. Batons and bare heads: the strike at Amato Textile, February 1958.
- Bozzoli, B. Class, community and ideology in the evolution of South African society.
- Bradford, H. We are now the men: women's beer protests in the Natal countryside, 1929.
- Bradford, H. Lynch law and labourers: the ICU in Umvoti, 1927-1928.
- Brink, E. Maar 'n klomp 'factory' welders: Afrikaner family and community on the Witwatersrand during the 1920's.
- Callinicos, L. The peoples part: towards transforming the present.
- Chisholm, L. Themes in the construction of free compulsory education for the white working class on the Witwatersrand, 1886-1907.
- Clynick, T. Community politics on the Lichtenburg alluvial diamond fields, 1926-1929.
- Cock, J. and Emdon, E. Let me make history please: the story of Johanna Masilela. Childminder.
- Couzens, T. Keeping the runway clear: Ethelreda Lewis.
- De Jager, H. Music and change in black urban culture during the first half of the 1960's.
- Delius, P. Abel Erasmus: power and profit in the Eastern Transvaal.
- Dikobe, M. Class, community and conflict.
- Dubow, S. Understanding the native mind: the impact of anthropological thought on segregationist discourse in South Africa, 1919-1933.
- Garson, N. The Cape franchise in action: the Queenstown by-election of December 1921.
- Gilfoyle, D. A concurrence of interests?: businessmen, proletarians and housing in Springs, 1948-1960.
- Gillmore, H. Class, community and conflict: mobilising the Cape Dutch and the Boers in the 19th century.
- Gordon, S. Robert Ramathoka Seise.
- Gray, S. Leipoldt's valley community: the novelist as archivist.
- Guy, J and Mollatsi, T. The Ma-Rasha: a participant's perspective.
- Hamilton, C. and Wright, J. The making of the laia: ethnicity, ideology and class formation in a pre-colonial context.
- Harris, P. A forgotten corner of the Transvaal: reconstructing the history of a relocated community through oral testimony and song.
- Hofmeyr, I. Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902-1924.
- Hyalop, J. Trade unionism in the rise of African nationalism: Bulawayo, 1945-1963.
- Jeeves, A. and Yudelman, D. The mobilization of a sub-continent.
- Kaasholm, P. Lutheranism and imperialism in the novels of Olive Schreiner.
- Keegan, T. White settlement and black subjugation on the South African highveld: the Tlokoa heartland in the north-eastern Orange Free State, ca. 1850-1914.
- Kinsman, M. The impact of the Difagane on southern Tswana communities, with special reference to the Rolong.
- Koch, E. The destruction of Marabi culture: urban segregation in Johannesburg, 1923-1938.
- Krut, R. The making of a South African Jewish community in Johannesburg, 1886-1914.
- La Hausse, P. The struggle for the city: alcohol, the Ematsheni and popular culture in Durban, 1902-1936.
- Lau, B. The oppressed as oppressors: on kommando groups in 19th century Namaqualand.
- Lodge, T. Political organizations in Pretoria's African townships, 1940-1963.
- Mabin, A. Class as a local phenomenon: conflict between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in the 19th century.
- Mantzaris, E.A. Radical community: the Yiddish-speaking Branch of the International Socialist League, 1918-1920.
- Maylam, P. Twentieth-century Durban: thoughts on its regional specificity, and some reflections on a recent workshop.
- Meintjes, S. Law and authority on a 19th century mission station in Natal.
- Morrill, R. A community in conflict: the poor whites of north Middelburg, 1900-1930.
- Murray, B. The Hertrog years, 1924-1939: a survey for a popular history.
- Nicol, M. Johannesburg hotheads and the gullible children of Cape Town: the Transvaal Garment Workers Union's assault on low wages in the Cape Town clothing industry, 1930-1931.
- Pelres, J. The legend of Fenner-Solomon.
- Pinnock, D. Stone's boys and the making of a Cape Flats mafia.
- Rayner, M. Labourers in the vineyard: patterns of resistance to servitude on the wine estates of the south-western Cape, 1806-1838. Sammons, J. Sports history: why? what? how?
- Sapiro, H. The stay-away of the Brakpan location, 1944.
- Sharp, J. and Spiegel, A. Vulnerability to impoverishment in South African rural areas: locating the failure of kinship.
- Sitaa, A. Culture and production: the contradictions of working class theatre in South Africa.
- Stewart, P. The story of Mandlenkosi Makhoba.
- Sutner, R. The ideological role of the judiciary in South Africa.
- Swilling, M. The politics of working class struggles in Germiston, 1979-1983.

Tayal, M. The 1913 Natal Indian strike.

Von Katze, A. Teutonic ladies and their savages: thoughts on women writers and their image of the black population of colonial South West Africa, 1900-1914.

Webster, E. Workers divided: five faces from a hidden abode.

Witz, L. A case of schizophrenia: the rise and fall of the independent Labour Party.

1984 HM
SEMINARS**SEMINAR 1 : ETHNICITY, COMMUNITY AND IDEOLOGY IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

Kinman, M. The impact of the Difagane on southern Tswana communities, with special reference to the Kolong.
 Lau, B. The Oppressed as oppressors: on kommando groups in the 19th century Namagualand (Namibia).
 McIntjies, S. Authority and control in a 19th century mission community in Natal.
 Wright, J and Hamilton, C. Ideology and class formation in a pre-colonial context.

SEMINAR 2 : ACCUMULATION AND DISPOSSESSION IN REGIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

Dellus, P. Abel Erasmus: power and profit in the Eastern Transvaal.
 Keegan, T. White settlement and black subjugation on the South African highveld: the Tlokoa heartland in the north-eastern Orange Free State, ca. 1850-1914.
 Pelras, J. The legend of Fenner-Solomon.

SEMINAR 3 : RURAL RESISTANCE

Belmart, W. Amafelandawonye (the diehard): rural popular protest and women's movements in Hershel district, South Africa in the 1920's
 Bradford, H. Lynch law and labourers, the ICU in Umvoti, 1927-28.
 Rayner, M. Wine and workers: patterns of resistance to servitude on the wine estates of the south-western Cape, 1806-1838.
 Tayal, M. The 1913 Natal Indian Strike.

SEMINAR 4 : MIGRANCY AND RURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Hartless, P. A forgotten corner of the Transvaal: reconstructing the history of a relocated community through oral history and song.
 Jeeves, A. and Yudelman, D. The mobilization of a sub-continent.
 Sharp, J. and Spiegel, A. South African rural areas: locating the failure of kinship.

SEMINAR 5 : COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND AFRIKANER SOCIETY

Gillmore, H. Mobilising the Cape Dutch and the Boers in the 19th century.
 Gray, S. Leopold's valley community: the archivist as novelist.
 Hofmeyr, I. Building a nation from words: Afrikaans language, literature and ethnic identity, 1902-1924.

SEMINAR 6 : ETHNICITY, IDEOLOGY AND THE STATE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Dubow, S. Understanding the native mind: the impact of anthropological thought on the segregationist discourse in South Africa 1919-1933.
 Murray, B. The Hertzog years, 1924-1939: a survey for a popular history.
 Suthner, R. The ideological role of the judiciary in South Africa.

SEMINAR 7 : COMPARATIVE URBAN PERSPECTIVES

Garson, N. The Cape franchise in action: the Queenstown by-election of December 1921.
 Mabin, A. Class as a local phenomenon: conflict between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in the 19th century.
 Maylam, P. 20th Century Durban: thoughts on its regional specificity and some reflections on a recent workshop.

SEMINAR 8 : WORKING LIVES

Cock and Emdon, E. Chlidminders in Soweto: a face from the hidden abode.
 Gordon, S. Robert Ramathoko Selse.
 Stewart, P. The story of Mandlenkosi Makhoba.
 Webster, E. Cast in a racial mould: five faces from a hidden abode.

SEMINAR 9 : SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

Chisholm, L. Themes in the construction of free compulsory education for the white working class on the Witwatersrand 1886-1907.
 Krut, R. Building a home and a community: Jews in Johannesburg, 1914-1918.
 Mantzaris, E. Radical community: the Yiddish speaking branch of the I.S.L. 1918-1927.

SEMINAR 10 : POOR WHITE STRUGGLES AGAINST PROLETARIANISM

Clynick, T. The Lichtenburg alluvial diamond diggers, 1926-1929.
 Morrell, R. A community in conflict the poor whites of north Middelburg, 1900-1930.

SEMINAR 11 : UNION ORGANISATION AND STRUGGLES, 1920-1940

Brink, E. Maar 'n klomp 'factory' meide: the role of the female garment workers in the clothing industry. Afrikaner family and community on the Witwatersrand during the 1920's.
 Nicol, M. Joh'burg hotheads and the gullible children of Cape Town: the Transvaal garment workers' Union's assault on low wages in the Cape Town clothing industry, 1930-1931.
 Witz, L. A case of schizophrenia: the rise and fall of the Independent Labour Party.

SEMINAR 12 : LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

Couzens, T. Ethelreda Lewis.
 Von Kotze, A. Teutonic ladies and their savages: thoughts on women writers and their images of the black population of colonial South West Africa, 1900-1914.

SEMINAR 13 : TOWNSHIPS, REGULATION AND RESISTANCE

Gilfoyle, D. A concurrence of interests?: businessmen, proletarians and housing in Springs, 1948-1960.
 Koch, E. The destruction of Karabi culture: urban segregation in Johannesburg, 1914-1918.
 Lodge, T. The Pogo Insurrection, 1961-1965.
 Sapire, H. The stay-away of the Brakpan location, 1944.

SEMINAR 14 : WORKING CLASS CULTURE

De Jager, H. Music and change in black urban culture during the first half of the 1920's.
 Dikobe, M. Class community and conflict.
 La Haussee, P. The struggle for the city: alcohol, the Ematsheni and popular culture in Durban, 1902-1936.

Sammons, J. Sports history. Why? what? how?

Staes, A. Culture and production: the contradictions of working class theatre in South Africa.

SEMINAR 15 : GANGS

Guy, J and Thabane, M. Ma-Rushes: a participant's perspective.
 Plimock, D. Stone's boys and the making of a Cape Flats mafia.

SEMINAR 16 : UNION ORGANISATION AND STRUGGLES SINCE 1945.

Hyalop, J. Trade unionism in the rise of African nationalism: Bulawayo 1945-1963.
 Lambert R. and Bonner, P. Batons and bare heads: the strike at Amato Textile, February 1958.
 Swilling, M. The politics of working class struggles in Germiston.

HISTORY WORKSHOP 1984

**PROGRAMME FOR 1984 POPULARISING HISTORY DAY
POPULARISING HISTORY: LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES**

SESSION 1

INTRODUCTION : Luli Callinocos

TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES IN POPULARISING HISTORY

Presenters: SACHED - Four techniques in popularising history.
Learn and Teach - Popular History in Easy English.
SAIRR Oral History Project - Extracts from 3

Projectes:

1. 'Sifuna Imali yethu' : the life and struggles of Durban dockworkers, 1940-1981.
2. From survival to Defiance: Johannesburg Indian Hawkers, 1940-1981.
3. The Troubles of Chief Abram Molwa.

**Economic History Group - The Struggle for Land.
Frezanlian Comix - Vusi Goes Back.Chair: Jacklyn Cock Discussant: Luli Callinocos**

SESSION 2

THEATRE AS POPULAR HISTORY

Presenter: A talk given by Malcolm Purkey, a director of the Junction Avenue Theatre Group and director of the play "Gandhi" which will be presented at 8.00 pm in The Wits Theatre.
Chair: Tim Couzens

SESSION 3

WORKERS' HISTORY

Presenters: Labour History Group - Workers at War: CNETU and the 1946 African Mineworkers' Strike.
International Labour Relations Information Group - Extract from the 1975 Strike in Botswana.
Posatu Worker News - The Making of the Working Class: Pt.

**A People's History of South Africa - The Change to Wage Labour, Chp. 5 of Factories and Townships.
Chair:** Jeff Guy (to be confirmed) Discussant: Alec Erwin.

SESSION 4 :

AMERICAN WORKING CLASS HISTORY PROJECT

Presenter: Kate Pfordresher, Project Administrator & Research Assistant, will speak about the aims and curriculum of the project and will present some audio-visual material.
Chair: Belinda Bozzoli

Appendix F
The 1987 History Workshop
'The Making of Class'
Full List of Papers

- Bickford-Smith, V. Cape Town at the advent of the mineral revolution, ca. 1875: economic activity and social structure.
- Bloch, G. Popularising history: some reflections and experiences, East Rand, 1939-1955.
- Bonner, P. and Lodge, T. Introduction
- Bonner, P. Family, crime and political consciousness on the East Rand, 1939-1955.
- Bonnin, D. Two generations of worker leadership: the histories and traditions of the Sarmcol workers.
- Bottomley, J. Political resurgence in the Orange River Colony, and the Brandfort Congress of 1904.
- Brink, E. Only decent girls are employed: the respectability, decency and virtue of the garment workers on the Witwatersrand during the thirties.
- Brown, D. The basements of Babylon: English literacy and the division of labour on the South African gold mines.
- Bundy, C. Street sociology and pavement politics: aspects of youth/student resistance in Cape Town, 1985.
- Campbell, G. Labour and the problem of class in nineteenth century Imerina (Madagascar).
- Campbell, J.T. T.D. Mweili Skota and the making and unmaking of a black elite.
- Chaskalson, M., Jocheelson, K and Jeremy, S. Rent boycotts and the urban political economy.
- Chisholm, L. Crime, class and nationalism: the criminology of Jacob de Villiers Room, 1869-1918.
- Clingman, S. Biography and representation: some analogies from fiction.
- Clyneck, T. Chiefs, concessionaires and reserve politics on the Tloping alluvial diamond diggings at Taung, 1919-1921.: a local perspective on segregation and class interests.
- Cope, R.L. Civilisation and proletarianisation: the new native policy of the 1870's.
- Crankshaw, O. Trade union strategy and the labour process in the South African Building Industry, 1962-1975.
- De Haas, M. Culture, class and consciousness in contemporary Natal.
- DeJans, P. The Ndzundza Ndebele: indenture and the making of ethnic identity.
- Eales, K. Patriarchy, passes and privilege: Johannesburg's African middle classes and the question of night passes for African women.
- Edgcombe, A. The token system: labour acquisition and control on the Natal collieries, 1911-1956.
- Edwards, I. Swing the assegai peacefully? new Africa, Kkhumbane, the co-operative movement and attempts to transform Durban society in the late 1940's.
- Erlmann, V. Singing brings joy to the distressed: the social history of Zulu migrant workers' choral competitions.
- Freund, B. Defending capitalism: a review of Herie Lipton's Capitalism and Apartheid.
- Gardiner, M. Liberating language: people's English for the future.
- Glaeser, C. Students, tactics and the Congress Youth League: youth organisation on the Rand in the 1940's and 1950's.
- Grahamstown Oral History Workshop: worker struggles in Grahamstown: the first steps towards a people's history.
- Grundlingh, A. God hat ons arm nense die houtjies gegee: towards a history of the poor white woodcutters in the southern Cape forest area, ca. 1900-1939.
- Gunner, E. Power house, prison house - an oral genre and its use in Isalah Shembe's Nazareth Baptist Church.
- Hamilton, C.A. and Webster, H. The struggle for control over the voices of the past and the socialising role of precolonial history: perspectives on the production of precolonial educative materials.
- Hamilton, C.A. Traditions of origin and the ideological appropriation of the past in the Zulu Kingdom under Shaka.
- Harris, P. The roots of ethnicity: discourse and politics of language construction in south-east Africa.
- Hartless, P. Songs, stories, rhymes and riddles: African folklore and people's history.
- Hendler, P. The interweaving of social reproduction and capital accumulation in the making of Soweto.
- Hirson, B., Wells, J. and Jancovich, J. Whatever did happen at Jagersfontein? or diamonds are forever - but gold is for now!
- Hirson, B. The British seamen's strike, 1925: solidarity in South Africa.
- Hofmeyr, I. Turning region into narrative: English storytelling in the Waterberg.
- Huffman, T.M. Iron age settlement patterns and the origins of class distinction in southern Africa.
- Hughes, H. Violence in Inanda, 1985.
- Hyalop, J. School boards, school committees and educational politics: aspects of the failure of Bantu education as a hegemonic strategy, 1955-1976.
- Hyalop, J. A preface to people's education: reflections on the 1955-1956 school boycotts.
- Jaffee, G. Women commuter workers of the Thusanang sewing project: their group identity, households and consciousness.
- James, W.G. Grounds for a strike: South African gold mining in the 1940's.
- James, D. Land shortage and inheritance in a Lebowa village.
- Jeeves, A.H. William Gemmill and South African expansion, 1920-1950.
- Jeremy, S. The origins of political mobilisation in the PWV townships, 1980-1984.
- Keegan, T. Exploiting the contradictions: the life story of Ndame Makume.

- Kelly, J. The state, capital, reproduction and control: black working-class housing in Durban, 1920-1950.
- Kohler, P. Freeburghers, the Nama and the politics of the frontier tradition: an analysis of social relations in the second narrative of J.H. Coetzee's *Dusklands*. Towards a historiography of South African literature.
- Krige, S. Textbook writing and popularisation: some limits and possibilities.
- Krkljar, J. William Macmillan and the working class.
- Kroes, C. Beyond model curricula - a preliminary critique of the presentation of history in South African schools.
- La Haussee, P. The message of the warriors: the ICU, the labouring poor and the making of a popular political culture in Durban, 1925-1930.
- Lambert, R. Interpreting the politics of the 1950's: problems and potential of oral history in a politicised present.
- Mablin, A. Land, class and power in peripheral mining communities: Indwe 1880-1920.
- Hanson, A. The life of Chief Molloa II of the Huruutshe, ca. 1795-1875: the role of chiefly power in an age of reconstruction.
- Mantziaris, E.A. Class, community, language and struggle: Hebrew against Yiddish in South Africa 1900-1914.
- Maree, J. Harnessing intellectuals: tensions between democracy and leadership in the Independent trade unions in the 1970's.
- Mason, R.J. How archaeology can contribute to a people's history of Johannesburg.
- Mason, R.J. Identification of class in Iron age Sotho-Tswana archaeology: early history in the south-west central Transvaal.
- Mazel, A.D. and Stewart, P.M. Perpetual poisoning of the mind: a consideration of the treatment of the San and the origins of South Africa's black population in South African school history textbooks since 1972 for standards 8, 9 and 10 and since 1974 for standards 5, 6 and 7.
- Woodie, D.T. Migration and male sexuality on the South African gold mines.
- Woodie, D.T. The moral economy of the black miners' strike of 1946.
- Morrill, R. Pipping a little game in the bud - Pixley Isaka ka Seme, land purchase and rural differentiation in the Eastern Transvaal.
- Morris, A. A peasantry under siege: a case study of the farms of Bloedfontein and Geweerfontein.
- Murray B.K. Wits as an open university.
- Nasson, B. She preferred living in a cave with Harry the snake-catcher: towards an oral history of popular leisure and class expression in District Six, Cape Town, ca. 1920-1950.
- Ndabaje, N. A tribute to our togetherness.
- Newton-King, S. Commerce and material culture on the Eastern Cape frontier, 1784-1812.
- Ondandaal, A. South Africa's black Victorians: sport race and class in South Africa before Union.
- Orkin, M. Contesting prevailing discourse: Nongqause and the girl who killed to save.

- Parnell, S.M. Johannesburg's backyards: the slums of New Doornfontein, Berrama and Prospect township, 1934-1939.
- Parsons, N. Notes from the other side: teaching history in the frontline states.
- Pelres, J. Piet Draghoender's lament.
- Preorius, R.E. Banishment: Germiston's answer to opposition, Natalapurt location, 1955-1957.
- Reimer, K.L. Changes in the sexual division of labour in agriculture: case study, Brooksby, Bophuthatwana.
- Rich, P. Managing black leadership: the joint councils, urban trading and political conflict in the Orange Free State, 1925-1942.
- Rogerson, C.M. Shisha Nyama: the rise and fall of the native eating house trade in Johannesburg.
- Sapiro, H. African settlement and segregation in Brakpan, 1900-1927.
- Sitas, A. The flight of the guala-guala bird: ethnicity, populism and worker culture in Natal's labour movement.
- Starfield, J. Not quite history: the autobiographical writings of H. Selby Malmang and R. V. Selope Thema and the writing of history.
- Swilling, M. The united democratic front and township revolt in South Africa.
- Thabane, M. Africanist historiography, personal reminiscences and romanticism of the past.
- Van Niekerk, A. Changing patterns of worker accommodation, Zebedie's Citrus Estate, 1926-1953: the dynamics of external restraint and self-discipline.
- Von Korte, A. First world industry and third world workers: the struggle for a workers' theatre in South Africa.
- Witz, L. Organising for control: the Garment Workers' Union, the Indian Tailoring Section and the South African Clothing Workers' Union, 1928-1936.
- Wright, J. Popularising the precolonial past: politics and problems.

HISTORY WORKSHOP 1987

POPULARISING HISTORY DAY

SESSION XIII: LEARNING AND TEACHING PEOPLE'S HISTORY

Chairperson: Ms L. Callinico

Discussant: Mr Leslie Witz (SACHED/History Workshop)

Papers:

Dr N. Parsons (Botswana)

"Notes from the Other Side: Teaching History in the Frontline States."

Ms C. Kros (JCE)

"Beyond Model Curricula"

Ms Melanie Walker (University of the Western Cape)

"An Introduction to the History Commission."

Dr M. Gardiner (JCE)

"The Possibilities of People's English for People's Power."

Ms S. Krige (SACHED)

"History Textbook Writing".

SESSION XIV: PEOPLE'S HISTORY ON THE STAGE

Chairperson: Prof. I. Steadman (Witwatersrand)

Presentations by:

Dr A. von Kotze (Natal)

Mr M. Purkey (Witwatersrand)

SESSION XIVB: THE VISUAL IMAGE IN POPULAR HISTORY

Chairperson: Mrs L. Callinicos (Witwatersrand)

Presentations by:

Mr J. Brown (American Social History Project)

Mr S. Rothenberg (Lean and Teach Publications)

SESSION XIVC: WRITE YOUR OWN HISTORY

Chairperson: Ms H. Perold (SACHED)

Presentations by:

Mr L. Witz (SACHED/Witwatersrand Council of Churches Project)

Dr M. Lacey (Rhodes/Oral History Workshop, Grahamstown)

SESSION XV: POPULARISING THE PRECOLONIAL PAST

Chairperson: Prof. P. Bonner (Witwatersrand)

Discussant: Dr N. Parsons (Botswana)

Papers:

Prof. J. Wright (Natal)

"Popularising the Precolonial Past".

Ms C. Hamilton and Ms H. Webster (Swaziland Oral History Project)

"The Struggle for Control over the Voices of the Past and the Socialising Role of Precolonial History: Perspectives on the Production of Precolonial Education Material."

Mr A. Mazel and Mr P. Stewart (Natal Museum)

"Perpetual Poisoning of the Mind: A Consideration of the Treatment of the San and the Origins of South Africa's Black Population in South African School

History Textbooks".

Mr M. Thabane (Roma)

"Africanist Historiography, Personal Reminiscences and

Romanticisation of the Past".

Prof. R. Mason (Witwatersrand)

"The Role of Archaeology in Popular History."

SESSION XVI: PANEL DISCUSSIONTHE POLITICS OF PEOPLE'S HISTORY

Chairperson: Prof. Eddie Webster (Witwatersrand).

Appendix G
The 1990 History Workshop
'The Making of Class'
Full list of papers

- Atwell, D. The labyrinth of my history: the struggle with filiation in J.M. Coetzee's dusklands.
- Baines, G. The New Brighton Advisory Board ca. 1909-1952: its legitimacy and legacy.
- Bark, L. The Janus face of rural class formation: an economic and political history of traders in Qwaqwa, 1950-1985.
- Beale, E. The task of Fort Hare in terms of the Transkei and the Clakeli: educational policy at Fort Hare in the 1960's.
- Belmar, W. Transkeian migrant workers and youth labour on the Natal sugar estates 1918-1940.
- Bickford-Smith, V. the background to apartheid in Cape Town: the growth of racism and segregation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Bolinck, J. Sefela Sa Letsemyanaha - the wartime experiences of Potlako Kitchener Lebello.
- Bonner, Phil. An evil empire? The Russians on the Reef, 1947-57.
- Bradford, H. Getting away with slavery: capitalist farmers, foreigners and forced labour in the Transvaal, ca. 1920-1950.
- Brown, D. Structure and agency in ethnolinguistic policy-making of the apartheid ideologues, 1950's onwards.
- Chetty, D. The Durban riots and popular memory.
- Chisholm, I. Education, punishment and the contradictions of penal reform: Alan Paton and Diepkloof Reformatory, 1934-1948.
- Clark, N. Labour and the state corporations during World War II.
- Clyneck, T. Class and social history in the evolution of a Western Transvaal reserve: Ditsobotla, Lichtenburg district, 1936-1954.
- Coupe, S. Apartheid and secondary industry: the productivity debate, 1955-1965.
- Couzens, T. (Tabled) The struggle to be independent: a history of the black press in South Africa, 1836-1960.
- De Klerk, M. The accumulation crisis in agriculture.
- Dellus, P. Dikgomo di Ile: the changing context of resistance in Sekhukhuneiland, 1950-1986.
- Du Toit, A. Neo-Fichtean nationalists or organic intellectuals? Revisiting the ideological entrepreneurs of modern Afrikaner nationalism.
- Dugmore, H. Becoming a somebody - fraternal lodges and the coloured middle classes in Johannesburg between the two world wars.
- Duncan, D. The regulation of working conditions for Africans, 1918-1948.
- Zales, K. Popular representations of black women on the Rand and their impact on the development of influx controls, 1924-1937.
- Edgar, R. A.P. Mda: the making of an African nationalist, 1935-1944.
- La Hausse, P. So who was Elias Kuzwayo? Nationalism, identity and the plicaresque in Natal, ca. 1920-1948.
- Edgcombe, R. The riots at Northfield Colliery (1942) as the turning point in labour conditions on the Natal coal mines.
- Edwards, I. and Nuttall, T. Seizing the moment: the January 1949 riots, proletarian populism and the structures of African urban life in Durban during the late 1940's.
- Fascuta, F. Accommodation or protest? The rise of a wall decorating tradition in rural southern Africa.
- Freund, B. The rise and decline of the Indian peasantry.
- Friedman, M. Tehayal He has our money! The uprising of municipal workers in Marabastad, 1942.
- Frillick, S. Time has run out - period: myth and history in Serote's poetry.
- Gardiner, M. The exploded self of a South African poet: the case of Wopko Jensma.
- Glasser, C. The Mark of Zorro: sexuality and gender relations in the tsetse subculture on the Witwatersrand, 1940-1960.
- Glasser, C. When are we going to fight? Tsetse, youth politics and the PAC on the Witwatersrand during the 1950's and early 1960's.
- Goodnow, D. Between the devil and the deep blue sea: crime, policing and the Western Areas of Johannesburg, ca. 1930-1962.
- Gray, S. The long eye of history: four autobiographical texts by Peter Abrahams.
- Green, M. Blood and politics. Sarah Gertrude Millin in literary history and social history.
- Grele, R. History and the language of history in the oral history interview: who answers and why.
- Grundlinch, A. Politics, principles and problems of a profession: Afrikaner historians and their discipline, ca. 1920-65.
- Hofmeyr, I. Mterata/The wire fences. Boundaries and cultural resistance in the potgoleterrust district.
- Host, L. Riddles and Tales - aspects of popular culture in the Malmesbury district, 1920's.
- Hyalop, J. A Prussian path to apartheid? Germany as comparison and perspective in critical analysis of South African society.
- James, D. Mmino wa Setso: Woman's music in a Lebowa village.
- Jeeves, A., and Crush, J. (Tabled) White farms, black labour: agrarian transition in rural South Africa, 1930-1970.
- Jeffrey, I. Street rivalry and patron-managers: football in Sharpeville, 1940-1985.
- Jeppie, S. The class, colour and gender of carnival: aspects of a cultural form in inner Cape Town, ca. 1939-1959.
- Jochelson, K. Tracking down the treponema: patterns of syphilis in South Africa, 1880-1940.
- Kaashold, P. (tabled) Mental colonisation or catharsis? theatre, democracy and cultural struggle from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe.

- Kistner, U. Boundaries - typologies and topologies. The history of the Entombe mission.
- Kohler, P. Literature, criticism and the history of suspicion: a study of Alan Paton, penal reform and the language of social relations, Johannesburg, 1936-1948.
- Kross, C. Deep rumblings: Z.K. Matthews, witness to the Eiselen Commission of Inquiry into native education, 1934-1949.
- Lazar, K. Penulism as 'pitting'? Ambiguities in Nadine Gordimer's short stories.
- Lebejo, S. Class and non-class cleavages in the making of a community: landlords and tenants in Sophiatown, 1935-1955.
- Mabin, A. Doom at one stroke of the pen: planning and group areas, ca. 1935-1955.
- Mager, A. and Minkley, G. Reaping the whirlwind: the East London riots, gender, class, race and African nationalism.
- Manson, A. and Drummond, J. Rural transformation and politics: the case of Molloa's Reserve, 1930-1987.
- Marks, S. The nursing profession and the making of apartheid.
- Maylam, P. The local evolution of urban apartheid: influx control and segregation in Durban, 1900-1951.
- Mazower, B. Problems in paradise: the fare labour shortage in the Natal midlands, 1940-1951.
- McAllister, P. The role of ritual in resisting domination in the Transkei in the 1970's.
- Minkley, G. The fighting port: East London, capital formation, working class struggle and apartheid, ca. 1945-1963.
- Morrell, R. Differential access to the state: white farmers in the Natal midlands, 1900-1930.
- Munro, K. Sources of economic growth in the South African economy since 1945.
- Murray, B. Wits, student politics and apartheid, 1948-1959.
- Nattrass, N. Wages, profits and apartheid: 1939-1960.
- Nauright, J. The development of urban African life in peri-urban South Africa: a history of Alexandra Township, 1912-1963.
- Nel, E. The making of territorial apartheid: the case of East London's locations.
- Ngcokoto, B. The day KTC became Cape Town's Beirut: African squatter struggles in Cape Town, 1983-1986.
- Orkin, M. Contesting and reproducing apartheid and colonialist discourse in the dam and the dove returns.
- Parnell, S. The ideology of African home-ownership: the establishment of Dube, Soweto, 1946-1955.
- Peterson, B. The plays of H.I.E. Dhlomo: ordering history out of nonsense.
- Pirie, G. Rolling segregation into apartheid: South African Railways, 1948-1963.
- Posel, D. The state in apartheid's second phase.
- Ritchken, E. Migrants, ethnicity, chiefs and the state.
- Rogerson, C. Anywhere but near us: the removal of beerhalls in Johannesburg.
- Sapire, H. Popular politics and the rationalisation of urban native administration in Brakpan, 1943-1948.
- Schirmer, S. Freedom in land and work: labour, tenancy and the proclamation of chapter four in Lydenburg.
- Seekings, J. Broken promises: discontent, protest, and the transition to confrontation in Duduza, 1978-1985.
- Segal, L. Mines, migrants and women: strike action on the Witbank collieries, 1940-1950.
- Stees, A. The voice and gesture in South Africa's revolution: a study of worker gatherings and performance genres in Natal.
- Smith, M. Mining disaster in instalments: the completion of foundations for the modern health and safety system on the Witwatersrand gold mines, 1930-1939.
- Sole, K. This time set again: the temporal and political concepts of Serote's 'To every birth its blood'.
- Spiegel, A. Polygyny as myth: towards understanding extra-marital relations in Lesotho.
- Starfield, J. For future reference: the Mamathola removal of 1958 and the making of apartheid.
- Steadman, I. Towards popular theatre in South Africa.
- Tatham, K. Interpretations of racism/segregation/apartheid in South African historiography.
- Trump, M. Serote's to every birth its blood and debates within southern Africa's literature of liberation.
- Van Wyk, A. Class, race and sex in Afrikaner nationalist plays, 1920-1950.
- Van Tonder, D. First win the war. Then clear the slums: the genesis of the Western Areas removal scheme, 1940-1949.
- Vaughan, M. Writer and community: some comparative comments on Ndebele and Isakander.
- White, W. Apartheid: the U.P. reaction.
- Witz, L. and Purkey, C. The horse that made it all the way: towards a political biography of Iselle Heymann.

SESSION 1 - PLENARY - INTRODUCTION TO CONFERENCE THEMES -
Speakers : John Lonsdale, Ronald Grele, Nick Visser

SESSION 2 - SEMINAR 1 : EXPLAINING APARTHEID
Discussants : Chris Saunders and John Lonsdale.

Hyalop, J. A Prussian path to apartheid? Germany as comparison and perspective in critical analysis of South African society.
Tatham, K. Interpretations of racism/segregation/apartheid in South African historiography.

SEMINAR 2 : LANGUAGE, POWER AND REPRESENTATION
Discussants : Nick Visser

Atwell, D. The labyrinth of my history: the struggle with filiation in J.M. Coetzee's *Dusklands*.
Brown, D. Structure and agency in ethnolinguistic policy-making of the apartheid ideologues, 1950's onwards.

Ristner, U. Boundaries - typologies and topologies. The history of the Rintombe mission.
Kohler, P. Literature, criticism and the history of suspicion: a study of Alan Paton, penal reform and the language of social relations, Johannesburg, 1936-1948.

SEMINAR 3 : ORALITY, LITERACY AND POPULAR CULTURE

Discussant : Ronald Grele

Hofmeyr, I. *Nterata/The wire: fences. Boundaries and cultural resistance in the Potgieterstraat district.*

Host, L. Riddles and Tales - aspects of popular culture in the Malmesbury district, 1920's.

Sitas, A. The voice and gesture in South Africa's revolution: a study of worker gatherings and performance genres in Natal.

Spiegel, A. Polygamy as myth: towards understanding extra-marital relations in Lesotho.

SESSION 3 - SEMINAR 1 : ORAL MEMORY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY

Discussant : Reabel Hofmeyr

Chetty, D. The Durban riots and popular memory.

Grele, R. History and the language of history in the oral history interview: who answers and why.

Starfield, J. For future reference: the Mamathola removal of 1958 and the making of apartheid.

Mitz, L. and Purkey, C. The horse that made it all the way: towards a political biography of Isaie Heymann.

SEMINAR 2 : GENDER, TEXT AND POLITICS
Discussant : Shula Marks

Eales, K. Popular representations of black women on the Rand and their impact on the development of influx controls, 1924-1937.

Glaser, C. The Mark of zorroi sexuality and gender relations in the teotal subculture on the Witwatersrand, 1940-1960.

Lazar, K. Feminism as 'piling'? Ambiguities in Nadine Gordimer's short stories.

Mager, A. and Minkley, G. Reaping the whirlwind: the East London riots, gender, class, race and African nationalism.

SEMINAR 3 : THE ECONOMY

Discussant : Bill Freund

De Klerk, M. The accumulation crisis in agriculture.

Munro, K. Sources of economic growth in the South African economy since 1945.

Natras, N. Wages, profits and apartheid: 1939-1960.

SESSION 4 - SEMINAR 1 : MIGRANT CULTURE AND ORGANISATION

Discussant : Deborah James

Belhart, W. Transkeian migrant workers and youth labour on the Natal sugar estates 1918-1940.

McAllister, P. The role of ritual in resisting domination in the Transkei in the 1970's.

Ritchken, E. Migrants, ethnicity, chiefs and the state.

SEMINAR 2 : CLASS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Discussant : Colin Bundy

Dugmore, H. Becoming a somebody - fraternal lodges and the coloured middle classes in Johannesburg between the two world wars.

Fescura, F. Accommodation or protest? The rise of a wall decorating tradition in rural southern Africa.

Jeffrey, I. Street rivalry and patron-managers: football in Sharpeville, 1940-1985.

Jepie, S. The class, colour and gender of carnival: aspects of a cultural form in inner Cape Town, ca. 1939-1959.

Lebelo, S. Class and non-class cleavages in the making of a community: landlords and tenants in Sophiatown, 1935-1955.

SEMINAR 2 : YOUTH, MIGRANCY AND CRIMINALITY

Discussant: Paul la Haussee

Bonner, Phil. An evil empire? The Russians on the Reef, 1947-57.

Chisholm, L. Education, punishment and the contradictions of penal reform: Alan Paton and Diepkloof Reformatory, 1934-1948.

Glaser, C. When are we going to fight? Totolisa, youth politics and the PAC on the Witwatersrand during the 1950's and early 1960's.

Goodhue, D. Between the devil and the deep blue sea: crime, policing and the Western Areas of Johannesburg, ca. 1930-1962.

SEMINAR 3 : AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Discussants : Mike de Klerk and Jeff Peires

Bradford, H. Getting away with slavery: capitalist farmers, foreigners and forced labour in the Transvaal, ca. 1920-1950.

Freund, B. The rise and decline of the Indian peasantry.

Jeeves, A., and Crush, J. (Tabled) White farms, black labour: agrarian transition in rural South Africa, 1930-1970.

Mazower, B. Problems in paradise: the fare labour shortage in the Natal midlands, 1940-1951.

Mortell, R. Differential access to the state: white farmers in the Natal midlands, 1900-1930.

Schirmer, S. Freedom in land and work: labour, tenancy and the proclamation of chapter four in Lydenburg.

SESSION 3 - SEMINAR 1: MAKING THE APARTHEID CITY

Discussant : Deborah Posel

Blickford-Smith, V. the background to apartheid in Cape Town: the growth of racism and segregation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Maylam, P. the local evolution of urban apartheid: influx control and segregation in Durban, 1900-1951.

Nel, E. The making of territorial apartheid: the case of East London's locations.

Pirie, G. Rolling segregation into apartheid: South African Railways, 1948-1953.

van Tonder, D. First win the war. Then clear the slums: the genesis of the Western Areas removal scheme, 1940-1949.

SEMINAR 2 : STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

Discussant : Helen Bradford

Bolinck, J. Sefela Sa Letsemeyanaha - the wartime experiences of Potlako Kitchener Lebello.

SEMINAR 3 : STATE AND INDUSTRY

Discussant : Alan Mabin

Clark, N. Labour and the state corporations during World War II.

Coupe, S. Apartheid and secondary industry: the productivity debate, 1955-1965.

Duncan, D. The regulation of working conditions for Africans, 1918-1948.

Minkley, G. The fighting port.: East London, capital formation, working class struggle and apartheid, ca. 1945-1963.

SESSION 1 - SEMINAR 1 : COLLIERIES AND COMPOUNDS

Discussant : Alan Jeeves

Edgcombe, R. The riots at Northfield Colliery (1942) as the turning point in labour conditions on the Natal coal mines.

Friedman, M. Tshayal He has our money!: The uprising of municipal workers in Harbastaad, 1942.

Segal, L. Mines, migrants and women: strike action on the Witbank collieries, 1940-1950.

SEMINAR 2 : HEALTH AND POLICY

Discussant : Shula Marks

Jochelson, K. Tracking down the treponema: patterns of syphilis in South Africa, 1880-1940.

Smith, M. Mining disaster in instalments: the completion of foundations for the modern health and safety system on the Witwatersrand gold mines, 1930-1939.

SEMINAR 3 : MAKING AND UNMAKING THE APARTHEID PAST

Discussant : David Atwell

Gray, S. The long eye of history: four autobiographical texts by Peter Abraham.

Green, M. Blood and politics. Sarah Gertrude Millin in literary history and social history.

Sole, K. This time set again! the temporal and political concepts of Serote's 'To every birth its blood'.

SESSION 2 - SEMINAR 1 : AFRIKANER INTELLECTUALS AND NATIONALISM

Discussant: John Lonsdale
Du Toit, A. Neo-Fichtean nationalists or organic intellectuals? Revisiting the ideological entrepreneurs of modern Afrikaner nationalism.

Grundlingh, A. Politics, principles and problems of a profession: Afrikaner historians and their discipline, ca. 1920-65.

Van Wyk, A. Class, race and sex in Afrikaner nationalist plays, 1920-1950.

Edgar, R. A.P. Nda: the making of an African nationalist, 1935-1944.
 La Haussee, P. So who was Elias Kuzwayo? Nationalism, identity and the
 picareque in Natal, ca. 1920-1948.

SESSION 4 - SEMINAR 1 : MAKING APARTHEID POLICY

Discussant : John Lonagale

Mabin, A. Doom at one stroke of the pen: planning and group areas, ca. 1935-
 1955.
 Marks, S. The nursing profession and the making of apartheid.
 Posel, D. The state in apartheid's second phase.
 White, W. Apartheid: the U.P. reaction.

SEMINAR 2 : THEATRE AND CULTURAL STRUGGLE

Discussant : Ari Silas

Kaarehoid, P. (tabled) Mental colonisation or catharsis?: theatre, democracy
 and cultural struggle from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe.
 Orkin, M. Contesting and reproducing apartheid and colonialist discourse in
 the dam and the dove returns.
 Peterson, B. The plays of H.I.E. Dhlomo: ordering history out of nonsense.
 Steadman, I. Towards popular theatre in South Africa.

SESSION 1 - SEMINAR 1 : BANTU EDUCATION

Discussant : Jonathan Hyslop

Beale, E. The task of Fort Hare in terms of the Transkei and the Ciskei:
 educational policy at Fort Hare in the 1960's.
 Campbell, J. African-American Education in South Africa : A History of the
 Wilberforce Institute.
 Kros, C. Deep runblings: Z.K. Matthews, witness to the Eiselen Commission
 of Inquiry into native education, 1934-1949.
 Murray, B. Wits, student politics and apartheid, 1948-1959.

SEMINAR 2 : MAKING THE APARTHEID CITY

Discussant : Paul Maylam

Nauright, J. The development of urban African life in peri-urban South
 Africa: a history of Alexandra Township, 1912-1953.
 Parnell, S. The ideology of African home-ownership: the establishment of
 Dube, Soweto, 1946-1955.
 Rogerson, C. Anywhere but near us: the removal of beerhalls in Johannesburg.
 Sapiro, H. Popular politics and the rationalisation of urban native
 administration in Brakpan, 1943-1948.

SEMINAR 3 : CULTURAL RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID

Discussant : Kelynn Sole

Couzens, T. (tabled) The struggle to be independent: a history of the black
 press in South Africa, 1836-1960.
 Frielick, S. Time has run out - period: myth and history in Serote's poetry.
 Gardiner, M. The exploded self of a South African poet: the case of Mopko
 Jensema.
 Trump, M. Serote's to every birch its blood and debates within southern
 Africa's literature of liberation.
 Vaughan, M. Writer and community: some comparative comments on Ndebele and
 Isakander.

SESSION 2 - SEMINAR 1 : POPULAR STRUGGLES AND THE APARTHEID CITY

Discussant : Phil Bonner

Baines, G. The New Brighton Advisory Board ca. 1909-1952: its legitimacy and
 legacy.
 Edwards, I. and Nuttall, T. Seizing the moment: the January 1949 riots,
 proletarian populism and the structures of African urban life in Durban during
 the late 1940's.
 Nyokoto, B. The day KTC became Cape Town's Beirut: African squatter
 struggles in Cape Town, 1983-1985.
 Seekings, J. Broken promises: discontent, protest, and the transition to
 confrontation in Duduza, 1978-1985.

SEMINAR 2 : RESISTANCE AND SOCIETY IN THE RESERVES

Discussant : William Beinart

Bank, L. The Janus face of rural class formation: an economic and political
 history of traders in Qwaqwa, 1950-1985.
 Clynick, T. Class and social history in the evolution of a Western Transvaal
 reserve: Ditsobotla, Lichtenburg district, 1936-1954.
 Dellijs, P. Dikgomo di Ile: the changing context of resistance in
 Sekhukhuland, 1950-1986.
 James, D. Mlino wa Setso: Woman's music in a Lebowa village.
 Manson, A. and Drummond, J. Rural transformation and politics: the case of
 Molloa's Reserve, 1930-198

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