

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE  
HISTORY DEPARTMENT

SEMINAR PAPER

ON  
SOCIAL CHANGE IN POST-WAR BULAWAYO

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May 1986

## Introduction

Ian Phimister, Charles van Onselen and Steven Thornton have each made a significant contribution to the study of the emergence of the working class in Southern Rhodesia.(1) Their evaluation of the development of worker consciousness has been important in the reassessment of African protest in the industrialization of Southern Rhodesia. Their work [especially Phimister's and van Onselen's] has been well received by many historians and has taken the use of empirical evidence and incisive writing to a higher level. But Melvin Goldberg in a paper Worker Consciousness: A Formulation and a Critique, has identified serious problems with their work, including their understanding of worker consciousness, which, he suggests, can be traced to a lack of coherent theoretical framework.(2)

While I do not criticize all three writers on their use of empirical evidence, I do agree with Goldberg in his criticism of their approach to describing the evolution of worker consciousness. His main complaint is that Phimister and van Onselen, in particular, have not clarified the concept worker consciousness and, therefore, have misconceived the term which resulted in serious problems with their historical analysis.(3) Rather than go on to outline Goldberg's criticisms of the Phimister and van Onselen and explain his theoretical approach, I shall merely sketch the theoretical framework I hope to use to analyse the period surrounding the 1948 General Strike, which began in Bulawayo and refer, when necessary, to where I differ from the approach taken by the Phimister, van Onselen, and Thornton. This framework which will allow me to demonstrate that the events intrinsically linked to the strike were significant to the development of worker consciousness and the working class in Southern Rhodesia.

Other issues which are very relevant to the issues above, and which I hope to address in my thesis, concern the role of ideology, ethnicity and class consciousness in the evolution of the working class and Nationalism in Southern Rhodesia.

This paper is split into three parts. The first part is concerned with a description of the type of Capitalist Mode of Production [C.M.P. from now on] which formed the structure for understanding the type of working class - the main focus of my thesis - that emerged during the period I am interested in. This will enable me to illustrate the contradictions within the dominant classes in order to fully comprehend the development of the particular working class in Southern Rhodesia. This is important simply because the evolution of worker consciousness is a defensive response to capitalist exploitation.

The second part of the paper will discuss the evolution of worker consciousness among the urban Africans in Bulawayo throughout the nineteen forties. I have chosen Bulawayo because, in the period of my study, this City, was the main industrial centre in Southern Rhodesia. Not only did this mean that it was here that the majority of Africans were exposed to the most concentrated and rapid capitalist development in the form of manufacturing industry, but also that Bulawayo had the largest proportion of semi skilled whites. This is an important point when the actions of the local Council are taken into consideration. I would like to make it clear at this point that I, like Goldberg, see worker consciousness as a collective consciousness, that is:

"...an activity, a force informed by material conditions which comprise not simply material production but also such elements as intellectual activity, political and ideological factors. It is not concerned with the pathology of man nor with collective motivation."(4)

It is important to distinguish, for the purposes of this paper, worker consciousness from trade union consciousness. The former allows one to identify collective activity within the specific capitalist mode of production I am interested in, while I see the latter as collective action controlled by a given organization. My use of the concept worker consciousness should not be confused with class consciousness. Worker consciousness is largely bound up with the economic class struggle, e.g. demands by the workers for better wages and conditions, while class consciousness has a political element which transcends the limits of the employer/employee contradiction.(5) I would like to distinguish worker consciousness from individual protests and demonstrations, which Phimister and van Onselen has identified as worker consciousness.(6) As I have indicated above, I see this concept as the activity of a collective group of workers. I must stress that I am locating this concept in a specific phase of the development of the capitalist mode of production, within which individual actions cannot be so successfully located. Finally, the collective action of workers which are not directly related to their challenge to the system of exploitation, e.g. protests along ethnic lines within a specific period of the development of the capitalist mode of production, must also be excluded.

The intellectual activity, political and ideological factors, along with the collective activity, which characterize worker consciousness, will be at the centre of my analysis of the development of the working class at this time. In addition, I aim to interpret the relative success or otherwise in the 1948 Strike in the context of growing worker consciousness at this time and not merely from the immediate material gain or otherwise the strikers may have received after the strike.

The final section of this paper will concern the role of ethnicity and race in the developments during the nineteen forties. As I will mention below, these concepts are very important in that I see ethnicity, like Goldberg, as essentially antithetical to worker consciousness because it appears to counteract the unity and collective action which this sort of consciousness propagates; and race as a problem because of the change from largely economic protest to nationalism is linked to the question of rights of Blacks vis-a-vis the European settler state. As far as ethnicity is concerned, I disagree with Thornton who, in Municipal Employment in Bulawayo, 1895-1935: An Assessment of Proletarianisation, perceives ethnicity in a particular period in the development of worker consciousness in Bulawayo, as beneficial to the Tongas, in the development of worker consciousness within their ethnic confines (although he does not make this totally clear).(7) I see the role of ethnicity as particularly inimical to the development of worker consciousness among Africans who were compelled to compete with each other for the few jobs in, what was then, an economically depressed Bulawayo through the use of ethnic ties and loyalties.

Although I disagree with this interpretation of the role of ethnicity, I must admit I am not so sure of its role in the development of Nationalism, which is apparent at the end of my period of interest, the middle of the nineteen fifties. Some sort of basic ethnic awareness must have been one of the ideological underpinnings of consciousness that evolved into nationalism. Despite its pre-capitalist material base that relates to the particular class formations of that period, ethnicity is an important force to be taken seriously.

I differ from van Onselen, Phimister and Thornton, then, on a more theoretical basis. Unlike them, my approach is to make clear what I mean by the terms worker consciousness, ideology, strike and ethnicity. I am also concerned to make clear what stage in the development of capitalism in Zimbabwe I am focusing on. With Thornton, I am critical of his use of the term worker consciousness in relation to the way he is able to link it to what is essentially an ethnic based protest, implying that such a development was quite wide spread at the time and had close links with the events in the 1940's.(8) Consequently, although I may be at one with these historians, who I admire for their collection of empirical data and use of the same to support their arguments, I cannot help thinking that full justice has not been done to the data through lack of clarity of theoretical framework.

CAPITAL. Why was there a general strike of African workers centred on Bulawayo in 1948? I follow Phimister's point that there was a dispute between local and international capital.(9) It is necessary to look at the stage of development of capitalism in Southern Rhodesia to understand why this dispute was linked to the development of worker consciousness and the collective action of the urban African workforce. The economy of Southern Rhodesia was going through transition from what was the last vestige of primary accumulation to the beginnings of an industrial economy. Both the dispute between local and international capital and the evolution of worker consciousness among the workers in the urban areas should be seen within this context.

Southern Rhodesia's economy changed profoundly during and after the Second World War. Agriculture and mining were the central pillars of the economy before the 1940's; after this period secondary industry became an equally important sector. In fact this type of economic activity superseded mining as one of the principal industries in the Southern Rhodesia.(10) The rapid development of secondary industry took place at the same time as there was a massive demographic change in the population of urban Africans. From the mid to late 1930's the numbers of Africans entering towns to seek work increased significantly.(11) According to Ian Phimister, the changes in the African population were partly due to the world wide depression, beginning at the start of the 1930's.(12) Capitalist agriculture was affected by the decline in prices for maize and the external market for cattle and mining contracted as chrome and asbestos concerns cut back production.(13) With the earlier collapse of the labour intensive tobacco industry at the end of the 1920's,(14) the decline of two main pillars of Southern Rhodesia's commerce made unemployed a large number of Africans. These people were unable to retreat back to the reserves.

Interrelated with this period was the deterioration of the African reserves. This atrophy was caused by a combination of over-production, drought, the growth in the African population and the fact that cattle ownership was becoming concentrated in fewer hands [as pointed out by Phimister].(15) This meant that an increasing number of people were compelled to seek work as labourers in commercial agriculture, mines and, importantly for my study, towns. The Land Apportionment Act, 1941, which forbade Africans to occupy land set aside for Europeans, also had a profound effect on the numbers of Africans being forced out of the rural areas into towns. This process was evident from the late 1920's onwards, and continued for the entire period of my study. It is not the apparent abundance of cheap labour - which in fact was in high demand by the end of the 1940's - that I am interested in, it is the phenomenon of these people being forced to seek work in the above areas. This change in the structure of the labour market is directly related to my focus on worker consciousness. The rapid growth of a large African community in the urban areas partially explains why people were compelled to form new relations and modify their way of life at the work place and in the home. It would appear that in this situation there would be a tendency for worker consciousness to develop.

As people were forced to seek work outside the reserves more frequently and for longer periods, the growing urban population of Africans corresponded to a need for labour by the new industries, which began to develop during the Second World War. Consequently, the assumption, held by settler entrepreneurs, that all labour in the "European" areas of Southern Rhodesia was temporary and migrant began to be questioned as the larger manufacturing combines began to perceive a need for a more stable labour force, with a higher commitment to staying in the urban community. At the same time as there was an increase in urban manufacturing industry, there was also an expansion in the population of Whites coming to Southern Rhodesia after World War Two, attracted by the flourishing economic activity that was apparent at the time. This second phenomena was also a big reason for the greater demand, and greater opportunities, for African labour.

These economic developments affected the white settler community in a profound way. In Bulawayo up to the mid-thirties, before the advent of secondary industry, local capital - that is enterprises owned by settlers - was dominant. Phimister states that these businesses were "little more than extended workshops characterized by small outputs, an extremely low-capital-labour ratio and by low productivity.(16) They were mainly geared to the service of the then two main props of the Southern Rhodesia economy, agriculture and mining.(17) Other enterprises in the town served the white population in Bulawayo and the surrounding areas. The owners of local capital also controlled town politics. The most prominent businessmen tended to be elected to the Council as councillors and, inevitably, Mayors.(18) The majority of those who were considered to be very important figures in the white community tended to take on civic responsibility as a matter of course. For these people, such responsibilities were not borne with any philanthropic notions. Not all Europeans were rate payers.(19) Those with business establishments bore the main burden of local taxes. These people were likely to take the most interest in how these taxes were spent by the Municipality.

The powers conferred by a place on the Local Council were considerable. The right to raise revenue through local taxes and to set bye laws were the normal rights one would expect Bulawayo Council to have. But the Southern Rhodesia council's right to control and regulate the living conditions of Africans wishing to work and live in Bulawayo; to provide all housing outside private locations within the municipal boundaries: the costs of the services provided; to control the labour force through the provision of accommodation; to control over any decision to allow Africans to establish businesses in Bulawayo; and, further, to regulate where that person could and could not trade, added another dimension to sitting on Council. Consequently, the Municipal Council effectively controlled the number and cost of labourers to businesses in need of it. The Council's power dominated the way Africans were compelled to live in Bulawayo, and became see below an issue between Central and Local Government as the pace of economic change increased in Southern Rhodesia.

The ascendancy of the Council over the control of Africans in the urban areas was enshrined in legislation passed prior to settler self-Government in Southern Rhodesia, in the Location Ordinances of 1895 and 1896. It was through these Ordinances that the local authorities, whether it was the original Sanitary Board or the Municipal Council, controlled the presence of Africans in Bulawayo.(20) The regulations were a verification that all locations for Africans within the Municipal boundary were private property, and that Central Government had no right of entry or control. Any responsibility for the up-keep and the development of these locations, owned by Municipal Council or private citizen, rested with the proprietor not the State. Also, any revenue derived from the general location, controlled by the Municipality, through rents and profits from the sale of beer, were to be dispense at the sole discretion of the Council. Such freedom from external interference was jealously guarded by the Bulawayo Municipal Council.(21) This was apparent in the Council's refusal to adopt the Location Ordinance of 1906, which gave the State some level of control and rights over the urban locations for Africans - for example the Government had the right to appoint an Inspector of Locations, taking that power away from the City Council.(22)

The hostility towards government encroachment into Council policy towards control of Africans resident in the urban areas is important in understanding the development of the African urban society in Bulawayo. Central Government, even before Huggins began his twenty year leadership of the White settler State, was anxious to coax the local authorities into adoption of the Urban Locations Ordinance, 1906. This was to make more effective the recently passed Land Apportionment Act. By 1931 all the major centres of white settlement had agreed to conform to this Ordinance, leaving Bulawayo isolated.(23) This point that was not lost on the newly elected Huggins Government, and the substance of his Acting Chief Native Commissioner's 1934 minute responding to Bulawayo's Council's reasons for not wishing to come under Location Ordinance No. 4, 1906:

".....The letter .....removes the question from the restricted issue of the heading, and puts it on something approaching its proper footing. ....(1) That in my opinion we shall not successfully control our Natives for their own welfare and that of the Colony, until locations etc are brought back into the unified control of the Government. (2) That, if the above be not agreed to, the present situation calls not for a piecemeal amendment of the Native Urban Locations Ordinance, but for a comprehensive Act embodying some of the features of the Native Urban Areas Acts 1923, and 1930 of the Union of South Africa, but broader in its scope and wider in its vision."(24)

According to Ian Phimister, the domination of the local economy by settlers was swept away as foreign capital, largely from the U.K. and the R.S.A., invested heavily in Southern Rhodesia during and after the Second World War.(25) The investment brought in its trail a large demand for black labour. Which, as mentioned above, corresponded with the huge increase in the population of urban Africans. The 1946 Census illustrated the profound change in the numbers of Africans employed throughout this period.

"With the exception of the depression year of 1931, the proportion of the total estimated population employed outside the Native economy has increased steadily, from 16 per cent in 1921 to 23 per cent in 1946."(26)

As mentioned above, it was the local entrepreneur who controlled local government. Their interests appeared to differ from the newer industrialists and Central Government. This point becomes apparent when one looks at the dispute over the development of facilities for Africans in Bulawayo between local and central Government during this period. The above quote by the Acting Chief Native Commissioner in 1934 shows that as early as the 1930's the inadequacy of the segregationist policies were beginning to be appreciated by the Native Affairs Department.(27) As Africans began to enter towns in large numbers, it became the concern of the State to ensure that they were catered for. The spurt of industry that occurred after the initial increase in urban population, added urgency to the need to provide for the numbers of Africans coming into the urban areas(28) This desire to assist the development of facilities by the Huggins administration explains the legislation to amend the Land Apportionment Act in 1941 and again in 1945.(29) This statute eventually compelled local authorities to set aside designated areas within their municipal boundaries for African habitation, and obligated them to provide adequate accommodation.

The compulsion in the provisions of the Land Apportionment amendment Act of 1945 was necessary from the Government's point of view due to the hostility of the municipalities, especially Bulawayo, towards setting up these African urban areas. What was interesting about the dispute is that Mayor D Macintyre - described as "envy of all businessmen in Southern Rhodesia" by Gann and Gelfand(30) - argued that the rate payers, mainly the local white entrepreneur would not agree to finance improved facilities for the Africans they themselves depended upon. In the various commissions of inquiry during the nineteen forties Councillors, the most vocal of whom was Macintyre, repeatedly gave evidence expressing the view the migrant labour system was more desirable than the stabilization policies of the Government.(31) It is necessary to look at two acts that affected the way the Municipalities generated revenue to carry out its policies to understand such an opinion.

The Municipality Act, passed in 1930, compelled the Council to use rateable property as security for loans from the financial market. Therefore, when the Council took loans to finance the expanded African house building programme,

the security was not the houses themselves but on those who paid rates. This upset those Europeans whose property was put at risk in this way.(32) The Kaffie Beer Act Amendment, passed in 1942, further limited the options of the Council in its efforts to keep the financial burden of African house building off the rates. The Act forbade the Council to use the huge profits made from the sale of beer to Africans in the Location Beer Hall to subsidize the cost of erecting housing in the locations. The dispute over the use of those profits involved the Native Society and liberal opinion, who were concerned at the exploitation of Africans through Council appropriation of those profits.(33) The effect was to force the Council to place the burden of subsidizing the house building programme onto the rates.(34)

Therefore, it appears clear that the settlers, especially those who bore the main burden of local taxes, the relatively small entrepreneur, were unwilling to consider the need to subsidize the facilities Africans. As a result, the shortage of housing that was apparent in Bulawayo throughout the period from the mid nineteen thirties well into the nineteen fifties, admittedly exacerbated by the insufficient supplies of material during the Second World War, was in a large part due to the inertia of the Bulawayo Council, with its unwillingness to invest sufficiently to meet the demands made upon it.

Salisbury had agreed to abide by the provisions of the Act by 1946, but Bulawayo had resisted until 1949, although the Council had agreed in principle in late 1947. The long delay by the Bulawayo Municipal Council was in character with its desire for independence on this matter, and it reflected the long dispute about who was going to pay for the financial responsibilities that went with such an edict. The other point is that the Act was a dead letter as long as sufficient finance was not put into the scheme to provide housing. This was stressed by J. MacNamee, who was commissioned in 1948 by Bulawayo Council to report on the state of local African policy and the implications of fully implementing the 1946 Urban Areas Act.(35)

By looking at the pronouncements of Macintyre, it is possible to understand where the disagreement lay. Macintyre was very influential in Bulawayo local politics. He was large owner of Bakeries, primarily in Bulawayo but had interests in other bakeries in other towns.(36) He was a major politics figure and an important government critic on the opposition benches, before joining the United Party in 1948. He represented the artisan classes as a member of the Southern Rhodesia Labour Party.(37) His activities as a Mayor of Bulawayo and a Councillor, chairing the crucial Finance Committee of Bulawayo(38), ensured that he and his supporters were able to oppose government attempts to force the Council to take greater fiscal responsibility towards the development of a progressive housing policy for urban African workers.(39) Macintyre was prominent at commission of inquiries, in the media, and in correspondence with the Government defending the Council's housing policy.(40) It is interesting to note that Macintyre's apparent disregard for Africans in the urban areas did not go un-noticed by the urban Africans themselves. In the days prior to the strike Macintyre's name was a frequent target of abuse from various speakers and crowd at mass meetings held by the British African Workers Voice Association and the Federation of African Trades Unions.(41)

The dispute between local and international capital was over the cost of the stabilization of African labour. Who was going to pay for the changes to the structure of the economy, which entailed stabilizing the new African workforce, masked a deeper difference which represented the changes to the economy as the capitalist mode of production developed in Southern Rhodesia. It was the reactionary, settler controlled, local Council that was able for a short while to impede the developments wished by those running the new secondary industries. Consequently, understanding the reasons for the action of the Bulawayo Council is directly relevant to explaining the evolution of worker consciousness among African workers in Bulawayo.

The Development of African Worker Consciousness. If we accept that collective consciousness can only be identified through the activity of a group or a class which is informed by the material conditions /as well as political and ideological factors and intellectual activity/, it is important to identify the activities which indicate the development of the class we are interested in - the working class - within the C.M.P. As mentioned above, the huge increase in the population of urban Africans throughout the nineteen thirties and forties eventually coincided with, and made possible the vast expansion of the Southern Rhodesian economy, which was led by manufacturing industry and agriculture, especially tobacco. For our purposes, I am interested solely in the former.

This development brought thousands of Africans into direct contact with the material conditions that had prevailed in Bulawayo during the late nineteen thirties(42) and had been aggravated by the shortages of material, the massive increase in the cost of living and drought during the Second World War. Added to this there was the dispute between a disinterested Local Council and Central Government over what should be the position and role of the urban African community; if the African population was to be partially stabilized who was going to pay for it? The sum of all these problems meant that conditions were appalling in Bulawayo. There had been numerous books, commissions of enquiry and reports by philanthropic individuals to illustrate the fetid housing conditions in which Africans were compelled to live and the low wages that pertained, despite the increasing cost of essential items.(43) Thornton made the point that these poor conditions and low wages may exist for a very long time without any overt collective activity by those people who have to bear them. It takes a very particular incident to spark off the collective action against this type of exploitation which we can identify as the growing worker consciousness we are interested in.(44)

Despite the fact that I am interested in the nineteen forty eight Bulawayo industrial strike, it is not the immediate spark to this event that I shall focus on, but on the nineteen forty five Railway strike, which was centred on Bulawayo. This strike is of great importance in understanding the rise of worker consciousness in Bulawayo, which reached a peak with the general strike three years later. The strike can be considered a success, not only due to the fact that the Government of the day forced the Rhodesia Railway Company to meet the demands of the workers and implemented machinery to deal with future grievances of the Railway employees, it was also a success in that it had a profound effect on the level of African worker consciousness in Bulawayo and, to a much lesser extent in the rest of Southern Rhodesia. Between the ending of that strike and the beginning of nineteen forty eight strike, there were at least eighteen strikes and industrial related protests in Southern Rhodesia, the majority of the disturbances being in and around Bulawayo.(45) Along with spontaneous action by workers, trade union-type organizations were established as well. The Federation of African Trades Unions /Federation from now on/ was formed in 1946, 946) and The British African Workers' Voice Association a year later,(47) this was indication of the growth of smaller trade-related unions immediately after the Railway strike. There were eight Associations federated to the Federation by August, 1946.(48) The B.S.A. Police, who had been monitoring the growing unrest since nineteen forty five, saw the cause of these developments as a direct result of:

"/a/.....Culmination of events that have happened over the preceding 7 or 8 years .....the railway strike of October, 1945 was the principle hand work, and it is proposed to give as fairly detailed outline of all events occurred subsequent .....it is thought /that/ ...all played their part in working up to the climax."(49)



The Railway employees strike was, in itself, a demonstration that the War years and the poor conditions had a profound effect on the worker consciousness of those African workers living in Bulawayo. But the nature of the Railway location, its isolation from the rest of the African community living in Bulawayo, and the nature of the job, which separated these employees from the rest of the African workforce in Bulawayo because they were concerned with work along the "line of rail,"(50) meant that the worker consciousness developed by these employees would be directed against their specific employer - the Rhodesia Railways - and not seek to widen appeal and support from fellow workers outside the Railways. This is underlined by the fact that the Railway employees did not come out on strike when all other Bulawayo employees came out during the City-wide strike in 1948.(51) Perhaps this illustrates the limitation of trades union/worker consciousness, which I see as broadly similar, in bringing about a conspicuous change in the material conditions of workers in conflict with their employers.

The development of worker consciousness had other elements to it besides the appalling living conditions and low wages that were apparent at the time. The intellectual activity added an important level of understanding of the situation Africans found themselves. I must stress that when I use the term "intellectual" I mean it to explain the political awareness of individuals in the context of the period I am studying. These activists, in the case of Bulawayo the leaders of the various worker organizations such as J. Savanhu, Simpanbinso, P. Makoni, G. Banco and B. Burombo, informed, advised and guided mass understanding of the situation they were in and who were the "enemy," etc. The mass meeting that became a feature of Bulawayo African political activity during the early months of nineteen forty eight is indicative of how important the role of the intellectual was at this time.(52) I shall argue that this awareness was partly instilled by the intellectual and partly by actual strike action. Strike action is important in itself, as Lenin pointed out:

"A strike ..... opens the eyes of the workers to nature, not only of the capitalists, but of the government and laws as well."(53)

Consequently, it is not surprising that, with the immediate background of the Railway strike and the smaller strikes which took place between that, and the nineteen forty eight strike, Africans were very aware who their oppressors were and what sort of demands they should make. To reinforce this point, as mentioned above, during the mass meetings in Bulawayo during early nineteen forty eight Councillor Macintyre, the highly influential businessman and white politician and chief opponent of any local financed policies towards the partial stabilization of the African labour force, was the object of frequent African abuse.(54)

This brings us to the last aspect of worker consciousness, ideology. Goldberg sees the importance of ideology as:

".....class struggle occurs not only at the economic and political level but also at the ideological level.

One important function of ideology is to 'recruit' individuals and groups into particular ideological camps. In the capitalist mode of production bourgeois ideology functions, for example, to atomize the proletariat, to transform individuals into subjects and to represent the state as their state. ....  
.....Thus ideology facilitates and emphasizes the atomization of individuals."(a25-6)

It is obvious, in this case, that the ideology of the dominant class within the Capitalist mode of production, represented by the settler society, has, during the various stages of capitalist development in Southern Rhodesia, managed to a large extent to impose its ideology as the dominant one. Africans were compelled to compete with each other for jobs and see themselves as individuals in the labour market. If we just look at the atomization of the African workforce in urban areas during my period, it is quite clear that the process of incorporation had gone a long way. For example, at a general level through competition for jobs and in a more subtle way in advertisements in the newspapers extolling some chemical or another to assist one to compete for jobs or a partner or other forms of success.(55)

I would also suggest that sport had the purpose, within the context of my study, the rapid urbanization of Africans and the establishment of a new economic order in Southern Rhodesia, of incorporating people into the dominant ideology, whether it is just on the level of encouraging people to accept the society created within the capitalist mode of production or to increase competition between groups or individuals. Goldberg points to institutions as having a pivotal role: "How is ideology effected? Not simply through the transmission of ideas but through institutions which 'carry' ideological currents."(56)

The European-run institution, the Native Welfare Society, had such a role within the specific context I am talking about. It was a promoter of sport and other social functions in what were then the African Locations in the larger Cities. Its role was to incorporate Africans in the urban life and a study of its role is very important in order to gain a better understanding of how the dominant ideology altered and found new ways to incorporate the dominated as the new economic relations developed in Southern Rhodesia.

On the other hand, the strikes, the development of labour organizations and growth in worker consciousness among African labour had the tendency to uncover the mask of the nature of economic exploitation and to counter the dominant ideology.(57) And the collective action of workers has the tendency to counter the dominant ideology of capitalism, i.e. individualism. Working class action can have the effect of challenging specific aspects of the dominant ideology. But awareness of the fact that ideology helps to reproduce and legitimize the social system is important in order to understand the role ideology plays in social formation or in its transformation. This is important if you accept that worker/trade union consciousness is, as Lenin has stated, the politics of the bourgeoisie.(58) That means that all worker consciousness is a legitimization and acceptance of the new economic order.

This does leave an unanswered questions. Because capitalist penetration was uneven in this region, a lot of the pre-capitalist ideologies of the dominated classes survived. I am interested in fitting in the ideology of the dominated, pre-capitalist, social formations into the social formation that had evolved at this time. Were these ideologies completely submerged? Where did they fit into the developing urban society within the dominant ideology? What can be made of the various religious, burial and "Home" societies? And finally, how influential was ethnicity in the ideology of the dominated? These questions lead us on to the question of ethnicity and nationalism.

Ethnicity and Nationalism. I interpret race as a concept which described the conflict between Blacks and the White controlled settler state, and ethnicity as cultural/historic differences also Blacks within the same community. The role of ethnicity can be seen, in the context of my study, as antithetical to worker consciousness. This ideology tends to prevent the unity of workers to achieve the collective consciousness that is essential to any possibility of challenging the domination of the employers. In the period of my study the pervasiveness of ethnicity as an impediment to effective worker consciousness appeared to be eroded. I am interested in explaining how this happened. I see the reason for the lack of division among Africans in Bulawayo as partly to do with the nature of the development of this phase of capitalism in Southern Rhodesia; this consisted of the

particular working conditions in Bulawayo, the vast increase in the population of Bulawayo, the totally inadequate housing conditions, and the limited differentiation among the African community. I see these factors as largely instrumental in overcoming the ethnic divisions and fostering common cause among the African community in that City.

It is here where I differ from Thornton's assessment of the development of worker consciousness in Bulawayo during the middle of the nineteen thirties. He saw ethnicity as crucial in the development of worker consciousness during what was a different stage in the development in the capitalist mode of production in Bulawayo. He saw the isolation of the ethnic group, the Tonga, in the work place and in competition for jobs as important in understanding the development of worker consciousness at that time.(59) I would argue the opposite suggesting that it was the very ethnic divisions reinforced by the capitalists through intense job competition at that time that prevented any effective opposition by all the workers, and not just the Tonga. The events in Bulawayo over ten years later, during increased development of the capitalist mode of production, that workers were able to overcome the inhibiting nature of ethnicity to such an extent to mount a City-wide collective challenge fueled by a stronger development of worker consciousness. Despite this apparent development, one should not underestimate the power of what is an ideological manifestations of ethnicity as an ideology of the dominated section of the community.

Where I do have doubts it is about the role of ethnicity, and also race, in the development of Nationalism. The boundary of my study ends when the Nationalist movement in Southern Rhodesia begins. I am concerned to look at limitation of worker consciousness in assisting in understanding the development of an overtly political movement. As with class consciousness, worker consciousness differs from racially conscious Nationalism in that it represents economic class protests, while consciousness developed at the same time as the growing awareness of inequality and exploitation during this particular phase of the capitalist mode of production, if one accepts the evidence of newspapers and other platforms of African elite opinion - such as commissions of inquiry and speeches at various African organisations.(60) If this is so, how and why did this consciousness become the dominant political expression among Africans within ten years of the 1948 General Strike?

Tentatively, I suggest that economic demands were largely met by increased wages and effective implementation of the Urban Areas Act in Bulawayo, characterized by the appointment of a very progressive administrator responsible for meeting the social needs of the Africans living in Bulawayo, Dr. Hugh Ashton. These responses did not alleviate other forms of oppression and exploitation of Africans in the Colony. The strike and its aftermath made people more aware of their disadvantaged position, which began to be perceived as racial consciousness rather than economic worker consciousness.

## Conclusion

My main interest is to interpret the African strike that took place at the end of the Second World War in relation to the development of worker consciousness and, hence, the working class in Zimbabwe. To understand these events within the context of the developing capitalist mode of production, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the concept worker consciousness and why it is an important tool for analysis the evolution of the class struggle at this particular time. How developed the African urban work force was indicates and helps to explain the stage of social development in Bulawayo and Southern Rhodesia.

Despite the overly theoretical nature of this paper, I see the role of empirical evidence as crucial to giving reality to the themes I have suggested above. An understanding of the policies of Bulawayo Municipality, which represented local settler capital, is important to understanding the development worker consciousness in Bulawayo in the nineteen forties.

These ideas are still rather undeveloped, I am still not completely sure how to account for the evolution of Nationalism so soon after the events in Bulawayo, and why Salisbury was the centre of political activity for nationalists after this period? But the ideas I have suggested above owe a lot to the work on this subject by the Ian Phimister, Charles van Onselen, and Steven Thornton. Over and above their skillful use of empirical evidence, I am indebted to them for focusing on the concept of worker consciousness as a useful tool for analysis of the historicography of labour in Southern Rhodesia.

May 3, 1986

40. Macintyre view was consistent, whether in Parliament, Commissions of inquiry or in the media. He always argued that the burden for the development of the urban areas for Africans should be paid for by the employer through increased wages, rather than the local authorities.
41. See Reference numbers 32 and 34. op.cit.
42. S517. INTERNAL SECURITY. N.A.Z.
43. S246/429. Gov't Medical Director to Sec' of Department of Internal Affairs. No. 3882/81. April 23, 1936. N.A.Z.
44. S482 387/39. Report on Housing, Wages and Living Conditions of Africans in Bulawayo District. October 12, 1939. This was a typical report by the Native Welfare Society.
45. Thornton, op.cit. p.134
46. Internal Security, op.cit.
47. ibid.
48. ibid.
49. ibid.
50. A.Turner, 'The Growth of Railway Unionism in the Rhodesias, 1944-1955 in Eds.R. Sanbrook & R.Cohen The Development of an African Working Class: Studies in Class Formation and Action. p.74
51. R.Gray, The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in Rhodesias and Nyasaland. p.318
52. Internal Security, op.cit.
53. V.I Lenin, 'On Strikes' in Golberg, op.cit., p.21
54. Internal Security, op.cit.
55. Goldberg, op.cit., pp.25-6
56. ibid., pp.27-8
57. ibid., p.27
58. ibid., p.28
59. Thornton, op.cit., p.144
60. Banti Mirror. March 2, 1946. p.3.