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## POPULAR WRITING AND THE DEMOCRATISATION OF KNOWLEDGE:

Review article of *Factory and Family*,  
Vukani Makhosikazi and *Working Women*

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### Introduction

In a recent article,<sup>1</sup> Jacklyn Cock noted that: "Working class women are among the central shock absorbers of the current crisis". An increasing awareness of the particular way in which black working women experience their oppression under South Africa's racial capitalism has found expression in the recent publication of three books: *Factory and Family*, Vukani Makhosikazi and *Working Women*.<sup>2</sup>

All three books present a detailed account of women's "triple struggle"<sup>3</sup> as blacks, as workers and as women. Furthermore, what distinguishes these three books is that they all attempt to depart from an academic analysis of the relationship between gender, class and race in South Africa, and to present their accounts in a popular form, intended in each case to reach the women whose personal histories and oral accounts form the basis of each of the books. The authors of *Factory and Family* describe the book as "a report about Black women workers for Black women workers"(p.3). The authors of *Vukani Makhosikazi* describe themselves as a group of white intellectuals with research experience on women in South Africa, but who see their challenge as "to rewrite academic work in an interesting way, accessible to others who (are) also concerned with change in South African society and women's position in it" (p.v). *Working Women* is dedicated to "all the women whose experiences fill the pages of this book", and is obviously intended primarily for that readership.

This article will examine some of the themes and images of black working class women portrayed through the pages of these books. But more particularly, it will focus critically on these books as forms of popular writing, and assess the

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extent to which they succeed in 'democratising' the rich insights and information that they contain.

### Themes and Images

The three books under consideration all draw on authentic personal accounts by women to weave a detailed picture of their experience of the 'double shift': their exploitation as black, female wage earners at the 'bottom of the pile' of the labour market, and their experience of the sexual division of labour in a male-dominated household, where they have to carry the major burden of domestic labour and responsibility for child-care.

A stark picture emerges of the ultra-exploited women workers in 'traditional' areas of female wage labour: the service and agricultural sectors. Through the pages of these books, domestic workers, night-cleaners and farm labourers speak of their oppressive and appalling working conditions, their insecurity, and their feelings of being trapped into the least desirable jobs. One woman, a retired farm worker, talks thus of her past employers: "Those boers who used us for free — what will they do for us now that we are old? Nothing, niks."<sup>4</sup> She goes on to describe how, if they dared to protest against their conditions, they were "dismissed like a dog". The words of women trapped in the rural areas speak too of their desperate poverty, helplessness, and lack of support from their men-folk.

In interviews with women working in factories and other areas of urban employment, the familiar themes emerge of their confinement to the most labour intensive, lowest paid and monotonous jobs. They also give vivid accounts of their domination by white female supervisors, and of their sexual harassment and exploitation by male superiors. In the words of one woman: "The position of women workers is too heavy, with many things."<sup>5</sup>

Out of these interviews, a theme also emerges of how the daily sufferings of black workers in this country are experienced, especially harshly by women workers. Under the pass laws and in the face of rising unemployment, black women face a particular dilemma because of their general lack of skills on the one hand, and their position of increasingly being the sole breadwinner on the other. Through the pages of these books, women express their fears about the prospect of life trapped in the poverty-stricken reserves, alone, with husbands who never return. For those few who have legal access to jobs in urban areas, it is often they who have to carry the burden of spiralling costs of living, and who are at the centre of struggles against removals in the squatter camps, as they increasingly carry the responsibility for housing their families. As women workers, they speak also of their desperate need for maternity rights and their constant worry over unsatisfactory child-care arrangements.

Many of those interviewed also speak openly and graphically of how they experience their gender oppression in the household. For example, the women in *Factory and Family* talk thus about the 'men in their lives':

These are the people who control us and whom we must obey. We live in a man's world and men are superior to women . . .<sup>6</sup>

A picture emerges of the daily, inexorable grind of black women to keep their job and home going, in most instances with no support from their husbands in the home. One woman describes how, when a woman returns from work: "You'll be a 'girl' again in the house. He (the husband) is the boss reading the paper."<sup>7</sup>

The personal histories of the women which fill the pages of these books present a painful image of women constantly being torn between the demands of wage labour, children and husbands, and how the stress which this creates often leads them to choose the equally difficult life of being a single parent. One woman says of husbands: "... he's just an extra baby for the wife. He wants money for smokes and beer. She has to buy him clothes and feed him like a baby," and concludes: "No, I can do without."<sup>8</sup>

A final but important theme which emerges from these books is the question of women and organisation. For many of the women portrayed in these books, politics is perceived as a 'male' affair. For others, feelings of ambivalence towards organisational involvement emerge: on the one hand, their day-to-day struggles and harsh encounters with their employers and the state evoke strong feelings of anger; but on the other hand their insecurity and fear, as well as their incredibly long working hours, and lack of any leisure time, militate against political or union involvement.

For example, on p.49 of *Factory and Family*, the book reads:

We don't have time for meetings. We would like to belong to clubs and to work with organisations that do good work. We think that there is a need for women to get together and to improve their situation. We would like to join such a group but we do not know where to find the time.

In this book, a picture of women as extremely isolated and powerless emerges.

However, in *Vukani Makhosikazi* and *Working Women*, significant sections are devoted to the experiences of women's organisation: with the former laying stress on community-based organisations such as United Women's Organisation, and the Vaal Women's Organisation, and the latter stressing the role of women



in trade union organisation. These two books urge the importance of women's organisation, but note also the difficulties of organising the many women who are domestic workers, farm labourers, or unskilled factory workers. In *Working Women*, trade union organisers also speak of the problems of women "taking on a third shift" by becoming involved in organisational work, and how, having undertaken the necessary sacrifices to do this, they still encounter male dominance and prejudice even within their own organisations.

### Popular Writing

The question of how knowledge and culture can or should be popularised and democratised is a relatively new and unexplored field in South Africa. There are a number of historical examples of popular or working class history or writing in this country.<sup>9</sup> But the successes or failures of such attempts have not been systematically evaluated, nor have questions about the social and political implications of various forms of writing been properly theorised. For those interested or practically involved in trying to build a tradition of popular writing, questions need to be urgently addressed regarding the production, appropriation and distribution of such writing, so as to ensure that a more democratic writing tradition is built.

In examining the three books under review as forms of popular writing, this article attempts in some small way to begin this process. By evaluating these books, it also explores the question of how to *define* 'popular writing': *by* whom and *for* whom are popular materials produced? *How*, and in *what forms* should they be produced, and how should they be *distributed* to ensure a process of democratisation of knowledge? Finally, and most importantly — *whose interests* should popular writing serve, and in what way does this writing promote such interests?

### Defining the Readership

Defining the readership is the primary task of any writer of popular materials, and is one of the most difficult. Most writers of such materials would probably define their readership as falling within the very broad category of those who are dominated, oppressed or exploited by the ruling group in any society. Of particular relevance to such a writer is that his/her readership constitutes those who have been most excluded from expressing themselves through writing and other cultural forms.

However, such a definition of a 'popular readership' remains extremely broad and vague, and of little help in deducing the most appropriate form of writing for

such a readership. Ultimately, for popular writing materials to be successful in reaching their intended readership, a much narrower and more specific definition of such a readership is required.

The carving out of such a definition is a problematic task, for it is essentially a political act: — it is based on the writer's specific analysis of how oppression operates, and an assumption about which classes or other groups constitute those who are most dominated or oppressed.

In the case of the three books under review, the writers's definition of their intended audience is closely intertwined with their implicit political analysis regarding the nature of female oppression and gender relations in South Africa. For the authors of *Working Women*, the women they are addressing are seen first and foremost as members of the working class, who experience a particularly acute form of exploitation and oppression because of their race and gender. The road to their liberation is therefore seen as one of organising through working class organisations, to strengthen the working class movement as a whole, while at the same time raising the question of women's particular oppression within these organisations.

*Vukani Makhosikazi* situates its women's oppression within the broader context of South Africa's racial capitalism, and lays far greater stress on their national oppression within the structures of apartheid — an oppression which is experienced particularly harshly because of their gender. While *Working Women* has a distinct urban, working-class appeal, *Vukani Makhosikazi* directs itself to a broader audience of both urban and rural women, employed and unemployed, workers as well as members of a wider township community. This, together with the stress on women's organisations aligned to the cross-class, national political movement, appears to offer a way forward for women which is closely linked to the national democratic struggle against apartheid structures. Although the need for separate women's organisations is stressed, their problems are not seen as issues which affect black working women alone, but as popular issues around which broad class and racial alliances can be forged.

In contrast with both these two books, *Factory and Family* construes the women who form the focus of the book as being oppressed primarily as part of a black racial group, and only secondarily as working women. As noted above, the accounts contained in the book point mainly to the difficulties of organising such women, rather than stressing examples of successful organisation. In so doing, the book offers little direction as to how such women should challenge their oppression.

It is not possible at this point to enter into a debate concerning these three

political positions, or the nature of oppression in South Africa. What is important here is that such political assumptions affect the way in which writers define their 'popular readership', and as we shall see in the following section, also effect the form and content of popular writings.

What is apparent in the books under review is that the more narrow the definition of the intended readership, the more successful the book in reaching such an audience. *Working Women* appears to have the most narrow definition of its intended readership, and as will be shown in the following section, this translates itself into a form which is particularly successful in making it accessible to black, urban, working class women. *Vukani Makhosikazi* on the other hand, has (implicitly) a much broader definition of its readership. It is directed to a very broad range of groups, committed to the national democratic struggle against apartheid, and which would appear to include sympathetic groups outside of South Africa as well. As will be shown in the following section, this definition of its readership has effects on the form of writing produced.

### Form and Content

The three books under consideration have all enjoyed some success in adopting a form and content which make them accessible reading to the majority of less literate, working class women (and men) who are seen as their potential readership. They are all heavily based on personal interviews, many of which are presented verbatim in *Vukani Makhosikazi* and *Working Women*. In this way, the authenticity of the accounts is preserved, along with the cultural richness, emotion and personal detail which allows these books to make a powerful and direct to appeal to working class readers.

*Factory and Family* sets itself the more difficult task of attempting to synthesise the 992 interviews done amongst black women workers in the Durban-Pinetown area, and presenting the results of this survey in the form of a generalised first-person account. The results of such a survey, presented in a simple and accessible way, might well have proved extremely interesting reading to these women. However, by presenting the results in the form of a first-person account by a hypothetical 'collective woman', it tends to read in an inauthentic and uneasy way. For example, on p. 50, it reads:

About a third of us do all the house work ourselves singlehanded and most of us feel that it is not right that men should do housework. For 46% of us the men in our lives make all the decisions. 68% of us ask for permission from our husbands or our parents before we go anywhere.

Oral accounts may be a powerful tool in popular writing; some may even feel that it is legitimate to *construct* oral accounts in some cases, so long as they are based on circumstances which are established and real, and where they might add to the appeal of the popular writing. However, *Factory and Family* constructs oral accounts which at times bear no relation to what the speakers might realistically have said, and as such, they lose much of their effectivity as a popular writing tool.

The three books attempt to use a form and level of language which is intended to make them accessible to readers with English as a second language. This has been achieved particularly successfully in *Working Women*, and the simultaneous use of English and Zulu on each page of *Factory and Family* also enables it to be easily read by many working class women. On the other hand, the broader readership intended by *Vukani Makhosikazi* has had an influence on the book's language level which is somewhat higher than the other two books, and not always accessible to working people with English as a second language.

*Working Women* and *Vukani Makhosikazi* are both extremely informative, providing explanations and historical accounts which could prove useful tools in the hands of its readers. The texts of all three books are generously interspersed with many excellent photographs, often well-integrated with the text, and these visual images, together with a clear and well-signposted lay-out, provide the additional criteria for successful popular writing.

The three books under review, by basing themselves strongly on personal interviews, give authentic self-expression to the struggles, hopes and fears of many black, working-class women in South Africa. They have succeeded in making these 'invisible' and 'silent' women visible and vocal — and at the same time, have challenged stereotypical images and conventional wisdom of women's roles and the value of their work.

### **Production and Distribution**

It has already been shown that in terms of their intended audience, as well as their form and content, the books under review represent successful attempts at popular writing in a number of important ways.

However, it can be argued that the production of popular writings which succeeds in 'democratising' knowledge to the working class or other dominated groups in society, requires a far deeper 'disestablishment' of conventional writing, and far more thoroughgoing changes in the production, presentation, and distribution of such literature, than evidenced in the case of the books under review. I would argue that in order to build a more democratic writing culture,



there is a need for far more active participation by those for whom it is intended. This active participation would have to take place on a number of levels: in the production of the literature, as well as in the distribution and use of the material.

Mattelart has written that: "New forms of communication can only be created by new forms of collective organisation."<sup>10</sup> This principle has found expression in the growth of the idea that we cannot divorce the content of popular literature from our method of producing it. The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers in Britain has sought in recent years to promote new forms of writing, publishing and distribution amongst working class people. In a recent publication, the group describes how, in its publishing cooperatives, writers (ordinary, working class people) were involved at every stage of making the books: in the editing, lay-out, choice of pictures, typeface, and setting of the price. They write:

... we cannot divorce our methods of production (writing, discussing, criticising, editing, pasting-up and in every other way putting books together) from the 'finished products'.<sup>11</sup>

Returning to our three books on working women, it would seem that although these women played an important role in providing the oral material which forms the core of the books, they did not participate further in the production of the books. What an exciting project might it have been if these women workers had contributed more to the production of the books! How differently might these books have emerged if they had participated in some of the decision-making about editing, lay-out, pictures, length and so on? Would they, in fact, have chosen the book-form as the best means of communicating with each other?

This is not to argue that all popular writing be collectively written, in a project involving its intended readership. This is certainly often not practically possible; nor is it feasible when the subject matter involves areas outside of the previous experience or knowledge of the readership. What is being argued is that some form of participation by the readership in the production of the materials — and this may be an indirect contribution in the form of having a say in the sorts of questions being asked — will greatly enhance the chances of such materials proving useful to their intended readership.

Democratisation of knowledge also entails a consideration of the means whereby the vehicles of such knowledge are to be distributed. It would appear that some attempt was made in the case of at least two of the books to give some consideration to their distribution: *Working Women* was 'launched' at a festive



gathering attended by a number of black, working class women, while copies of *Factory and Family* were given to each of the 992 women involved in the interview survey. Both of these books are also being retailed at a discount price to workers.

However, I would argue that a deeper transformation is required of conventional methods of distribution, in order to popularise and democratise writing. In the case of these three books, for example, perhaps more use could have been made of the many formal and informal organisational and social networks of women so richly detailed in these books, such as stokvels, burial societies, church groups as well as women's and trade union organisations. By seeking out these organisational and social networks for the distribution of popular writing materials, the possibility is raised for communal discussions of such books to take place, and hence a more socialised form of appropriating the material.

A last qualification must also be raised about the use of the book-form to give a voice to black women workers. The question of democratising knowledge must raise questions about the best cultural medium to act as a vehicle for such knowledge. It is questionable, in the context of the audience under consideration here — with the low levels of literacy amongst black working women, and their lack of leisure time — whether the book-form is necessarily the best means whereby they can begin to speak to each other, and share their common experiences in a constructive way.

### **The function of popular writing**

Specifying the purpose or function of popular writing is perhaps the most difficult part of defining such writing. In a very broad way, it can be said to be 'furthering the interests' of the dominated classes or groups for which it is written. Such writing may be 'educational', intended to further the interests of these groups by raising their consciousness in a broad way, or it may be 'agitational', and oriented towards evoking action on the part of such groups.

This article concentrates on popular writing which may be regarded as being within the 'educational' category, and which attempts to 'raise the consciousness' of its intended readership in a variety of ways: for example, we have already noted the value of self expression in giving a voice to those that are so often voiceless, so that they can begin to communicate with each other, and thereby overcome some of their isolation and powerlessness.

By creating a space for women to speak for themselves, the three books under review have all made a start in overcoming the mental/manual division of labour in capitalist society:

the rigorous division of status and roles between those who speak and those who listen, those who transmit and those reduced to being eternal receptacles, representatives and represented, and between educators and educated.<sup>12</sup>

The value of this self-representation cannot be underestimated, and is, I would argue, an important criterion in evaluating popular writing. It represents perhaps the most important characteristic of a growing movement, in many parts of the world, to 'disestablish' literature, and wrench it away from being the preserve of a privileged elite. Referring again to the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers, they note the importance of self-representation in creating a more open and democratic method of producing literature:

The struggles about representation, about resisting dominant views of working class life and the life of the nation, about demanding access to the means of spreading other and oppositional views, are always involved with political struggles . . . The particular character that this work takes is not direct opposition, not necessarily confronting an argument, but beginning to supplement or replace the dominant culture—creating, making space for, developing ways of distributing, the self-expression of working class people themselves, so that the dominant views will not have a free field.<sup>13</sup>

However, the importance of self-representation in overcoming the mental/manual division of labour is not functional for its own sake, but rather to enable the popular readership to begin to challenge and transform the society which oppresses them. In other words, I would argue that in assessing the value of the three books under review as examples of popular writing, we have to go beyond looking at how far they expose or represent oppression and exploitation, and begin to consider how far they allow their readership to understand their current situation, and to transform it.

This has been aptly pointed out by Barbara Hutton in an unpublished essay reviewing these three books:

To establish a new hegemony, it is not sufficient simply to present an account of how people experience oppression, but the existing order of society must be challenged, criticized and transformed.<sup>14</sup>

The argument that people's 'authentic' experience of oppression is not sufficient to enable them to understand or challenge that oppression is based on the

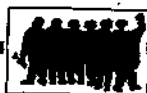
assumption that such experience is not a neutral perception of 'reality', but is itself 'ideological'. The way in which people spontaneously perceive their oppression may even 'veil' the real source of their oppression, and the mere presentation of their lived experience may in fact hinder rather than help their struggle against that oppression.<sup>15</sup>

Gramsci uses the notion of "common sense" to describe the uncritical and largely unconscious way in which a person perceives her world, and through which his/her experience is organised. For Gramsci, it is the task of Marxist theory to be a criticism of common sense, to enable people to develop its positive nucleus — "good sense" — into a more coherent outlook.

It therefore follows that in order for the books under review to be considered as successful forms of popular writing, they have to go further than presenting women's 'lived experience', and constitute in Gramsci's words, a 'criticism of common sense'. These three books do not all succeed fully in doing this.

Of the three books under review, *Factory and Family* proves least successful in leading its readers to a deeper understanding of their own position, (and thereby providing them with the tools to begin changing their situation). In this book, the way in which the traditional prejudices against women have been internalised by women — their passivity, isolation and subjugation — is graphically illustrated. But at the same time, the book makes little attempt to analyse how their objective situation interacts with their lived experiences or gives rise to their contradictory consciousness. The information about the ways in which they experience lives of drudgery, worry and stress, hemmed in by economic necessity and low expectations of personal pleasures or freedoms, is not explicitly counterposed by an analysis of their position within the broader South African context, nor by any counter-ideology. This book ends with a short description of how the position of black women today is getting worse, and with the final words: "Who will help us?" The book fails to answer this vital question, and by so doing, it ultimately appears to legitimise the individual solutions, passivity and apolitical positions displayed by the consciousness of the women 'speaking' through its pages.

*Vukani Makhosikazi* and *Working Women* succeed to a far greater extent in providing possibilities for women to examine critically their own lives and take more control of them. Through the provision of useful information and historical background, the explicit making of links in its analyses of the position of black working women, they offer the potential for such women to reach a deeper understanding of the root causes of their oppression and exploitation. As already detailed above, both *Vukani Makhosikazi* and *Working Women* also give



attention to the practical ways in which black women workers have attempted to transform their positions, by focusing on examples of their struggles, and their attempts to build women's and trade union organisations.

The argument that popularising writing necessarily implies responsibility for providing readers with the conceptual tools to understand and transform their situation is not necessarily a licence to use such literature to 'push a political line'. Kelwyn Sole has written:

There is a difference, it seems to me, between injecting political ideas wholesale into the working class, and giving shape and direction to the working class perceptions that are found.<sup>16</sup>

And further:

A political art and culture is not necessarily one which denies contradiction and exhorts people to stick to a political line: it is one which makes available to people the means to critically examine their own lives and take control of their own futures.<sup>17</sup>

It was argued above that each of the books implicitly assumes an interpretation of the relationship between gender, race and class, which reflects the three major political currents working towards a transformation of South African society: a working class-based movement striving for socialist transformation; a movement based on popular class alliances striving for national liberation and democracy; a movement based within the black consciousness tradition.

It is both inevitable and perfectly correct that each of the books should manifest a particular political bias. How then, in Sole's words quoted above, is such literature to avoid 'injecting political ideas wholesale' into their readership, while at the same time 'giving shape and direction to the working class perceptions that are found'? I would argue that such political positions, rather than being buried implicitly within the material presented, should be made explicit in the form of tentative propositions. By making such political positions explicit, readers would be given the opportunity to recognise the political assumptions being made, as well as to begin to examine them critically (measuring them up against their own concrete experience), and if they so choose, reject them. This I would suggest, is a fundamental prerequisite for the production of cultural forms intended to democratise knowledge, and to provide oppressed groups with the means to challenge their oppression.

## The producers of popular writing

The importance for popular writing of making explicit an analysis that will help readers to understand and transform their situation is closely linked to another important argument: that there is no necessary connection between the mere presentation of knowledge and insight on the one hand, and the desired end-product of understanding, action and transformation of social relations on the other hand. Between the former process of making knowledge available, and the latter process of transforming social relations, a crucial educative process has to intervene.

Producers of popular writing materials, who want their materials to have a democratising and transformatory effect on their readers' consciousness and actions have to consider the educative process that must intervene before their materials can have such an effect. In other words, such writers have to make assumptions from an early stage in their production as to how their materials can or should be *used* — and this will have important repercussions for the form, content and structure of the materials that they produce.

This, in turn, has implications for the relationship that must be forged between the producers of popular writing materials, and their prospective readership; —which brings us on to the final and thorny question of who — within the definition of popular writing developed thus far — should be the producers of such materials? The argument made earlier for the active participation of the popular readership in the production of materials is *not* an argument for the exclusion of others, such as intellectuals, from such work. The crucial issue, I would argue, is not so much the class origin of the writer, but rather the relationship between the writer and his/her intended readership, and the consequent ability of the writer to produce materials which will further the interests of his/her readership.

What form this relationship should take is an extremely complex question, particularly when it involves intellectuals writing for a popular or working class readership, because such a relationship is a political one, involving the appropriation of knowledge as power. Many of the controversial issues surrounding this relationship have been succinctly raised in a recent paper by Muller and Cloete,<sup>18</sup> and will not be gone into here.

What is indisputable is that writers of popular materials will have to explore ways of generating their materials in conjunction with the groups for which they are intended, so that such groups can play a role in defining what their interests are, and help to ensure that such materials do generate an educative process

which is both democratising and liberating. Gramsci argued that the function of intellectuals is:

feeling the elemental passions of the people, understanding them and thus explaining them and justifying them in a particular historical situation, connecting them dialectically to the laws of history, to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated — i.e. knowledge.<sup>19</sup>

However, he also stressed that the successful fulfillment of the intellectuals' role depended on the relationship between such intellectuals and the people in whose interests they strived:

if the relationship between intellectuals and the people-nation . . . is the result of an organic participation in which feelings and passion become understanding and thence knowledge . . . then and only then is the relationship one of representation.<sup>20</sup>

The three books under review spoke very little of the relationship between their authors and the women intended as their readership, and thus the present writer is not able to comment on how the nature of such relationships effected the final form of the books in question. Instead, it is perhaps appropriate to end on a final note of self-criticism: just as the production and distribution of popular writing requires a thoroughgoing transformation of more conventional and conservative methods, so does the evaluation of such writing. It is certainly not sufficient for the critic to review popular writing in the way that literature is conventionally reviewed: as a piece of writing in isolation from the process whereby it is produced or consumed. A proper critique or evaluation of popular writing materials would have to go beyond this, and assess the political relationships within which such writing is produced, and follow its path after production, evaluating the ways in which it is used, and the political effects which it generates.

## Conclusion

This paper has attempted to evaluate three recently published books on working women, as forms of 'popular writing'. The primary intention has not been to criticise these books — whose pages are filled with many powerful and moving first-hand accounts of working women's lives — but rather to open a debate concerning the nature of popular writing, and to raise questions concerning how such writing should be produced and for what end. It is hoped that the continuation of this debate will help those engaged in the practical tasks of

writing for a popular or working class readership, to evaluate their own work critically and constructively. But ultimately, proof of the value of such writing will come from those for whose use it is intended.

In the words of Domitilla, drawn from the well-known book which constitutes an outstanding example of giving a voice to oppressed women:

Well, I want it to reach the poorest people, the people who don't have any money. It's for them that I agreed that what I am going to tell be written down. It doesn't matter what kind of paper it's put down on, but it does matter that it be useful for the working class and not only for intellectual people or for people who only make a business of this kind of thing.<sup>21</sup>

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- 2 *Factory and Family*, edited by Fatima Meer, was published in 1984 by the Institute for Black Research in Durban, and funded by the Ford Foundation of America; *Vukani Makhosikazi: South African Women Speak*, edited by Ingrid Obery, was funded and published by the Catholic Institute of International Relations in London, in 1985; *Working Women* was published by Sached Trust/Ravan Press, Johannesburg, in 1985.
- 3 Here, I draw an analogy between black, South Africa women's struggle against racial, class and gender oppression, and the struggles detailed in Bronstein, A. 1982: *The Triple Struggle: Latin American Peasant Women*. War on Want, London.
- 4 *Working Women*, p105.
- 5 Ibid p26
- 6 Ibid, p50
- 7 Ibid, p37
- 8 Ibid, p12
- 9 These are reviewed by Luli Callinicos in a paper introducing the 'Popularising History' day at the University of Witwatersrand History Workshop in 1984, as well as her paper entitled "The People's Past: Towards Transforming the Present", presented to the 1985 ASSA Conference at the University of Cape Town in July, 1985. See also Callinicos in this edition of *Critical Arts*.
- 10 Mattelart, A. and Siegelau, S. (eds) 1983: *Communication and Class Struggle: Vol. 2: Liberation, Socialism*. International and International Mass Media Research Centre, Bandolet, p30.
- 11 Morley, D. and Worpole, K. (Eds) 1982: *The Republic of Letters: Working class writing and local publishing*. Comedia Publishing Group, London, p65.
- 12 Mattelart & Siegelau, op cit, p1712.
- 13 Op cit, p66
- 14 Barbara Hutton, unpublished essay, Wits. University, 1985. p17.



- 15 It is useful here to refer to Althusser's notion of ideology as a couplet of illusion/allusion:  
—illusion insofar as ideology does not correspond to "reality", but is an "imaginary  
distortion" of people's real conditions of existence; at the same time, their perceptions do  
allude to 'reality', and like all ideologies, have a material existence. Althusser, L. 1971: *Lenin  
and Philosophy and other essays*. New Left Books, London, p156.
- 16 Sote, K. 1985: "Working Class Culture", *South African Labour Bulletin*. Vol 10, No 7, p51.
- 17 Ibid., p54.
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