



W. JAMES and M. SIMONS (eds). *The angry divide*. David Philip: Cape Town, 1989. 258 pp. Illus. R33,84 (exclusive). ISBN 0 86486 116 8.

Most South African historians focus on a particular time or a specific topic of interest. *The angry divide* focusses instead on a particular region: the Western Cape. This volume largely consists of papers presented at the Western Cape: Roots and Realities conference hosted by the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Town. Some of these papers have already appeared in print elsewhere. Perhaps

it is the wide subject area of this conference that has resulted in one of the major shortcomings of this volume — a lack of a coherent unifying theme. Chapters are loosely grouped under three headings: 'Historical foundations'; 'Economy and labour'; and 'Politics and society'. Some of the more interesting contributions in these three areas will be assessed.

Nigel Penn's chapter on land, labour and livestock in the Western Cape of the 18th century represents a competent overview of some of the major developments of this period — ongoing European territorial expansion and the destruction of Khoisan society. Nigel Worden's study of the effects of the emancipation of slaves is both insightful and interesting in its discussion of the different modes of production that emerged in the Western and Eastern Cape. The reluctance of farmers in both regions to employ wage labour precluded the proletarianization of freed men. Instead many were kept in service through devices such as the 'dop' system or through a cycle of indebtedness. This tendency was reinforced by legislative measures such as the Masters and Servants Act. In his contribution Hermann Giliomee looks at the origins of the consistent support that Western Cape wine and wheat farmers have shown for the Afrikaner nationalist movement. (It is interesting to note that this group still forms the bedrock of National Party support today.) Economic concerns coincided with concern about the political status of Afrikaners, which resulted in the rural Western Cape becoming 'the most solidly bourgeois wing of Afrikaner nationalism'.

The 'Economy and labour' section consists of four articles on topics ranging from Van Duin's look at artisans and trade unions in the Cape Town building industry to Maree's more contemporary study of the General Workers' Union (GWU). Richard Goode looks at the Wolseley general strike of 1953-1954. Alan Mabin explores the change of South Africa's economic geography. It is argued that the reasons for this change were intimately tied up with agricultural depression in the Western Cape and the discovery of minerals in the Transvaal in the late 19th century. This resulted in much investment being channelled to the Transvaal at the expense of the Cape. Based on Maree's first-hand experiences of the emergence of the independent trade unions, his chapter on the GWU sheds light on the transformation of an advice bureau into a major force on the shop-floor. Particular attention is paid to major strikes involving the GWU and the political stance of this union.

More problematic is the 'Politics and society' section of this volume. It is here that the dated nature of this volume becomes most apparent: almost all the chapters were written in 1986, while this compilation was published in 1989. Don Pinnock's chapter, 'Ideology and urban planning', suggests a dominance of the ideas and preconceptions of Swiss town planner Le Corbusier in the planning of Cape Town and more particularly the Foreshore area in the post-war period. While some discussion is given of changing municipal policy, there is little analysis of this, or of the state's policy which, after all, caused the misery of the Group Areas Act forced removals. If the Pinnock article seems to have many conclusions and few facts, Richard Humphries' contribution appears to suffer from the opposite malady — many facts and few conclusions. In dealing with the coloured labour preference policy, the Humphries article seems at times to be little more than a 'shopping list' of dates and figures without any useful line of argument. It is doubtlessly interesting to note the exact extent to which the black population of Cape Town increased between 1960 and 1970, but it is unclear what this really means in broader political terms. No more is the dated nature of this volume apparent than in the Bundy article dealing with 'youth-student' resistance in the Western Cape. Written before the full effect of emergency repression was felt, Bundy is optimistic to the point of naivety. He sees the radical youth as being a source of both 'militant cadres' and intellectuals. Today the hollowness of this argument is exposed in the emergence of the 'lost generation' of poorly educated youths, themselves a result of incessant school boycotts.

It is clear that some of the contributions to this volume are of great value towards an understanding of the historical development of the Western Cape. However, there appears to be a lack of editorial direc-

Western Cape. However, there appears to be a lack of editorial direction by James and Simons. This impression is reinforced by the brief and superficial introduction. It seems strange that the editors saw fit to include a chapter on the tiny Unity Movement and neglect the ANC, surely the dominant force in the Western Cape. Definitely this volume contains useful material, but it is by no means an authoritative social and economic history of the Western Cape.

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