A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE ETHNIC CHINESE CATERING INDUSTRY

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The present political climate in which the ideals of entrepreneurship and self-help are strongly encouraged has drawn attention to those ethnic minorities noted for their entrepreneurial activity. Since the Chinese appear to be an exemplary case in point, this thesis focusses upon the historical material conditions which have led to the formation of a Chinese 'business' community in Britain, both past and present. As such, it rejects the theories of cultural determinism which characterise most studies of the Chinese. For rather than representing the endurance of cultural norms, the existence of the contemporary Chinese 'niche' of ethnically exclusive firms in the catering industry is due to the conjunction of a number of historical processes. The first is the imperialist expansion into China of Britain's capitalist empire during the nineteenth century which established a relationship of dependency upon the interests of British capital by colonial Chinese labour. The second is the post war development of the catering industry and its demand for cheap labour as administered by the British state together with the contemporaneous development of the agricultural economy of colonial Hong Kong. Far from representing a source of material benefit to all, the ethnic Chinese 'niche' in catering is highly exploitative and merely underlines the racial oppression of Chinese in Britain. Attempts to promote business interests within the ethnic community therefore serve merely to entrench the structures of oppression.

KEY WORDS: Chinese Race Culturalism Entrepreneurship Catering

For Mum, Dad and Geoff, with all my love.

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INTRODUCTION

In the present climate of general industrial decline in the major productive centres of the Western world, local ethnic communities with a reputation for entrepreneurship have been brought increasingly under the focus of political strategies aimed at economic revival. This is underpinned by beliefs in the proclivities for 'self-help' attributed to some ethnic minorities and not others. One group which has fallen target to this 'culturalist' labelling is the Chinese, who throughout the world have been noted for an apparent orientation towards business ownership. Such ideas were encapsulated in the words of British sociologist Peter Hall (1981 p.122):

"in the period when inner city innovation did flourish, it did so to a remarkable degree with the aid of newly-arrived groups of people who brought with them a stong entrepreneurial tradition. The Huguenots in London in the seventeenth century, the Jews at the end of the nineteenth, the Indians in our day, all provide examples. The same might happen again, if we attracted small businessmen, with capital and expertise, to settle and establish small workshops and trading centres. Thus we might being to emulate the drive and enthusiasm of emerging centres like Singapore or Hongkong."

On the American experience, Rose (1985 pp.182-183) expounded in greater detail upon the cultural virtues of the Chinese at which Hall had merely hinted:

"The images of those who used to be called "Orientals" have changed dramatically... The pariahs have become paragons, lauded for their ingenuity and industry and for embodying the truest fulfillment of the "American Dream". Ronald Reagan has called them "Our exemplars of hope and inspiration... The characteristics are familiar: a deep sense of ethnic identification and group loyalty; a high level of filial respect; a heavy emphasis on proper demeanor and on the seriousness of life; a firm belief in the importance of education; a tendency toward extrinsic assimilation; and an overriding attitude that one must advance as far as possible not just for oneself, but so that parents can enjoy the Chinese ... equivalent of what in Yiddish is known as *nachas fun die Kinder*, "pleasure from the [accomplishments of] children"."

By studying the case of the Chinese in Britain, this thesis seeks not only to explode some of the popular myths and stereotypes which inform attitudes to Chinese communities but also to expose the explanatory inadequacy and reactionary politics of culturalist arguments. Unlike the

vast majority of work on Chinese communities, therefore, this study goes far beyond an ethnography of everyday life for Britain's Chinese; something which Robert Miles (1982 p.67) might have termed "a simple cataloguing of cultural difference (a dictionary of the 'exotic')". Instead, the method of analysis presented by this study is the historical materialism of political economy, a methodology that renders qualitatively different conclusions from those of the culturalists.

Chapter 1 defines the parameters of the political economy approach, establishing a case developed from a critique of competing analyses used to study Chinese communities. The following chapter then proceeds to explore the historical material conditions which structured the emergence of Chinese 'business' communities under the economic and political umbrella of Western colonial expansion. Within this framework, special attention is given to the development of the entrepreneurial basis of the early Chinese community in Britain. Chapter 3 goes on to examine the foundations of the contemporary small business concentration of Chinese in Britain, reviewing in detail the factors which have shaped the profile of the Chinese catering 'niche'. The discussion includes a historical consideration of the catering industry and the role that migrant workers have played within it as well as the particular circumstances which led to the post war Chinese migrants to enter into a specifically ethnic sector of catering. The focus then turns to their personal experiences of this process. Chapter 4 traces the subsequent development of the catering industry in terms of the American-led 'fast food' expansion of the 1970s and its impact upon the Chinese community, both objectively and subjectively. Here and in Chapter 3, care is taken to present people's experiences as accurately and as sensitively as possible by reproducing tape-recorded verbal accounts solicited from Chinese people themselves. The final chapter returns again to the original themes of the thesis, drawing together the underlying arguments in a conclusive rejection of the ideology of culturalism, ethnic small business generation and economic revival. Finally, the discussion is set within the practical context of the contemporary political intiatives to encourage ethnic entrepreneurship.

RESEARCH METHODS & DATA COLLECTION

The research for this study was conducted through a variety of means. These were as follows.

1) A wide ranging literature survey of books, articles, reports and dissertations pertaining to the subject of the thesis: this was achieved through pursuing references taken from book and journal bibliographies, computerised library searches (University of Aston in Birmingham, London Research Centre), daily reviews of press articles and a trawl of library material by subject at the Universities of Aston, Birmingham, Warwick and London (Senate House & London School of Economics), Birmingham City Library, the Office of Population, Census & Statistics, the Runnymede Trust, the Institute of Race Relations, the Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations and the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies.

2) Consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies with an overlapping interest in the areas of concern (listed at the end of the thesis): an important achievement arising from this exercise was the completion of a tendered research project on the local Chinese and Vietnamese communities in Birmingham with regard to local authority service provision for Birmingham City Council Race Relations Unit (Baxter 1986).

3) Active participation in Chinese community groups: including part-time community advice work, organisational work on management committees, defence campaigns and a strike support group (Chinese Community Centre, Birmingham; Chinese Information & Advice Centre, London).

4) Semi-structured, tape-recorded and transcribed interviews solicited through community based activities: these numbered fifty seven in total but varied greatly in terms of length and quality.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN RESEARCH & DATA COLLECTION

A political economy methodology, in particular, necessarily requires as many statistical data and as much factual evidence as possible to substantiate an argument. The major problem for this study was an acute lack of reliable, corroborative information of any such nature even in the most basic of areas, such as the size and distribution of the Chinese community in Britain. The best existing measure for calculating this is

the 1981 Census (supplemented by the Labour Force Survey). However, as is commonly recognised, the 1981 Census (Table 4) recorded only country of birth rather than ethnic origin and in this sense probably grossly under-enumerated the Chinese community in Britain. It was not possible to identify Chinese people purely on the basis of name (for example, from the Electoral Register) because of the similarities between certain Chinese and English surnames names ("Lee" for instance), non-Chinese with Chinese surnames (particularly amongst the Afro-Caribbean community) and Chinese people who have taken non-Chinese surnames (for instance, through marriage). This was complicated further by the fact of many Chinese adopting English forenames for convenience, as is commonly the custom in urban Hong Kong.

On the contemporary history of Chinese migrants both in Hong Kong and Britain, again there is hardly any reliable documented information. The scale of the ethnic Chinese catering industry was measured by the Home Affairs Committee (1984-5) entirely upon the basis of "community estimates". A systematic attempt at sampling a representative cross section of Birmingham's Chinese community for interview by questionnaire based on files held at the local Chinese Community Centre was thus finally abandoned when adequate demographic and other necessary information proved impossible to obtain. The interview sample therefore was based upon an approximation of the demography of the Chinese community in Birmingham with regard to social class, gender, occupation, age group and generation. However, it was felt that neither the quality nor accuracy of the data suffered in respect of this. Selected excerpts from these intereviews are reproduced in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis.

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CHAPTER 1

APPROACHING CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN BUSINESS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to define the methodological parameters of the thesis. As such, it builds upon a review of the relevant literature, the bulk of which is cast within a theoretical mould that assumes culture to be the most significant determinant of entrepreneurship. This 'culturalist' perspective characterises most studies of Chinese communities throughout the world, as well those that focus on non-Chinese minorities renowned for entrepreneurial activity. The following discussion thus attempts to chart the culturalist argument in its various manifestations, presenting a case throughout for a more rigorous and sophisticated analysis of Chinese and other apparently 'business-oriented' communities. Such an analysis, it is argued, is offered by the historical material method of Marxist political economy, which has the capacity to portray and explain more accurately the totality of Chinese people's experiences in Britain.

A case is made by first addressing the most simplistic culturalist studies which culminate in the notion of the 'middleman minority'. The conceptual frameworks and theoretical propositions which underpin them are then abstracted for critical discussion. From this is derived a sharper analytical approach to the biological implications that are lodged tacitly in the culturalist 'middleman' argument and then to the more developed theories of the 'ethnic enclave'. Having exhausted the culturalist literature, the chapter proceeds to consider another body of 'ethnic business' studies which align themselves to the Chicago 'urban ecology' school. Whilst these provide valuable observations that contradict the conclusions of the culturalists, they nevertheless fall short of offering the level of explanation afforded by political economy. In conclusion, the implications of this critical review for the structure and direction of the thesis are explicitly summarised. This is what is taken to constitute a discussion of methodology. It is not so much concerned with the mechanics of research technique as with fundamental principles of analysis.

CULTURAL DETERMINISM AND ETHNIC ENTERPRISE

'Culture', to postulate a received definition, is a repertoire of social relations and institutions which are particular to every society. There are sub-cultures whose boundaries to an extent cut across the dominant culture ('working class culture', for example) but these are all necessarily defined by the overarching culture. These social relations have an ideological counterpart, for without the latter, the institutions would be devoid of meaning [1]. Chinese culture, it is popularly believed, is especially enduring, so much so that the cultural dimension has virtually monopolised all sociological studies of Chinese communities.

Bernard Wong (1979) on New York's Chinatown community represents a classic case of the culturalist approach. Wong expressly set out to remedy what he perceived to be an inadequacy of the sociological literature which was the failure to take into account the specific methods used in the mobilisation of human resources to explain Chinese economic activity. He documented how the New York Chinese community was an "obvious" example of the "persistence of the old values" (ibid p.131), in that people's lives were regulated according to the code of *gam ching* (trusting friendship), kinship solidarity and patronage, without which entrpreneurial success would never have blossomed. He identified three patterns of organisation within what were typically family firms which facilitated the best use of training and labour, provided unchallenged leadership and hence, swift adaptabilty to changing demand. Entrenched customs of acquiring credit through family, friends and informal credit clubs (known as *wui* or *hui*) safeguarded financing. Lastly, the resolution of conflict through channels established according to community norms ensured the smooth overall running of the ethnic economy. Thus, in conclusion, Wong upheld that "Economic success and maintenance of the ethnic businesses have a great deal to do with their successful manipulation of kinship, friendship, patron-client and broker-client networks" (ibid p.175).

In a study of Chinese businesses in Toronto, Chan and Cheung (1982) emphasised the importance of "individual" advantages as well as cultural institutions for the maintenance of the ethnic economy. "Personal

resources such as education and English language facility tend to influence the type and nature of business one engages in" (ibid p.12). Nonetheless, the authors concluded that

"The Chinese population provides a large pool of customers and potential employees for these businesses... Other collective resources such as partnership arrangements and family or kinship assistance also play some role in the maintenance and growth of ethnic businesses." (ibid p.13)

Pitting Black entrepreneurs against those from Chinese and other American Asian [2] groups, Light (1972) drew conclusions similar to those of Wong (1979) on their relative achievements. Like Wong, Light also identified the *hui* as the mainstay of Chinese prosperity. The *hui*, moreover, was deemed by Light to be a viable institution only by virtue of the cohesive cultural bonds which existed between members: "the ability of the *hui* ... routinely to provide credit without requiring collateral depended, in the last analysis, on the strong, informal, and moralistic social relations of lenders and borrowers" (Light 1972 op cit p.189). The financial advantage rendered to Chinese entrepreneurs by the *hui* was said to account for their greater success in comparison to Black businesses. The *hui* circumvented the difficulties presented by trying to acquire sufficiently sophisticated expertise necessary for financial dealing in the mainstream economy, a problem that supposedly "dogged ... Negro efforts in formal banking" (ibid p.51). Continued business prosperity amongst the Chinese, according to Light, was contingent upon "mutual aid" and "immigrant brotherhood" for labour, custom and credit. In contrast, Blacks were "Deprived ... of any valued ethnic identity" (ibid p.189) and thus were condemned to "rampant individualism" which was not conducive to entrepreneurial success.

In a similar comparison of the successes of Black and Chinese Americans in the vice industry, Budros (1983) attributed the accomplishments of the Chinese to their specific forms of cultural organisation. He argued that Chinese syndication was achieved

"because the Chinese immigrants utilized a traditional cultural form, fighting 'tongs' (or 'secret organizations'), as a basis for the development of their organized vice networks ...: overseas tong agents, for instance, recruited prostitutes in South China; tong importers arranged for the Chinese girls to be transported to America and then distributed to tong brothels; and finally, the tongs protected their investments by paying-off the police and employing the Chinese gangsters (or 'high-binders') to

ensure the safety of their women ... (ibid p.442) Furthermore, it seems that only cultural variables have the potential to emerge as the 'sole' cause of vice syndication. (ibid p.443)"

Likewise, Charles Choy Wong (1977) on Black and Chinese grocery stores in Los Angeles concluded that "the ethnic groups' divergent business practices" (ibid p.460) accounted for their differential success rates. His questionnaire survey revealed that cutomers felt Chinese store owners possessed greater business acumen, invested more time and money in their stores and were culturally more cohesive (ibid p.459) than Black grocers, which explained their greater profits.

On the British as well as the American experience, Storey (1982) cited the "lack of a tradition of enterprise amongst Negroes" (p.92) as a reason for their lower rates of entrepreneurship. Moreover, with reference to a study in the Seychelles by Benedict (1979), Storey (1982 op cit p.92) related how "In short, the Indian and Chinese family structures oriented to business development. The opposite is true for the Creoles". Benedict (1979 op cit p.323) contended that the patriarchal family relations shared by Indians and Chinese predisposed them to greater business success than the typically "conjugal family with a neolocal nuclear family ideology" of the local Creoles.

Another study by Light (1980) proposed that not only the Chinese but also the Japanese and Koreans in America displayed similar cultural traits, which made for a specific form of "ethnic business style" that was a recipe for success. Like the Chinese, Koreans in Los Angeles also operated rotating credit associations (or *kye*), nepotistic trade guilds, family firms, ethnic homogeneity of business sales and maintained immigrant motivations and values. It was this "ethnic solidarity and culture" (ibid p.54) that was deemed by Light to be the root cause of Korean business success and not the "personal wealth and strong educational background" (ibid) which they brought with them to America.

A recurring implication thrown up by the various culturalist analyses is the assumption that the traditional emphasis upon bonds of kinship within

Chinese culture entails a common orientation towards familistic economic and social activity amongst overseas Chinese communities. Thus follows the preference for self-employment and an economic strategy which mobilises resources from within the family and extended kin structures as far as possible so that the benefits are confined within these boundaries. Further resources are tapped from within the rest of the ethnic community according to received norms based upon amity and trust which are consistent with the introspective principle of familism. These ideas were neatly summarised by Fitzgerald (1972 p.75):

"The ties which in the past have bound the Overseas Chinese to China have been ones of kinship, culture, patriotism and the sojourner mentality, expressed in the term for Overseas Chinese, hua-ch'iao, and it is on these ties that the close commercial and political links have been founded."

This theme is cystallised in the concept of 'middleman minorities'. The term can be traced to a Weberian characterisation of marginalised groups who performed essentially alien functions (usually trade and commerce) in predominantly agrarian societies, however in recent years it has been applied to ethnic groups in advanced industrial society, including the Chinese both in Britain (eg. Ward 1984) and throughout the world (eg. Bonacich 1973, Fallers 1967, Hamilton 1978, Shibutani & Kwan 1965). Middleman minorities are otherwise known in the literature as "pariah capitalists" (Hamilton 1978, Jiang 1968), "migrant intermediaries" (Schermerhorn 1968), "marginal trading peoples" (Stryker 1959) and "stranger-traders" (Fallers 1967).

MIDDLEMAN MINORITIES

The basic components of the 'middleman minority' model have been developed over time by a number of authors. Weber (1968 p.493), for instance, developed the notion of 'pariah' peoples, "a distinctive hereditary social group" who were noted for their "political and social disprivilege and a far-reaching distinctiveness in economic functioning." Their social distinctiveness was supposedly commensurate with the degree of "disprivilege" experienced by the group. Similarly, the trading 'stranger' as described by Simmel (in Wolff 1950 p.403) was a "supernumerary ... who intrudes ... into a group in which the economic positions are actually

occupied". Since 'strangers' were not integrated within the mainstream society, they were ideally placed as "objective" and therefore successful traders. However, their social ambivalence rendered 'strangers' particularly susceptible to victimisation as scapegoats during periods of political turmoil. Another contribution of the early sociologists was that of the 'marginal man' developed by Park (1928). Like the 'stranger', the 'marginal man' was associated with the expansion of trade and commerce and his presence heralded progressive social change. As "one who lives in two worlds, in both of which he is more or less of a stranger" (ibid p.893), 'marginal man' as a rule was only a transitory "personality type" on the road to assimilation into the surrounding society [3]. Notably, Weber, Simmel and Park cited the European Jews as model examples.

Many other sociologists have contributed to the 'middleman minority' concept. Rinder (1958), for example, proposed that a 'status gap' between rulers and "social inferiors" in rigidly stratified societies was a necessary pre-condition for the emergence of 'middleman'. Blalock (1967), Fallers (1967), Sjoberg (1960) and Jiang (1968) have discussed in further detail the role of 'middleman' traders in peasant societies, whilst Stryker (1959) and Wertheim (1964) emphasised that the position of 'middleman minorities' was contingent upon the specific balance of political forces in every particular social formation.

The pertinence of the 'middleman minority' model to culturalist perspectives on contemporary ethnic communities in business was established in a paper by Bonacich (1973). Up until that time, the expanding body of literature on the 'middleman' phenomenon had focussed mainly on agrarian, but also to some extent, colonial societies. However, throughout the literature ran the suggestion that 'middleman minorities' were ideal types to be found at any historical juncture given a certain set of social conditions. Bonacich articulated this suggestion, proposing decidedly that "it is clear these groups persist beyond the status gap ... One finds them in post-colonial societies, after the elites have gone ... And one finds them in modern industrial societies..." (ibid p.584).

The underlying reason for the development and maintenance of 'middleman minorities', Bonacich argued, could be found in a 'sojourning' attitude to migration of which the ultimate objective which was one day to return to their country of origin. 'Sojourning', it was argued, fostered a "Future time orientation" (or deferred gratification), a drive "to make money, not spend it" (ibid p.585). For this reason, 'sojourning' groups were drawn towards easily liquidable lines of business, (often rising to dominate certain trades) and thriftiness. They displayed internal social insularity which set them apart sharply from the surrounding society and in this sense, the hostility shown towards them was a *result* of their economic role (ie. clashes of interest with clients, with native businesses and with organised labour), rather than its *cause*. The apparent "alienness" of 'middleman minorities' and their tendency towards self-employment in what were seen to be peripheral trades, Bonacich construed as being "closely akin to preindustrial capitalism" (ibid p.588).

Bonacich's paper drew heavily upon the work of Siu (1952/3) in which 'sojourners' were distinguished from previously defined 'pariahs' and marginalised groups by a purposeful decision to "cling" to their original culture. Siu maintained that 'sojourners' were quintessentially unassimilable because the economic and social roles they assumed in the country of migration were simply part of a longer-term scheme, a means to an end (ibid p.35). 'Sojourners' thus lived in "symbiotic segregation" from the rest of society, deliberately limiting their spheres of activity and interest within it to their economic role alone, at the same time remaining immersed in their own ethnic cultural persuits in order not to sever ties with "the homeland". In the course of time, 'sojourners' became distinct "racial colonies", still ideologically oriented to returning home, yet with an increasing material stake in their country of migration. Within the British sociological literature, 'sojourning' has been said also to characterise the Asian - particularly the Pakistani - experience (see for example, Brooks & Singh 1978/80, Anwar 1979).

The voluntarism and 'sojourner' attitudes which, according to Bonacich, moulded the experience of migration for 'middleman minorities' were features which distinguished her formula from previous ones. Applied to

the Chinese throughout America and South East Asia, the culturalist understanding of 'middlemen' stood in contrast to a variety of other studies of Far Eastern Chinese communities (eg. Coughlin 1955 on the Chinese in Bangkok, Eitzen 1971 on the Chinese in the Philippines, Esman 1979 on the Chinese in South East Asia as a whole). Bonacich also generalised her anaylsis to cover Asian Americans in general, in the belief that "almost all" groups that have become 'middlemen' "derive from Asia and the Near East" (1973 op cit p.588). Like Siu, she suggested that certain 'sojourning' groups

"become middlemen wherever they go. Chinese, Indians, Jews, in every country show a similar occupational concentration (thus, a status gap in the receiving country cannot explain the pattern). This regularity suggests that culture of origin is an important contributory factor." (ibid)

Bonacich's culturalist interpretation of the 'middleman minority' phenomenon in advanced capitalist societies is important in that it crystallised many of the analytical assumptions contained within the contemporary studies reviewed above of Chinese (and other ethnic) communities in business. Clearly stated was a particular conception of culture and a specific view of the properties believed to be inherent in Chinese and other Asian cultures. The general perspective on the Chinese was derivative of the anthropological literature on traditional Chinese society, as exemplified by the work of Freedman (1958 and 1966), Hsu (1971) and Baker (1979), to name but a few. These authors illustrated at length the centrality of the family for the maintenance of a society characterised by feudal subsistance agriculture [4]. Baker (ibid pp.26-27), for example, recounted how

"the Chinese saw the family as the basic unit of society ... In a way the individual *was* the family, just as he *was* his own ancestors and his own descendants. He received his descent and his body from his parents and he held them in trust for his sons - ".

Bonacich (1973 op cit) and the other culturalists, however, clearly departed from the anthropological studies in as far as they implicitly contended that the ideological and institutional relations which were integral to traditional Chinese society were said to continue to structure the lives of Chinese people in emigration once divorced from their material context.

The culturally deterministic vision described above reflects a fundamentally static conception of culture. It makes no concession to the ideological and institutional components of cultures being socially created, sustained and changed through time, although this is necessarily the process by which cultures become distinguished from each other (and implicitly, the process by which ethnic cultures become distinguished from those in their societies of origin).

At the root of the culturalist analysis is a specific articulation of the relationship between ideology and the material world. Ideology refers to the matrix of ideas with which a person perceives things and events rather than to discrete political doctrines, although this is not to deny that the latter do not permeate one's ideology. What is proposed by the culturalists is essentially an ideological determinism in the sense that over-riding importance is ascribed to the ideological 'baggage' that migrants transport with them in determining their position in the society to which they migrate. That is to say, ideological relations are understood by the culturalists to operate independently from their material basis - the economic, political and juridical structures which constitute the physical skeleton of ideology - for these cannot be transported with the migrant. (This would not be the case in imperialistic migration, since this entails the imposition of new material and hence, ideological relations. However, as the subject does not fall within the context of the immediate discussion, it will not be addressed here.) Kitano (1974), on Japanese Americans in Hawaii and California as an ideal 'middleman minority', asserted that "What that group brings to the interaction initially determines where its members fit into society and how they adjust" (ibid p.504). He continued,

"The less-than-equal perspective brought over from Japan appears to have survived in modified form in spite of the change in generations. (ibid p.514) ...Most "knew their place in society," and although there was high motivation to achieve some degree of upward mobility (especially financially), there was also a limit to their expectations; becoming members of a ruling class or more powerful elite was not a part of their dreams." (ibid p.517)

Probably the best critique of the ideological determinism which characterises the culturalist studies is to be found in Bonacich's own

later work with Modell on Japanese Americans. The theoretical foundation of their book, The Economic Basis of Ethnic Solidarity (1980), was an elaborated version of Bonacich's 1973 (op cit) 'middleman minority' model but the weight of their empirical evidence led them beyond the limits of this framework. 'Middleman minorities' were introduced as ideal typical communities (1980 op cit p.22), characterised by a high level of cultural organisation which distinguished them from the surrounding community as "birds of passage". They were economically specialised in petty trading and finance on a 'family business' scale and were political "buffers" or "go-betweens" between "elites and masses". Ethnic solidarity, small business concentration and societal hostility were portrayed as mutually interacting forces which served to perpetuate 'middleman' communities. 'Middlemen' were said also to have been a feature of both modern capitalist and pre-capitalist societies, although certain social conditions were identified as being especially conducive to their emergence. The culturalist argument was clearly stated at several points within the opening chapters:

"Indeed, some groups, notably Jews, Chinese and Indians, are regarded as middleman minorities no matter where they reside" (ibid p.14).

"There is ample evidence to suggest that only some groups, and not others, come to concentrate in middleman-type economic activities, regardless of context. An adequate theory, therefore, cannot ignore internal factors." (ibid p.31)

Following a lengthy introduction of their "middleman-minority perspective", Bonacich and Modell concluded nevertheless, that "the concept of middleman minorities is no substitute for tracing the historical development of a particular community in a particular context" (ibid p.24), so this they proceeded to do in their extensive survey of the Japanese community in America. The first generation of Japanese migrants, or *Issei*, Bonacich and Modell found,

"were driven into these very kinds of small businesses. Their opportunities for employment were severely restricted. Japanese immigrants were denied citizenship rights and therefore could not lodge complaints against discrimination. New immigrants were forced to take jobs wherever they could get them, and the fact that fellow ethnics offered them an opportunity to establish themselves was bound to produce loyalty." (ibid pp.251-252)

The *Nisei*, or the second generation Japanese, were found "to be fully enmeshed in the middleman-minority position of their parents" (ibid p.254) before the wartime internment of Japanese in America. Indeed, "regardless of their desires, ... They had to continue in small business" (ibid p.255). However,

"The postwar period ... provided a whole new social context for the Japanese minority. No longer were they excluded from participation in the surrounding economy as employees, while opportunities for ethnic small business concomitantly shrank... The Nisei in the mid-1960s could hardly be considered a full-fledged middleman minority." (ibid)

The decline of the ethnic Japanese economy, together with the decline in ethnic Japanese institutions, was found to be accelerating. The *Sansei*, or third generation Japanese, showed "a marked continuation of this trend" (ibid p.258)

Thus Bonacich's and Modell's longitudinal study of the historical experiences of America's Japanese led them to draw the following conclusions:

"Engaging in small business tended to be related to relatively high levels of attachment to the family, high rates of informal social attachments in the ethnic community, high levels of participation in Japanese American organizations, and high rates of affiliation with Buddhism." (ibid p.256)

"Retention of the small-business mode has tended to reinforce ethnic solidarity; leaving small business has been associated with the weakening of ethnic bonds. This is perhaps our most significant finding, and one we would like to stress... ethnicity is not an eternal verity but a variable that is responsive to societal conditions, and that one very important condition is the economic position of the group in question. Ethnic affiliation is a resource that may be called upon to support certain economic interests. When those economic interests are no longer present, ethnicity is likely to subside in importance. Our study has demonstrated this, at least to a certain extent, with the Nisei. Those who moved into the corporate economy had less material reason for retaining closed ethnic ties than did those who ran small businesses, and they behaved accordingly." (ibid p.257)

"without the retention of common and distinctive class interests, it will be increasingly difficult to keep members from defecting and disappearing into the mainstream,.." (ibid p.258)

"To comprehend ethnicity fully and to gain a sense of its future, we must examine it as a dialectically changing product of concrete historical structures and processes." (ibid p.259)

The findings of Bonacich and Modell seemed to refute the "ample evidence" they cited at the outset of their study which suggested ethnic groups like the Chinese, Jews and Indians emerged as 'middlemen' "no matter where they reside" and "regardless of context". The overwhelming evidence of their own study squeezed them into a tacit rejection of the methodological assumptions of their original culturalist 'middleman minority' perspective and onto new theoretical terrain. For once their impressionistic idealism was confronted with actual historical data, it crumbled. Thus, it appears that abstract culturalism (crystallised in the concept of 'middleman minorities') fails to account for the empirically proven reality of the situations it is intended to explain, even when tested by arch advocates of the culturalist argument. It is assumed, therefore, that such contentions by the authors as "Our central thesis is that ethnic groups often act as economic-interest groups, and when they cease to do so, they tend to dissolve" (ibid p.3) must have been imputed retrospectively, since they were posed against the thrust of the culturalist presentation which dominated the beginning of the book. In sum, Bonacich's and Modell's serious attempt to substantiate an essentially ideologically deterministic approach with detailed historical evidence floundered in a confused and confusing discussion.

Not wishing to suffer from the same pitfalls as Bonacich and Modell, this study intends to reject the cultural determinism of the ethnographies outlined above as a methodological principle for the present study. This is due to the inadequacy of their analysis which does not extend an explanatory framework beyond the narrow confines of that which is superficially most apparent. Because such an approach projects an interpretation of the present position of ethnic communities in terms of their perceived outward forms which derive meaning and significance from the societies left behind, it cannot fully comprehend any independent ideological and social transformations in the ethnic community itself as a result of its specific situation. This criticism does not deny that ethnic cultures are important in informing the daily experiences of migrants: what is disputed is the principle that ethnic cultures, or to be more specific, ethnic ideologies in themselves are the sole or major

determinants of people's material position in the society to which they migrate.

UNDERSTANDING ETHNIC ENTERPRISE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IDEAS AND REALITY

The self-contradictory work of Bonacich and Modell does more than expose the failure of a simplistic, uni-directional apprehension of the relationship between ethnicity and society to explain adequately the reality of experience. It also points to the necessity for an explanatory theory which incorporates an understanding of the broad structural determinants of ethnic mobilisation. This is provided, it is argued, by the analytical method of *historical materialism* developed by Marx. In contrast with the idealism of the culturalists, the conceptual relationship between ideas and the material world that is implied by a Marxist methodology is not one in which the realm of ideas moulds real life experience nor even a crude inversion of this [5]. Rather, it is a relationship in which ideology, or people's consciousness, is the contemplative reflection of the struggle between essentially antagonistic classes of people within society.

Every society (with the exception of primitive communal and future communist social formations), Marx argued, was characterised fundamentally by two polarised classes - producers and non-producers. The relationship between the two was defined and structured by the principle upon which goods and services were made and distributed within society - the *mode of production*. This economic *base structure* delineated both the form of classes and the relationship between them (ie. the *social relations of production*). These social relations, encompassing legal, political, ideological and cultural systems, Marx analogously termed the *superstructure* of a society, to emphasise that such systems did not act autonomously but in relation to and also upon the base. However, it was the base (ie. the essential mode of production), which supplied the logic by which the superstructure (ie. its social relations) must be understood and explained. On the basis of this fundamental abstraction, an analysis of the concrete world could be developed.

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process in general." (Marx & Engels 1973 p.503)

The analytical centrality of the mode of production rests upon Marx's materialist conception of historical progression. He argued that production was necessarily a *social* activity by which people modified the natural environment to meet their needs. As such, it entailed a fundamental structure of relations between people which governed the access to the *means of production* (ie. the materials needed for production) and the use of the product. The social relations engendered by the mode of production threw up mechanisms by which that mode was reproduced and developed. However, they also generated the forces which would lead to the exhaustion and demise of that mode and its replacement with another. These social relations did not develop by conscious design but by historical evolution. Different stages of development were characterised by a correspondingly different structure of social relations and thus a separate process of analysis was neccessary for each.

Marx abstracted a number of modes (and social relations) of production through which society had already passed. In Europe these were the *ancient* mode, defined by the dichotomy between slaves and slave owners; the *feudal* mode, characterised by localised agrarian production by a class of unfree peasants or serfs who controlled their own subsistence plots but who were physically coerced to support a landlord class; and most importantly, the contemporary *capitalist* mode. The latter involves the generalised production of commodities for monetary exchange. People who form the producing, or working class own nothing except their labour power, which they must sell for a wage in order to purchase their means of sustenance. Ownership and control of the productive forces are concentrated in the hands of the minority capitalist class, or the *bourgeoisie*. The central dynamic of capitalism is the accumulation of

capital (in simplified terms, profit). This is achieved by the bourgeois class reaping a surplus from the commodities produced by the working class in terms of their exchange value. The bulk of this surplus is then reinvested in the production process. Capital accumulation is thus by nature, a predatory and exploitative principle, according to which the objective interests of the bourgeoisie and the working class are diametrically opposed. Whilst the former must strive to enhance profits, the latter are forced consistently to thwart such attempts, their ultimate interests lying in the overthrow of the capitalist system by wresting control of the means of production.

Classes, then, are fundamentally economic relations. They cannot be analysed meaningfully in isolation from each other and the relationship between them is the essential defining characteristic of the society in which they exist.

"Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the places they occupy within a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy." (Lenin cited in Callinicos 1987 p.96)

The inevitable expression of the inherent antagonism between opposing economic classes (ie. class struggle) Marx saw as the *dialectical* basis of all historical change and progression. This was wholly distinguished from the philosopher Hegel's dialectical view of history, firstly in that Marx's analysis was materialist (ie. the impetus of historical development is rooted in the material world) and not idealist (ie. the impetus of historical development is rooted in ideas) like that of the cultural determinists, and secondly, in that he argued how class conflict was not mechanically resolvable in terms of an absolute: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." (Marx & Engels 1973 p.504)

Class struggle, and therefore the conditions of historical development, were defined by the historically specific relations of production in which they were rooted. These relations of production, in turn, were tied to a definite stage in the development of the productive forces (ie. the material organisation of production in terms of tools, level of technology, etc).

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." (Marx & Engels 1975 pp.103-104)

Within the Marxist framework, a person's consciousness, or ideology, at any one time is both reflective of and reflexive upon the present state of the specific historical process and the balance of forces within the struggle. It follows, therefore, that "the class which is the prevailing *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force" (Marx & Engels 1975 in Callinicos 1987 op cit p.99). Ideas in themselves cannot *determine* their material context nor a person's position within it. Neither can a person's ideology remain static, for it is an integral part of the historical process of class struggle within certain prevailing relations of production and it is within this context that ideology must be understood.

To apply these methodological tenets to a study of an ethnic community means that the ideological and social relations between people within that community which derive from their society of origin - the basis of their ethnicity - cannot *determine* their material position in their society of migration (although they will inform people's perceptions of and responses to it). Moreover, those relations develop and transform in accordance with the prevailing balance of productive forces in their new material context and it is this context which sets the framework within which such relations must be analysed. (Thus it is possible for people who form an ethnic community to show little cultural resemblance to the culture of their society of origin whilst at the same time being markedly different from others around them in their society of migration.) To establish the nature of the material context provides only the parameters of its study. A proper understanding of that society or of particular groups of people within it must grasp the content of those relations - the specific way in

which economic, political and ideological forces interact with each other. Therefore, an understanding of the position of Chinese people in Britain would entail an examination of the economic, political and ideological evolution of their role within the overall relations of production.

This was specifically the methodology adopted by Leon (1970) in his analysis of Jews, a group like the Chinese who were popularly associated with trade, entrepreneurship and 'middleman minority' forms of economic activity. Leon rejected the conventional approaches which started from the perspective of religion or nationality, taking his guide from Marx: "We will not look for the secret of the Jew in his religion, but we will look for the secret of the religion in the real Jew" (Marx 1926 cited in Leon 1970 p.66). The material facts of history were central to Leon's study:

"The plight of the Jews in the twentieth century is intimately bound up with their historical past. Every social formation represents a stage in the social process. *Being* is only a moment in the process of *becoming*. In order to undertake an analysis of the Jewish question it its present phase of development, it is indispensable to know its historical roots." (Leon 1970 op cit)

Leon documented how although originally occupationally diverse, the Jews had become entrenched into commerce and usury during the period of the Roman Empire and Medieval Europe, not through an accident of fate but due to the specific conditions in Palestine which forced a mass emigration - the Jewish diaspora. As such, "the Jews constitute historically a social group with a specific economic function. They are a class, or more precisely, a people-class " (ibid p.73) which rose to dominate a pivotal role in feudal society. "It is ... the transformation of the Jewish nation into a class which is at the bottom of the "preservation of Judaism"." (ibid p.123)

The steady encroachment of capitalism throughout Europe following the industrial revolution gave rise to mounting persecution of Jews as the economic bastions of the old feudal system. As a result, Jews retreated as a "people-class" to the last outposts of feudalism in the most backward areas of Eastern Europe. In this sense, the accentuated attachment of

Jews to Judaism was the expression of the Jewish "people-class" interests under attack:

"It is not the loyalty of the Jews to their faith which explains their preservation as a distinct social group; on the contrary, it is their preservation as a distinct social group which explains their attachment to their faith." (ibid p.73)

The spread of capitalism, hastened by the discovery of America and the development of the mercantile economy, was eventually to undermine completely the basis of the Jews as a "people-class". In the 'New World', Jewish traders became known as 'new Christians', since their economic character was indistinguishable from that of the 'old Christians'. "The same was true of the Jewish plantation owner. And this is also the reason why juridical, religious and political distinctions rapidly disappeared." (ibid p.176)

From the systematic destruction of the Jewish "people-class" under capitalism emerged a dialectic which explains the contemporary salient forms of Jewish ethnicity in the absence of a substantial material basis.

"On the one hand, capitalism favoured the economic assimilation of Judaism and consequently its cultural assimilation; on the other hand, by uprooting the Jewish masses, concentrating them in cities, provoking the rise of anti-Semitism, it stimulated the development of Jewish nationalism... At the same time that the bases for a new Jewish nationality were being elaborated, all the conditions were likewise being created for its disappearance. " (ibid pp.221-222)

The role of the Jews as portrayed by the culturalists and proponents of 'middleman minority theory' was rooted wholly in the feudal class system. As Leon stated, "The Jews lived within the pores of feudal society. When the feudal structure started to crumble, it began expelling elements which were, at one and the same time, foreign to it and indispensable to it." (ibid p.225) The 'people-class' was "strangled between the jaws of two systems; feudalism and capitalism, each feeding the rottenness of the other" (ibid p.87). To regard the role of the Jews as a 'people-class' under feudalism as somehow intrinsic to Jews themselves or even to capitalism is profoundly misleading, according to Leon's historical analysis. "The Jews certainly contributed to the development of the exchange economy in Europe but their *specific* economic role ends precisely where modern capitalism starts" (ibid p.182). The relationship of userers

in feudal society to the relations of production was entirely different from that of bankers in capitalist society:

"Whereas credit is essentially *consumer* credit in the feudal era, it becomes credit of *production* and of *circulation* in the era of commerical and industrial development... Ignoring this fundamental distinction leads almost all historians into error." (ibid pp.143-144)

The conclusions drawn from Leon's Marxist analysis of Jews were completely different from those of the culturalists and 'middleman minority' theorists. Most significantly, his study illustrated in detail how ethnic economic concentration was in no way attributable to a group's particular cultural traits and that such a phenomenon could not be characterised as an 'ideal type' which emerged under any mode of production given a similar set of circumstances. To attempt to do so was to draw false analogies.

BIOLOGICAL DETERMINISM AND ETHNIC ENTERPRISE

Implicitly rejected by a historical materialist analytical methodology such as Leon's is an explanation of distinctive ethnic economic activity in terms of biologically fixed drives and propensities. The latter is a line of reasoning which cannot be dismissed lightly since it finds resonance with many culturalist accounts (although it is by no means an *automatic* extension of culturalist interpretations). Bonacich (1973 op cit p.586), for instance, stated how "The "primordial tie" of blood provides a basis for trust" but in her later work with Modell (1980 op cit) the suggestion of biological determination was clearly dispelled. Other studies of Chinese communities have displayed greater ambivalence on the subject. Clammer (1982) on the Chinese in Singapore, for instance, dismissed "economistic" explanations of their role as "invalid". Instead, he believed the answer to lie in the "high degree of spontaneous ethnic consciousness felt by Singaporean Chinese, and indeed, Chinese everywhere" (ibid p.128), which was said to be "irreducible - a primordial characteristic or essence" (ibid p.129). Similar conclusions can be drawn from all such unsubstantiated and impressionistic generalisations about Chinese culture. To take another example, Francis Hsu (1958 pp.67-68), a Chinese anthropologist, remarked that

"Nepotism is an old Chinese virtue. There's nothing wrong with it really... "I believe it (ie. Chinese culture) to be remarkably cohesive, much more so, for example, than is the Hindu culture. The cohesion of Chinese culture permeates personal relationships between the generations and also works horizontally within the generations. The strength of the Chinese background tends to discourage the adoption of non-Chinese ways. I would say that the Chinese are less readily assimilated than are the Hindus and attribute this to the difference in the cohesiveness of their respective cultures."

The "primordial" bonds of ethnicity is a theme which in recent years has been articulated in sociobiological theory. Essentially, sociobiology is an analysis of human society in terms of the relationship of heredity with environment and based upon Darwin's natural evolutionary principle of 'survival of the fittest.' According to the sociobiologists, social organisation is structured around the perpetuation of the fittest human genes. Racism thus stems from an innate drive to ensure the safe reproduction of a person's genes by favouring blood relatives over non-blood relatives (van den Berghe 1981 p.29). In this sense, phenotypical resemblance and cultural similarity are taken instinctively as indicators of genealogical relatedness and are acted upon in the nepotistic urge to form allegiances with kin. Hence the formation of phenotypically and culturally distinct cohesive groups, or "ethnies", to use a sociobiological term [6].

The sociobiological perspective embraces wholesale and unquestioningly ideal typical concepts such as 'middleman minorities'. Van den Berghe saw such social phenomena as particular group responses to situations in which "ethnies" were forced to merge and compete over scarce resources. 'Middleman minorities' thus were not solely products of pre-industrial, agrarian societies but could be found presently engaged in "the import-export trade, retail and wholesale shopkeeping, ... buying and reselling of cash crops, ... restaurants, laundries and the provision of transport facilities" as well as in "clerical, administrative and technical" occupations (ibid p.142). Drawing upon the example of the Chinese in South East Asia, van den Berghe described classical 'middleman minorities' as nepotistic, frugal, thrifty and industrious (ibid p.145) and usually engaged in a "familistic mode of production" (ibid p.143).

Precisely because van den Berghe was so specific in his widely cast characterisation of contemporary 'middleman minorities', the serious flaws in his argument were clearly exposed. As one who claimed his theory was "fully congruent with Marxist class analysis" (ibid p.61; see also ibid p.x of the Introduction & p.241), van den Berghe then proceeded with an economic definition of 'middlemen' not in terms of their relationship to the means of production (ie. class) but as they were concentrated vertically within distinguishable industries, (hardly a method which could be called "Marxist class analysis"). Moreover, it is difficult to see how a "familistic mode of production" (ibid p.143) could possibly apply to "clerical, administrative and technical occupations" or even "import-export" and "the provision of transport facilities", since these descriptions almost certainly imply a level of economic organisation which surpasses the scale of the small family firm.

Whatever commonality there could have existed between the sundry 'middleman' trades listed by van den Berghe, it was certainly not of an economic nature. Neither was it conceivably in terms of low 'exit' (or even 'entry') barriers for speedy 'liquidity', to use 'middleman minority' jargon. Moreover, the enormous diversity of economic roles which were said to distinguish 'middleman minorities' from others around them were so diffuse as to render virtually meaningless van den Berghe's definitions. "Any ethnically distinct group that specializes in the selling of goods or skills" (van den Berghe 1981 op cit p.138), hardly constitutes an analytical starting point, let alone betraying a biological inclination towards nepotistic familism, of which the ultimate objective is the preservation of specific human genes. Van den Berghe's model, and indeed, the whole culturalist and 'middleman minority' syndrome, appears to be founded more upon crude stereotypes and impressionistic observations than accurate and contextualised evidence.

Indeed, absent from van den Berghe's "Marxist class analysis" of 'middleman minorities' appeared to be any consideration whatsoever of Marxist conceptions of economic class in terms of ownership and control of capital. Otherwise, his attention would have been drawn immediately to the point that far from providing a shared economic interest conducive to

ethnic solidarity, the fundamentally antagonistic economic relations within the ethnic community concentrated within an industry would have provided a material basis for intra-ethnic division and conflict. This general failure to accommodate any notions of class when defining economic interest groups in advanced capitalist societies, however, is not specific to van den Berghe. It is inherent to any attempt to construct an ideal typical economic group from a disparate set of social characteristics. Bonacich and Modell (1980 op cit p.14), for instance, fell into the same trap by including "professional and bureaucratic government positions" in their range of 'middleman minority' occupations.

Since van den Berghe's vivid illustration of sociobiological theory for explaining ethnic 'business' communities seems to have contradicted the material realities which it attempted to illuminate, it would seem reasonable to regard such theory as contentious. Sociobiology takes no account of the self-conscious labour of humans which distinguishes them from all other animals and transforms nature, a fundamental tenet of Marxist analysis. If it did, it could not continue to adhere to the simplistic and profoundly conservative biological reductionism through which all human behaviour is interpreted. Needless to say, the sociobiologist assumptions about human nature and behaviour, many of which are latently implied in many of the culturalist studies discussed above, are an anathema to Marx's historical materialist method. From the insights afforded by the work of Leon (1970 op cit) and Bonacich and Modell (1980 op cit) alone, van den Berghe's application of sociobiological theory to an explanation of 'middleman minorities' appears not only internally inconsistent but also unable to incorporate any sustained historical substantiation. Thus, an analytical procedure which does attempt to address reality must follow as Leon (1970 op cit p.140) described: "It is not by the "innate" capacities or the ideology of a social group that we must explain its economic position. On the contrary, it is its economic position which explains its capacities and its ideology."

ETHNIC ENCLAVES

A similar, more updated version of the 'middleman minority' perspective is a body of literature which centres around the concept of 'ethnic enclaves'. 'Ethnic enclave' studies, however, differ from the ahistorical cultural and biological analyses, in that their analytical terms of reference are expressly rooted in the contemporary social relations of production in which the studies are set and, therefore, they do not set out ostensibly to assert sweeping historical generalisations from perceived quintessential 'models'.

The starting point of ethnic enclave analysis was taken from 'dual labour market theory', which sought to assess the differing implications for employment conditions for American workers by isolating the central features of America's advanced capitalist economy. Developed in relation to theories of the American 'dual economy' (Averitt 1968) [7], 'dual labour market theory' proposed basically that workers were divided between a *primary* labour market, where wages and conditions were relatively good, and a *secondary* labour market, where the opposite applied. Within the former, employment security, promotion prospects, "equity, and due process in the administration of work rules" (Doeringer and Piore 1978 p.165) combined to form what Doeringer and Piore termed an "internal labour market" - a set of privileges conferred upon workers to minimalise industrial disruption (see also Edwards et al 1975). In contrast, "high labor turnover, little chance of advancement, and often arbitrary and capricious supervision" (Doeringer and Piore 1978 op cit p.165) as well as undesirable work tasks, bad pay and conditions were rife in smaller, secondary labour market firms. Primary labour markets generally structured firms which operated with a high degree of fixed capital and employed a relatively highly skilled and unionised workforce. The obverse was the case for secondary labour markets. Primary jobs characterised the 'centre' economy; secondary jobs were concentrated in the economic 'periphery' (see also Averitt 1968 op cit). Racism and sexism practiced by the state, employers and labour unions alike, it was said, served to channel ethnic migrants and women disproportionately into secondary jobs, effectively preserving primary jobs for non-minority white men.

'Ethnic enclave' theory found that contrary to the conventional 'dual labour market' analysis, not all ethnic workers were simply cheap, subordinate labour for non-minority employers. 'Dual labour market' theory, it was proposed, had neglected the phenomenon of *clusters* of ethnically owned and staffed firms. Despite their resemblance to other secondary firms on an individual level, the economic integration within the clusters (in the degree to which competition and control over supplies was regulated between them) entailed an aggregate organisational resemblance to primary labour market firms in the centre economy. "The enclave is different from the periphery in that the latter is much more "atomized" - that is, less interconnected with other firms in the periphery - than the ethnic enclave." (Wilson and Martin 1982 p.138) This distinction, argued Wilson and Martin, explained the relative success of 'enclave' firms compared to others in the secondary sector.

The high level of integration within clusters of 'enclave' firms depended upon tight control within individual firms. This was achieved through informal channels based upon the shared ethnicity of owners, managers and staff alike which was lacking in conventional secondary labour market firms. Recruitment through informal networks, for instance, permitted "cheap information about the quality of future workers" (Model 1986 p.66). More importantly, "By hiring through the ethnic networks, immigrant employers engage their workers in a sponsor/client relationship whose claims extend far beyond the cash nexus" (Waldinger 1984 p.225). Paternalistic relations between employer and employee were said to cement workers' attachment to their employers, despite the inherent economic antagonism and generally low wages, thus lessening the appeal of unions (Model 1986 op cit p.66). Where shop sizes were small, formal labour market relations might be "entirely superseded by family relations" and where it was necessary to "reach beyond the family circle", jobs were filled by "fellow townsmen, or at the very least, common nationals" (Waldinger 1984 op cit p.218). Furthermore, since racism was not an issue within the 'enclave', employers took full advantage of workers' "past investments in education and job training" (Portes 1981 p.291). The relative integration and stability of 'enclave' firms built on ethnic resources, it was said, provided the basis for a secure "export platform"

from which the firms could broaden their markets (Waldinger 1984 op cit p.224). Workers supposedly benefitted by being able to maximise their "past human capital investments" (Wilson and Portes 1980 p.295) in the absence of racist or linguistic barriers and also to enjoy the protection of community based "norms and sanctions" (Waldinger 1984 op cit p.219) which safeguarded wage levels and checked rapacious management.

The 'ethnic enclave' analysis has been applied in America specifically to Cubans in Miami (Wilson and Portes 1980 op cit; Wilson and Martin 1982 op cit) and Chinese in the New York garment industry (Waldinger 1983), and in Britain to Bangladeshis in the restaurant industry (Baker 1981/2) and Pakistanis in the Manchester clothing trade (Werbner 1985). Whilst Baker documented how Bengali entrepreneurs adapted their available ethnic resources to suit their economic requirements, Werbner stressed how consolidation of the 'enclave' depended as much upon the necessity for regulation of internal economic competition as upon mutual support and trust.

The New York garment industry, according to Waldinger (1983 op cit), was in the process of being transformed from a principal centre of clothing manufacture into a "spot" market, specialising in the production of novelty fashions and uncalculated over-demand for more standardised items (the bulk of these being supplied from the Far East). Acceleration of this industrial reorganisation had witnessed the proliferation of ethnic garment manufacturers, of which Chinese firms had figured significantly. This was in part a result of the exodus of larger, primary clothing firms from the city centre during the 1970s, which had lowered the cost barriers to entry for more lowly capitalised firms with a flexible workforce. Amongst the Chinese firms, a "repertoire of cultural symbols" between workers and employers was said to reduce the "social distance" derived from differential relations of production, establishing a feeling of mutual "egalitarianism". This normative climate mitigated against industrial conflict and thus facilitated the smooth absorption of the effects of erratic demand. Paternalistic employer/employee relations were bolstered by the giving of *ung bow* (small, red envelopes containing money and symbolising the bestowment of good luck) amongst other gifts as

compensation for long hours of hard work. Thus, Waldinger was led to the conclusion that it was the "interaction" between specific economic change and the mobilisation of informal, ethnic resources that afforded 'enclave' firms an advantage not open to larger scale, more traditional primary employers. Waldinger's emphasis on the economistic elements of 'ethnic enclaves' represented what has been termed the "interactive" approach, which also has been used to interpret the position of Asians in Britain (Ward 1984; Mars & Ward 1984).

Waldinger's study, like those of the other 'enclave' theorists, illuminated vividly the organisational mechanics of economically concentrated ethnic communities. However, like the 'middleman minority' theorists, they failed to come to terms with the essential logic of capitalist production - the accumulation of capital by the capitalist class through the expropriation of surplus values produced by the working class - a principle which applies regardless of cultural similarity. By confounding this central antagonism with the cultural boundaries of the ethnic group, the 'enclave' studies associated the interests of the ethnic group as a whole with the specific interests of ethnic capital alone. The benefits believed to accrue to ethnic labour within the 'enclave' were obscure. Upward mobility due to the absence of internal racism, by definition, was achievable only for the minority in relation to the majority. Moreover, no attempt was made to relate upward mobility within the 'enclave' to the wider society of which the 'enclave' was an integral part. This was because of the fundamental error in 'ethnic enclave' theory, by which the 'ethnic enclave' is analysed as an economically autonomous entity existing within capitalist class relations, although these were precisely the relations by which the 'enclave' was defined and structured.

This is not to say that potential economic conflict within ethnic firms could not be subverted or obscured by constant recourse to a shared cultural heritage, but that the interpretation of such strategies requires an analysis which is contextualised within the general capitalist relations of production from which they derive significance, if it is not to lapse into simplistic culturalism. As it remains, the shortcomings of 'ethnic enclave' theory outlined above render it incapable of integrating such

empirical anomalies as intra-community struggles into the static model. Evidence of growing industrial militancy within the New York Chinese restaurant 'enclave' and employers' increasingly oppressive and underhand attempts to thwart it (Neustadt 1980), for instance, cannot be readily explained through Waldinger's framework according to which the cultural repertoire of "norms and sanctions" safeguard pay and working conditions.

A variation of the 'ethnic enclave' model is to be found in a study by Loewen (1971) on Chinese grocery stores in the Mississippi Delta. Whilst Loewen's approach yielded more to the conventional culturalist analysis than to 'dual labour market theory', his historically specific exposition of the social structure of the Mississippi Delta and the position of the Chinese grocery niche within it strongly resembled the 'ethnic enclave' pattern of findings. The specific conditions of local racial segregation, Loewen argued, afforded the Chinese an opportunity to capitalise upon their ethnic resources and thus to rise in social status to the extent that they are now associated more with the position of whites than with Blacks.

Unlike the 'enclave' theorists, Loewen's analysis focussed upon the more pathological aspects of the situation. Rigid Black/white segregation, Loewen asserted, was principally "an etiquette system, a system of norms, expected behaviours, and definitions" (ibid p.4) demarcated by white upper class ideology (ibid pp.40-45 & p.158). As such, "native whites have left a vacuum in the field" (ibid p.49) which was filled by the Chinese who were viewed as racial "intermediates", remaining somehow "alien" and politically oblivious to the nuances of segregation (ibid p.47 and p.155). An established tradition of independent economic activity owing to a cultural orientation towards familism and sojourning amongst the Chinese but not the Blacks (ibid pp.30-50) entailed the mobilisation of necessary resources for business operation from within the ethnic, if not the family group. As long as whites refused to service Blacks by opening small shops in competition with the Chinese and as long as Blacks lacked the resources to service themselves, the Chinese grocery shop enclave flourished. Eventually, the Chinese achieved relative parity with local whites but at the same time becoming occupationally drawn to the northern

and western cities of America (ibid p.180). Hence the contemporary demise of the Delta Chinese grocery store niche.

Whereas the Delta Chinese appeared to have been predominantly *self-employed* within retail trading whilst the ethnic 'clusters' in the urban manufacturing industries were not, Loewen did not treat this phenomenon with the importance it deserved. The apparent reason for this shortcoming was that, like the 'ethnic enclave' studies, Loewen appeared to display an inadequate conception of the relationship between ethnicity and economic forces. By discussing racial segregation exclusively within ideological and social dimensions, Loewen neglected the central importance of its underlying economic determinants and thus failed to explain, for instance, the situation of the Chinese grocers in relation to the local Italians, Lebanese and Jews who also dominated petty trading in the Delta (ibid p.49). Such a comparison would have invoked an economic analysis which was not present in Loewen's study. Only in passing did he refer to the mechanisation of agricultural harvesting which led to a rapid Black depopulation of the area and a correspondingly sharp drop in clientele for Chinese grocery stores as a reason for their decline (ibid p.172). Thus, Loewen's work resembled the 'ethnic enclave' studies in that the groups they sought to examine were identified precisely in terms of the coincidence of their economic and ethnic characteristics under a specific set of material relations. However, it also suffered from the same methodological inconsistencies in that a sustained economic analysis which took cognisance of the material basis of such a phenomenon was missing. The Delta Blacks had inherited a bitter legacy of slavery to the white ruling class. The Chinese, whilst having been indentured labourers, were never slaves, yet the implications of this fundamental historical difference for explaining their divergent economic roles were barely mentioned.

ECOLOGICAL BUSINESS SUCCESSION AND THE CHICAGO SCHOOL

Yet another perspective on ethnic businesses derives from the work of Park, Burgess and McKenzie (1925) on the socio-spatial organisation of urban centres. Inspired by what has been termed the 'Chicago' school of

sociology, Park et al. interpreted the social composition of the city in terms of the patterns of ecological concentration within it. From this, Burgess elaborated what came to be known as the 'concentric zone theory' of the city. Park and Burgess both appeared to regard the city as a manufactured ecological complex within which the processes of social adaptation, competition for living space, specialisation of function and of life style acted to produce a coherent spatial structure which was held together by a form of social solidarity which Park (1936) called "the moral order". The various groups and activities within the city system were essentially bound together by this 'moral order' and competed with each other, both socially and spatially, within the constraints imposed by the 'moral order'. It was within this context that Park's ideal typical 'marginal man' (see 'middleman minorities') was located. More recently, Rex's theory of immigrant incorporation into urban areas through transitory, or "twilight" 'housing zones' (Rex and Moore 1967) has made an influential contribution to contemporary sociological thought based upon similar lines. The Chicago scholars, like the 'ethnic enclave' theorists, were concerned primarily with the socio-cultural rather than the economic definition of groups.

Rooted firmly in the tradition of Park et al., the 'ecological' analysis of ethnic businesses is one in which the residential succession of areas by ethnic groups is followed by a corresponding entrepreneurial succession within the locality. This framework has been applied empirically to Asian retailers in Bradford, Ealing and Leicester (McEvoy 1979; Aldrich, Cater, Jones & McEvoy 1981 and 1983; Aldrich and McEvoy 1984; Jones and McEvoy 1985), in Wandsworth (Aldrich 1980) and in Croydon (Mullins 1979), as well as to Blacks and Puerto Ricans in the United States (Aldrich and Reiss 1976).

The 'ecological' studies specifically rejected the differing "organising capacities" of ethnic groups as a major determinant of business activity, preferring instead an explanation of Asian self-employment and small scale entrepreneurhip as an outcome of their structural subordination in the general labour market (eg. Aldrich 1980). Moreover, the 'ecological' studies avoided the stumbling blocks of the culturalist and 'enclave'

arguments by addressing only the specific situation of the small scale self-employed instead of trying to compress into a single explanatory 'model' the polarised interests of capital and labour. In this respect, the various ecological studies of ethnic businesses were in general agreement that Asian small business owners had merely "exchanged the status of second-class worker for that of second-class proprietor, with the visible gloss of self-employment simply concealing the continuing presence of racial disadvantage" (Aldrich et al 1983 p.29). They stated that such a phenomenon was an example of ecological "growth without development" (Jones and McEvoy op cit), despite widely varying accounts of business operation in different locations. The British three city study, for instance, found Asian entrepreneurs to be dependent upon a local, "protected" ethnic market for continued viability, whilst in Croydon, "Only 5 per cent of businesses were mainly dependent on Asian customers, and in only 15 per cent of cases were more than a quarter of the customers Asian" (Mullins 1979 op cit p.404).

Clearly, the 'ecological' perspective illuminates a different reality for small scale ethnic entrepreneurs from that presented by the culturalists and 'enclave' theorists. However, it lacks the capacity to explain this reality. For instance, despite bearing crucial significance, "racial disadvantage" (cited as the reason for the continued "second class" status of Asians in the transition from manufacturing employment to self-employment) remained largely unaddressed by the 'ecologists'. This is because the theoretical basis of the 'ecological' studies is one which seeks to interpret social phenomena within a context of the spatial pattern of urban development and not in terms of economic and political relations. As such, rather than offering incisive analysis, the 'ecological' approach remains on the level of description (and an erroneous level of description at that, according to Engels in The Condition of the English Working Class 1844 p.46-47 cited in Harvey 1979 p.133). Therefore, like 'ethnic enclave' theory, the 'ecological' perspective is confined to making a fragmented series of observations which throw up 'models' that cannot adequately be explained.

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE ON ETHNIC CHINESE ENTERPRISE

Through a critical discussion of competing analytical methodologies for the study of ethnic Chinese entrepreneurship, this first chapter has attempted to establish a case for a method based on Marxist political economy. It has been argued that those groups who might seem to fall into the category of what have been termed 'middleman minorities' are essentially a product of the historical material conditions of their existence. Therefore, at best, elements of the 'middleman' label would apply only to certain minorities at certain periods in history, as illustrated by Leon's analysis of the "people class" of Jews during the demise of feudalism in Europe. Static characterisations which brand groups as 'middlemen' as a result of cultural or biological propensities, on the other hand, do not conform to the historical realities which they attempt to explain, as illustrated by the work of Bonacich & Modell (1980 op cit) and van den Berghe (1981 op cit). Like the culturalists, proponents of the 'ethnic enclave' theory suffer from the same fundamental methodological problem, which is a failure to incorporate any notions of class in advanced capitalist society. By concentrating upon superficial appearance (ie. ethnic homogeneity and occupational 'clustering'), they overlook the essential material basis for social organisation and mobilisation within the ethnic community. The 'ecological' model of urban business succession by immigrant groups does not necessarily lead to the same pitfalls as the culturalist argument. However, as a perspective set within the explanatory dimensions of "organic" spatial development, the 'ecological' approach is incapable of moving beyond the level of simple description.

There are other studies of Chinese communities which do not fall into the broad approaches of the studies discussed above, although these are few and far between. Unlike the majority, they take into account the historical development of economic and political relations structuring the entrepreneurial activity of Chinese people. These studies derive almost exclusively from America and Canada. Li (1976 pp.330 & 39) for instance, moulded his study from the starting point that

"The importance of studying the specific historical experience of ethnic groups *[is]* a precondition to unravelling the meaning of ethnic stratification... The persistence of the ethnic businesses among the

Chinese cannot be seen in isolation from the historical continuity of racial inequality, nor can it be evaluated solely in terms of the cultural characteristics of the ethnic group. Human relations, like commodities, are produced and reproduced in a continuous connected process. To single out the ethnic businesses of the Chinese without reference to the economic relationships of the past and the present is to disregard the forces of historical development."

King and Locke (1980), to take another example, found the Chinatown subeconomies in America to be far from a thriving source of wealth for those who sustained them, whilst Thompson's data on Toronto refuted the whole notion of an ethnically exclusive subeconomy in the first instance. "Businessmen first, Chinese second" (Thompson 1979 p.312) was how one of Thompson's informants characterised the dominant economic and political class of Toronto's Chinatown. Their public appeals to ethnic camaraderie, according to Thompson, were no more than attempts to obscure and repress class conflict.

Common to the final set of studies mentioned above is an implicit recognition of the dynamics of racism and class within the operation of capitalist society and more specifically within the ethnic community. This is derived from an analytical methodology grounded in political economy, which broadens the explanatory scope beyond that which is superficially most apparent.

Specifically, political economy is the science of laws governing economic production and exchange. These are far from static, being continuously susceptible to the influences of external forces, as pointed out by Engels (1969 pp.177-178):

"The conditions under which men produce and exchange vary from country to country, and within each country again from generation to generation. Political economy, therefore, cannot be the same for all countries and for all historical epochs... Political economy is therefore a *historical* science. It deals with material which is historical, that is constantly changing; it must first investigate the special laws of each individual stage in the evolution of production and exchange, and only when it has completed this investigation will it be able to establish the few quite general laws which hold good for production and exchange in general."

An understanding of the entrepreneurial Chinese phenomenon in terms of the historical material evolution of production and exchange therefore dictates the basic structure of this study. The next chapter thus embarks upon a validation of the thoretical propositions of political economy analysis as defined in the preceeding discussion by examining the actual historical conditions which have contributed to the emergence of Chinese communities renowned for entrepreneurship. Implicitly rejected by such a procedure are the prejudicial and arbitrary assumptions of the culturalists, biologists and urban ecologists. Instead of accepting an explanation achieved through 'stereotyping backwards' based upon the perceived contemporary social or cultural attributes of entrepreneurial Chinese groups, the Chapter will focus upon the material factors which unify them historically. Such an analysis necessarily wil bear relation to the development of the international capitalist mode of production, for it is principally this context which has structured entrepreneurial Chinese communities, regardless of ethnic allegiance and geographic distribution. Indeed, the following chapter reveals the great extent to which the development of modern-day Chinese 'business' communities has been a direct result of the internationalisation of capitalist relations of production.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF ENTREPRENEURIAL CHINESE COMMUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

The central mode of production characterising the epoch in which Chinese 'business' communities have emerged is capitalism. A political economy method of analysis, as discussed in Chapter 1, thus takes these communities to be an inextricable part of the capitalist social formations in which they are sustained and stresses that it is within such contexts that they must be apprehended. In other words, no ethnic community can be defined autonomously from the overarching social relations of production which surround it. Indeed, this chapter argues that it has been precisely the impact of the global expansion of capitalism into China that accounts for the contemporary entrepreneurial profile of Chinese communities throughout the world. Such an argument draws upon a specific conception of the capitalist law of accumulation and its implications for the movement of capital and labour on a global scale, discussed immediately below. The chapter then moves on to document exactly how such a process operated in the specific case of the Chinese, articulating and illustrating three major points. The first is that the imposition of capitalism upon China gravely eroded and finally destroyed the country's pre-existing economic and social fabric. Secondly, the effects of this abrupt transformation for millions of Chinese people were such that they were compelled either by force or by starvation to emigrate as indentured labour to the far flung corners of the capitalist empires. Thirdly, the varying conditions which influenced their experiences of migration entailed that these Chinese communities either became totally assimilated, repatriated, or else systematically excluded and disenfranchised to the extent that self-employment and intra-ethnic patronage became the only resort for economic survival. It is within the context of the last situation that the case of the Chinese in Britain is then examined in greater detail.

ACCUMULATION AND EXPANSION

"The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society... Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and removable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, antiquated before they can ossify."
(Marx & Engels: Manifesto of the Communist Party, 1975, pp.36-37)

The competitive drive within capitalism always to seek to maximise profits has led to the expansion abroad of the forces of capitalist production in the continual quest for new markets, cheaper raw materials and cheaper labour. In the process, more and more people have become incorporated into capitalist relations of production, usually through the coercive use of brute force. The expansionist nature of capitalism has entailed on the one hand the internationalisation of capitalist relations of production (and hence the internationalisation of the labour market) whilst on the other, the concentration and centralisation of capitalist monopolies has become entwined increasingly with national state powers in order to secure and further competitive interests. Consequently, rivalry between capitalist monopolies has also assumed a political militaristic dimension.

One specific aspect of this expansion has been the acquisition of colonies by the advanced capitalist powers and their integration into an international capitalist economy. As Lenin (1944 p.379) wrote,

"the capitalist system cannot exist and develop without constantly extending its sphere of domination, without colonizing new countries and without drawing ancient, non-capitalist countries into the whirlpool of the world economy."

However, this was not achieved merely by the replication throughout the world of the autarkic pattern of capitalist development in its countries of origin. Instead, the very process by which capitalism spread from its European centres to the colonies entailed for the latter a restricted form of capitalist development which was oriented towards satisfying the demands of capital at the centres. This phenomenon has been termed the *underdevelopment* of societies at the capitalist *periphery*. It arose from the outset by virtue of the initial trading advantages of the more

developed powers and continues to be expressed in the asymmetrical relationships of exchange between centre and periphery. Whilst concern originally was focussed upon underdevelopment in relation to the case of Latin America, the analysis has been extended to characterise the contemporary relationship on a global scale between all advanced major capitalist powers and the 'Third World'. Prescriptions for action vary widely amongst 'underdevelopment' theorists [1] but they nevertheless share a basic underlying unity of analysis which articulates clearly the specific processes structuring the dominance of the centre over the periphery and thus, the conditions under which migration has occurred from peripheral social formations as they have become integrated into a world capitalist system.

Amin (1976) for instance, detailed how the "extraverted" development of specialised commodity production in peripheral societies towards export to countries at the centre had distorted local economic growth from the very beginning. Disproportionate foreign investment in high-productivity sectors had had the dual effect in the periphery of undermining pre-capitalist production by draining a part of the labour force (without implanting an autarkic substitute) and imposing competition with more sophisticated production techniques at the centre economies. This had forced production at the periphery into a subordinate role with the result that wages there had become depressed and exchange with centre economies unequal. Underdevelopment, therefore, was not simply a description of less advanced countries in comparison to the more advanced. It referred specifically to the extreme unevenness in productivities and income in the periphery, its unequal exchange relationship with the centre, the orientation of production towards the needs of the centre and the concomitant stifling of economic progress at the periphery and finally, the dependence of the periphery upon dominant centre countries in the development of specialised commodity production. Thus, workers at the periphery were super-exploited by capital rooted at the centre. This rendered them an extra vulnerable source of labour to be directed wherever greatest profit was to be realised. Amin noted how the migration of cheapened workers from the periphery to industries at the centre served to

boost profits there by undermining standard wage levels for indigenous workers:

"In order to counteract the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall at the centre itself, capital imports labour from the periphery at a lower wage (reserving for this labour the most thankless tasks), in order to depress the labour market of the metropolitan countries." (ibid p.362)

MIGRATION AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

Migration has occurred throughout human history. However it is specifically the demise of pre-capitalist societies upon the rise of capitalism that has induced migrations on an unprecedented numerical and geographical scale. Understanding the international migration of labour as an intrinsic part of the uneven development of capitalism is central to understanding the case of the Chinese, as will be revealed. (There are, of course, other migratory movements which also characterise the integrated nature of the world system: managerial and 'brain drain' flows, for example, can occur across continents but within a single firm.) This framework does not deny individualistic motivations for migration in terms of 'push and pull factors', the preoccupation of many migration studies. It merely explains the reasons why such 'factors' emerge. Not to do so leaves recourse only to ad hoc psychological and culturalistic analyses that only mystify rather than clarify historical example.

Prior to the capitalist penetration of China, migration on any large scale was uncommon, most movement having occurred for trading purposes. However, the inherent conservatism of the Chinese regime (see discussion on the *asiatic mode of production* below) restricted trading to such an extent so as to retard the country's commercial development (Meskill 1973; Ho 1962). Whilst some progress continued under the Yuan Dynasty (1260 - 1367), trade was again severely curtailed under the reign of the Ming (1368 - 1644), although by this period, Chinese trade routes had become established as far afield as Africa (Lyman 1974). An Imperial Edict issued in 1712 prohibiting the return of overseas Chinese under penalty of death discouraged migration still further. The following sections of this chapter describe how such a situation was reversed with the advent of the Western colonialists.

CHINA BEFORE THE BRITISH

The history of China falls into four broad categories corresponding to its stages of economic and political development (Chen 1973). The first period stretches from the earliest historical records (c. 2000 BC) to the unification of China under the Ch'in dynasty (221 - 207 BC), during which the basic patterns of agricultural life were evolved. The second period covers the next two thousand years up to the first Opium War of 1840 and witnessed the firm establishment of agricultural production and its subsidiary activities. This was abruptly ended with the political subordination of China to Western colonialists following China's defeat in the Opium Wars. The subsequent injection into China of industrial capital, integrating local production with the world markets of the capitalist empires, entailed the demise of the previous local economic and social order and the mass deportation of Chinese workers. The imperialistic struggle for control of China's resources ending with the Second World War hailed the dawn of the contemporary stage of China's development in which wealth and power were wrested back into the hands of the Chinese state in 1949 under the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao. To understand the impact of the introduction of capitalism to China and the resulting development of a Chinese community in Britain, it is necessary to focus upon the period of transition from the second to the third historical period.

The traditional China which confronted the first colonial merchants from the West was an agrarian society in which economic and social relations centred around localised susbsistence agricultural production. Crops accounted for the bulk of produce, these being mainly wheat and millet in the north and rice in the south, although cotton, tobacco, potatoes, maize and peanuts were also grown. Agriculture combined with animal husbandry and handicraft production on a domestic scale for direct use by the household and local community formed the foundations of a largely self-sufficient, self-sustaining economic and social system [2]. This was perpetuated through rigid divisions of labour and political despotism.

Men generally farmed the land whilst women's tasks were rooted in the domestic sphere, spinning and weaving cotton, making pottery, shoes and

other textiles (Curtin 1974; Croll 1978; Siu 1982). During peak demand for agricultural labour, such as planting and harvest, women joined men in the fields but their contributions were never sufficiently sustained to threaten the established patriarchal structures (ibid). Property transmitted along agnatic lines meant that women were economically, socially and politically subordinate. Subject first to their fathers, then to their husbands and finally to their sons, the role of women in dynastic China could never be an independent one (Baker 1979; Freedman 1965). This was enshrined in the lineage and clan institutions which regulated village life and codified in Confucian epigrams. (Confucianism - the doctrine developed from the works of an ancient Chinese philosopher - was a dominant, state endorsed ideology in dynastic China.) Thus, if women held any power at all, it was only in the ability to manipulate their kinsmen.

An extensive and elaborate bureaucracy administered the imperial autocracy throughout China's vast eighteen provinces and their subdivisions. Its prime objective was to maintain absolute political control, which was achieved through such devices as popular indoctrination, oppressive magistrates and governmental 'spies' operating in village and clan organisations. The net result was social, economic and political stagnation, as expressed by Hsiao (1972 pp.8 and 9):

"Few public functionaries, from the highest ranking mandarins in Peking to the humble magistrates of remote districts, made efforts to do things that might bring true advantages to their sovereigns or give material benefits to the people; most merely sought to keep out of trouble and to look out for their personal advantage and profit... Rural China was thus kept virtually stagnant, intellectually and economically unable to meet the challenge of changed circumstances; the inhabitants became helpless against grave disasters wrought by nature or against oppressions inflicted by local bullies and yamen underlings. The foundations of the empire, ironically, were weakened by the very process of control."

The condition of classical Chinese society was symptomatic of the static oriental, or *asiatic* (to use Marx's term) mode of production by which it was differentiated from Western societies immediately predating capitalism [3]. Unlike the structure of feudalism in the Europe, economies formed around the asiatic mode (China and India being the two main examples used by Marx to develop the concept) tended not to generate any mechanisms that would lead to the development of productive forces and the eventual

rise of capitalism. Therefore, contrary to popular belief, a trading or entrepreneurial tradition was distinctly lacking in dynastic China prior to its integration with the world capitalist system.

"The Asiatic form necessarily holds out longest and most tenaciously. This fact is rooted in its very presupposition: that the individual does not become autonomous vis-a-vis the community; that the production cycle is self-sustaining; unity of agriculture and hand-manufacture, etc"
(Marx, K: Grundrisse 1857-8 p.386 quoted in Draper 1978 p.534)

What little trading structure existed in pre-colonial China was fragile. Border trade was established and maritime traders were known on the shores of Vietnam as early as 300 BC. By the second century BC there appear to have been Chinese trade routes through Yunnan to the Irrawaddy and Salween valleys. During this period, Tongking (and not Canton) was the major southern port (Purcell 1951). Between the fifth and the eighth centuries AD, the spread of Buddhism in China led pilgrims regularly to Indonesia and India. This contributed to the development of the carrying trade in South East Asia, which brought spices to China, India and Arabia (Tay Erh Soon 1962). Chinese merchants, however, did not figure prominently throughout South East Asia, trade being dominated mostly by Muslims from Persia and Arabia. The small Chinese populations which resulted from trade in South East Asia, moreover, were quickly absorbed into the local society such that in many countries (especially Thailand), the numerous native inhabitants of Chinese descent confound classification. Indeed, it was not until the Sung Dynasty (960 - 1279), one thousand years after the first known traders abroad, that Chinese trade in South East Asia was developed to any significantly more advanced degree.

The archaic social structure of China had survived intact through a deliberate Imperial strategy of political, economic and social detachment from the influence of other countries, exemplified by the 1712 Edict. The permanent absence of a foreign ministry meant that dealings with countries abroad were dispensed on an ad hoc, local basis. Fearing a similar fate as befell Japan and India, the Chinese state ensured that their door to the West remained firmly closed. In Japan, the "Christian century" (1550 - 1650), during which the missionaries had been largely tolerated, ended in a Christian rebellion against the Imperial power. In India, trade with

Portugal followed by the British East India Company had led to political penetration and eventual conquest. Russia was the only European power to have stricken any formal agreements with China (the Treaty of Nerchinsk 1689 and the Treaty of Kiachta 1727), as even Portugal's control of Macao (a southeastern Chinese trade port) in actuality was not based upon any treaty with the Chinese Manchu government. Very much an outgrowth of the political and social status quo, the official attitude to foreigners, or 'barbarians' as they were known, assumed an elaborate philosophy:

"The Chinese believed that the world is square, that heaven is round, and that heaven projects its circular shadow onto the center of the earth. This circle, the "zone beneath heaven" *(tianxia)*, is the Chinese empire itself. The outer pieces formed by the four angles of the square (called the "four seas") do not receive the celestial emanations, and they have therefore become the domain of foreign barbarians *(yi)*, demons, and sea monsters" (Chesneaux et al. 1977 p.9)

The rise of Chinese merchants to positions of commercial dominance throughout South East Asia went hand in hand with the stamp of European colonialism. "The free trade proclaimed by the British was especially important... The European had the resources of international organisation and political influence or control; the Chinese had local knowledge and connections throughout Asia." (Tay Erh Soon 1962 op cit p.39). Free from localised sentiments of nationalist resistance and from the legal restrictions imposed by national governments upon domestic traders, Chinese commercial networks were actively nurtured by the colonialists at the colonial ports of Penang, Malacca, Singapore and Hong Kong (ibid pp.38-40; see also map overleaf). The new trading relations wrought by colonialism opened up further opportunities for the fast growing Chinese mercantile class and a few moved into the ranks of the nascent local bourgeoisie.

This transformation errupted during the nineteenth century with the Western race for the Chinese markets. It was eventually to overturn the traditional foundations of southeast Chinese state and society, as expressed vividly by Marx (1968 p.4):

"Complete isolation was the prime condition of the preservation of Old China. That isolation having come to a violent end by the medium of England, dissolution must follow as surely as that of any mummy carefully

preserved in a hermetically sealed coffin, whenever it is brought into contact with the open air."

THE OLD CHINA TRADE

By the time the British first opened a trading establishment at Canton in 1865, Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch maritime merchants were already established in China. However, from the mid eighteenth century Sino-British trade intensified. The East India Company was the sole firm allowed by Parliament to deal in the Far East, as was the Cohong (a self-appointed guild of local merchants) the only official Chinese body to trade directly with foreigners at Canton. The Cohong met with tacit Chinese governmental approval, since it was a source of considerable profit for many local officials. The Cohong monopoly presided over rising levies for foreign merchants but relatively constant customs duties for the government. The power of the Cohong was consolidated by an imperial decree in 1757 limiting trade with foreigners to Canton alone, (despite attempts by English merchants to open Amoy and Ningpo as trading ports), and also by winning formal recognition by the emperor in 1760. Its member merchants were responsible for unloading foreign goods, establishing their market prices, paying customs duties, liaising with foreign merchants in all affairs and supervising their personal conduct.

The value of all British goods (which included woollen fabrics, cotton cloth, cotton yarn and metal products) legitimately imported into China from 1781 to 1793 amounted to 16,870,000 silver dollars - only one sixth of the value of the teas China exported to Britain (Foreign Languages Press 1976 p.5). This was mainly due to the fact that China's domestic textile production and trade were largely self-sufficient, as noted by the Lazarist Evarist Huc:

"One excellent reason why China is only moderately fond of trading with foreigners is that her home trade is immense... China is such a vast, rich and varied country that internal trade is more than enough to occupy the part of the nation which can perform commercial operations." (quoted in Chesneaux et al. 1977 op cit p.52)

TRADE PORTS ON THE SOUTHEASTERN CHINESE COASTLINE

Source: Waley 1973 p.10

Thus, eager to expand their markets and continue buying tea and silk but keen also to retain their silver, the East India Company found a way of balancing trade with China by swamping the country with opium, an addictive drug. As such, its sale exploited an enormous potential market at a time when Indian cotton could claim approximately only one quarter of imports to China and British woollens about one eighth. Opium therefore emerged as the single commodity which clinched Britain's 'triangular' trade profits from the East. (British manufactured goods were transported to India, Indian products to China and Chinese products to England, where profits were amassed or invested in India - a process which involved the movement of profits along a geographic course that resembled a triangle.)

Fay (1976 p.10) described the effects of opium thus:

"And if he makes opium a habit, ... sooner of later he will experience, should he try to stop, not simply the absence of bliss but positive misery:... Coleridge suffered from vomiting, stomach cramps, and excruciating pains in the head and limbs. De Quincey felt himself freezing to death whilst heaped with blankets by a blazing fire in midsummer. And both endured torments of the mind and of the feelings: extreme nervousness, fits of uncontrollable weeping, fear, shame, anger, and dreadful nightmares."

In 1773, the British government of India adopted the policy of large scale opium export to China and granted the East India Company the right to monopolise the opium trade in India. To ensure the implementation of this policy, in 1797 it also gave the Company the sole right to manufacture opium. By the year 1800, opium occupied more than half of British cargo to China from India (Li 1956 p.27), annual exports to China having reached two thousand chests, ten times the figure for 1767 (Foreign Languages Press 1976 op cit pp.8-9). As opium imports increased, the Ch'ing government issued successive orders banning the drug in 1796, 1800, 1813 and 1815 but to no avail. During the early nineteenth century, opium imports to China rose further still. By 1820, an annual average of 9,708 crates of opium were documented to have been smuggled into China (Chesneaux et al. 1977 op cit p.54). Ten years later, during the period following the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe, this figure had doubled to 18,712 (ibid) and by 1839, approximately forty thousand crates per year were successfully sold on the Chinese market (Holt 1964 p.65),

representing well over sixty percent of Chinese imports (Chesneaux et al. 1977 op cit p.55).

As an illegal drug, opium incurred no taxes in China and thus became an extremely lucrative commodity for both Chinese and British merchants. The enormous extent to which British companies benefitted was stressed clearly by the Hong Kong Research Project (1979 p.9):

"Already by 1830 the export of opium to China from warehouses belonging to the East Company of India paid both for England's tea imports from China and for English cotton exports sold to India, as well as for a considerable part of the Indian administration. In 1830 the Auditor General of the East India Company stated flatly: "India does entirely depend on the profits of the China trade". Suggestions that Britain was somehow officially against the opium trade are quite untenable. The opium business was crucial to the economy of British colonialism in Asia."

William Jardine, the biggest of the British opium dealers, disclosed in a private letter that "in the good years ... gross profits were sometimes as high as $1,000 a chest" (Greenberg 1951 p.105). Having amassed a large fortune, Jardine entered the House of Commons in 1841. Another opium smuggler, James Matheson, bought an island off the west coast of Scotland upon his return from China in 1841 and spent £329,000 on its reclamation alone (Foreign Languages Press 1976 op cit p.11). He was later knighted by Queen Victoria.

American merchants were also amongst those who shared in the opium profits, buying their supplies from Turkey and Persia. Their involvement in drug smuggling, however, was not as heavy as that of the British as they lacked the East India Company's grip on plantations and labour. Nevertheless, by supplementing opium sales with ginseng, furs and sandalwood (each gained by unscrupulous barter with the native peoples of the New World and South Pacific), America's trade with China was reported by Dulles (1974 p.49) to have brought the greatest profits of any branch of American foreign trade, having paid for the founding fortunes of "a long line of merchants in New York Philadelphia, Boston and Salem" (ibid). By 1790, trade with China accounted for one seventh of America's imports, only six years after it had begun. By 1825, "seven eighths of the China trade was in the hands of four firms: Perkins and Company, of Boston;

Archer, of Philadelphia; Jones Oakford and Company, of Philadelphia; and T.H.Smith, of New York." (ibid p.113)

In 1793, the first British ambassador, Lord Macartney, sent to China to extend and consolidate Britain's trading privileges, met with a similar response to his predecessors from Portugal, Spain and Holland. Regarded as a tributary envoy, he was requested to *kow tow* (a ceremony of three kneelings and nine bows) before the emperor, which he refused to do in the spirit of his mission. He subsequently returned to Britain unsuccesful. Amongst his unmet demands were the legitimate use of more ports along the southeastern Chinese coast, storage for goods at key cities in China, the abolition of import and travel tariffs and permission for English missionaries to teach Christianity in China. The saga was repeated by Britain's second ambassador, Lord Amherst in 1816, with the exception that Amherst also managed to incur the wrath of the emperor by his arrogance. Upon Amherst's failure, the Select Committee of Supercargoes of the East India Company (responsible for import and export arrangements) started to advocate a more forceful approach:

"We are decidedly of opinion that with little sacrifice of Commerical Interests and without any acts of aggression on the unoffending Natives of the Country it *[the Chinese Empire]* could be readily brought to a sense of its own comparative weakness, and an intercourse infinitely more favourable be established to any which Foreigners have hitherto enjoyed. This we believe could be accomplished either with or without the acquisition of an independent settlement." (quoted in Graham 1978 p.25)

Towards the 1830s, Sino-British relations became increasingly strained as British merchants openly flouted local Chinese rules and regulations, operating a thriving opium trade from the small island of Lintin just offshore from Canton. This culminated in 1834, when the East India Company's trade monopoly with China was ended, resulting in a deluge of opium imports to China, and Lord Napier was subsequently appointed as Chief Superintendent of Trade in China. On arrival, Napier's refusal to use the medium of the Cohong in dealings with the governor-general of Kwangtung led the Cohong to suspend trade with the British. In response, Napier sailed up river to Canton using armed force and issued a public challenge to the emperor on behalf of the king of England and the British merchants. The Chinese authorities relented, trading was resumed and

Napier withdrew to Macao, where he died shortly afterwards on October 11th 1834. The following Superintendents, Davis and Robinson, pursued a more conciliatory strategy.

Meanwhile, widespread opium addiction in China started to drain the country of silver after years of a balance of trade in China's favour. Between 1823 and 1834, 25.2 million Spanish dollars in silver were exported from China, followed by another 4½ million in the next fiscal year alone (Foreign Languages Press 1976 op cit p.17). The dearth of silver was felt not only in the coastal provinces but also throughout the country.

"The most conservative estimate is that at least 100 million dollars' worth, one-fifth of the total amount of silver in circulation in China was drained from the country in the 20 years 1821-40 before the Opium War. This means there was, on the average, an annual loss of 5 million dollars in silver, one-tenth of the Ching government's annual revenue." (ibid)

As a result, the exchange rate of copper (the other form of currency in China) more than doubled in relation to silver (ibid p.18). The depreciation of copper was particularly severe in the south. Peasants and artisans were the hardest hit, the price of their produce being assessed in copper whilst their taxes in silver.

Throughout the 1830s, whilst Chinese merchants and corrupt bureaucrats favoured the legalisation of opium, growing popular sentiments for total prohibition of the drug resulted finally in the appointment of Lin Tse-hsu as Commissioner at Canton in 1839 to implement strict new controls. In two months, he ordered the arrest of sixteen hundred opium dealers, confiscated eleven thousand pounds of opium, forced foreign traders to surrender their stocks of twenty thousand crates and two thousand sacks which were publically destroyed on the beach at Humen (Chesneaux et al. 1977 op cit p.63; Foreign Languages Press 1976 op cit p.29). He also entreated foreign merchants to sign bonds promising to cease all trade in opium. In response, Elliot, the new Superintendant of Trade, urged the British government to declare war on China and directed British merchants to continue large scale armed smuggling of the drug. Tension mounted until on November 3rd 1839, Elliot commanded British ships to open fire on Chinese patrol boats, whereupon ensued the battle of Chuenpi. Six further

incidents, all provoked by Elliot, during the following ten days in the Pearl River estuary formed the prelude to war. By January 1840, an imperial decree formally declared the stoppage of trade with England and military action followed.

THE OPIUM WARS

Having gleaned political, economic and military intelligence since 1823 on all the important ports along the southeastern Chinese coast (Foreign Languages Press 1976 op cit) the British government was well prepared for war. In June of 1840, British naval forces were poised just off the Kwangtung coast ready for invasion. Thwarted at Amoy, they succeeded in taking Tinghai, the Ch'ing government only having prepared for war in the provinces of Kwangtung and Fukien.

"The men forced their way into every house and ransacked every drawer and chest, and the streets were strewn with books, paintings, furniture, utensils and foodstuff ... all of which were taken away... The plundering only stopped when everything of value was gone. Such barbaric behaviour on the part of the British took place not only in Tinghai, but throughout the entire course of the war." (ibid p.40)

From Tinghai, the British fleet sailed northwards towards Tientsin and pressed hard their demands on the Chinese authorities. Resistant to any form of compromise the British forces, led by Henry Pottinger, intensified hostilities and retook Tinghai and moved on to occupy Chinhai, Ningpo, eastern Chekiang, Chapu, Woosung, Shanghai and Chinkiang, a central link between northern and southern China. Such was the ferocity of the British troops that upon storming Chapu, they discovered that "in terror at the coming of the invaders many women had drowned or hanged their children and then followed them to death, and husbands had hanged their wives and cut their own throats" (Holt 1964 op cit p.144). On August 29th 1842, the Chinese emperor conceded to the Treaty of Nanking.

Hostilities had not seriously damaged profits, British trade having continued under the auspices of the American flag at Canton. More importantly, Britain had seized the upper hand in future business affairs

with China. As a result of the first Opium War, the British government wrested from the Chinese sovereign control of the island and harbour of Hong Kong; the opening to British trade of the five "treaty ports" of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai; 21,000,000 Chinese silver dollars indemnity payment; political parity; the abolition of the Cohong monopoly and slashed trade tariffs [see Table 1]. Sino-Western relations were placed on a new footing as the subsequent Treaties of Whampoa and Wanghia signed with America and France extended to their merchants similar privileges to those awarded the British. Autonomous foreign administration of the 'treaty ports' combined with the intimidating policing of the southeastern Chinese coastline by British 'gunboats' ensured a flourishing opium trade. By the middle of the nineteenth century, approximately 800,000 chests per year were being imported to China from India alone (Foreign Languages Press 1976 op cit. p.112) through Hong Kong, the new centre for smuggling.

TABLE 1: EFFECTS OF THE TREATY OF NANKING ON CHINESE TARIFF RATES

Commodities	*Rates before 1843*	*Rates in 1843*	*% reduced*
Cotton	24.19	5.56	77.02
Cotton yarn	13.38	5.56	58.45
1st class cotton cloth	29.93	6.95	76.78
2nd class cotton cloth	32.53	6.95	78.64

Source: Yan Zhongping et al: Selection of Statistical Materials on the History of the Modern Chinese Economy, Kexue Chubanshe, Beijing, 1955 p.59

The effects of the first stage in the "opening" of China, as it is euphemistically termed, soon had a devastating effect on people throughout the entire southeast region of the country. Any economic stability which had become established around the controlled trading through Canton and its established inland communication routes was suddenly overturned,

rendering many people destitute and vagrant (Chesneaux et al 1977 op cit p.72-73). Heavy taxes were exacted from the peasantry to finance the indemnity payment wanted by the British government. A sharp rise in tea and silk export was matched by a flood of British cottons on the Chinese market. Cotton yarn imports, for instance, which amounted to 380,000 lbs in 1830 grew to 3,419,560 lbs in 1840 and multiplied further still to 6,210,024 lbs by 1843 (Siu 1982 op cit pp.187-188). Increased specialisation of textile production demanded by the level of trade accelerated the separation of handicrafts from agriculture in the rural areas of southeast China, transforming established divisions of labour.

From the shaken foundations of the traditional social structure emerged a series of peasant revolts which severely weakened the Ch'ing autocracy. The most prodigious of these was the widespread Taiping Rebellion which swept southeast China throughout the 1850s, establishing separate autonomous Taiping states in the major areas it controlled. This was the period which also witnessed the start of the transportation of indentured Chinese workers (derogatorily termed "coolies") to different parts of the British empire to fill the labour shortages created by the abolition of slavery in 1834. The massive diaspora of indentured Chinese workers was qualitatively different from all previous Chinese emigration in its intensity, its oppressiveness and most importantly, its economic and political impetus. Whereas former emigration had not altered the equilibrium of the existing Chinese social structure, the "coolie" emigration was part and parcel of the disintegration of traditional China.

The trading advantages grabbed by Britain in the first Opium War proved not to be as great as had been hoped. All formal negotiation with China was still conducted through senior Chinese officials rather than directly with Peking and the British had still not been able to claim Canton as an "international concession" with independent rule as they had done at other treaty ports, despite several armed attempts. The opium trade, though incredibly lucrative, was still illegal. The import of cotton textiles from Manchester, had increased but had not reached anticipated scales. Dyed and printed cotton imports, for instance, rose only from 169,521 rolls in 1843 (the year immediately following the first Opium War) to 198,105 rolls

in 1855, the figures having fluctuated considerably in between (Peng 1957 p.491). More and more, the attention of British merchants turned to the northern and inland ports to widen their scope for trade. They pressed for a "revision" of the Treaties but were not entertained by the Manchu government.

With the allied forces of France, British troops seized Canton by force in 1856 and continued northwards from 1859 until they reached Peking, which they captured and looted in 1860. The justification used for invasion was the arrest by Chinese authorities of the crew of the Chinese lorcha, *Arrow* for piracy whilst it was flying the union jack and the execution of a French missionary, Father Chapedelaine, found in an inland province designated out of bounds by the Treaties of 1842 and 1844.

With the Summer Palace burned and ransacked, the emperor agreed to the treaty of Tientsin, drawn up in 1858, and the "Peking conventions" of 1860. The seizing of vast territories in the northeast by Russia whilst the Chinese army was fighting both the European invasion and the internal peasant uprisings was ratified and eleven more ports were opened to the Europeans, including Tientsin and Hankou. Western vessels were allowed access to certain inland waterways and Western missionaries and merchants were granted the right to travel about the country and buy land. The opium trade was legalised and other foreign commodities were exempted from transit tax. Both France and Britain received a war indemnity of eight million taels and acquired the right to send permanent diplomatic missions to Peking. Britain also gained sovereignty of the Kowloon peninsula and Stonecutters Island (both adjacent to Hong Kong island). This second Opium War, having immediately rekindled Britain's dwindling balance of trade with China (see Table 2) and yielded from the emperor the desired privileges, also witnessed an abrupt end to the British neutrality towards the Taiping rebels and British troops were sent to aid their suppression and the slaughter of twenty million people (Chan 1982 p.516).

"[B]y 1865, the once fertile valley was 'strewn with human skeletons, their rivers polluted with floating carcasses, no hands were left to till the soil'. Another eye witness reported that many 'have been driven to cannibalism to satisfy the craving of hunger'." [4]

TABLE 2: DECLARED VALUE OF BRITISH IMPORTS TO CHINA (in £ Sterling)

	1852	*1853*	*1854*	*1855*	*1856*	*1857*
Cottons	1,905,321	1,408,433	640,820	883,985	1,544,235	1,731,909
Woollens	434,616	203,875	156,959	134,070	268,642	286,852
Others	163,662	137,289	202,937	259,889	403,246	431,221
Total	2,503,599	1,749,597	1,000,716	1,277,944	2,216,123	2,449,982

Source: Marx On China 1968 p.89

The deluge of British goods upon the Chinese market following the "opening" of China was further expedited by the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 which lowered shipping costs drastically. Also came the rapid industrialisation of the textile industry through the spread of foreign owned factories and the corresponding demise of indigenous handicrafts. Together with massive imports of opium, kerosene, cereals and sugar, these developments combined systematically to undermine and eliminate the economic base of traditional Chinese society and with it, the long established roles of men, women and the family. Hundreds of thousands of economically displaced peasants were forced to migrate to the fast growing urban industrial centres in search of a wage. In many areas, this migration involved *all* the economically active (Siu 1981 op cit p.84). Even during the twentieth century, working conditions, especially in the foreign owned factories, were appalling. Women workers suffered the worst, sometimes being compelled

"to urinate at their workpoint or to give birth to babies in the hallways of the factories. In fact, due to the 'complications' attached to married women, factory employers were usually reluctant to hire them, with the result that most women workers were between 10 and 18 years old." (ibid p.89)

PUSHED THROUGH THE "OPEN DOOR"

It was by virtue of China's "open door" (a phrase coined by the American government) achieved upon the country's defeat in the second Opium War

that the trafficking of "coolie" workers intensified greatly, resulting in a wave of emigration from China on a scale hitherto unprecedented. The "coolie" trade drew upon limitless numbers of destitute peasants: the economic, political and social penetration of China by the Western powers and the bloody suppression of the Taipings had supplanted millions. Starved to desperation, they were forced into indenture often never to return. For many, the choice was simple: "leave China or perish in the agony of poverty... So many Chinese were forced to combat death with glazed eyes and bloated bellies that the call for labour ... was not difficult to resist" (Chan 1982 op cit pp.516-517). Whilst this system in essence may have appeared more humane than the brutal slave trade which in large part it replaced, in practice there was little difference. At Shanghai, Amoy, Swatow, Nam-oa, Canton and Macao, British, American, French, Spanish and Portuguese "agents" used deception or intimidation to acquire as many Chinese men as possible for shipment under contract to companies in North and South America, the West Indies, Africa and South East Asia for years of hard labour.

"Sometimes the coolies were ruthlessly abducted from their homes and kept prisoner until the boats sailed for their sad new world; sometimes ignorant villagers were persuaded by smooth-tongued agents to sign agreements giving their services for a number of years, and thus became voluntary emigrants; but when they reached their destinations in the British colonies or in South America, where they were sold to planters at prices ranging from 400 to 1,000 dollars a man, the same cruel treatment was given both to the volunteers and to the men whom Chinese crimps had dragged from their homes. William H. Seward, Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of State ... was not exaggerating when he called it 'an abomination scarcely less execrable than the African slave-trade'." (Holt 1964 op cit p.250)

"[T]he British consul, Sir Rutherford Alcock, said in a report that in Canton "when no man could leave his own house, even in public thoroughfares and open day, without danger of being hustled, under false pretences of debt or delinquency, and carried off a prisoner in the hands of crimps, to be sold to the purveyors of coolies at so much a head, and carried off to sea, never again to be heard of, the whole population of the city and adjoining districts were aroused to a sense of common peril." In Shanghai, even some working people who came into the foreign concessions to sell farm produce were seized by British traffickers." (Foreign Languages Press 1976 pp.115-116) [5]

The fully armed vessels which transported the "coolies" from China were commonly described as "floating hells". Closely confined, poorly ventilated steerages and oppressive guards entailed a death rate at sea as high as 45% (ibid). More still, perished attempting to mutiny or as a result of the austere, slave-like conditions which awaited them at their destinations. In some places like Cuba, Chinese "coolies" worked side by side with African slaves (Williams 1964 p.29):

TABLE 3: CHINESE LABOUR ON CUBAN SLAVE PLANTATIONS

Plantation	*Negroes*	*Chinese*
Flor de Cuba	409	170
San Martin	452	125
El Progreso	550	40
Armonia	330	30
Santa Rosa	300	30
San Rafael	260	20
Santa Susana	632	200

Source: Cantero, J.G: Los Ingenios de la Isla de Cuba, 1857, La Haban: p.218 in Williams (1964: footnote 125)

Marx (1951 p.39) made a telling remark on the Chinese situation when he wrote

"We hear nothing of the illicit opium trade, which yearly feeds the British treasury at the expense of human life and morality. We hear nothing of the constant bribery of sub-officials, by means of which the Chinese Government is defrauded of its rightful revenue on incoming and outgoing merchandise. We hear nothing of the wrongs inflicted "even unto death" upon misguided and bonded emigrants sold to worse than Slavery on the coast of Peru, and into Cuban bondage. We hear nothing of the bullying spirit often exercised against the timid nature of the Chinese, or of the vice introduced by foreigners at the ports open to their trade ... because it is the part of policy and prudence not to agitate topics where no pecuniary advantage would result. Thus the English people at home, who

look no further than the grocer's shop where they buy their tea, are prepared to swallow all the misrepresentations which the Ministry and the Press choose to thrust down the public throat."

THE CREATION OF CHINESE 'BUSINESS' COMMUNITIES

Indentured Chinese labourers were imported to colonies throughout South America, the Caribbean, South East Asia and into the expanding industries of the Old Commonwealth, where their immediate living and working conditions appeared to be uniformly wretched. However, the specific economic and political conditions of each country which influenced the subsequent experiences of the indentured Chinese entailed for them profoundly diverse historical legacies. In situations where Chinese were accorded much the same rights as the indigenous population (or rather, where they were denied as many rights), they seem more or less to have become totally assimilated into their local social and economic environment. This appears to have applied in certain South American and Caribbean societies, such as Peru and British Guyana. On the other hand, where the material conditions of emigration entailed political and economic distinctions to be drawn between Chinese and other labour, a proportion of the Chinese remained both economically and socially distinguished, Jamaica being a case in point. The societies of the Old Commonwealth, where the state sought systematically to undermine and penalise imported Chinese workers as original demand for cheap labour began to subside, are those in which the Chinese even today are found to be most heavily concentrated in entrepreneurial economic activity. The development of Chinese 'business' communities in South East Asia, however, has been slightly different. There, Chinese workers have been associated both with the exploitative economic structures that served to bolster the hegemony of the Western colonialists as well as with the latent threat of China's contemporary military might. Nationalistic movements which have been thrown up in these situations have made scapegoats of generations of Chinese, who have retreated increasingly to self-employment and ethnic insularity. The section below illustrates some of the examples above in greater detail.

In Peru, Chinese "coolie" labour "for more than a quarter of a century, ... was the greatest single source of Peruvian wealth" (Stewart 1970 p,95). During the 1860s, over 90,000 Chinese were transported to Peru specifically to shovel and sack bird manure, despite a formal contract stipulating "that the coolie should not be put at labor in the guano beds" (ibid p.96). Ruthless taskmasters and vile climatic conditions accounted for a constant twenty five per cent sickness rate [6], ill health only being acknowledged when a person had no strength even to stand [7]. Duffield (1877 pp.77-78), describing the "coolies'" lot, wrote

"No hell has ever been conceived by the Hebrew, the Irish, the Italian, or even the Scotch mind for appeasing the anger and satisfying the vengeance of their awful gods, that can be equalled in the fierceness of its heat, the horror of its stink, and the damnation of those compelled to labor there, to a deposit of Peruvian guano when being shovelled into ships."

As early as 1854, a group of Englishmen [8] noted that

"two dozen lashes makes them *[ie. "coolies"]* breathless, and when released after thirty nine lashes, they seem slowly to stagger over, reeled and fell, and were carried off to the hospital - in most cases, if they recovered, committing suicide".

Time did not bring improvements. A United States consul to Peru writing in 1870 [9], commented that

"many of them too weak to stand up are compelled to work on their knees picking the small stones out of the Guano, and when their hands become sore from the constant use of the wheelbarrow it is strapped upon their shoulders, and in that way they are compelled to fulfill their daily task *[ie. clearing 4 to 5 tons of guano]* ... Life to the Chinaman under such circumstances possesses no attractive feature ... This feeling necessitates the constant employment of a guard around the shores of the Guano Islands, where they are employed, to prevent them from committing suicide by drowning..."

However, by 1879, the first "coolies" had fulfilled the conditions of their indenture and thus became free workers. Many took the Spanish names allocated to them by former owners, converted to Christianity and married local women. On this subject, an American diplomatic despatch to Lima [10] wrote, "They intermarry with the lower class of whites, mestizas, and cholas, and by these are looked upon as quite a catch for their make good husbands, industrious, domestic, and fond of their children". Comparatively very few returned to China.

"The remainder yet alive were quietly and efficiently adjusting themselves to Peruvian society, either as free workers in agriculture and industry or in some other occupation ... and the descendants of those early Oriental immigrants are now almost indistinguishable from the mass of Peruvian

citizens - be they white, black, red, yellow, or mixed." (Stewart 1970 op cit pp.228-232).

A similar sequence of events characterised the experiences of the Chinese transported to work on the sugar plantations of Guyana. The ten thousand or so discernable Chinese "coolies" recorded in 1866 (Patterson 1975 p.340) gradually declined as they were steadily 'creolised' through intermarriage and prolonged social integration. By the twentieth century, Clementi (1915 p.359) described the situation thus: "British Guyana possesses a Chinese society of which China knows nothing, and to which China is almost unknown".

The Chinese presence in Jamaica, by contrast, continues to be a salient feature of contemporary Jamaican society long after the decline of "coolie" labour for the sugar plantations. For whilst a large proportion of Chinese have become assimilated into the mainly Black population, retail trade on the island is nevertheless dominated quite distinctly by Chinese family firms (Patterson 1975 op cit). According to Patterson (1975 op cit), the difference between the situation in Jamaica and Guyana lies in the fact that the Guyanese sugar industry was redeemed by the importation of further indentured labour from India towards the end of the nineteenth century during the world crisis of sugar prices. "Thus Guyana continued to be a monocrop, plantation-based economy with a relatively simple social and economic system, in which the mass of the population remained largely at the mercy of the planter class" (ibid p.342). In Jamaica, on the other hand, the introduction of banana cultivation as a substitute hailed the relatively rapid diversification and development of the local economy. With fewer claims than Black workers to the land, those Chinese who were unable to sharecrop tended to enter small scale retail trading, some with considerable success. "Economic prosperity made ethnic consolidation possible" (ibid p.329) and links with Far East were rekindled. Sons were sent to China and Hong Kong for enculturation, Chinese wives were procured from the Orient and ethnic trading associations were established (ibid). In Guyana, however, the preferential treatment of Portuguese "coolies" over Blacks and Chinese by the European ruling class tended to preclude independent trade as an economic strategy for the Chinese. Thus, despite the large Jamaican population of mixed Chinese and Black descent (ibid

p.323) it is specifically those Chinese who cornered the retail and wholesale trade and who subsequently reconstructed the boundaries of ethnic exclusivity that are noted as the ethnic Chinese "business" community.

Throughout South East Asia, the historical course for the evolution of both small and large scale Chinese entrepreneurship was somewhat different from the Jamaican experience. Part of the strategy of British and European colonialists in manipulating the established South East Asian trade networks to and from China was the specific development and expansion of the role of Chinese merchants abroad. In this sense, Chinese merchants fulfilled a similar role to that of the Asians in East Africa, as described by Rees (1982 p.87): "They found themselves there largely because a succession of British administrators found their presence convenient, whether as indentured labourers.., or as traders and clerks in the local bureaucracy". Since the Chinese generally were not amongst the ousted trading hierarchies of the pre-colonial era, their economic ascendence presented less of a threat to the hegemony of the East India Company and others of the new order. Hence, a significant proportion of those who owned the mines, plantations, factories, transportation companies, brothels and other workplaces into which "coolies" were sold in South East Asia were themselves Chinese who had amassed considerable wealth under the auspices of the British empire (Tay Erh Soon 1962 op cit). Conditions in the Chinese-owned firms of South East Aisa, however, were no less atrocious than elsewhere for indentured workers. In the British controlled Federation of Malay States, for example, the "men markets" of Singapore and Penang (both British colonies) furnished with Chinese indentured workers the development of tin mining in Perak and Selangor, the sugar plantations in the Protected Native States and also the rubber plantations after the 1909 rubber boom (Campbell 1923).

"Wages were rarely paid ... On the Saga rubber Estate (Negri Sembilan) general provisions or chandu were given the labourers in lieu of wages. [In Perak] Mr J.R.Delmege, Medical Officer Krian, gave evidence: "Sanitation as a rule nil"" (ibid p.23)

Mutual self-help and intra-ethnic bonding does not appear to have been the order of the day amongst the Chinese labourers and plantation owners in

South East Asia. In fact, "When British troops landed in the British colony of Singapore on their way to invade China during the Opium Wars, Chinese merchants in the colony gave their officers a mangificent feast" (Tay Erh Soon 1962 op cit p.45). Nationalism amongst Chinese communities abroad was only really generated after 1890 following repeated efforts by the Manchu government who were seeking financial aid from foreign sources to fight the colonialists and the subsequent rise of the nationalist Kuomintang party (ibid). The growth of overseas Chinese nationalism, however, still did nothing to improve conditions for Chinese "coolies" indentured to Chinese employers.

The ascendance of Chinese merchants and capitalists and their political allegiances have been often interpreted as a threat to national economic independence during the decolonisation process in South East Asian countries. Planned programmes of anti-Chinese discrimination have sought to marginalise as far as possible the economic and political activity of entire Chinese populations. In Malaysia, for instance, certain areas of land were constitutionally reserved for Malays only, statutory quotas protected Malays in public service, scholarships and appointment committees favoured them in the university and government-supported industries were strongly encouraged to favour the recruitment of Malays over Chinese (ibid p.36). The persecution of Chinese throughout post-colonial South East Asian countries has assumed extreme political, economic, social and physical dimensions, such as the massacre of Indonesian Chinese ordered by President Sukarno during the 1960s. It is within this context that many former Chinese labourers in South East Asia have opted for self-employment.

Anti-Chinese labour programmes have not emanated solely from the emergent nationalism of states oppressed by colonialism. In South Africa, for instance, where 100,000 Chinese workers were indentured to the Witwatersrand gold mines at the turn of the twentieth century, a successful anti-Chinese labour campaign (in which a determining role was played by the 1907 British Liberal government) actually led to the mass deportation of all Chinese miners by 1910. The Chinese had been brought in originally to replace the drain of Black South African miners after

wages were slashed following the Boer War (Callinicos 1985 p.64). Working conditions were tough and a high death rate prevailed. Subject to the same strictures as Black miners before them, the Chinese were not allowed to pass freely beyond the confines of mine property, perform any skilled tasks, buy land, trade or pay rent for land (ibid p.65). The Transvaal government had banned all possible means of mobilisation for Chinese workers, including peaceful meetings, a rule tightly enforced by the ruthless Chinese compound police. Nonetheless, a series of strikes, widely publicised desertions whipping up white demands for Chinese repatriation, lowered wages for Blacks and increasing pressure from the British state brought Chinese settlement in South Africa to an abrupt end.

In Australia and New Zealand the extensive employment of Chinese indentured workers was coupled with restrictive immigration quotas, financial penalties for residence and heavy taxation aimed specifically at the Chinese. The adoption of "white Australia" and "white New Zealand" policies served to maintain the subjugation of Chinese labour, thus perpetuating the conditions which rendered "coolie" importation by the colonialists a profitable option.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the height of the Australian 'gold rush' in Victoria saw the introduction of the 1855 Victorian Act restricting Chinese immigration. This was later reinforced by the introduction of a licence fee of £1 on every Chinese resident who was not a British subject in 1857. In 1859, the two previous Immigration Acts were substituted with one which also imposed a £10 entry tax on Chinese arriving by sea. Those arriving by land had to pay £40 and the residence levy was raised from £1 to £4 annually. The measures adopted in Victoria were replicated throughout other states. In 1877, the Queensland government introduced similar restrictions under the Chinese Immigrants' Regulation Act and the Gold Fields Act. In 1878, a thirteen week strike by white workers against the employment of Chinese "coolies" by the Australian Steam Navigation Company, actively supported by the Queensland government, won the withdrawal of Chinese seamen and fed minority demands for concerted anti-Chinese action. In 1881 the Chinese Immigration Restriction Bill was passed, which drastically reduced the entry of Chinese workers, bar the

educated few who could pass the language test, together with merchants and students (Campbell 1923 op cit pp.62-79). Anti-Chinese agitators continued to mobilise against Chinese labour, inciting riots in Victoria (ibid pp. 56-76) and eventually the Chinese were squeezed out of the gold mines and into employment in the peripheral sectors of the economy, such as casual agricultural labouring, market gardening, cabinet making and laundering (Choi 1970).

The American case of Chinese labour exclusion is probably the best documented of all. Recruited principally for the gold mines in California by the Chinese compradores in San Francisco during the mid-nineteenth century, "coolies" at first met with little hostility either in the mine camps or in the local 'boom towns' which serviced them. During this period, California was known in southeast China as "the golden mountain" (Sandmeyer 1973 p.14). As the gold yields declined, however, the Chinese found themselves increasingly reduced to working exhausted seams either by legislation or by physical intimidation, whilst the richer territory was monopolised by white mining contractors. Before long, "Like the Jewish ghettoes of the Middle Ages, the boudaries of San Francisco's Chinatown, and some others, were demarcated by authorities" (Rose 1985 p.188). In the 1860s large numbers of Chinese workers were redeployed to build the Central Pacific Railroad, boring the Sierra tunnel and driving the line east across the deserts of Nevada and Utah.

Some were shipped north to Canada for work on the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). One Canadian labour contractor, Onderdonk, saved $3-5 million by employing Chinese rather than white workers on the CPR (Chan 1982 op cit p.520). After completion of the CPR a poll tax of $50 was levied on each immigrant at the instigation of British Columbia. This was raised to $100 in 1901 and followed by Orders in Council to prevent Chinese from disembarking. Finally the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 forbade entry of persons of Chinese ancestry other than government officials, Canadian born children, merchants and students (Black 1963). Prevented from buying any land outright, the former construction workers dispersed. The majority drifted towards the urban centres of the west, where paid employment was more readily available. Some ventured to the

United States and others went eastwards towards the Maritimes in search of work. Fewer still settled in the towns and villages they came across along the way, selling low cost services like those which had been provided for the railway workers on the CPR (Chan 1982 op cit).

The thousands of Chinese workers thrown into unemployment upon completion of the Central Pacific Railroad on America's west coast were joined by an influx of demobilised workers from the east at the end of the Civil War in 1870, increasing pressure on available employment. Some of the Chinese construction workers remained with the company; others diversified into agricultural labouring, manufacturing and domestic service in the towns and cities of California. During this period, it was estimated that the Chinese constituted as much as one quarter of California's economically active (Saxton 1971 p.7). Most of the jobs, however, were in the nascent small firms engaged in retail, small scale cigar and shoe manufacture, the bulk of industrial development in California being a post-1890 development (Black 1963 op cit). Fierce competition for work led to the Chinese eventually being pushed out of those sectors where white labour was organised, such as construction (Saxton 1971 op cit). Racist mobilisation was fired by a growing anti-Chinese political lobby generated from the ranks of the petit bourgeoisie (Black 1963 op cit) which had achieved moderate success in discouraging employers from giving jobs to the Chinese for fear of reprisals. "Employers who could afford to yield generally preferred to do so." (Saxton 1971 op cit p.6)

For single Chinese women, experience of life in America was acutely exploitative and generally short lived. As successive legislation rendered independent immigration by single women a virtual impossibility, most were prostitutes shipped illegally to America as children by the San Franciscan compradores and sold to brothels as far afield as Canada (Chan 1982 op cit).

"A woman ... had a life expectancy of six to eight years. After that, she was debilitated by disease, beatings and starvation and allowed to "escape" to die at the Salvation Army, or at a "hospital"... Merchants from Victoria were part of the audience that saw women 'stripped and paraded on to a platform where prospective buyers could inspect and bid'" (ibid p.531)

Mounting anti-Chinese racism, occasionally expressed in riots which drove local Chinese from their homes in towns throughout California and forced them to seek sanctury in the "Chinatown" ghetto of San Francisco, culminated eventually in the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This suspended immigration by Chinese workers for ten years, although teachers, students, merchants and travellers were exempted. It also prohibited the naturalisation of Chinese in the United States. The Scott Act of 1888 disallowed the return of any Chinese workers who had left America, effectively barring 20,000 from re-entry who had taken temporary leave. Exclusion was extended an additional ten years by the Geary Act of 1892 and in 1904, the exclusion of Chinese workers from America was enforced on an indefinite basis. The Immigration Act of 1924 prevented the entry of Chinese women to America for residence. Previously, wives of Chinese merchants and American-born Chinese were allowed to enter the country, although the wives of Chinese workers were banned (Nee & Nee 1974, Appendix 2). As in Australia, New Zealand and Canada, these laws systematically reduced and eroded the Chinese working class, whilst disproportionately advancing the interests of those who were business owners or who possessed professional skills.

Quite clearly, the original "coolie" diaspora induced under the auspices of the British empire has spawned a plethora of Chinese settlements throughout the world. Whether or not these have developed into 'business' communities characterised by a high level of self-employment and ethnic patronage has depended upon the specific economic and political structures into which the indentured Chinese became inserted. In situations where they have been most marginalised and vilified by the state and local society, they have tended towards the most ethnically insular forms of economic and social activity. These situations have been moulded out of the global expansion of British and other Western capitalisms and therefore can only be fully understood fully within this context. The final section of this chapter turns to the position of the Chinese in Britain. It illustrates in greater detail how processes of exclusion from the general labour market similar to those practiced in the countries of the Old Commonwealth led once again to the formation of a Chinese community forced back onto its own resources for economic survival.

THE EARLY CHINESE "BUSINESS" COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

Like the "coolie" workers throughout the plantations and mines of the Commonwealth, Chinese were recruited as cheap labour for the British merchant marines during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first Chinese in Britain were thus largely transient, travelling also within the country between the ports of Liverpool, London, Cardiff, Bristol and Glasgow to their next outward berths. Chinese crew contractors, many of whom doubled as boarding house keepers, would secure work for the incoming seamen, who remained in the dock areas of the port cities where they could be assured of Chinese company and procure necessary services. Some of the services on offer to the seamen would be run by Chinese settlers, but it was not until the twentieth century that the famous Chinese laundries became established (Jones 1979), in response to the lack of facilities at boarding houses for washing clothes.

It is worth noting that although the practice of hiring Chinese seamen for British ships was started during the Napoleonic Wars (to substitute for British seamen drafted into military service), Chinese seamen have remained a cheap source of labour ever since. Even in 1982, whilst Chinese (and other non-white) seamen were formally recognised as "British" seamen - ie. "one who, whatever his nationality, is serving on board a British ship" (Strouds Judicial Dictionary 1977 p.328) - their average basic rate of pay at £208 compared adversely with that of UK seafarers at £320 (NUS Executive Minutes: Appendix 5, 1-3/12/82). Wages paid to Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani seamen were less still (ibid). This inequality remains statutorily enshrined in the Race Relations Act of 1976 (MacDonald 1977 p.130). Since Chinese seamen historically have been in a position to command relatively higher salaries than those from India (due to the critical position of the British colonial port of Hong Kong in South East Asia), their numbers in direct British employ have declined since the Second World War, from just under eleven thousand in 1961 to just under nine thousand in 1971 (The 1971 Census of Seamen) [11]. However, a practice which still thrives is the indirect employment of Chinese seamen from Hong Kong by British firms at much cheaper rates through the independent chartering of vessels under a "flag of convenience" (Why Are Seamen Angry?) [12].

One hundred years previously, anti-Chinese racism in Britain enjoyed a higher profile, despite the relatively small numbers of Chinese settlers. May (1973) discussed at length the central role of the popular press in articulating, legitimating and fanning hostility towards the threat of the amorphous "yellow peril". This was a popular derogatory reference both to Chinese workers abroad and to the vast reserves of cheap labour in newly industrialised China, which were percieved as a latent threat to British markets. The journal Justice (3 August 1895, quoted in May 1973 op cit p.116) noted of the British capitalist, "Instead of bringing the Chinaman here to use cotton machinery, he is taking the cotton machinery to the Chinaman." Upon such developments, J.A.Hobson (in Imperialism 1902 p.307, quoted in May 1973 op cit p.119) concluded,

"It is here enough to repeat that Free Trade can nowise guarantee the maintenance of industry or of an industrial population upon any particular country, and there is no consideration, theoretical or practical, to prevent British capital from transferring itself to China, provided it can find there a cheaper or more efficient supply of labour ... It is at least conceivable that China might ... flood their markets with her cheaper manufactures ...".

Protection from the "yellow peril" both at home and abroad became the cry of the day. Sustained media coverage of the use of "coolies" in Australia, South Africa and America consistantly cast the mere presence of Chinese workers as inimical to the interests of local organised labour during the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: "[O]f all races of the world the Chinaman is considered the worst enemy of the British working classes. He not only accepts conditions of labour to which they decline even to listen, but he is a foe to trade unions..." (The Sunday Chronicle 1906, quoted in Waller 1970 pp.92-93). The threat to the indigenous British people of the "yellow peril", as Chinese labour was termed in the newpapers, appeared imminent.

"The isolation of China is a thing of the past, and in a century, if not sooner, we are told, the Chinese will become the principal workman element not only in America but in Europe... In 50 years steam navigation will transport the Chinese at fabulously low prices to all parts of the world." (The Times, 22nd November 1878, quoted in May 1973 op cit p.1)

"They are too strange; their health and cutoms are altogether different; they would constitute a foreign element, tending to lower and degrade us and hinder our development; they would constitute a serious cause of disturbance and disorder in our present social and political condition..."

(Crompton, H: "An infamous Project", Bee Hive 1st February 1873, quoted in May 1973 op cit p.6)

"If Chinese labour - of which there is an enormous supply, should prove generally effective, and remain as cheap as it is at present, the outcry against the "Yellow Peril" is indeed a warning to which the Western world should give heed. Labour at ten cents a day of twelve working hours ... is a prospect appalling to the hardiest competitor.." [13]

Frequent recourse in the press was made to the use of Chinese to undercut prevailing wages and to break strikes, such that the mere arrival of Chinese workers was deemed to spell doom for local white labour. The importation of Chinese into the Beaver Falls Cutlery Company, Pensylvania, for instance, was reported in such a manner by the Times (1st January 1873) that its inevitable concomitant was redundancy for white workers. The Chinese were said to have

"caused considerable dissatisfaction among the white workmen... it is alleged that they were requested to instruct the Chinese in the finer branches of the business, only to be discharged as soon as the Chinese could do the work ... it is stated that the Chinese do the work for $25 (gold) per month which heretofore paid the white workmen $80 per month".

Later that same month, the Times (28th January 1873) also published a letter from Francis Philips, Deputy Charman of the Ebbw Vale Company, where workers were on strike. It read,

"I have had an offer from an eminent contractor to supply us with any amount of Chinese labour, delivered at our works on moderate terms from San Francisco, including skilled miners from Nevada. I shall place the proposal before our board on Thursday next, and hope that prompt action will be taken..."

Upon such issues, the Times (25th Aug 1877) commented

"the employer of labour may be glad ... that he has at command a more docile race of beings ... Their influence on the labour market may not just now be altogether welcome to the white labourer, but if it helps to make him more reasonable, and more industrious than he would otherwise have been, he may perhaps be of opinion by and by that it has not been without its use."

By the turn of the century, bureaucratic layers of the union movement had begun to act in accordance with the publicity campaign, particularly amongst the seamen, of whom Chinese workers accounted for a significant proportion. In 1902, the subject of Chinese indentured workers was first raised at the annual TUC conference and was addressed in terms of their inherent threat to the interests of white labour. Chinese exclusion from

America was generally applauded and within the following few years, anti-Chinese speeches were made and exclusionary resolutions passed at a number of union conferences, such as the National Dock Labourers, the Navvie's Union and the Miners Federation of Great Britain (May 1973 op cit pp.21-27) - in short, those unions "which had most to fear from a potentially limitless supply of cheap, manual labour" (ibid p.122).

The economic confinement of Britain's early Chinese settlers was compounded immeasurably by the Aliens Act of 1905, aimed principally at stopping the entry of East European Jews [14]. This forbade the entry of non-Commonwealth born migrants at all but eight authorised ports and empowered immigration officials to reject anyone who could not prove possession of "means of decently supporting himself and his dependants" (quoted in Broady 1955 p.67), anyone suffering from contagious or "loathsome" disease, one who was mentally afflicted or such as had received any previous conviction for crime. Since the vast majority of Chinese seamen were actually born in China (a non-Commonwealth country), only those who were able successfully to falsify their place of birth as Hong Kong managed to evade the new restrictions (May 1973 op cit).

Implementation of the Act, which conceded to racist demands by legitimising the harassment of "alien" workers by the state, coincided with the heightened political campaigning of the 1906 general election and the demise of the Conservative government led by Balfour. It was during this period that anti-Chinese hostility was intensified, especially in the port cities where Chinese workers were to be found. In London, the arrival and subsequent detention of thirty two Chinese arriving with only ten shillings between them at London's Royal Albert Docks on November 19th 1906, for instance, was branded "unguarded dumping" by the Daily Telegraph (May 1978 p.115) and provided journalist Claude Blake with an excuse to publish a virulently racist article entitled "Chinese Vice in England" in the Sunday Chronicle of the following week. It read

"I thought I had seen the worst of which the race was capable. But a residence of a few weeks in close proximity to them *[ie. the Chinese]* n Liverpool, with the opportunity of studying them by day and night in all the phases of their life, has shown me that they are far worse than I imagined - far less fitted to form an integral part of a civilised white community... If I had a child, I would certainly never let him or her go

near a Chinese shop... when they hear from their countrymen already here that England is a good place where they are allowed to do as they like, they will come in droves and form large colonies at all the ports, as they are already beginning to do in Liverpool, and at Limehouse in London. A serious problem looms ahead, and it had better be grappled with in time." (quoted in Waller 1970 op cit pp.90-91)

In Liverpool, amidst agitation in the local press, the Liverpool Trades Council passed several anti-Chinese resolutions (May 1978 op cit p.114) and a separate Chinese seamen's union was established (Broady 1955 op cit p.68). However, the precise source of the apparent surge of feeling was not at all clear, as expressed by the local Chief Constable who speculated "that what is really at the bottom of most of it is the competition of the Chinese with the laundries and boarding-house keepers" (quoted in May 1973 op cit p.115) in a letter to the Home Secretary dated 8th December 1906.

The popular press of the time abounded with anti-Chinese propaganda. Much was alleged about the degradation of the Chinese residents and the detrimental effects of their social integration with local British people. Issues 6, 8 and 11 of the Liverpool Courier, for instance, called for the expatriation of the Chinese in England as well as South Africa, warning that "the race is in danger of becoming tainted with Chinese blood" (quoted in Waller 1970 op cit p.94). It continued,

"It is at once sorrowful and sickening to observe apparently decent British woman succumbing to the attractions of the yellow man, but it is to be seen not alone in Chinatown, but wherever Chinese laundries are established, that is to say, all over Liverpool... The propogation of half-bred Chinese and English in Liverpool is not a matter to be treated lightly... Such a degraded type should not be allowed to grow up in our midst to be a source of contamination and further degradation for generations ahead..." (quoted in Waller ibid)

Such was the degree of concern aroused on the subject of Chinese/English marriages during this period that two special reports were commissioned upon the subject, by Liverpool City Council (1906) and a later one in London (1910). The latter concluded upon the subject that "however undersirable this may be from an English point of view, there is nothing criminal about it" [15]. Nonetheless, such attitudes did not silence the journalistic bigotry which at times reached fever pitch, advocating direct

action against the Chinese. Claude Blake writing again for the Sunday Chronicle expounded

"Is Great Britain going to profit by the bitter experience of America and Australia, by the experience of all white communities cursed by the influx of the yellow men? Or is she going to wait and deal with the scourge after half a million or so of Chinamen have settled in these islands to contaminate the white race?... 'We are not going to have Liverpool turned into a yellow town' they say - and they are right. They are not going to accept from the Flowery Land a civilisation and morality infinitely lower than their own." (quoted in Waller 1970 op cit pp.93-94)

Blake's inflammatory articles contrasted markedly with a considerably less publicised letter by Birkenhead's Chief Constable to the Home Secretary in 1906 (HO45 11843/139147. quoted in May 1973 op cit p.90) which stated "The police find the resident Chinese quiet, inoffensive and industrious people ... there is no evidence to show that their morals are any worse than those of the rest of the community". Similarly, in a report entitled "The English Illustrated" (G.A.Wade in Review of Reviews, quoted in May 1973 op cit p.91), passing reference was made to the local Chinese at Limehouse, to the effect that "He is on good terms with his neighbours, most of whom speak well of him. He is picturesque in a region where it is sadly needed."

New by-laws passed under the Merchant Shipping Act of 1894 had subjected all boarding houses to regular inspection by local authorities at risk of having their licences withdrawn if evidence of opium smoking or gambling were found or if the premises were unsanitary (Jones 1979 p.398). Moreover, the Factory and Workshops Acts ensured laundries were periodically insepcted for cleanliness (Waller 1970 op cit p.98). Indeed, Liverpool City Council's Commission of Inquiry had remarked favourably upon hygiene standards in Chinese businesses (May 1978 op cit p.114). The exercise of statutory controls, however, was not sufficient to stop accusations in the newspapers that "nearly all" Chinese laundries, shops, boarding-houses and restaurants were simply blinds for the "gambling, opium-smoking and indescribable vice which is carried on in the back rooms and below and above stairs" (Blake 1906, quoted in Waller 1970 op cit p.91).

The year 1906 also witnessed the introduction of the Merchant Shipping Act which imposed a language test for all non-British recruits and a five yearly census of seamen, both of which provided further fodder for anti-Chinese agitators. Widely publicised were the Chinese seamen seeking to evade the language test by claiming British citizenship by falsified Hong Kong or Singaporean birth (eg. in The Seaman - the official journal of the National Union of Seamen - February 1908, July 1908, May 1909; Cardiff Maritme Review 8th July 1911) rather than the attack on seamen's employment conditions enshrined in the new law. This racist publicity drew credibility from the rising figures for Chinese and Lascar recruitment readily available from the newly established seamen's census.

Formally barred from a diverse range of manual employment by the trade union bureaucracy and compelled to ensure financial security under threat of deportation, Chinese settlers turned to self-employment and ethnic patronage. Such was the basis of the establishment of the first Chinese laundries during the first decade of the twentieth century. By 1911, about thirty laundries could be found both in Cardiff and London, whilst Liverpool supported approximately fifty (Jones 1979 op cit).

Anti-Chinese hostility continued to brew, especially amongst native British seamen, amidst a climate in which a new Liberal government recently had been returned on the pledge to rid South Africa of Chinese "coolies". In London's East End on May 9th 1908, union pickets prevented a group of Chinese seamen signing-on at the Board of Trade offices. Their places on board a ship at Cardiff were subsequently filled by a European crew. On the following Monday, events were repeated and pickets more numerous, though on this occasion the police were summoned to escort the Chinese seamen into the buildings where they were successfully engaged. The fact that it was reported that very few of the Chinese involved could speak English (The Daily Chronicle 12 May 1908, quoted in May 1973 op cit p.40) underlined the organisational obstacles to mobilising British and foreign workers together.

1911 was the year of the seamen's strike over union recognition, wages and conditions. Lacking vital international support, strike funds and dockside

allies, "Captain" Tupper, leader of the Seamen's Union turned frustrations at Cardiff onto the local "yellow peril" in order to secure support from the city's dockers (Evans 1980 p.7). The highly charged situation at Cardiff errupted on July 20th in a night of violence leaving all of the city's thirty Chinese laundries vandalised (Jones 1979 op cit p.399). A number of factors contributed to this. The almost exclusive export traffic in freight at Cardiff meant that it was primarily a traditional 'signing-on' port and therefore the virulently anti-union Shipping Federation was able to operate a tighter monopolistic control over wages and conditions, exacerbating competition for work. Cardiff contrasted to Liverpool, noted for its import trade, where Chinese sailors were mostly disengaged (ibid p.86) and were therefore not perceived so much to be in direct competition with other seamen. Also, unlike Lascars, who generally remained with one ship, Chinese seamen more frequently changed berths, resubmitting themselves at British ports. The hostility generated by the activities of Chinese seamen at Cardiff thus came to a head when shipowners repeatedly attempted to draw in Chinese crews as strikebreakers (May 1973 op cit p.58). Thus, although Chinese formed less than seven per cent of the foreign seamen serving on British ships at the time [16], it was they who were the scapegoats of the 1911 seamen's strike.

The laundry shops at Cardiff were an easy target. However, they were not looted, nor were their workers sought out for personal attack, two features which indicate that the strength of anti-Chinese feeling might not have been as widespread as is often assumed (ibid p.128). Common conjecture is that the seamen's union was at the root of the rioting. This may well have been true but union membership never rose above twenty per cent amongst seamen in Britain and of these, nearly half were foreigners (Lindlop 1972, quoted in Lunn 1985 op cit p.11). The anti-Chinese hostilities therefore can only have represented the sentiments of a small fraction of seamen. Nonetheless, events at Cardiff were illustrative of the general mood that favoured Chinese exclusion from the British labour market, a mood doubtlessly sensed in no uncertain terms by the Chinese themselves.

In 1914, immigration and deportation controls were extended under the Aliens Restriction Act as a war time measure. Under the Act, 'aliens' could be refused entry on the discretion of an immigration officer, they were required to register with the police and could be deported simply if it was deemed "conducive to the public good" (quoted from Rees 1982 p.79). They were also required to live in certain areas and were confined to particular jobs (Gordon and Klug 1985 p.2), curtailing still further any opportunities for Chinese settlers to diversify within the economy.

The exigencies of war swelled the numbers of colonial merchant seamen serving on British ships as eight thousand natives were conscripted into the armed forces and a further nine thousand from those countries considered hostile instantly dismissed (Gordon & Reilley 1986). Many Chinese, previously used on well demarcated routes to the East, were now also engaged on the Atlantic trade (Evans 1980 op cit). These developments culminated once more in activities directed against Chinese sailors (amongst others) at the close of the war in 1919 when some of the demobilised returned to find themselves dislocated from previous jobs. In February of that year, seamen assembled at Cardiff and Newport, refusing to join any ship on which Chinese were employed, calling upon the Admiralty at Cardiff to repatriate the Chinese (Evans 1980 op cit p.12). In June racist violence, (this time including murder), errupted again at Cardiff but it was also paralleled at Newport, Barry, South Shields, Liverpool London, Manchester and Glasgow (May & Cohen 1974, Evans 1980 op cit). The outburst at Cardiff again entailed vandalism against Chinese laundries but was more "A general melee involving whites, blacks and police" (Evans 1980 op cit p.14). At Liverpool, four crews of the Blue Funnel Line (a company with an established tradition of Chinese employment) refused to sail under a Chinese man as Chief Steward when there were "thousands of Britishers wanting berths" (quoted in May & Cohen 1974 p.119)

The post war economic turmoil which gave rise to the 1919 'race riots', as they have been termed, also witnessed the permanent establishment of the stringent war time immigration controls under the 1919 Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act. The new Act also prohibited 'aliens' from inciting

'industrial unrest' where they were employed for under two years on pain of imprisonment (Gordon & Klug 1985 op cit p.2). In 1920, under the Aliens Order, non-British, non-self supporting residents were deported. Many Chinese were expelled purely on grounds of gambling or opium smoking (HO45 11843/139147/157 cited in May 1978 op cit p.120). "The effect of this restrictive immigration policy", explained Broady (1955 op cit p.67), "was appreciably to reduce, if not stop, the immigration of Chinese ... after 1919". In this a hostile environment, ethnic patronage for employment amongst Chinese in Britain increasingly determined the parameters of economic and social life for the Chinese in Britain, such that by the time of the 1931 Census there were over five hundred Chinese laundry shops in Britain (Jones 1979 op cit p.309). By 1945 there were one hundred in Liverpool alone (ibid).

CONCLUSION

According to a method of political economy, this chapter has sought to establish the historical foundations of entrepreneurial Chinese communities. These foundations bear very little relation to aspects of traditional Chinese culture. Indeed, the asiatic mode of production which characterised China before the advent of the British actually discouraged migration and trade. Rather, the 'business' oriented Chinese settlements throughout the world have originated from the integration of China into the world capitalist markets through subjugation to the imperialist economies of the West (and particularly Britain). This central relationship structured the emigration of millions of indentured Chinese labourers to countries throughout the developing capitalist empires. Many of these emigrants settled permanently where they were sent, eventually merging with the local population. On the other hand, in societies where the state divided off the interests of the Chinese substantially from others, they remained both economically and ethnically distinct. This depended directly upon the degree to which racism was employed to define their situations. The case of South East Asia has been somewhat different in that a specific class of Chinese merchant traders was developed, consolidated and entrenched by the Western colonialists. The vast majority of entrepreneurial Chinese communities, however, share a common

history of labour market exclusion and hostility from the surrounding society. Such were the origins of the early Chinese 'business' community in Britain, the seafaring settlers who were forced systematically to rely upon any available resources for economic survival.

The next two chapters focus upon the contemporary entrepreneurial Chinese community in Britain. This was built partly upon the already existing links with Chinese firms in the laundry trade, although under quite different immediate circumstances, as revealed in Chapter 3. These circumstances as much dictated the demise of the Chinese laundries as the rise of Chinese restaurants, the modern 'business' niche for Chinese. What is also revealed in Chapter 3 is how this situation was borne out of the post War immigration of Chinese which was merely the latest stage in the diaspora of Chinese labour underwritten by the British colonial exploitation of Hong Kong. Largely unskilled, the majority of these migrants were channelled by work permits and vouchers into jobs in which they could demonstrate that their ethnicity was a specific and necessary qualification for work. This precluded the laundry trade but not specialised ethnic catering.

CHAPTER 3

THE CATERING INDUSTRY, MIGRANT LABOUR AND THE CHINESE COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION

Having set the general historical context within which Chinese 'business' communities have developed, the study now turns to the contemporary situation of the Chinese in Britain. This is one in which the ethnically exclusive entrepreneurial niche appears to have endured over a century. Indeed, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee (1984-85 p.xi) reported that "about 90 per cent" or more Chinese were employed in a single industry (catering), of which "perhaps 60 per cent" were self-employed in family-run ventures. However, a consideration of the material factors conditioning the situation of the Chinese presented throughout the next two chapters demonstrates clearly that cultural, biological or ecological forces have played no determing role. Rather, the 'business' orientation of the Chinese community today is still rooted in the legacy of British colonialism in China and the continuing relationship this established between colonial labour and the interests of capital at the metropolitan core. The more specific circumstances structuring the present situation of the Chinese in Britain however, are quite different from those which drew the original merchant seamen into the laundry trade. The current position of the Chinese community relates to the evolution of the capitalist economy in Hong Kong under British rule in combination with the contemporaneous development of the catering industry in Britain. Whilst the two processes are inextricable in terms of structuring the lives of Chinese in Britain, they have been separated out for analytical purposes in the following text. This chapter deals firstly with the historical development of Britain's catering industry, setting into perspective the objective conditions into which Chinese migrants became incorporated into the British economy after the War. The focus then turns upon the migrants themselves, the material forces which underpinned their emigration and their personal responses to it. This serves as a backdrop to the next Chapter, which discusses in

detail people's present day experiences in the ethnic catering niche of the economy as they relate to the pivotal themes of the study.

APPROACHING THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CATERING INDUSTRY

The development of the catering industry in Britain can be broken down into four distinct periods. The first relates to the time prior to the Second World War, during which catering was characterised predominantly by domestic service and craft production. The second period corresponds to the era of the 'war economy' and the introduction of factory canteens and state restaurants. The third period, the most important in understanding the emergence of the Chinese catering sector, begins with the post war economic expansion. The final period, dealt with in Chapter 4, relates to the contemporary profile of the catering trade and the rise of monopoly capital in the industry from the 1970s onwards.

The growth of industrial catering throughout these four periods has been contingent upon two underlying factors. The first is the fact that the general conditions surrounding the expansion of commodity meal production for a mass market have borne an inverse relationship to the conditions surrounding catering in the home. Stated more simply, as the material basis for catering in the home has been increasingly undermined, (for instance, by the re-entry of married women into the labour force), the potential for the expansion of industrial catering has enlarged correspondingly. This has contributed to the second factor, which is that technological advancement within the industry has led to a substantial drop in the cost of 'eating out' in comparison to cooking at home, further expanding the potential for the catered meals market. This fall in the price of 'eating out' over the years has reflected the unceasing attempts by catering capitalists and the state to secure ever more productive combinations of capital and labour in the race to increase profits in accordance with the fundamental laws of capitalist production. These factors constitute the basic framework within which the development of the industry and the position of migrants within in it can be charted.

THE ORIGINS OF INDUSTRIAL CATERING

Industrial catering for the mass consumer market emerged relatively late on the British scene, having developed rapidly in a relatively short period of time. Prior to 1940 the scale of the industry was small and grounded in domestic service. In 1881 one in seven of the working population was employed as a servant (there are no figures for cooks alone) and even as late as 1931, as many as 1.3 million people still earned a living from service to the upper and middle classes (Wiggins 1985). As a "holding category" for expectant urban workers [1], domestic service was filled heavily by migrant labour. Catering work, therefore, has figured traditionally as a characteristic of the migrant experience in Britain. Yet only six years after the end of World War II, employment in domestic service had dropped by seventy one per cent. Indeed, the fifty years between 1931 and 1981 witnessed a total reversal of the ratio of workers employed in private, domestic service to those in public hotels and catering (see Table 4 below).

TABLE 4: EMPLOYMENT IN THE FOOD SECTORS 1901-1981 (000s)

	1901	*1931*	*1951*	*1981*
Domestic Service	1340	1300	380	80
Hotels & Catering	340	460	850	1350
Agriculture	1050	830	810	50
Food Distribution	550	770	850	950
Food Manufacture	440	620	760	660

Source: Wiggins 1985

The enormous growth of employment in industrial catering over domestic service was a direct outgrowth of the 1939-1945 War, during which time enormous levels of state investment and subsidy induced a dramatic shift in the organic composition of capital in the catering industry.

THE WAR YEARS

The Second World War was the first true total war in which civilians often were as much on the front line of death and destruction as military personnel. All potential productive forces within the economy were mobilised, which entailed huge demands for labour during a period when large sections of the population were already conscripted into military service. Still dependant upon food imports, Britain soon faced imminent food shortages. Without the intervention of the state, it was clear that industrial production - the key to military success - would break down under the exigencies of war. The regulation of food supplies (i.e. rationing) and the widespread expansion of publically provided meals thus were introduced.

Control of food consumption and the extension of communal feeding served the 'War Effort' in many ways. Not only were they functionally necessary for maintaining the productivity of labour in general; they specifically freed large numbers of women from domestic cooking in the home for the expansion of both state and private enterprises at a period when male workers were being conscripted en masse into armed service. As commented by the Labour Research Department (in Wiggins ibid p.4), "If women are to enter industry ... they must be freed from the necessity of providing meals for husbands and children. The extension of canteens in schools and factories accomplishes this purpose." Moreover, the state regulation of food prevented widespread profiteering and served to bolster civilian morale during a time of crisis and the fragmentation of the family. Napoleon's conviction that a military army 'marched on its stomach' was equally applicable to Britain's industrial army in the 1940s.

Within months of the outbreak of hostilities the state set about establishing a national framework which would provide catering facilities for workers. The Factory Canteens Order of 1940 (No. 1993) directed owners of factories engaged in War time or government work employing more than two hundred and fifty workers to provide suitable canteen facilities selling hot meals. In following years similar Orders where given to cover firms engaged in construction, engineering and dock work. A Chief Inspector of Factories was charged with the responsibility for ensuring that these

Orders were carried out. By 1942, 7528 work place canteens had been established and a further eight hundred were under construction (Labour Research Department 1943 p.10). However, the rapid and enormous expansion of workplace canteens still did not address the needs of the majority of workers. Half of all factory employees were estimated to work in places where the total number of staff was less than 250 (ibid). Indeed, the Chief Inspector of Factories noted in his report for 1941 (ibid) that "The feeding of the workers in these small places still presents many problems ... Many smaller employers even if they the desire to so, may not have the facilities for providing a canteen." Thus, in recognition of the shortfalls of the factory canteens, the state also introduced a system of Community Feeding Centres throughout Britain providing subsidised and unrationed hot meals at 8d to 1/- each. Many such restaurants developed a pre-packaged food service and cash and carry schemes. Primarily targetted at workers who failed to benefit from workplace canteens, these food outlets were used also by housewives, evacuees and residents of bombed areas, for the reason that, as Lord Woolton Minister for Food (in Hull & Jenkinson 1985) put it, "A nation that is not well fed looses both the power to work and the will to win."

The new subsidised restaurants constituted a difficult ideological pill to swallow for the food and catering capitalists, so much so that the term 'Community Restaurant' was never officially adopted. Churchill (ibid) thought it to be "suggestive of communism, and the workhouse" and renamed Community Restaurants, 'British Restaurants'. By 1943, two thousand British Restaurants had been opened, serving in excess of a daily six hundred thousand meals (Labour Research Department 1943 op cit). At peak growth it was estimated that at least two restaurants were opening every day throughout the UK. Most were run by local authorities, although a few voluntary agencies were also involved. Set up in pre-fabricated buildings, requisitioned shops and schools, British Restaurants provided many thousands of people with their first formal taste of 'eating out'.

Clearly, this state-induced extension of mass public catering expanded the productive capacity of the industry but it did not necessarily entail state control. Despite British Restaurants and industrial canteens accounting for

66.5 million meals per week and approximately one thousand new eating places per year, the private sector still provided a weekly sixty two million meals (ibid p.10). Throughout the War private catering businesses continued to consolidate their market position, often taking advantage of the profitable opportunities offered by new legislation. The relatively small size of most factories meant that many owners simply were not able to offer canteen facilities. Thus, subcontractors soon became an attractive means of complying with government legislation. By 1942 the National Society of Caterers to Industry claimed that their members operated some two thousand works canteens serving half a million meals daily (ibid). Other sources reported over one third of the industrial canteen market to be in the hands of sub-contractors of one form or another (ibid). Flourishing conditions for the expansion of small and large scale private caterers also witnessed the absorption of many migrants into the industry. The Labour Research Department (ibid p.11) noted that "Hotels, restaurants, and pubs have had to fall back on refugee and Irish labour to a great extent".

Whilst the introduction of readily available hot food was an important benefit to most workers, the meals themselves often were not quite the appetizing experience that some War time menus seem to have suggested. For example, a report carried by a 1943 edition of New Propellor, paper of the Engineering & Allied Trades Shop Stewards Council, told of maggots "thriving" on the pies served by particular catering firm. Such variable quality of catering service was indicative of the low profit margins generated by the 'contracting system', of which the underlying rationale was to reduce production costs. Companies tendering the most competitive bids (i.e. lowest costs rather than quality of service) secured the greatest number of contracts. This practice highlighted the extremely marginal economic postion of food catering which was under constant pressure to keep wages and operating expenditure to a minimum. Many catering companies sought to do this by operating a franchise sytem of management. In many canteens, managers were responsible for achieving profit targets (of up to 30% and 40%). "In some cases the manager's own wages depend on the profits made - in other cases if he does not make enough he is told to get out" (Labour Research Department 1943 op cit). The pressure to

maintain profits, therefore, not only restrained wages but also invariably resulted in low quality products.

By 1942 over 108 million meals per week were being eaten outside the home (ibid p.10). Clearly food rationing, workplace canteens and British Restaurants, introduced to cope with food shortages and a radically reorganised workforce, did more than simply sustain people through a difficult time: they also brought about lasting changes in mass consumer eating habits.

"Of all the changes wrought by war-time conditions, those pertaining to our food, its amount, its quality and the conditions under which many of us eat have been as widespread as any... Although many of our pre-war favourite dishes are missing, the population as a whole has never been better nourished. The outstanding change has been the new habit of taking more meals away from home. The packet of sandwiches that used to come to accompany a number of workers for their midday meal is, in many cases, no longer possible. The navvy carrying his basin wrapped up in a red hankerchief, or cooking for his breakfast a rasher of bacon on a shovel has largely disappeared. There is no longer enough on the ration to provide the sandwiches, and a rasher of bacon today is a comparative luxury. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that works canteens and British Restaurants have become popular. In both, the quality and variety of food is excellent. People who never used to eat in public are now doing so. Moreover, they like it." (Hull & Jenkinson 1985 op cit)

The establishment of 'eating out' on a regular basis created an enormous potential market for private catering firms, such that even before the War had ended, catering capitalists were making substantial headway into this new consumer market. The Food Boards, set up to regulate the supply and organisation of the War time food economy, increasingly became representative of private sector interests alone. Through the Food Boards, major national companies like Lyons were able to exert strong pressure to curtail the growth and scope of state-provided restaurant and canteen facilities, which they feared would gradually undermine their profit margins. Deputations from local and national trading associations led Lord Woolton to decree that before any British Restaurant could be opened, local businesses had to be consulted. More significantly, Restaurant subsidies were brought more firmly under control, with local authorities being instructed to charge prices that would cover all running costs and repay initial capital expenditure on restaurant construction. Thus was launched a

concerted drive to establish British Restaurants as profit-making enterprises. Of the three hundred and twenty two local authorities who furnished trading accounts, one hundred and sixty two made a profit in 1942. This put pressure upon the rest to increase prices whilst other authorities became more cautious about setting up new restaurants, particularly as losses would have to be borne by the ratepayer. As the Labour Research Department (1943 op cit) stated, "This is just what the private caterers want".

THE ECONOMICS OF POST WAR CATERING PRODUCTION

The intervention of the state during the War had transformed catering from a private, domestic service enjoyed only by few to a commercial utility accessible to many. However, in comparison to other industrial sectors, catering still remained a relatively minor feature of the immediate post War economy. For the removal of food catering from its former domain of the home and the family (in other words, its 'socialisation'), achieved through massive War time state investment, did not maintain momentum following the end of the War. Demobilisation of the armed forces swelled the pool of available workers, pushing women out of the labour force. Between 1947 and 1948, 1.4 million women left engineering employment alone (German 1987). In addition, an end to the disruption caused by bombing, conscription and evacuation had reduced the underlying imperative for the state to perform a leading role in key areas of social reproduction such as food catering. Thus the years immediately after the War witnessed the systematic withdrawal of the state from its direct intervention in many aspects of economic and social life, one of these being the subsidisation and provision of meals to the general public.

This did not mean the total abstention of the state from catering and meal provision. Food rationing, for example, continued until 1953 and whilst the civic restaurants and emergency feeding stations rapidly disappeared, the factory canteen legislation remained. Moreover, included amongst many other post War reforms conceded by the state was the introduction of public sector institutional catering services established under the new Health and Education Acts. These new facilities drew upon a ready supply of staff

trained during the War. Bevin estimated that the army alone had employed over 100,000 cooks (Labour Research Department 1943 op cit p.24). Nevertheless, the overall level of state intervention still dropped dramatically from War time levels, the cost of socialised meal provision having been a heavy burden for both state and private sector capital. Quite simply, the logic of regulated food rationing and subsidised meals for all who needed them was not that which underpinned a capitalist free market economy like that of Britain. Hence, the future development of food catering was to rest with private sector capital investment depending upon the profits to be reaped within the industry.

The development of industrial catering after the War was predicated upon the realisation of profit rather than the satisfaction of social need. Consequently, with the withdrawal of state subsidies to public catering, the number of meals consumed outside the home began to fall as meal prices rose to a level which rendered surplus values for catering capital. In short, 'eating out' became more expensive and, as a consequence, less popular. For these reasons, profitable mass meal production was difficult to sustain amidst a general economic climate of high growth and investment. This was because of the comparatively low ratio of fixed capital (ie. the instruments used for production, such as machinery, tools, etc) to the amount of labour necessarily employed in order for profits to accrue in industrial catering. This low ratio of technology to labour power which prevailed in catering just after the War (in Marxist terminology, this was a specific stage in the *organic composition of capital* in the industry) entailed a comparatively large amount of labour time for the production of catered meals, which pushed up the value of meal products relative to other commodities. The relatively high price of cooked meals therefore encouraged a return to unwaged cooking in the home, which was in turn a disincentive for industry investment and development.

The dearth of historical data makes an extremely difficult task of analysing the precise implications of the low rate of profit in the catering industry immediately following the War. Nevertheless, broad patterns indicate that the withdrawl of state investment in catering clearly curbed its expansion of the War period. This was compounded by the

relatively low rates of profit rendered by food catering compared to other sectors of industrial investment, despite conditions of general economic growth. Thus, lacking the substantial competition of the state or monopoly capital, continued development of the industry rested on small businesses, many of which by this stage were run by migrants and refugees.

CATERING FOR CHANGE: 1945-1970

"Twenty years ago we would sell literally hundreds of breakfasts. Now it's down to twenty - even that is on a busy day ... I think the traditional breakfast has just finished." (Cafe owner quoted in Hull & Jenkinson 1985 op cit)

Despite the reduction in state investment and low rate of profit, both of which had restricted growth in the catering industry following the War, a period of general economic expansion soon brought about a resurgence in the need (as opposed to effective demand) for ready-cooked meals. Before long, existing catering capitalists surmised

"The amount of people who eat out is likely to grow over the next four years. Already there are any number of families who never sit down to a meal together ... cooking in the home is on the decline. The serious loss of family cohesion is, not for the first time, a benefit to our industry." (reported in Catering Times 1983)

The "loss of family cohesion", both during and after the War, was the product of women drawn into the labour force. For even though the numbers of paid women workers had declined significantly following demobilisation, they increased again by roughly the same number during the 1950s, reabsorbed back into the labour market as a result of the shortage of workers engendered by the economic boom (German 1987 op cit). In America, for instance, ten million more married women joined the labour force in the twenty years after 1945 (Friend & Metcalf 1981 p.57). In Japan, the number of women working outside the home rose from two to twelve million between 1950 and 1970 (ibid). Similarly, in Britain, although the increase was not so dramatic, a 2.2 million rise in the number of working women accounted almost entirely for the 2.4 million increase in the working population as a whole between 1951 and 1971 (ibid). By 1971, women were forty per cent of the domestic workforce (having risen from twenty nine per cent in 1931)

and by 1976, fifty eight per cent of all women of working age in Britain were in paid employment - one third working full time and one fifth working part time. As Friend & Metcalf (ibid) commented,

"Increasingly, the maintenance of family living standards has come to depend on two or more wage packets and all adult female labour has become potential wage labour - as many as a quarter of the mothers of pre-school children are employed."

Women's growing rate of participation in paid employment continued into the 1960s and 1970s (Bruegel 1979) and by 1981 they constituted 42.6% of the working population (Census of Employment 1981). In some sectors (namely part time, lowly paid jobs) such as catering, women account for up to sixty seven per cent of all employees (Wiggins & Lang 1985 p.37)

The increasing proportion of waged women workers in the post War period has been paralleled by the re-emergence of catered meal commodities in the form of 'fast food'. .The term 'fast food' denotes a specific technological and organisational trend within the contemporary food catering industry whereby standardised meals are produced at rapid rate for immediate consumption either on or off the premises where they are purchased. Production characteristically comprises extensive use of highly developed, labour-saving cooking equipment combined with simplified, standardised ingredients. Whilst the major hamburger, fried chicken and pizza outlets have taken this trend to its most advanced form by capital investment in labour-saving technology on a massive scale, 'fast food' is a term which also describes the trade of fish and chip shops, cafes, snack bars, 'take-aways' and many restaurants. The term is least applicable to haute cuisine restaurants, where labour intensive meals are produced on an individual basis by specialists.) This phenomenon was recognised by Angela Davis (1982 p.243):

"enterprising capitalists have already begun to exploit women's new historical need to emancipate themselves from their roles as housewives. Endless profit making fast food chains like McDonalds and Kentucky Fried Chicken bear witness to the fact that more women at work means fewer daily meals prepared at home. However unsavoury and unnutritious the food, however exploitative of their workers, these fast food operators call attention to the approaching obselescence of the housewife."

Whilst the idea that fast food was developed primarily as a result of women's struggles is perhaps somewhat contentious, Davis' example nevertheless reflects the important relationship between the development of

post War commercial catering and the growing presence of women in the labour force.

Other factors too, have influenced the development of the fast food market. As production processes have become increasingly complex and sophisticated, the qualitative conditions of paid employment have been transformed accordingly, such that labour power has been used more rationally and intensively. Lengthened commuting distances to work for a growing number of people has increased demand for quicker and more convenient meals. The effects on general eating habits have been noted by Hull & Jenkinson (1985 op cit): "Lunch has become more of a snack, people are rushing in and out. The average home now tends to have its meal in the evening as against lunchtime, which it used to be, thirty or forty years ago." In addition, the technological advances in contraception, affording greater personal regulation of fertility, have entailed families becoming smaller in size but greater in number. Indeed, it has been estimated that family units over the last decade have been increasing by an average of 13,000 per year (Desmond et al. 1981 p.107). As a result, the average consumer household is estimated to be gaining greater collective spending power with the shift towards more than one member of the household being a wage earner. Less than one third of UK households now have only one wage earner and the trend is expected to continue (Fast Food 1978). Given these changes, the price of 'eating out' has come increasingly within the reach of the mass of the population in terms of time and money. This is particularly so since women's wages have grown as a proportion of total household income.

In sum, the conditions leading to the development of the post War fast food catering industry have been but a part of the demographic and social shifts in the general restructuring of the economy. These have culminated in considerable technological development within the catering industry itself during the late 1960s and early 1970s, which have raised considerably the level of productivity and profits through the expansion of flexible production techniques and range of products (see Chapter 4 for more detailed discussion). Mainly due to the cheapness and pliability of their labour (enforced through institutional racism) migrant workers have played a key role throughout this process. The case of the Chinese perhaps is one

of the clearest illustrations, since the particular circumstances of their migration have led them to concentrate almost exclusively in the fast food catering trade. The remainder of the Chapter therefore is devoted to the post War labour immigration and experiences of the Chinese.

IMMIGRATION AND THE BOOM

As stated at the beginning of the Chapter, the history of migrants in catering work dates back to the late nineteenth century, as documented by Hull & Jenkinson (1985 op cit) from Birmingham's City Museum archives:

"There was a man with a horse an' a hot machine at the back of him - he used to shout, - 'tatties and latte' - he was an Italian. You'd go to him - 'a penn'orth please'. He'd say 'help yourself to the salt'. You'd put your fingers in the salt and put it in the bag - you'd say 'blimey that's hot'."

Also by this period large scale international immigration had become a normal phenomenon of the world capitalist economy. For instance, the years from 1820 to 1924 witnessed the migration of some thirty six million people (87% European) to the United States alone (Miles 1982 p.161) and in Britain during the 1840s the Irish population doubled to reach almost eight hundred thousand (Walvin 1984 p.40).

In 1945 there were no more than twenty five thousand people in Britain of New Commonwealth origin (Alexander 1987 p.29) but from the late 1940s onwards the situation began to change as the world economy entered a new and prolonged period of expansion. Between 1953 and 1961 the volume of industrial production rose by one third (Petras 1980 p.142), fuelled by reconstruction capital from America: $22,800 million in public capital alone flowed from the U.S.A. into Western Europe between 1945 and 1955 (Brinley 1961 pp.35-38). Between 1960 and 1970 the most advanced economies of the West added $700 billion to their annual real incomes (Power & Hardman 1984 p.7).

The spectacular expansion of the Western European economies and the acceleration in the accumulation of capital triggered an enormous demand for labour. The decimation of the European workforce during two World Wars and the persistant pattern of low birth rates meant that industrial labour

requirements could no longer be satisfied within national economies (Petras 1980 op cit) . Thus, for example, having exhausted a supply of twelve million East German refugee workers in the post War decade up to 1955, the West German government met further demand for labour by signing recruitment agreements with Italy (1955), Spain (1960), Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morrocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965) and Yugoslavia (1968). As a result the number of foriegn workers in Germany rose from ten thousand in 1954 to over six hundred and fifty thousand in 1962 and further still to over 2.3 million in 1972 (Power & Hardman 1984 op cit p.7)

The general economic conditions in post war Britain were little different from those in West Germany and the other advanced Western European economies. Initial labour shortages (some of which had started to emerge during the war) in agriculture, mining, textile manufacture and the metal foundries had been met substantially by refugees recruited from the camps of Western Europe and migrants from Eire. Between 1946 and 1950 some seventy seven thousand refugees were brought to Britain as European Volunteer Workers. This was in addition to eighty eight thousand members of the Polish armed forces and eight thousand Ukranian prisoners of war (Miles 1986 p.54). By 1949 157,300 Polish migrants had settled in Britain following the Polish Resettlement Act and between 1946 and 1951 one hundred thousand new workers arrived from Ireland (Walvin 1984 op cit). However, the continued need for workers was reflected in the King's 1951 opening speech to Parliament, in which he declared, "My government views with concern the serious shortages of labour, particularly of skilled labour, which has handicapped production in a number of industries" (Foot 1965 p.124). Labour scarcity being widespread in Europe, the British state turned instead to the New Commonwealth (Power & Hardman 1984 op cit). In 1948 the British Nationality Act was passed, according British citizenship and the automatic right to live and work in the country to everyone born in Britain and its colonies from 1949 onwards as well as bestowing upon Commonwealth subjects the entitlement to register as a UK citizen after one year of residence in Britain.

From 1954, substantial numbers of workers were recruited from the West Indies, India (from 1955 onwards) and Pakistan (from 1957 onwards). A Cabinet minute of 3rd Nov 1955 noted that it was "the condition of full employment here that was attracting those immigrants". The role of the state was in this process was not only to encourage the supplies of labour (Cardechi 1979) but also to contribute to a social climate in which migrants were confined to those sectors where labour shortages were most apparent (Corrigan 1977; Berger & Mohr 1975). These sectors shared a common set of characteristics, as described by Castles and Kosack (in Friend & Metcalf 1981 op cit p.60):

"Immigrant workers in France, Germany, Switzerland and Great Britian are usually employed in occupations rejected by indigenous workers.... Typically, such jobs offer low pay, poor working conditions, little sercurity and inferior social status."

Workers from the Caribbean as well as Asia and the Far East were directly recruited by London Transport (see Brooks 1975 for the Caribbean) and by the newly formed National Health Service and the British Hotel and Restaurants Association (Gordon & Klug 1985 op cit). In the case of the Hong Kong Chinese, a special quota system expedited their emigration to Britain (Watson 1975).

Such patterns of labour recruitment reflected more general changes within the British economy. Whilst the post War boom on an international scale had given rise to a vast increase in the volume and range of manufactured goods (and consequently an absolute rise in maunfacturing employment) it was also accompanied by a wave of technological transformation (Friend & Metcalf 1981 op cit p.48). Thus, as automation spread and labour productivity increased, there arose consequently a relative decline in manufacturing employment, such that as a proportion of the entire labour market, jobs in manufacturing fell from 37.3% in 1951 to 32.6% in 1971 (ibid p.49). In the decade from 1966 to 1976 the absolute numbers in manufacturing employment declined from 8.6 million to 7.2 million (ibid).

In addition to this, from the mid 1950s onwards the level of investment in British manufacturing declined significantly as compared to other national economies. Throughout the 1950s UK capital continued to flow out of Britain into the relatively developed economies of the Old Commonwealth

such as South Africa, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, such that by 1968 British and American capitalists held 75% of of the world stock of direct company investment abroad (ibid p.50). The exit of British capital to countries abroad accelerated during the 1960s, making Britain a leading overseas investor: between 1968 and 1978 the outflow of capital investment from the UK domestic economy averaged 1.4% of Gross Domestic Product as opposed to 0.7% for the USA, 0.3% for Japan and 0.5% for Germany (ibid).

In contrast to the decline in domestic manufacturing, the level of investment in service sector industries grew dramatically. OECD labour force statistics, show that all major economies registered a six point jump in service work as a percentage of total employment between 1957 and 1968. Indeed, by 1968 service work (including financial services) accounted for between 40% and 61% of all jobs in each of the main OECD countries, except Canada and Italy (ibid p.48). This structural change within the British economy set the context within which labour was recruited to Britain throughout the period. As Miles (1982 op cit p.164) put it, "the demand for labour was not spread equally across all sectors of the economy but was limited to certain sectors of production and distribution".

One of these sectors was a group of industries (e.g textiles, metal manufacture) which had been integral to the early domination of British capitalism but which had since become less competitive on the world market and was consequently in decline. Decreasing profit margins, outdated technology and a subsequent lack of new investment meant that profitable production could only be maintained by employing cheaper labour. Faced with a relative decline in wages during a period of full employment, indigenous workers in these industries simply sought employment elsewhere. Thus Braverman (1974) noted how "In these circumstances migrant labour ... became replacement labour and in many cases was recruited during periods of deskilling." This was confirmed by the Department of Employment in a 1977 report on "The Role of Immigrants in the Labour Market" (in Friend & Metcalf 1981 op cit p.60):

"the main role of immigrants in the British labour market has been to provide certain industries with a relatively cheap labour pool at a time when it would have been necessary for employers to reduce shift hours and

increase rates of pay in order to maintain and attract an indigenous workforce."

In a general sense, therefore, immigrant labour was recruited into the more labour intensive sectors of the economy, such as the declining manufacturing industries and the new 'services', where its role was to expand production without having to reinvest profits in costly mechanisation and automation. Petras (1980 op cit p.441) noted how this applied especially to "construction, hotel and restaurant industries or services in which economies of scale are difficult to organise because of the necessarily small units of production." Thus when the demand for labour diminished, immigration also began to decrease, falling from over an annual rate of forty thousand between 1955 and 1957 to less than thirty thousand between 1958 and 1959. When numbers increased again in 1960 to 57,700 and further still to 94,000 during the first six months of 1962, it was primarily to "beat the ban" to be imposed by the impending Commonwealth Immigrants Act (1962). This was designed specifically to reduce drastically the numbers of workers coming from the New Commonwealth and "to tailor immigration more closely to the needs of the British economy" (Gordon & Klug 1985 op cit p.4).

MIGRATION UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH IMMIGRANTS ACT

The 1962 Act introduced the condition that all prospective Commonwealth immigrants be issued with an employment voucher for a specific job for a single, named employer in Britain before being allowed to enter the country. Those who were not Commonwealth-born were required to secure the more constricting work permits. This category included by far the majority of migrants, as shown in Table 5 below. Subject to greater economic restrictions and fewer rights to citizenship, permit holders were increasingly preferred to Commonwealth Voucher holders, whose numbers were drastically cut following the abolition of vouchers for the semi-skilled and unskilled after the 1965 White Paper, "Immigration from the Commonwealth".

Work permit regulations were described by Rees (1982 op cit p.84) thus:

"The work permit has to be applied for to the Department of Employment by the prospective employer, who is obliged to satisfy the Department that the

worker in question is qualified and required for a specific job, that the employment is necessary, and that there is no suitable British or long term resident foreign labour available... Department of Employment permission is necessary for a work permit holder to transfer to another employer, and such permission is by no means automatic... A work permit holder may apply to have the time limit and other restrictions attached to his employment removed after *four years" [my italics]*

He continued (ibid p.85),

"The object of the work permit is principally to promote a supply of labour from overseas where the domestic supply is inadequate... In the latter part of the 1960s and the early part of the 1970s the majority of permits were issued to workers in the hotel and catering industry and in hospital employment."

TABLE 5: IMMIGRATION FOR WORK 1963 - 1972

Year	*Work Permit Holders*	*Commonwealth Employment Voucher Holders*
1963	39,663	31,125
1964	42,584	14,705
1965	48,874	12,880
1966	48,637	5,461
1967	45,867	4,978
1968	45,142	4,691
1969	47,852	4,021
1970	47,384	4,098
1971	41,286	3,477
1972	36,705	1,803

Source: Home Office Statistics 1963 - 1972
in Gordon and Klug (1985 p.5)

It was during the period when the 1962 Act was in force that the majority of Chinese came to Britain, as shown in Table 6 below. This indicates the scale and timing of Chinese migration to Britain. It was assumed for the Table that the majority of migrants born in China, Hong Kong and Singapore were of ethnic Chinese origin - Singapore's population is seventy six per cent Chinese (Clammer 1982 op cit p.127). The inconsistancy of aggregate

categories and the lack of any exact data on ethnicity, however, preclude any more of a precise indication of the development of the Chinese community. What is clear, however, is that unlike the majority of migrants from the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent, a sizable Chinese community was not established until after implementation of the 1962 Act. Imposition of the Act thus dictated the limited range of employment open to the Chinese. This was compounded by a social climate of growing racism which proved a further obstacle to occupational diversification, although in the case of the Chinese this has remained virtually undocumented.

The vast majority from Hong Kong and China were channelled into jobs in catering, as witnessed by one who arrived before 1962:

"When I first came here in 1956 I got a job in a warehouse. There was hardly any Chinese here then. If there was a Chinese family living in the area, everybody would know who they were. But in the '60s when one came, they all came. Restaurants was the game. That was the only job it seemed we could get. They had all the connections set up over here in the trade and they all knew about the forms you had to fill in. I don't suppose anybody thought you could do anything else, really. And why not catering? It was better than starving in Hong Kong."

Nevertheless, Table 6 also indicates a sizable immigration from Singapore which matches that from Hong Kong during the 1960s. However, Chinese from Singapore hardly figure at all in the Chinese catering trade, nor are they represented in ethnic community organisation. This is because most Chinese from Singapore (and, as a general rule, Malaysia and urban Hong Kong) came either as students for higher education or as partially and fully trained workers with a knowledge of spoken and written English. They were thus at liberty to diversify into a far greater range of employment compared to the unskilled and relatively poorly educated Chinese from the New Territories and China who spoke little or no English and who were bound by the strictures of the work vouchers and permits (see Baxter 1986). On the whole, it is generally believed that of the Singaporean Chinese who settled in Britain, women are tend to be nurses and men tend to be employed in technically oriented jobs such as electrical engineering. (The total lack of official documentation on ethnic economic specialisation in Britain, however, precludes accurate quantification of these trends.)

TABLE 6: CHINA AND FAR EASTERN BORN RESIDENTS IN BRITAIN

	MALES	*FEMALES*	*TOTAL*
1951: Commonwealth citizens born in Far Eastern Colonial Territories (England & Wales) the largest proportion of whom were aged between 20 to 30 years	5,823	5,894	11,717
....			.....
1961: Persons born in China of whom 2,095 were 'aliens'	4,520	4,672	9,192
Persons born in Hong Kong of whom 548 were 'aliens'	6,260	3,962	10,222
Persons born in Singapore of whom 50 were 'aliens'	4,981	4,839	9,820
(England & Wales)			29,234
....			.....
1971: Persons born in China	6,760	6,735	13,495
Persons born in British Isles to parents born in China [the largest proportion of both males & females was aged between 20 - 40 years]	1,530	1,900	3,430
Persons born in Hong Kong	17,010	12,510	29,520
Persons born in British Isles to parents born in Hong Kong [the largest proportion of males was aged between 20 - 30 and females under 20 years]	3,700	3,785	7,485
Persons born in Singapore	13,745	13,590	27,335
Persons born in British Isles to parents born in Singapore [the largest proportion of both males & females was aged under 20 years]	9,235	8,975	18,210
(England, Scotland & Wales)			99,475
....			.....
1981: Persons born in China	5,446	6,358	11,804
Persons born in Hong Kong	31,689	27,228	58,917
Persons born in Singapore	15,965	16,482	32,447
(England, Scotland & Wales)			82,525
....			.....

Sources: 1951 Census (England & Wales Preliminary Report General Tables, Table 37); 1961 Census (England & Wales Birthplace & Nationality Tables, Table 2); 1971 Census (Great Britain Country of Birth Tables, Table 1); 1981 Census (Great Britain Country of Birth Tables, Table 1)

In order to understand how and why Chinese from Hong Kong and China almost exclusively entered catering work in Britain, it is necessary to study the actual process of their migration and incorporation into the British economy. This has been structured not only by the demands of the domestic British economy and legislature but also by the socio-economic development of Hong Kong and southeast China in the course of British colonial domination.

INDUSTRIALISATION AND AGRICULTURE IN HONG KONG

Like the five "treaty ports" ceded to the British government in 1842, the course of Hong Kong's economic and social development was set upon a singularly distinct course from that of the rest of China. The colonised territory now known as Hong Kong was enlarged considerably following China's defeat by Japan in the War of 1894-95. This final phase of the colony's formation included a major part of China's richest area, the Yangtze Valley, plus a ninety nine year lease of the rural hinterland of Kowloon (known as the New Territories) covering three hundred and sixty six of the colony's four hundred square miles, plus a number of surrounding small islands. As a major trading foothold for Britain in China and the Far East, Hong Kong became a significantly developed entrepot port specialising in warehousing, shipping services and banking. British manufacturing investments, however, were still directed to the Chinese mainland, principally Shanghai, where the British government also enjoyed extraterritorial "rights". During the revolutionary upsurge in China from 1924 - 1927, when working class action shook Canton, Shanghai and Wuhan, British rule and profits in Hong Kong also came under serious threat, first by a seamen's strike, then a boycott of British goods, followed by a general strike of more than fifty thousand workers for sixteen months (Hong Kong Research Project 1974). Upon the failure of the revolution in China and the retreat of the Chinese Communists into the countryside, the colonial regime effectively crushed the organised working class of Hong Kong (ibid).

When Japan invaded China in 1938, some five hundred thousand refugees fled to Hong Kong from Canton, amongst them a sizable group of Chinese capitalists. Their numbers were swelled following the end of the Japanese

Occupation which signalled the reversion of Shanghai to Chinese rule and the setting up of government in China by Mao's Chinese Chinese Communist Party in 1949. With this influx of capital and labour from China began the rapid industrialisation of Hong Kong. "About two-thirds of total investment at the start of industrialisation in 1948-50 came from Shanghai and Guangzhou (Canton), so much so that Hongkong has been called a 'transferred economy'" (Benton 1983 p.19).

British rule has accounted for the colony's untrammelled post War economic growth. Offering the added bonuses of a natural deep-water harbour and close proximity to Pacific shipping lanes, the colonial status of Hong Kong has enticed capitalists with technology and trade links throughout South East Asia in the wake of successive Indo-Chinese political revolutions. Industrialisation of the colony has been speeded further by the Imperial Preference granted to the colony at the Ottawa Conference of 1932 and the United Nations trade embargo on China during the Korean War in 1951, in conjunction with the relative absence of local industrial militancy. The population has grown from under two million before 1949 (ibid p.13) to five million by 1981 (Hong Kong Government Office 1985). This expansion has been due largely to the entry of workers from China, carefully regulated according to demand (England & Rear 1975, Hong Kong Research Project 1974 op cit, Benton 1983 op cit) and their Hong Kong born descendants. Adequate accommodation remains difficult to obtain and housing standards, particularly on the earlier built public housing estates, would not be considered fit for family habitation in Britain. There is no minimum wage, no limit on working hours for men and secondary education until 1979 was neither free nor compulsory. In the fiscal year 1969-70 (a period of rapid expansion), public expenditure on the police, defence and prisons in Hong Kong amounted to $HK 269,042,483, whereas social welfare spending accounted for a mere $HK 19,204,686 (Hong Kong Research Project 1974 op cit p.28).

Rapid post war industrialisation in Hong Kong has absorbed by far the overwhelming majority of local and migrant workers from China over the last forty years. Those who were not so readily accommodated, however, are those who are of immediate interest to this study, for it is they who now form the bulk of Britain's Chinese 'business' community. These people,

mostly from the rural New Territories of Hong Kong were also the subject of a study by Watson (1975 op cit), the only other contemporary published study of Chinese migration to Britain to date. Watson set out to document the effects of emigration upon one particular village, San Tin, home of the Mans lineage [2]. As an anthropological study, however, Watson's discussion of the dislocating political and economic determinants of emigration for the Mans (and subsequently, their incorporation into British society) was both brief and cryptic, since his primary focus was fixed upon the cultural aspects of emigration. Nevertheless, his being the only substantial study of its nature, it affords a valuable insight into the background to emigration from Hong Kong's New Territories as a whole.

Watson related how during the period following 1949, the British government of Hong Kong actively sought to sever the colony's dependance for imported food upon the newly established Maoist China (ibid p.44). For this reason, agriculture in the rural New Territories was developed from subsistence rice farming to labour intensive, high yield vegetable crop production geared towards the needs of the urban centre. This transformation was facilitated through newly established government-sponsored trucking co-operatives which transported produce to Kowloon for centralised distribution. Cheap, high quality long grain rice was imported from Thailand whilst remaining rice crops grown commercially in the New Territories catered for a more specialised market (ibid p.48). "In 1954, 70 percent of the total agricultural land in the Colony was under paddy rice cultivation; but by 1966, this figure had fallen to 44 percent" (ibid). By 1985, thirty five per cent of Hong Kong's vegetables, fifty four per cent of the poultry and eighteen per cent of the pigs consumed in Hong Kong came from local farms, which covered a mere nine per cent of the colony's 1,067 square kilometres, a considerably smaller area than in the years immediately following 1949 (Hong Kong Government Office 1985).

The transition from rice to vegetable farming throughout the New Territories was not a smooth one. Its effects were exacerbated by the influx into the colony of refugees and workers from China following the War, placing greater pressure upon available farm land and local jobs (ibid p.45). Livestock farming, which required intensive investments of both

capital and labour, was not an easily accessible alternative for the majority of rice farmers. Moreover, the simultaneous drain on established sources of agricultural labour due to the pull of burgeoning industries together with the expansion of vegetable farming entailed rising wage levels for agricultural workers that increasingly only could be met through vegetable cash cropping. Thus, within a very short period of time, the entire basis of the pre-War system of rice farming throughout the New Territories was undermined. Village economies which previously had centered around rice cultivation were compelled to switch to "landlording" high yield vegetable production and industrial employment, displacing many of the poorer rice farmers. Those who could not afford to invest in the new system of vegetable production, or whose inferior land was unsuitable for growing vegetables (a case in point being the rice farmers of San Tin village) such a conversion was not possible. The people worst affected were mainly from Hakka villages. The Hakka, or *guest people*, as they are called, are an ethnic minority amongst the predominantly *Punti*, or Cantonese locals. Having migrated to the regions of southeast China at a much later period than the Punti, the Hakka had to content themselves with less fertile farmlands than the longer established Punti. Distinctions between the Hakka and Punti of Hong Kong, however, are rapidly diminishing and most Hakka people are fluent Cantonese speakers.

Aside from the "vegetable revolution", agricultural land formerly available for rice farming in the New Territories was further eroded by substantial "new town" development at Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun, Sha Tin, Tai Po, Fan Ling, Yuen Long and Junk Bay. The subsequent extension of housing, industry and commerce throughout these areas has firmly consolidated the transformation of the pre-War New Territories rice economy.

To those who were dispossessed of a living from the obselete rice economy in the New Territories, emigration was swiftly presented as a solution. Watson remarked how "The colonial government ... encouraged emigration to the United Kingdom and other parts of Western Europe as part of the general program to ease unemployment in the New Territories" (ibid p.76). He added

"It is clear that the government tried to make passports and work permits readily available to the villagers. A 1958 memo circulated within the New Territories Administration stressed that emigration should have the "fullest encouragement" because of the high unemployment in parts of rural Hong Kong (Yuen Long District Office file no. P.S.412/57 I)" (Watson 1976 op cit p.76 footnote).

Like colonial workers from throughout the world, many of the New Territories Chinese emigrated to fill jobs in the rapidly expanding service industries of Britain's domestic post War economy, often drawn by the active recruitment campaigns by British employers in the colonies (Rees 1982 op cit p.83; Gordon & Klug 1985 op cit p.3). Between 1963 and 1966, seventy three per cent of all UK 'A' category work vouchers for migrants from Hong Kong went to New Territories applicants (Watson 1975 op cit p.97), facilitated under "special" quotas for certain Dependant Territories in recognition of their "unique problems" (ibid p.98) and Britain's implicit responsibility for them.

Industrially unskilled and unfamiliar with the English language, most of the New Territories Chinese relied upon Chinese sponsors already established in Britain to gain legal entry and a job. As such, they swelled the niche of ethnic firms established by their predecessors. Not all of these were concentrated in the catering industry by this stage. For instance, in the days when the majority of households did not possess a washing machine, there were still a number of Chinese laundries in existence. However, the stipulations of specialised skills and experience not already available from the existing domestic labour market set out by the conditions of the work permit and voucher system precluded any large scale Chinese recruitment to those sectors where Chinese firms had managed to survive purely through the employment of cheap and flexible labour. Only in the ethnic catering trade, which specifically exploited ethnic difference, could a case readily be made for the necessity for Chinese workers to fill available jobs. This was congruent with the general conditions of expansion and continued demand for labour in the catering industry as a whole and the fact that the jobs that Chinese workers filled did not actually require any previously acquired rele vant skills or experience at all. (The recognition of ethnic difference as a genuine occupation for particular forms of work is still

operated through Section 5 (c) of the Race Relations Act 1976.) It was thus to jobs in the ethnic catering industry in Britain that the vast majority of New Territories Chinese were directed (see Table 7 below). Some also went to work for British firms elsewhere, like the British Phosphate Works on Nauru and Ocean Island and the oilfields in Brunei. (In Table 7 below, Chinese "aliens" refers to Chinese born in China and not Hong Kong. Although this category does not include all those who emigrated to Britain, the Table nevertheless illustrates the scale of entry into catering work.)

TABLE 7: CHINESE ALIENS ENTERING BRITAIN FROM HONG KONG

	1963	*1964*	*1965*	*1966*	*1967*	*1968*	*1970*
Industry	58	69	68	101	72	77	78
Catering	256	354	380	475	719	720	833
Entertaining	10	9	0	23	3	10	6
Nursing	109	132	180	283	290	262	304
Domestics	53	49	81	65	91	71	66
Students	25	48	52	60	52	55	48
Totals	511	661	761	1007	1227	1195	1335

Source: Watson 1975 p.113

Watson offered no explanation for this phenomenon other than the sudden "discovery" by British people of Chinese food (Watson 1974 p.214), when "British people began to change their eating habits and developed a taste for foreign cuisine" (Watson 1977 op cit p.183). By failing to concentrate upon the centrality of historical economic and political factors which structured emigration for the New Territories workers, Watson also missed the essential significance of the emigration. This lay in its reflection of the demise of the New Territories village economies. Thus, far from

propping up "many other aspects of San Tin's traditional culture besides lineage" (Watson 1975 op cit p.213), the New Territories exodus reflected the final destruction of the material basis upon which local traditional culture was founded.

The encouragement of emigration amongst the New Territories rice farming villagers deriving from the colonial relationship between the economies of Britain and Hong Kong in combination with the channelling of migrant labour in Britain into the catering industry by the 1962 Act were the two main factors which defined the general situation for Chinese migrants. The manner in which they mobilised resources within the community to establish a foothold in Britain provides the other half of the equation as to why and how the ethnic Chinese niche in Britain's catering industry became as firmly entrenched as it is today. This is the focus of the remainder of the Chapter. It addresses the system of immigration and employment patronage for both the men who came first and their families who followed afterwards and its implications for binding migrants to their sponsors. This is set against the subjective responses of the Chinese to their first taste of life in Britain.

THE CHINESE COMMUNITY & CATERING

The work permit and voucher system compelled the Chinese to make use of whatever resources lay within their reach to fulfil the legal requirements of the 1962 Act. Thus, they soon established networks for immigration and employment patronage through the employers of friends and relations both in Hong Kong and Britain. Employers in Britain would be asked to sponsor the immigration and employment of a required employee and employers in Hong Kong would be asked to testify that the prospective employee possessed the necessary specialised skills and experience for the job. In many cases, this service cost money at both ends of the migration chain. (The current rate for legal immigration to Britain from Hong Kong in this way under the much tighter restrictions prevailing today is expected to cost in the region of £10,000). This system of patronage facilitated the emigration of entire village populations from the New Territories. In the

case of San Tin, Watson (ibid p.100 ff) documented how the Mans lineage served as an "emigration agency".

Four people recounted their own personal experiences of migration through this channel:

"In them days, it was really easy. If you wanted to come over to this country to work, all you had to do was get proof of identity and something to show you'd worked somewhere. It was all easy enough to fiddle - for some tea money - know what I mean? If you wanted, say to come to England and work as a chef, you could probably get somebody to write you a reference and say, "Yeah, he worked here for ten years as a chef" and you showed that to the Home Office and that was it."

"My uncle worked in a restaurant, you see - The Golden Dragon in Chatham, just outside London. He got the form signed for me to come. In those days, someone I knew would be coming over every week. My uncle came first and I came later. He got me a job working in the same restaurant as him."

"I come from a village where the whole village - about two and a half, three thousand people - are all called Chung. This whole village, these two and a half, three thousand people, are all in Europe; say, three or four hundred in Amsterdam in Holland, about two or three hundred in West Germany and the rest here. We all helped each other get across and with all the paperwork."

"All my friends now are the ones I knew before from my village. They're all over here. Now in our village, there's just old people or very young children but some of them are children of people here who sent them back to be looked after. It's really like a ghost town. England's our home now. We all came roughly the same time because once a few people arrived, they could help the others to come."

The dependence of Chinese workers upon their immigration sponsors placed them in a particularly vulnerable position. Restaurant management was often arbitrary and rapacious, the working week was long and hard and annual leave, sickness and holiday pay were virtually unknown:

"It was very hard in the early days, during the early 1960s. You could start work one day and if you didn't work hard, you'd get the sack the next day because there were so many queueing up for a job. During the '60s and '70s, work permits were very easy to get, so if the boss didn't like you he could easily replace you with someone else from Hong Kong. In Liverpool, they had the main Chinese community. They had a place where people who hadn't got a job could go to eat and sleep, so when restaurant owners wanted staff, they could just go there. When my father was out of job, he

went there. But it was very low pay in those days. It was like slavery. They got paid £5 a week."

Wages and conditions were poor by local standards but expectations were also generally lower:

"In China there was not enough rice to eat. Everyone was so poor. Hong Kong was also very hard. You know, working in a Cantonese restaurant *[in Hong Kong]* you only got £15 a month - a month! And all my money I sent back to China so my family could eat. Then I was a builder. Building, building, building - a lot of hard work. 1968 I came to England because you couldn't get a job that paid enough to put food in your mouth. My uncle got me a job working in the same place as him. No wages - just food and somewhere to live - no money. It wasn't supposed to be a real job, you see. But once I found a job with pay, it was so much better than Hong Kong. I got £17 for the week. In Hong Kong I got £15 for the month!"

Dormitory employment, whereby workers were given housing related to their jobs, compounded their dependence upon employers and mitigated against permanent settlement and family life. Even after another decade, the situation had not improved significantly:

"I lived in Teddington Lock when I first came, on top of a restaurant there. It's a small town in Middlesex near Richmond in London. My father, he was working there before me and I took over his job. He went up north somewhere. So the first two days I did nothing. I was sleeping all that time - must have been twenty four hours non-stop. Then, the fourth or fifth day I started working in that restaurant doing service as a waiter but I couldn't speak a word of English! I just said, "Order by number" and wrote down what the customers showed me. They asked me for a fork and spoon, I gave them chopsticks and that sort of thing. They asked me for a glass of water and I didn't know what they were saying, so I had to call the manager over. But that was a very small restaurant - only about nine or ten tables - so the boss was the manager, the waiter and everything. The only other waiter was me, so it was just two of us working. We did from half past eleven in the morning till half past three - that's with all the clearing up, the hoovering and all that stuff. Then we'd have a break and start again half past five getting ready for the evening until midnight, one o'clock, something like that, depending on what time the customers left. Seven days a week... yes, seven days a week. I'll tell you, I'd never heard of all these perks you get here - money for going sick, money for going on holiday, workers' rights and all that stuff. All I cared about was the money. That's what I needed; that's what <u>we</u> needed - my family I mean. I sent what I could back to my Mum in Hong Kong. Oh, I was a young boy then - no bad habits. No drinking, no smoking, no gambling, no nothing! At that time I was getting paid about £17 a week. It wasn't bad for the time; 1971, '72. And you got tips on top of that, so the average would be about £25 a week. Oh yeah, board and everything like that was free. Whenever you work in a Chinese restaurant, accommodation, food and all that's free, so all you have to do is work there and pick up your pay. But you can't afford to loose your job! Anyway, I worked there a

year and got my experience. Then I got a better job in Reading with better pay, still doing the waiter's job."

The situation was more precarious for unauthorised workers, such as Mr Ng who has now lived in the country for sixteen years:

"I came through a traveller's visa because I thought I would only stay a little time. I thought I'd try my luck because we were so short of money. But it was quite difficult because I didn't have a proper work permit so I could never earn as much as the others." *[ie. other Chinese workers in the same trade]*

As an illegal 'overstayer' on a visitor's visa, Mr Ng consistantly has had to content himself with a lower than average wage in the Chinese catering economy. The last full-time job in which he was employed paid £60 per week in 1984. His 'illegal' status has precluded tax and national insurance deductions from his salary, so that now he is no longer able to work through illness, he cannot claim any welfare benefits and therefore must be supported totally by his wife who joined him in 1973 under a work permit.

On top of all, familiarisation with the British way of life invariably entailed an abrupt introduction to British racism. This was explained by Alan, who came to Britain in 1970 as a waiter straight from school and with no knowlege of English.

"When we were in the restaurant we had some terrible fights. Not just one. Every week. Every Thursday night we had to fight. All the youngsters would come in and eat a meal and slip out the door or they would just tell you "I want a fight before I pay the bill". I don't know why. They just didn't like us. I've hurt a lot of people - broken a lot of legs and arms and that. Of course, they started the fights. We wouldn't start them. To us they were customers - business. Why would we want to start fighting with them? We wouldn't fight with them until they got nasty with us.

If there was new people who didn't know us, always they'd want to fight. I remember one very bad fight in Luton Town. There was three of us serving and these five young people were there. They had a meal and then two of them tried to run but we knew as soon as they came in the door what sort of customers they were. So as soon as one of them tried to run, we held the other one, then the other two started fighting us. Me, at the time, I was holding a plate and I just threw it like a frisby straight at his head and he went straight out. When the police came, I said, "Oh, he tried to run out and I was just holding a plate and he just ran into me and hit his head on it." We had to go to court for that one. It was always the youngsters. They would say, "Right, outside you chink" and that sort of thing, you know. Once, this one was shouting at me "Chink, chink, chink", so I chased him for about four or five streets and I dragged this young guy back to the restaurant and kicked him and kicked him. I was quite annoyed then. We didn't care about swearing and all that but when they started

calling us "chink, chink, chink", we got angry. So we used to chase them around the streets and beat them up in the restaurant.
Back in the early seventies - and even more in the sixties as well, before I came here - a lot of European people came in to eat and fight. I don't know why. Just because we were Chinese. That was before Bruce Lee came out. He helped us a lot. In '71, '72, '73, we had to fight a lot, a lot. When his films came out in England, the fighting settled down very fast. That's my personal view anyway."

Assault and racial harassment of Chinese waiters was an accepted part of the job. Ng (1968) told of one incident in 1963 at St. Helen's when one of a gang of white youths who preferred to fight rather than pay a bill for a Chinese meal was killed in the scuffles. His death led immediately to racist demonstrations outside the restaurant. Usually, however, fighting was merely part of the weekly routine, as recounted by Mr Li, who now runs a take-away business with his wife and two daughters.

"Anywhere I worked, Birmingham, London, Coventry, Wolverhampton, Dublin, all the time people were calling the Chinese "X, Y and Z" and all that. Gangs of youths used to come in drunk and complain about nothing and easily a fight would start. The restaurant people couldn't understand what they said half the time. I remember once, a man asked me, "Do you serve crabs here?" I said "We serve anybody here"! But that's just one of the funny things that happened. The fighting was every weekend, the same old story. But unless we stood up for ourselves, the boss would dock our pay the price of the meal. When you saw what was going on, you just went over and added a few kicks and punches and that was it. Usually the Chinese won by throwing hot fat or something. That's the only way we could win against double our number."

The economic and social instability attendant upon emigration combined with the strictures of legislation intially precluded most families from coming to Britain, with the result that the majority of earlier Chinese catering workers were men. Tied accommodation provided by employers was generally insecure, overcrowded and unsuitable for families. Most, therefore, remained in Hong Kong, supported by the remittances sent by relatives abroad, supplementing this income with marginal farming activities (see also Watson 1975 op cit):

"When my daughter was born in 1974, her father went to England after she was six months old. So it was me and my mother-in-law who brought her up. He used to send money to us for our living expenses - about £50 a month - and we could earn about £25 from farming. He had some land, you see, about one or two acres, and I worked on that. Everyone was the same then, not just my family."

Such arrangements were prone to abuses, as another woman remembered:

"My Dad came here first. He sent money over regularly to look after us. Then when my Mum came, I think she only came to see if she liked it here but she must have because she stopped. Meanwhile, I was being looked after by my relatives in Hong Kong. I was passed around to different people. An uncle had me first and I can remember being very ill treated by that couple. I can't remember much except lots of beatings. They used to beat me a lot. I remember once, she pushed me and I fell onto a corner of a stool and gashed my eye, just there. There's still a scar, isn't there? I can't remember how my Mum found out about it but then they moved me onto another relative."

As 'eating-out' in cheap, Chinese 'chop suey houses' became a well established and popular working class institution, the families of the first male settlers started to join relatives in Britain after years of separation. It was a gradual process, wives being generally the first to come, followed by children (and sometimes also elderly dependants) but at a later date. This was due to the long and awkward working hours demanded by restaurant work and the difficulties this presented for childcare:

"I was actually born here, you know. But you wouldn't have thought so ten years ago because I didn't actually come here until I was eight. I was sent to live with my auntie in Hong Kong until then, from when I was a baby because my parents were too busy working over here. I hadn't seen my mother for four years before I came and I don't ever remember my father in Hong Kong."

Family reunification was accelerated by the impending 1971 Immigration Act (implemented in 1973) under the Conservative government. By dividing people into the categories of 'patrials' and 'non-patrials', the 1971 Act effectively targetted Black and New Commonwealth citizens alone for more stringent immigration control (Gordon and Klug 1985 op cit). It also stripped wives and children of Commonwealth citizens already settled in Britain of their previously statutory right to join husbands and fathers in this country, although the Rules under which the Act was administered did make provision for this. Immigration Rules, however, were easier to change than legislation. Moreover, the new Rules not only dictated that the majority of New Commonwealth immigrant women were formally relegated to the status of 'dependant', being disallowed the independent right to bring husbands or fiances to join them in Britain; they also became obliged to demonstrate that they could be accommodated and maintained by their

'sponsor'. The threat of the 1971 Act (which also abolished the work voucher system) hastened the reunification of Chinese families in Britain, such that 'dependants'' immigration greatly outnumbered that of work permit holders (Hong Kong Government Office figures).

Many women and children were absorbed into Chinese restaurant work as kitchen hands and cleaners generally at substandard rates of pay:

"My sister can't speak English so she just washes dishes in a restaurant. I was the same when I first come to this country. My husband got me the job in the same place as he was learning to be a cook but it was hard work and I didn't get much pay."

Children often received no wages at all for it was assumed by employers that their labours were spent in part payment for accommodation:

"When me and my brother first came to this country, when I was twelve, we went to live above a Chinese restaurant in Wales. We had to work there on Thursday and Friday nights and every weekend because my parents had to work so hard in those days, they couldn't keep up with the business. When the boss felt good, he gave us £1 or 50p. When he didn't, we didn't get anything because we were living and eating there with our parents. It was one of the biggest restaurants in that town and the money was supposed to be quite good. But when we got there, the boss said the pay was less because he was supplying a room to live in. But this room was literally a rubbish tip. It was just full up with rubbish. We had to get a shovel and shovel it out before we could move in. None of the staff stayed long."

Where continued residence in staff houses became impossible for families, they turned to shared, private sector rented accommodation. Most did not know their entitlements regarding eligibility for public sector housing or how to gain access to it. This resulted in overcrowded living conditions becoming the usual experience for most Chinese families upon arrival in Britain, which exacerbated other problems of social adjustment, as three women explained.

"I came here in 1972 but I just couldn't get used to it. My nephew was here already with his wife but I brought their three children with me so we could all live together again. My nephew and his wife slept in one room and I slept with the children in another room. The youngest one was so young, she had to use a potty all the time. We had to cook and eat in the same room. It was really horrible. There were mice everywhere. There was only two good things about it: the rent was only about £6 or £7 a week for all of us and it was easy to make friends. Everyone was Chinese so we could all look after each other."

"When I came in 1968 I went to live with my husband above his uncle's take-away shop for a year. We both worked there in the evenings and he gave us free food and never asked us for any rent but we didn't get paid. Then we rented a fish and chip shop for a couple of years but it didn't do too well, so we moved to Chinese Street. Our two kids had come by then. In those days, all the Chinese used to live there in the big, old houses. There were five families in ours - well, one was only a single man. But the rent was only £3 a week, which was all we could afford. Only three families used to cook there - the others ate at work, so things weren't too bad. At that time my husband was working away from home. He had lots of different restaurant jobs, all over the country. Usually he came home once a month - he couldn't afford to come more often. The children didn't really get to know him. Actually, I was quite unhappy myself - very lonely. I used to cry a lot - not for any particular reason. There was just no-one I could really talk to. I've been trying to learn English ever since I came but it's very difficult when you've got nobody to talk to."

"When I first came here, my parents didn't have their own place. What they had was a rented room in somebody's house. It was a small room and the reason why I remember it so well was because they went to work and I had to stop in the room all by myself. She'd have the dinner waiting for me in a little bag but I had to stay there all the time. I can't remember ever having played out or anything like that. It sounds cruel now but it wasn't. I was fine by myself. I can't remember what I used to do because there wasn't any television or anything. I never went downstairs. It was a small terraced house, you see and we had the room upstairs and another family lived downstairs. I didn't hardly see them at all. Then when I started school, they'd be at work when I came home, so I just stopped in the room on my own after school until it was time to go to bed. Then, when my Mum became pregnant with my brother, we moved to another place, another rented place, about three years later. This was a big house but there was a few families there and we shared a kitchen but I never really saw much of them either."

For many relatives, simply becoming reunited with one another after such a long period of separation was a bewildering experience in itself, like for Madame Tsang.

"My husband has been here twenty years now. His father before him was here for many, many years. I never met him because he died over ten years ago. He had an English wife as well, you know, and had two kids but they lost contact. I know when he sent for his son, it was a lot of hard work. I hadn't seen him for about six years before he came to England because he had already gone to Hong Kong to work in a clothing factory. But the wages here were good, I think. I stayed on our farm in China and grew vegetables and my husband would send us quite a lot of money. The only time I went to Hong Kong was to catch the aeroplane to England. It was very different - so modern and so busy. When I came to London Airport, I didn't even recognise him! I waited and waited for about two hours and still nobody came for me. In the end I talked to someone in Chinese and they announced me on the loud speaker. Then it turned out he had been there all the time in the same place as me!"

Many children joining their parents were often also as confused, as two people who came to Britain at an early age described:

"Can you imagine standing in front of two strangers and suddenly your grandmother telling you to call them father and mother and to respect them as your father and mother? And in your mind you're thinking you haven't seen them before because it's such a long time since they left you. That's what it was like at Heathrow. Then can you imagine getting into a car with them and not having my grandmother with me because she had to stay with my other uncle in Somerset. That was the very first time we were separated. Can you imagine being in a car with those complete strangers? Then the houses were all different and the roads were so big and massive. That was my first impression because I was used to seeing fields all day everyday and dirt tracks, you know, not concrete and tarmac. I had really mixed feelings. Inside me I was frightened because everything was so new and in my mind I kept thinking about my friends back in the New Territories - I can't really describe the feeling. It was quite a shock, anyway."

"All I can remember is one day I was at school and someone came up to me and said I had to get on a plane and come to London. I don't even remember my uncle having told me "You're going to England on so and so date at so and so time" or anything like that. So I went home from school and packed my bags and got taken to the airport and then I was on the plane to England. A lot of it's a blur now but that's all I remember, just being dragged off from school to get on the plane. Somebody looked after me on the plane and my parents were at the other end waiting for me but I wasn't very emotional because I hadn't seen them for so long."

CONCLUSION

This Chapter has attempted to identify the material basis underlying Britain's contemporary Chinese community which has been characterised by a high degree of ethnically exclusive firms. Superficial appearances might suggest to many that such a phenomenon is evidence of the enduring cultural proclivities of Chinese towards entrepreneurship and self-help. However, an historical analysis of the situation reveals that the Chinese 'business' niche has been underpinned by the thousands of Chinese ousted as a result of the demise of the New Territories rice farming economy and encouraged to emigrate to the colonial metropolis. This was a process attributable to the unique circumstances of Hong Kong as a "free market" colony integrated with the economic interests of Britain, a situation established following China's defeat in the Opium War in 1842. In Britain, the experiences of the migrants have been shaped by the general need for cheap labour in the expanding post War catering industry and the manner in which this has been

administered by the state through the issue of work permits and work vouchers. Within this system, the Chinese were left with little option but to exploit their ethnicity as a specialised requirement for jobs in order to facilitate migration. However, in so doing, they consolidated and entrenched the ethnic niche in catering.

The Chinese 'business' community has flourished due to the particular vulnerability of Chinese workers, obliged to employers for sponsoring their immigration and statutorily bound to their jobs. Tied housing, racial harassment, frequent assault and dependant families in Hong Kong were the factors which bound them still further.

As the 1960s drew to a close, an increasing number of families became reunited in Britain, many prompted by the threat of the 1971 Immigration Act. The situations into which they entered magnified the level of exploitation within the ethnic Chinese catering trade, often entailing the additional sweated labour of children. These conditions, however, were relatively short-lived. For no sooner had Chinese 'chop suey houses' become an established part of the British scene than the catering trade was further transformed, this time as a result of the influx of American capital into the industry. The precise implications of this development and its impact upon the Chinese community are the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

ETHNIC FAST FOOD, COMMUNITY AND CLASS: THE CHINESE EXPERIENCE

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the multi-national fast food company at the end of the 1960s marked a corresponding transformation of the Chinese catering industry. This was the demise of the popular 'chop suey houses' and the rise of smaller, family-run take-away food shops. Such a shift also entailed a concomitant transformation of the class position of many Chinese, from that of paid worker to self-employed entrepreneur. Again, this might be interpreted as the emergence of the deep-rooted cultural orientation towards business activity amongst Chinese. However, this Chapter shows that such a transformation has been a direct result of the general conditions of economic rationalisation and increased competition within the catering industry, manifested in fast food production. The Chapter illustrates this process in detail, dividing the discussion for analytical expedience as in Chapter 3, concentrating firstly upon a study of the catering industry post 1970 followed by a consideration of both its objective and subjective effects upon the Chinese community. Two points are finally revealed. The first is that the ethnic take-away family business is merely another locus for the continued oppression and exploitation of Chinese and for Chinese women and children in particular, generating on the whole, low levels of profit. The second is that remaining distinctions between capital and labour within the Chinese catering industry are as pronounced as ever.

THE FAST FOOD BOOM & CAPITAL CONCENTRATION

The origins of the fast food boom in Britain lie in the over production of the catering industry in America. Heightened competition in the US gave rise to a saturation of the American fast food market and a corresponding decline in the rate of profit. In order to reflate their sagging returns on capital, the giant fast food corporations looked to Britain, Western Europe

and much of the developing world for new opportunities (Jones 1985; Desmond et al. 1981 op cit).

The attraction of the British market for US fast food investors was high profitability at a rate of productivity capable of far outstripping those of existing domestic producers. Based on more sophisticated production techniques, the American advantage depended on a much higher ratio of fixed capital to labour power than was to be found in the UK catering industry. Competing with the American fast food 'giants' would have entailed for British firms raising the level of investment and expanding production on a scale beyond the means of the majority of small domestic catering companies. Thus the main investment initiative in Britain's fast food trade came originally from outside the domestic economy. By 1982 the top forty American fast food companies were trading from sixty seven thousand units with a combined turnover of almost $35,000 million (Jones 1985 op cit p.55). Spurred by this lead and by government policies aiding company merger, the larger British-owned food producers then followed the American example, diversifying within and across industrial sectors. Between 1976 and 1978 McDonalds increased its fixed assets from £2 million to almost £17 million, the turnover of McDonalds restaurants having virtually doubled each year since 1976 as a result (Desmond et al. 1981 op cit p.82). By 1983 Wimpy (a British firm) was investing £5 million alone in new technology (Popular Food Service 1984/5 op cit pp.44-45). Mullan (1983) described this process:

"The multi-national combine 'Unilever' for example, produces inter alia, Birds Eye frozen foods, Vesta packaged meals, Batchelors tinned vegetables and soups, Walls ice cream and meat products, Blue Band, Stork, Summer County, Flora and Echo margarine, Spry and Cookeen lard, Crisp 'n' Dry cooking oil and detergent and toilet preparations such as Lux, Persil, Omo, Comfort, Sunlight, Rexona, Breeze, Vim, Sunsilk, Twink, Harmony, Sure, Shield, Gibbs Toothpaste, Close up, Signal and Pepsodent. Unilever also owns shipping lines (Norfold Line and Palm Line), meat wholesalers and processors, (Midland poultry and Unox), paper mills (Thames Board Mills), and much more - 312 companies in 75 countries manufacturing over 1,000 products. Unilever is the most spectacular example of a vertically integrated, multi national agribusiness corperation but it is by no means unique in controlling the inputs and outputs of the food system... At the lower end there are the plantations, purchasing boards and trawler fleets which between them harvest materials as diverse as herrings, groundnut and timber. At the next level there are the oil mills, slaughterhouses, factory ships and timber mills. At the third, the manufacturing operations: detergents, soap, margarine and container manufacture, food processing,

freezing and canning, etc. At the fourth level there is all the paraphenalia of selling, from the market research, advertising agencies, distribution depots and retail outlets to fish restaurants, industrial caterers and cleaners and meat pie shops."

In this sense, the fast food boom was merely reflective of the general expansion and technological progression taking place in all other branches of food production. The 1960s had witnessed heavy investment in farming and food processing as farmers moved to specialist crop production and manufacturers shifted to batch, semi-continuous and continuous production. By 1981 only seventeen per cent of farms were classified as operating mixed patterns of production (Marsden 1980) and expenditure on plant and machinery in food manufacture, processing and distribution rose from £168 million in 1976 to £580.8 million in 1978 (Wiggins 1986 op cit p.22). Rising output, the heightened pace of competition and company rationalisation brought about a rash of closures as food manufacturers divested themselves of their least efficient and least profitable enterprises. As a result between 1971 and 1981 over 100,000 jobs in food manufacturing were shed (ibid). In this sense, the food industries have merely reflected the development of the system as a whole, described by Marx in Capital (Vol.1 Moscow Progress Publishers Ed. pp.592 in Hardach et al 1978 p.22):

"The development of capitalist production makes it constantly necessary to keep increasing the amount of the capital laid out in a given industrial undertaking, and competition makes the imminent laws of capitalist production to be felt by each individual capitalist as external coercive laws. It compels him to keep constantly extending his capital, in order to preserve it, but extend it he cannot, except by means of progressive accumulation."

Wiggins and Lang (1985 op cit p.12) provided similar evidence of the accelerated pace of capital accumulation within the food industries in the last two and half decades:

"in the top 100 grocery markets... the two main manufacturers in some 70 of these markets have more than half the market between them. In just over 60 of these markets one manufacturer alone holds a share of over 40%."

Tables 8 and 9 below illustrate the American-led capital investment in food catering in Britain.

TABLE 8: EXPANSION IN MAJOR FAST FOOD CAPTIAL

Trading & Company Name	*Estab. in UK*	*Worldwide Units*	*No. of Units UK*	*New Openings 1984*	*1985*	*1986*
Barnaby's (Host Group Ltd)	1981	-	72	59	47	-
Beefeater Steak Houses	1974	-	163	20	30	-
Berni Inns	1948	342	340	8	15	-
Burger Express (Granada Motorway Services Ltd)	-	-	11	-	-	-
Burger King UK Ltd	1976	4000	10	1	2	-
Casey Jones Burgers (BR)	1980	-	12	4	-	-
Country Kitchen Restaurants (Granada)	-	-	21	1	-	-
Crispins (Manor Caterers Ltd)	1976	-	44	18	-	-
Crawfords (UB Restaurants)	1979	-	62	3	3	-
Happy Eater Ltd	1973	-	48	14	18	-
Kentucky Fried Chicken	1965	7000	369	9	25	-
McDonalds Hamburgers Ltd	-	8000	150	30	30	34
Mr Big UK Ltd	1979	-	16	7	10	-
New York New York (UB Restaurants)	1979	-	11	-	-	-

Nordsee Restaurants UK Ltd	1983	160	2	1	-	-
Olivers UK Ltd	1976	-	22	6	20	-
The Pancake Place	1973	-	16	1	6	-
The Perfect Pizza (UB Restaurants)	1978	-	21	7	10	-
Pizza Express	1965	-	28	1	5	-
Pizza Hut (UK)	1973	4000	54	-	-	35
Pizzaland (UB Restaurants)	1979	17	97	31	30	-
Poppins Rest.	1979	-	38	3	7	-
Roast Inns	1981	-	34	18	-	-
Sarahs (Manor Caterers Ltd)	1978	-	34	2	-	-
Spud-U-Like Ltd	1974	-	50	15	20	-
Strikes Rest.	1972	9	8	3	6	-
Superfish (Rhodes Foods Ltd)	1971	-	7	0	1	-
Vittle Inns Ltd	1980	-	23	3	4	-
Wendy Restaurants UK Ltd	1980	2800	13	-	6	-
Whats's Cooking Ltd	1978	4	4	2	6	-
Wimpy Int. Ltd	1954	570	419	17	15	-

Source: Popular Food Service 1984/5 pp.36-42

Clearly it was during the 1970s that the majority of fast food chains first made their impact on the British market, increasing rapidly throughout the subsequent decade. Table 9 gives an insight into the international scale of this expansion.

TABLE 9: LARGE FOOD CHAINS: WORLD RANKING BY NUMBER OF OUTLETS 1983/84

Ranking	*Company*		*No. of World-wide Outlets*	*Ranking Out-side the USA*
1	McDonalds	(US)	7589	4
2	Kentucky Fried Chicken	(US)	6989	3
3	International Dairy Queen	(US)	4763	9
4	Pizza Hut	(US)	4300	-
5	Burger King	(US)	3455	-
6	Allied Lyons	(GB)	2770	10
7	Wendys Internat.	(US)	2671	-
8	Hardees	(US)	2180	-
9	Kozo Sushi	(JAP)	2060	1
10	Chef & Brewer	(GB)	1500	2

Source: Hotels & Restaurants International 1984 in Keynote 1985 p.3

The influx of American capital into the expanding 'fast food' trade in Britain had important repercussions throughout the domestic catering industry. Amplified competition (an inevitable concomitant of the growing number of outlets) not only squeezed the profits of existing traders, it also widened the availability of cheap and convenient meal products on a scale unparalleled since the War. As a result 'eating out' increased dramatically, rising by sixty three per cent between 1973 and 1978 alone (Desmond et al. op cit 1981 p.107). Every person now consumes an average of over three meals a week outside the home (see Table 10 below), generating an estimated annual revenue (in 1980) of £7.6 billion for the private catering industry (London Food Commission 1986 op cit). By 1983 total annual consumer expenditure on food catering alone amounted to £9,967 million, constituting 5.6% of the total (ibid).

TABLE 10: WEEKLY NUMBER OF MEALS CONSUMED OUTSIDE THE HOME PER PERSON 1977 - 1980

	At Midday	*Other (mainly evening)*	*Total*
1978	1.75	1.26	3.01
1979	1.81	1.39	3.20
1980	1.77	1.46	3.23

Source: National Food Survey in Keynote Reports 1984 p.9

This increase in consumption has been matched by a growth in catering employment. From 1971 to 1981, jobs in the trade rose between fourteen and fifteen per cent (see Tables 11 & 12 below).

TABLE 11: EMPLOYMENT IN HOTEL AND CATERING TRADES 1851 -1981
(England & Wales 1851 - 1951, G.B. 1961 - 1981)

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
1851	50346	69888	120234
1861	96328	98329	194657
1871	113068	129061	242129
1881	118945	73836	192781
1891	131722	131423	263145
1901	165250	177116	342366
1911	202468	285554	488022
1921	159085	268698	427783
1931	198174	257864	456038
1961			995230
1971			1148560
1981			1352880

Source: Census of Population 1851 - 1981

TABLE 12: COMPARISON OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE FOOD INDUSTRIES BETWEEN 1973 & 1981

	1973	*1981*	*% Change*
Food, Drink & Tobacco Manufacture	728.1	669.3	-8.1
Food, Drink & Tobacco Wholesale Distribution	218.1	250.6	+14.1
Food & Drink Retail Distribution	608.1	564.0	-7.2
Hotels & Other Resid. Establishments	245.8	267.9	+9.0
Restaurants, Cafes & Snack Bars	168.4	192.4	+14.3
Public Houses	214.9	227.7	+6.0
Clubs	94.5	138.2	+46.2

Source: HTCIB Statistical Review of the Hotel and Catering Industry (Catering Intelligence Unit) 1984

Despite the impact of American capital, however, the catering industry in Britain still displays a highly uneven pattern of development. In 1985, for example, the top ten companies controlled only fifteen per cent of the market (London Food Commission 1986 op cit), although for contract catering the market share enjoyed by the top ten companies had reached fifty eight per cent (ibid; see also Table 13 below). This contrasted sharply again with the restaurant sector, where less than two per cent out of a total of some seventy thousand restaurants were part of restaurant chains (Keynote 1984 op cit p.3). Such unevenness reflects both the diversity of the industry and the selective effects of new investment upon different elements within it.

Prior to the investment boom of the 1970s catering production had remained largely labour intensive. This rule applied to state and private sector 'factory kitchens', small haute cuisine restaurants and cafes alike. Whether aimed at the production of luxury meals in restaurants or at mass public

consumption, catering technology had advanced little since the War. As a result, the productivity of labour and the profits extracted from it were relatively low. The investment drive of the 1970s thus effectively sought to improve productivity and thereby profitability by means of increasing and expanding the level of technological 'hardware' employed in catering production.

TABLE 13: BRITAIN'S TOP FIVE CONTRACT CATERING COMPANIES (1982)

	Turnover (£m)	*Pre-Tax Profits (£m)*	*% of Turnover*
Trusthouse Forte	915.4	57.1	6.24
Grand Metropolitan	135.3	2.8	2.13
Berni Inn	105.4	4.7	4.52
Stakis PLC	88.2	4.4	5.06
Mecca Leisure	76.8	3	4.02

Source: "The British Catering Industry" (Jordans 1984) in London Food Commission 1985

New technology, however, proved only of limited value to the disparate sections of the catering industry, due to their differing requirements for particular configurations of labour and capital. Specialist haute cuisine restaurants, for example, by definition operate on a highly skilled, labour intensive production process accessible to a restricted consumer market. This contrasts with the implied technological needs of mass producers seeking to sell as many meals as cheaply as possible. The investment boom in catering hardware of the 1970s therefore acted to catapult specifically the mass meal fast food producers into a dominant position within the sector. Before showing how these changes affected Chinese restaurants, it is necessary to examine in greater detail exactly *how* technological investment has altered the productivity of catering labour.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

"Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby, also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and on the mental conceptions that flow from them." (Marx 1954 p.406)

Raising the productivity of labour and hence the rate of profit through new investment in the catering industry was actually achieved by extending the 'chain' of food production (ie. the amount of work actually expended on producing food commodities). This expanded the number of points at which it was possible for catering capitalists to realise surplus value. 'Convenience foods' is the most visible arena in which the value-adding process has taken place, frozen food sales having more than quadrupled between 1973 and 1982 (Gallup Estimates in Wiggins & Lang 1985 op cit p.22). Data from the Ministry of Agriculture's National Food Survey shows convenience foods as a proportion of total food consumed to have increased from 17.5% in 1972 to 22% in 1982 (ibid).

The development of convenience foods has allowed food retailers to move from low profit margin, packaged groceries to high profit foodstuffs. Progress in 'cook-chill' technology has meant that catering companies can now offer consumers totally prepared meal products. Leading retailers who have expanded into this market now employ their own chefs and food technologists to develop catered meals for consumption in the home. Wiggins and Lang noted that at Marks and Spencer's store in Birmingham, convenience food sales accounted for something in excess of forty per cent of turnover (ibid). However, the most important function of the increased proportion of fixed capital investment has been to raise the efficiency of labour actually expended and to more tightly control the labour process. Braverman's work in Labour & Monopoly Capital (1974) has been of seminal importance in advancing this argument at a general level: "While capitalist development has tended to increase the productivity of living labour, it has also reorganised the labour process to becalm worker insubordination."

In as much as the productivity of labour power is not a fixed entity but must be transformed into living labour by capitalists (a process which according to Braverman rests upon the intervention of managers), pseudo-

scientific strategies of mediation are employed to the following ends (Braverman 1974 op cit):

a) a restructuring of the 'craft' elements in the labour process such that production becomes comprised of a series of simple tasks
b) separation of the mental ('conception') and manual ('execution') components of the labour process
c) use of managers' 'scientific' knowledge of the labour process to plan in detail, and thus control the tasks required of each worker.

These strategies serve to deskill and thereby cheapen the cost of labour as well as bring under tighter control the pace and quality of production, in such a way that

"The subjective factor of the labour process is removed to a place among its inanimate objective factors. To the materials and instruments of production are added a 'labour force', another 'factor of production' and the process is henceforth carried on by management as the sole subjective element." (ibid p.171)

The use of technology, therefore, is much more than simply a neutral, innovative input into the organisation of production: it is a functional component in a particular system of domination and control. In short, new technology is capitalist technology (Wilkinson 1983 p.14).

The impact of new technology upon catering production is divisible between that which affects the labour process by more sophisticated forms of management (i) and that which now constitutes fundamental technological hardware in the industry (ii).

(i) 'Scientific management' and advanced marketing techniques have thrown up a plethora of format-run fast food outlets dominated by major multinationals such as McDonalds and franchise chains such as Pizzaland and Burger King. Their semi-continuous production strategies yield marginal unit profits but rely upon a large product turnover and the capacity to respond to changing demands for food products throughout opening hours. Consequently, a cheap and flexible labour force is absolutely essential to profitability. This entails the interchangable use of staff at different stages of the production process, so that during peak consumer periods all efforts are focussed on cooking and serving, whilst in quieter periods the

workforce can be assigned other duties such as cleaning and stock taking. This method of job rotation, often presented under the guise of 'job enrichment', also prevents workers from developing specialisms enabling them to exert greater control over their work. Of greatest importance, 'scientific management' allows the employer to break down the cooking task into a series of simple procedures which require no prior knowledge and which can be timed to within seconds to ensure that workers are carrying out their respective functions at an optimum level. As noted by the Centre for Business Research (Desmond et al. 1981 op cit p.53)

"Most of the fast food chains maintain that in order to keep costs low and the speed and efficiency of service, high specialisation and simplification of job roles within the outlet are essential. By dividing each job into a number of component parts, each easily learned in a short period, training becomes less of a problem - staff have little to learn and can reach maximum effectiveness in a very short time."

These principles guide recruitment policies such that the majority of non-managerial staff are employed on a part-time and/or shift basis precisely tailored to fluctuating demands for food during the day. Deskilled work is used as a justification for low pay and fringe benefits are either marginal or non-existent. Terms of employment such as these tend to draw the kind of workers for whom the job is seen as their only possible source of employment, as a temporary stepping stone, as an additional source of income or as convenient to other commitments which they must meet at certain hours of the day. Consequently, the employment profile of the industry is characterised by young, female and ethnic minority workers. Transitory, short term and part time employment mitigates against labour organisation, which in many companies is totally absent, thus obstructing any long term qualitative change in the employment circumstances of workers.

(ii) The extent of technological hardware in catering is shown in Tables 14 and 15. The production techniques mentioned in the Tables have been developed to satisfy at least one of four objectives - to make food a more manageable commodity in terms of transportation, storage, processing, edible lifetime and consumption; to expand the range of saleable food products; to

increase the locations at which they can be consumed; and most signifcantly, to lower the costs necessary for its production.

TABLE 14: MAJOR PROCESSES IN CATERING TECHNOLOGY

Mechanical	Cutting, Mixing, Kneading, Sifting, Moulding, Vending Machining
Physical	Heating, Freezing, Cook/Chill, Cook/Freeze, Microwave, Infra Red
Chemical	Organoleptic modifiers, Preservatives, Processing Agents
Biological	Fermentation
Electronic	Electronic Point of Sale, EFTS, Food Trolley Start Up, Food and Beverage Control

Source: Wiggins 1985 pp.8-9

TABLE 15: THE IMPACT OF CATERING TECHNOLOGY ON THE LABOUR PROCESS

Ultra Heat Treatmenmt (U.H.T.)	Portion control improvement, Increased stock holding
Irradiation	Increased centralisation of kitchen facilities, Deskilling of food purchasing, Job loss
Cook/Chill	Deskilling, Centralisation, Job loss
Electronic Point of Sale (E.P.O.S.)	Reduction of cash handling, potential for differential pricing, Improved stock control, Job loss
Process Automation	Increased use of vending machines
Retort Pouch	Increased use of processed foods, Deskilling

Source: Wiggins 1985

Whilst technology has now become an indispensable element in fast food production it has also entailed a very high level of investment in the production process. For example, a 'milk shake' machine capable of dispensing three shakes a minute can cost up to £3,000; an ice machine producing 400lbs of ice a day (a standard amount for a large fast food outlet) requires an initial outlay of more than £2,000. The specialist nature of such equipment adds further to maintenance costs. If machines break down, such as Kentucky Fried Chicken's "Henny Penny" which can pressure fry thirty six portions of chicken in eleven minutes, customer turnover is immediately affected (Desmond et al 1981 op cit p.52). It is this increasing cost of fast food production that has had the most important implications for small catering producers competing in the mass consumer market.

THE FAST FOOD REVOLUTION AND CHINESE CATERING

"The major chains in the fast food markets are now virtually all controlled by large corporations. Relatively few chains now stand alone as fast food only ventures, McDonalds and Wendys being really the major exceptions. Within the UK market the main competitors are operated by UK subsidiaries of US corporations or by UK based companies utilising licensing or know-how based on successful North American chains. Contrary to some popular belief fast food is no longer an open business for small operators except possibly as a franchise business." (Desmond et al 1981 p.64)

The major effect of the rise in investment was to heighten the pace of competition, impelling existing producers for the mass market also to raise productivity through the introduction labour saving machinery. The effect on other catering firms such as specialist restaurants is less clear, for whilst competition has increased in general terms, the need to 'technologise' in haute cuisine restaurants has been less of an imperative in view of their craft based forms of production. This increasing separation between the economics of mass meal and specialist meal production underlies one of the most important changes in the development of the industry as a whole over recent years, which is the rapid rise in food 'take-away' shops. Table 16 below shows that despite an overall expansion in restaurant trade, restaurants have been superseded increasingly by take-aways catering to the mass market [1].

TABLE 16: TRENDS IN CONSUMER EXPENDITURE ON FOOD CATERING (£m)

	1977	*1978*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*
Restaurants	880	950	1000	1150	1300
Take-Aways	870	1075	1235	1500	1750
Pubs and Clubs	460	635	810	1025	1225
Hotels	490	590	655	775	875
Total	2700	3250	3700	4450	5150

Source: Euromonitor in Keynote Reports 1984 p.7

According to a recent estimate, the fast food market is growing currently at an annual rate of fifteen per cent and totals £2.3 billion (London Food Commission 1986 op cit) with predictions of sustained growth for the industry into the 1990s and expectations of a fifty percent increase in sales between 1984 and 1990 (see Table 17). However, whilst the market for catered food has grown in general, it has been specifically the fast food chains which have accounted for the major proportion of increased sales, a trend which also seems set to accelerate into the 1990s. Whereas projected sales for fast food chains are anticipated to have increased by more than double between 1984 and 1989, sales for ethnic take-aways show little sign of growth (see Table 17 below).

TABLE 17:PROJECTED SALES THROUGH TAKE-AWAY ESTABLISHMENTS 1984-1990 (£m)

	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*
Fast Food Chains	670	800	930	1,050	1,160	1,275	1,400
Fish & Chip Shops	470	460	455	460	470	465	455
Ethnic Take-Aways	215	210	205	200	205	210	215
Sandwich Bars	425	440	460	480	500	530	560
Total	1,780	1,910	2,050	2,190	2,335	2,480	2,630

Source: Euromonitor in Popular Foodservice 1984 p.46

The greatest growth has been in the American format chains which rely upon large capital investment in labour saving technology and a high rate of turnover. For instance, Kentucky Fried Chicken, established in the UK in 1965, was the first nationwide multiple to challenge the fish and chip market with eighty per cent (by value) of its trade represented in take-away form. The company now has three hundred and sixty five outlets in Britain, one hundred and fifty of which are run as franchises (Keynote Reports 1985 op cit p.6). Hamburger chains, to take another example, have been synonymous with the fast food industry from the beginning. Indeed, the trends within the hamburger market continue to reflect those within the sector as a whole. Wimpy, the oldest British owned hamburger fast food chain dating back to 1955 (Popular Foodservice 1984/5 p.44), achieved a sales turnover in 1983 in excess of £30 million (ibid) and in 1984 opened seventeen new stores. However, it continues to be the large US firms which account for the greatest expansion. McDonalds boasts the highest sales turnover and has opened close to two hundred outlets in Britain with plans for opening between thity to forty new units each year until the year 2000. At this rate, by the end of the century, forty thousand people will be working in McDonalds retail outlets (Wiggins & Lang 1985 op cit p.13). Again, in the pizza market, Pizzaland started thirty one outlets in Britain during 1984, followed by a further thirty during the following year.

Major independents and susidiaries of multinational corporations are growing at a dramatic rate. Concentration, therefore is proceeding on a massive, international scale. When Pepsico, the American soft drinks giant, bought Kentucky Fried Chicken from Nabisco at a cost of £570/$850 million, Kentucky's six thousand and five hundred restaurants with an annual turnover of $1.3 billion were added to Pepsico's existing stock which include Pizza Hut and Taco Bell outlets, giving it a total of over 14,000 restaurants worldwide (Financial Times 25th July 1986 p.1). Intensified competition from foreign-owned companies has led British firms to rationalise and restructure their operations. Wimpy, for instance, as one of the leading franchise chains, has sought to upgrade the quality of their products and increase the rate of turnover by a £5 million (in 1983) investment programme in new cooking technology, moving from predominantly a waiter to a counter service. In the same year, this resulted in the

closure of fifty two existing outlets and the opening of sixteen new outlets in new locations (Popular Foodservice 1984/5 op cit pp.44-45).

The precise impact of the investment boom on the Chinese fast food trade is difficult to assess due to the lack of comparative statistical data. However, it is clear from community sources of information that the market position of Chinese businesses has only been maintained by considerable shifts in the economic basis of the ethnic catering economy. Intensified competition for the mass consumer market as the international chains gained ascendancy entailed a choice of four main options for Chinese in the 'chop suey house' operations of the 1960s.

The first was to seek employment on the wider labour market. However, for many Chinese lacking industrial skills in the onset of economic recession (which had become apparent in some industries during the 1960s) and a social climate of growing popular racism, prospects were bleak. These factors combined to exert strong pressure upon Chinese to remain within the ethnic catering trade. A second alternative was to compete on the same basis as the fast food giants but the very nature of Chinese settlement in Britain entailed that most neither possessed nor were in a position to raise the necessary capital resources. There were apparent exceptions, such as Jo Kwan Mandarin Kitchens, a Chinese restaurant group which sought to enter the factory kitchen market producing plastic sealed, reheatable meals by means of franchised outlets. However, it was specifically Hong Kong based, drawing its capital from outside the ethnic Chinese catering industry in Britain. A third option was to move towards specialist haute cuisine catering for a small but relatively lucrative market. Whilst this obviated the heavy cost of investment in expensive labour saving technology necessary for competition with the fast food giants, the limited market size and problems of recruiting adequately skilled cooks restricted the numbers of restauranteurs able to enter this market. The final alternative was to continue to compete in the mass consumer market, substituting even cheaper labour for costly labour saving technology by means of the family-run take-away shop. This most accessible resort was consolidated by the arrival of many Chinese families in Britain at the beginning of the 1970s.

The early 1970s thus saw the demise of the cheap Chinese 'chop suey houses' and the simultaneous growth of smaller capital units in the form of take-aways and chip shops staffed by increasing numbers of family relatives from Hong Kong who represented a ready supply of compliant workers. This process has structured the experiences of most Chinese families in the fast food industry, the following account being a typical example:

"Twenty years ago there wasn't any take-aways. It was all restaurants. Me and my husband used to work in one of the big ones in the city centre. He was just learning then, like me. It was no good as a job but what else could we do?. Then we got a job in this take-away for two years. He worked in the kitchen and I worked at the counter. There was another cook as well but he got the sack soon after because business wasn't very good then - not enough customers. Then after two years, we'd saved enough and bought the business. That was ten years ago. The old owner, he's got another business now. That's where he works with his family. We run this place on our own now, with our two sons."

Capitalisation and running costs for take-away or fish and chip shops are considerably lower than for restaurants, as remarked by one restauranteur:

"Running a restaurant involves a lot of money. But to open up a take-away only costs about a third of what it costs to open up a restaurant. The profit margin is about the same - in fact it's more without the heavy outgoings. All you need is one chef in the kitchen and one waiter at the counter."

Chinese accountants informed that the average starting-up costs for a take-away shop were between £10,000 and £15,000 for rented premises, but rising anything up to £50,000 if premises were purchased. Restaurant start-up costs, by contrast, were quoted as only beginning at £70,000, amounting easily to well over £100,000 if a conversion of premises were required (figures quoted were for the Birmingham and West Midlands area only). Interestingly, the difference was said to have magnified considerably over the years. As it was phrased by one accountant, "Nowadays we're talking about the big boys. The traditional old fashioned small chop suey houses aren't around any more. These are high class places around now; interior designers and the lot." Bank loans, personal savings and loans from family and friends were the usual means by which take-aways and chip shops were capitalised, bank loans accounting for the heaviest proportion of initial outlay.

For many Chinese, the move into take-away and chip shops also presented a welcome opportunity to resume some semblance of family life, seriously eroded by dormitory restaurant work and hampered by the statutory requirement to demonstrate that incoming dependants could be accommodated and maintained by their sponsor (see Chapter 3 for fuller discussion):

"My parents both worked for the same restaurant at first. Then my Mum got a job as an orderly in a hospital and my father stayed in the kitchen as a cook. But when she had my brother, she went back to the restaurant again, part time in the kitchen. So most of the time I had to look after my brother, feed him and change him and all that on my own. But I was only a kid then myself. A few years after that, though, they got a take-away and we moved to Stoke, so we could have our own place at last. That's when we brought my sisters over from Hong Kong."

By far the most important consideration, however, is that the transition from restaurants to family take-away shops also entailed a wholesale redefinition of economic roles for a great many Chinese families in the fast food industry. Becoming proprietors of small, family-run meal shops actually meant that many waged workers joined the ranks of the petit bourgeoise and that in their businesses, the family became the essential unit of production. 'Petit bourgeois', however, is a description which necessitates considerable clarification if its implications for the Chinese community are to be understood clearly.

THE PETITE BOURGEOISIE DEFINED

Much of the extant sociological literature does not sharply distinguish the 'petite bourgeoisie' from the more general 'middle class', a term which has been cast over a variety of white-collar, non-manual, technical and managerial waged occupations (eg. Parkin 1971; Poulantzas 1975; Roberts et al. 1977; Giddens 1981). A particularly important case in point are the contemporary 'middleman minority' theorists (eg. Bonacich 1973; van den Berghe 1981) discussed in Chapter 1. This lack of distinction serves to confuse rather than clarify analysis principally because the petite bourgeoisie occupies an objective relationship to the means of production which is not shared by supervisors, bureaucrats, clerks, teachers and skilled non-manual workers, etc. The petite bourgeoisie are circumscribed by their use of capital in conjunction with their own labour in order to

generate an income. In this they differ from the vast majority of paid workers, including those who might be ascribed to the category of 'middle class', 'new middle class' or 'new petite bourgeoisie'. The latter are defined (somewhat arbitrarily it seems) upon such highly relative criteria as autonomy at work, supervisory functions, level of skill, income, occupational 'culture' and political affiliations: those deserving specific mention include the "market capacity" of workers (Giddens 1981), their perceived status (Lockwood 1958) and the degree to which non-productive, "intellectual" labour is required (Poulantzas 1975). ('Non-productive' was meant in the sense of labour which does not directly realise commodities that can be exchanged for profit.) In such a way, Poulantzas (in Wright 1978 p.55) was led to conclusion that the American proletariat accounted for a mere twenty per cent of the country's workforce, whilst the "new petty bourgeoisie" constituted seventy per cent.

Without diverting into the debates on productive and non-productive labour, suffice it to say that such descriptive or impressionistic definitions of the 'new middle class/petty bourgeoisie' provide precious little analytical mileage for grappling with the transition in the Chinese community from restaurants to take-away and chip shops and the objective and subjective implications which follow from it. As stated by Wright (1978 op cit pp.49-50)

"both productive and unproductive workers are exploited... In both cases, the capitalist will try to keep the wage-bill as low as possible; in both cases the capitalist will try to increase productivity by getting workers to work harder; in both cases, workers will be dispossesed of control over their labour-process. In both cases, socialism is a prerequisite for ending exploitation. It is hard to see where a fundamental divergence of economic interests emerges from the position of unproductive and productive labour in capitalist relations of production."

Many of the emergent 'new middle class' occupations may afford greater relative control over labour and the production process but their central relationship to capital is essentially that of the paid worker. The petite bourgeoisie in the Marxist sense, on the other hand,

"comprise those who make their living primarily by the exercise of their own labour with their self-owned means of production (tools) or other property (like a shop). They are typically self employed, small proprietors or tradespeople, carpenters working in their own shop, tailors working for their own customers, small merchants, and so on; in short, largely self employed artisans and shop keepers." (Draper 1978 p.288)

In short, whereas the petite bourgeoisie "denotes a specific class that can be rigorously defined, *middle class* or *middle classes* has no fixed meaning whatever; this term takes on a meaning only from its context and the declared inten tion of the user" (ibid p.290). To this Bechhofer and Elliott (1976 p.78) added, "The small businessman gets his living by mixing his own labour with his own capital. The clerical and administrative workers do not; consequently they have significantly different interests." In the same vein, Scase and Goffee (1982) drew the distinction between the *salaried* and the *entrepreneurial* middle class to clarify the specific position of the petite bourgeioisie in relation to capital.

Draper (1978 op cit) and Scase & Goffee (1982 op cit), were careful to differentiate the petite bourgeoisie (referred to by Scase & Goffee as the 'self-employed') from the *small* bourgeoisie (or 'small employers' to use Scase & Goffee's term), although it was said that the two categories "shaded off" in both directions. They were distinguished by "the degree to which wage-labor figures in the enterprise. The petty-bourgeoisie earn their living by dint of their own labor and their own property; the bourgeoisie live on earnings from the labor of others" (Draper 1978 op cit p.289). Scase and Goffee (1982 op cit) added that the self-employed were "generally dependent upon the unpaid services of their families and the utilisation of domestic assets for business purposes" (pp.23-24), distinguishing them from three other forms of entrepreneur/employer including the bourgeoisie proper. However, it is essentially the position of the self-employed petit bourgois as distinct from higher and more clearly defined forms of entrepreneurial capitalist which concerns the present discussion.

A further qualification of the petite bourgeoisie suggested by Bechhofer and Elliott (1976 op cit p.77) was "the dominance of relatively low technology" in production, which was "typically rather traditional and subject to little alteration". This entailed "weakly developed forms of differentiation" in the labour process, such that "the social organisation of work is simple, the span of authority small, *[and]* the petit bourgeois concern cannot be given a bureaucratic structure" (ibid). However, whilst the elements of "low capital and simple material and social technology" which were said to characterise the petite bourgeoisie may well "hint at its anachronistic

nature" (ibid) within the *overall* evolution of capitalism, it is important to recognise the role of the class in the nascent stages of capitalist development in specific industrial sectors. Examined from this perspective, the particular circumstances of the petite bourgeoisie in each industry sector can provide a valuable illumination of the precise point of development in the process of accumulation within that industry.

THE PETITE BOURGEOISIE AND CAPITALIST DEVELOPMENT

"In every capitalist country, side by side with the proletariat, there are always broad strata of the petty bourgoisie, small proprietors. Capitalism arose and is constantly arising out of small production. A number of new 'middle strata' are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism (appendages to the factory, work at home, small workshops scattered all over the country to meet the requirements of the big industries, such as the bicycle and automobile industries etc)."
(Lenin 1949 Vol.15 p.39)

Lenin clearly acknowledged the persistence of the petite and small bourgeoisie in capitalist accumulation, despite "the fundamental and principal trend of capitalism" which was "the displacement of small-scale by large-scale production" (ibid Vol.22 p.70). In the same way, Marx before him had pointed out that

"Accumulation and the concentration accompanying it are, therefore, not only scattered over many points, but the increase of each functioning capital is thwarted by the formation of new and the sub-division of old capitals. Accumulation, therefore, presents itself on the one hand as increasing concentration of the means of production, and of the command over labour; on the other, as repulsion of many individual capitals one from another."
(Marx 1954 Vol.1 p.586)

The case of Britain's Chinese in the catering industry is just one illustration of this process. The general tendency towards capital concentration on an international scale forges ahead cheek by jowl with the persistence of the petit bourgeois family shop.

The production of commodities by the petite bourgeoisie (who employ no labour in their independently-owned means of production) entails that essentially, it falls outside the capitalist mode of production. However, in so far as petit bourgeois production operates within a framework within which capitalist relations predominate, it assumes a capitalist form and is

assimilated into the capitalist system. Hence, in an abstract sense, the petit bourgeois can be split into both capitalist (as owner of the means of production and profiteer) as well as wage-labourer (producer of surplus values). After this fashion, Draper (1978 op cit p.292) described the class as representing "a living duplex, a class amalgam with an internal class struggle of their very own, a social schizoid ("cut up into two persons")." As such, the petite bourgeoisie, on both an objective and subjective level are squeezed from above and below, internalising within themselves the contradictory interests of both ruling and working classes.

Subjectively, the petite bourgeoisie as property owners "can rejoice in their identity with millionaires and thrill to orations on the Rights of Property" (ibid p.292). As workers, "they can appreciate the grievances of the working classes", sharing with them "a community of interest, especially in the long run, with the proletariat as against the evils of the capitalist system" (ibid). In short,

"Through the small amount of capital it owns, it [the petty bourgeoisie] shares in the conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie; through the insecurity of its existence, in the conditions of the proletariat."

On an objective level, "From above, they are crowded out by the pressure of more efficient capitals and oppressed by the policies of a government interested in the expansion of big industry ... *[and]* suffer all the miseries of the proletariat" (ibid pp.292-293). This already has been amply shown to be the case for the Chinese. Alternatively, "the poor mini-capitalist is driven to supersweating in order to extract ... that which is needed to balance the advantages of a bigger competitor" (ibid p.293). The consequences of this condition for Chinese families in business and their subjective responses to it are the subject of the next part of this chapter.

THE PETITE BOURGEOISIE AND THE CHINESE COMMUNITY

The prominence of Chinese fish & chip and take-away shops throughout the UK in relation to the size of the ethnic population as a whole is a measure of the prominence of the petit bourgeois class within the community. For, as described above, virtually all of these are staffed by individual

families. As stated above, the Home Affairs Committee (1984-85 op cit p.xi) estimated the proportion of family-run fast food shops to account for as many as sixty per cent of all Chinese presently engaged in the catering trade (see also Chapter 3) but no substantiated information exists as to their market share in the industry as a whole. From information gleaned on Birmingham, however, Chinese family shops were approximately one fifth of the city's five hundred and fifteen take-away food outlets (Birmingham City Council, Environmental Health Department 1985), their proportion in relation to larger concerns confirming the figures of the Home Affairs Committee (1984-85 op cit). Less than one third of all Chinese catering establishments employed any workers at all (West Midlands County Council 1986), larger restaurants with an average of ten to twenty staff accounting for the majority of those which did (ibid). The few remaining businesses with hired labour comprised an average of one to three staff.

For the majority of Chinese in the fast food industry, therefore, the family is an institution which structures both social *and* economic life, a situation uncommon to most waged workers who sell their labour power independently on the open market. Indeed, most of the petit bourgeois businesses are entirely dependent upon the efforts of family members, as remarked by one Chinese accountant: "If they make money, it's because of the family's contribution. If they had to pay the market rate for workers, the businesses wouldn't survive." The profits from such family businesses were not notably high. Accountants again confirmed that approximately half made a nett profit of less than £10,000 per year, with only about ten per cent managing to raise over £15,000 (for Birmingham only). One third of family businesses were believed to be constantly struggling to remain solvent, turning over roughly £600 per week (including VAT). Yet another sixty per cent were estimated to turn over between £1,000 to £1,500 per week, which was considered average. Only a successful five per cent managed in excess of a weekly £3,000 business turnover. As such, business ownership tended to change hands frequently, the average length of a particular family business being five years. An accountant explained, "These take-away businesses are not meant to be permanent. If people are successful, they try to get rid of them and make some money. If not, they cut their losses and get out."

The Wong family were running a take-away shop above which they lived in the south of Birmingham. It occupied a favourable position just off a main road and business was considered good. The father and mother worked full time and their son, still at school, worked part-time, yielding an annual average profit level of £8,000. Mr Wong, however, worked an eighty four hour week, his wife thirty five hours per week and their son approximately twenty five hours per week - a weekly family total of one hundred and forty four hours. Taking only two days off every year, the annual number of hours worked by the Wong family totalled 7,467. This entailed an hourly rate for each person of £1.07.

The Wong's schedule was typical for the average take-away shop, as verified by Mrs Tsoi, who worked in a similar establishment nearby.

"I work seven days a week - but only in the evening, not in the daytime. We don't open for lunch but a lot of our friends do. We both work there at night but we can have a rest during the day, although we've still got to prepare the food for five o'clock when we open. Thursday, Friday and Saturday we work quite hard in the day - cutting the meat, getting it ready, chips, vegetables - things like that. Anna, our daughter, helps us when she's on her school holidays and sometimes at the weekend but she' got her school homework. Some of the stuff we get delivered but other stuff we've got to get from the wholesale market. You have to get up early for that. It's very difficult sometimes because we can't go to bed until about two o'clock at night and the market *closes* by eleven in the morning. Weekends, it must be two or three o'clock before we're even finished in the kitchen. You have to clean everything after you've closed at night, you know. There's a lot of cleaning."

Certainly, as acknowledged by Bechhofer and Elliott (1981 op cit p.194), "This familial basis to the activity ... means that husbands, wives and children are often bound together in the most basic task of earning a living." This 'binding together' however, is not a neutral process but one which is structured by family relations that are inherently hierarchical and oppressive under capitalism. Such relations are rooted in the moulding of the family as the locus of reproduction during the nascent stages of capitalist development.

Reproduction refers to the reproduction of labour; procreation, feeding, clothing, washing, socialisation and general regeneration of present and future workers. These functions, to a varying degree performed within the

private domain of the family, have been achieved historically through the material and ideological subordination of women both inside and outside the family. In this way, the cost of socially necessary tasks entailed in reproducing labour power (childrearing, cooking, shopping, cleaning, etc) can be shrugged off by capital and the state. The oppression of women under capitalism is thus crystallised in the institution of the family and its persistence is integral to the maintenance of the economic system. Marx (in Engels 1978 p.66) wrote of the family, "It contains in miniature all the contradictions which later extend throughout society and its state."

Operating within a system in which family relations are structured upon the subordination of women, Chinese family-run take-away and chip shop businesses as a rule intensify women's oppression. Chinese accountants confirmed that the vast majority of Chinese take-away shops (eighty per cent was estimated) was registered in the sole name of the male head of household and that in virtually all cases (ninety per cent or more was estimated) no wages or salaries were received by family members. Women's labour is used directly to produce profit, yet the overarching relations of the family within which this occurs means that women's economic roles are consistantly subsumed within their roles as mothers, wives and housekeepers, systematically eroding their latent strength as productive workers. Moreover, the confinement of economic activity to the social boundaries of the family effectively denies women any collective basis from which to challenge their subordination, in that they have no organic link with workers outside of the family business. In this way, the degree of control Chinese women command in the family business is not measured by their productivity but by individualised, informal negotiation. In some families, the material differences in wealth between husbands and wives are pronounced, depite an equal contribution to the running of the shop. Relegated to two paragraphs under the residual heading of "Other Matters" in the Home Affairs Committee Report (1984-85 op cit pp.lxxvi-lxxvii), Chinese women were often noted to become "dependent on their husbands for finances", "withdrawn" and "extremely isolated". This scenario, however, is probably best described by one Chinese woman and her daughter.

"After ten years we'd saved up enough money to start our own business. My husband's uncle helped us out a bit though. It's hard work but at least now we can all be together. My husband and me do the cooking and my son - he can speak English you see - he works at the counter. I get very tired sometimes because when I'm not working at the shop, I've got to look after Linda, David and Susan, my other children. They're still at school. I don't get a wage or anything. It's my husband's business. He makes all the decisions. But he gives me pocket money whenever we can afford it. Most of the time I'm too busy or too tired to spend it, though. Sometimes I go to play Mah Jeung at my friend's house. A lot of Chinese like to do that - or go to the casino. That's all there is to do at one o'clock in the morning when we finish work. Some of my friends just go to the casino to watch the Chinese films. They're not even interested in the gambling. It's a very boring life really but what else can I do? There's nothing for me here doing this work, that's the truth."

"My parents are always on the go. When you work in a restaurant, when your time comes for a break, you can take a break, whereas in a take-away, you know there's always something to be done, even if you're supposed to be having a break. You're on the go constantly. My Mum spends hours afterwards cleaning things up, just scrubbing everything. So, whenever they have any time off, they're quite happy just to sit and relax. They get up about ten, well, that's when my Mum gets up. Actually, it's my Mum that does most things, come to think of it. Anyway, they open at noon and close at two. Then from two till half past, they're pottering around in the kitchen doing little things. Then at three they'll have an hour's break. They might decide to go into town and do a bit of shopping or they might just sit and do nothing. Then about four, the're off again, starting to get ready for the evening, until about one, half one in the morning or maybe later at the week-end. That's after my Mum's finished clearing up. She works a lot harder than my Dad, now I think about it, because she does most of the cleaning up and preparation and she looks after us as well. I don't know how she managed when we were little."

Amongst the generation of Britain's Chinese whose childhood as well as their adult life have been shaped by the fast food industry, there is far less of a resigned acceptance of the relentless routine of the take-away or chip shop. Many reflect bitterly upon their situations, as illustrated by the two examples below.

"I came to England when I was eight to live with my parents. When I arrived we lived in Norwich where my father was working as a waiter. I went to school there until I was twelve and then my father got a little restaurant near Newcastle, so we all moved up there. My father still lives in Newcastle but he's finished his business now. He's unemployed. I think it did quite badly. I'm not sure, though, because to be honest, my relationship with my parents isn't very good. Everything was under my father's control. If he said, "Do it", you had to do it. He was very strict. Everything had to be done his way. All of us older ones, we've left home. I think my mother's working, though, in a take-away. When my

father had a restaurant, my uncle and I were working in the kitchen. He did the cooking, I prepared the food and my parents and sisters did the waitering. We got home from school about five p.m. and started working about half past, until we finished at midnight - every day for six years. It was so tiring. I wanted to carry on studying but my father wanted me to work in the restaurant. They never asked me how I was doing at school, or anything. It was always the business first but that's not for me. Sometimes I could get a couple of hours off but I'd have to go back and work. No time to watch telly or anything. I just needed some room to breathe. That's why I ran away from home."

"I've had my family up to here for nineteen years and I need a break. I just want some independence. When you're born in this country you grow up with two different sets of ideas - Chinese and English - and you've got to try to cope with both of them. It's a real strain sometimes. I've had some terrible rows with my parents. I think it was worse in my situation because I had to work for them all the time. I felt obliged to do it you see. I just felt I had to do it because they worked so hard and there were eight of us and all these things. I really resented it when I was about fourteen or fifteen. I couldn't go out most nights because I was working. All my friends would go to discos and parties and I could never go because I was working. I just used to look at my friends and how they lived with their families and I'd get so jealous. Plus all that, I had my homework as well. That was very important to me because for me it was a way out. We had a little table in the corner of the shop and I'd spread my homework out and do it when there were no customers about."

The drudgery of the take-away shop for many second generation Chinese has taken its toll on their educational and social development, as recounted by another woman and man:

"I didn't think anything of coming here. I knew my parents were here and my older sister was coming with me. In those days, my Dad was a waiter and my Mum was a kitchen help. They'd worked in lots of different places - Ireland, Dublin I think, and Scotland. But that's before I came. By the time me and my sister arrived they'd settled down in their own shop. It was good business then. We helped sometimes, chopping potatoes for chips and things like that. We helped quite a lot really, especially at weekends because they were so busy. It was tiring but I didn't get any homework so it didn't disturb my schooling. There wouldn't have been any time for it. I didn't like school anyway. When I came, I only knew simple English like 'pen' and 'pencil', so I didn't learn a lot. I just sat around and watched what was going on. I was in a class where everyone was slow, you see, so how could I learn much? There were only three girls including me and the other two didn't like me, so that was that. My parents were too busy to teach me anything - my Dad speaks English, you see - so I never learned to speak it, not having any friends or anything and working in the kitchen every evening. All my friends now are from my village in Hong Kong."

"You know at one stage, I had to get up about six o'clock in the morning, go to the wholesale market, come home and unload all the stuff, have another hour's sleep, get up and go in and do my exams. At that time, my father was having serious business problems. It was doing very bad and he couldn't work because he was sick. His back and his shoulder had gone from all those years of using a heavy wok and carrying all the groceries. Before we got a car he had to carry all the stuff from the wholesale market on the bus everyday and the bus stop's about half a mile from the shop. During that time my sister was a great help. She's the one that's worked hardest for the take-away out of all us children. She even gave up college for me to give me more time to study when I was eighteen because she said I was more clever than her and I'd get further if she did more of the business."

For many younger Chinese, educational progress has not only been hampered by the demands of the family business over which they have no control, it has also been peppered with racism. The observations of Garvey and Jackson (1975 p.7) that "Chinese children are bullied all the time, systematically, consistently" were widely confirmed, the example below being typical of the general experience. Such stories, incidentally, did not support the findings of Fichet's study (1976 p.18) on Chinese children, in which he stated that they "displayed a high degree of contentment and philosophic adjustment to their new life in England."

"I left school with one 'O' Level. I wasn't capable of taking 'O' Level exams because of the language barrier. So when everybody in school was studying for 'O' Levels I spent most of my time doing art and sports, nothing else. And I got into lots of trouble fighting, because of racial harassment, oh yes. To give you an instance, the first day in school, I had a fight. The first week in school, I had five fights. They had me in the middle, four or five boys around me and they just pushed me about. Oh yeah, first day. First thing, this boy kept saying things to me, well I didn't understand what he was saying so I didn't care but then he started pushing me about. By lunchtime I had about four or five of them around me, all pushing. The next break I was so scared I hid in the cloakroom the whole break. That was the first day. When it was time for going home, I went straight out of the school really quick. The someone pushed me from the back and I fell over. It really got to me then. I'd had enough and that's how it started. Then as it went on and on, I sought protection from the teachers but they can't be there all the time, can they? You know, that time I had in junior school, that was what made me get such a bad name in secondary school. Because I'd suffered so much when I was a kid in that school, I took full advantage of people when I got to secondary school, which gave me such a bad name and really ruined my eduation - because of the violence. So at sixteen, I thought "If this is education, I don't want to know because I feel such a mess, there's no hope." But secretly I knew that meant I'd be trapped in that take-away for the rest of my life."

Racism is not confined to the school playground. It figures in all aspects of life in Britain. Family-run Chinese fast food shops which exist constantly on tight profit margins are particularly vulnerable to racists. For example, one Chinese family who ran a take-away shop above which they lived, were suffering weekly deposits of refuse scattered on the pavement outside their home and on their glass shop frontage, which also had been purposefully cracked on several occasions. No insurance company would issue cover for this, so the family paid the cost of replacing the glass every time. The police had been informed several times of the incidents but had refused to intervene. After some months, the take-away owner borrowed a video camera and managed to film the perpetrators as they were committing the acts. He then personally delivered the film to his local police station only to receive another refusal to respond.

Another man who has spent most of his life working in the catering industry in Britain told of his varying encounters with racism:

"Twenty years ago it was very bad, like for my father's generation. They actually spat at you in the street. He went to a pub for a drink. When he finished it, the barman actually smashed the glass in front of him because he said a Chinaman had drunk out of it and he didn't want it anymore. That was only in some places, not every place, of course.

When we had a take-away in Angelsey, there was this youngster and he always used to make trouble. So we didn't serve him; we wouldn't serve him anything. So he said, "If you don't serve me I'll smash your glass." Then he just walked to the door and smashed the glass.

We knew everybody there because it was a very small village. But even though you knew them, they were still bad to you because they thought if you're Chinese, you're different to their people. They would come into the shop and shout and sing and make a loud noise. They just liked to cause trouble for you, even though you knew them. We did ask them to keep the noise down but once you asked them, they got even noisier. Some of them didn't want to buy anything. They just came in to cause trouble. They liked to show off to their friends. It used to happen most weekends. Because people didn't work weekends, they'd go out for a few drinks and then they'd start causing trouble. Some of them were very friendly at other times. When they hadn't had any drinks at all they were very good friends with you. They were regular customers and nice to you. But once they'd had a few drinks, they came for trouble. It was because we were a different kind of people to them. If we were the same kind of people as them, they wouldn't have done those sort of things. It does make you feel bitter about them when you're having to face it every day. But I think Angelsey was a backward place. What I mean is the people were all very conservative because there wasn't much going on there. Other places I've been, the people don't make such a song and dance if you're a foreigner."

CAPITAL, LABOUR AND THE CHINESE COMMUNITY

Clearly for many Chinese, the task of running a fast food shop as a small family business is not a particularly rewarding experience. It is fraught with economic insecurity, long and unsociable hours of work (which compound the social disorientation that accompanies emigration), low levels of remuneration and racist attacks. Producing meal commodities within the asymmetrical sphere of the family binds both women and children still further into their subordination. Their labour is crucial for the survival of the business but they are denied the economic independence offered by employment on the open labour market. The isolation of the petit bourgeois niche acts as a self-perpetuating trap to the people caught up within it, with lasting effects for the second generation. A childhood spent in meeting the unrelenting demands of the family shop over individual needs has left many British-born Chinese with little option but to continue to use their particular skills working in the same trade, either as petit bourgeois entrepreneurs themselves (if they are lucky) or as waged workers in the ethnic economy.

Net wages for waitering in city centre restaurants, both in Birmingham and London ranged from an average of £120 to £200 per week, £150 being quoted as about average. Working hours, however, were long and divided into split shifts, the weekly total for most waiters averaging between sixty and seventy five. Invariably, employers declared only a small percentage of wages (approximately £30 to £70 per week) in order to make savings on national insurance and tax contributions paid on behalf of their workers. One waiter told how

"A lot of Chinese bosses don't give you a pay packet. They just give you cash, so after you finish, you've got no proof you've worked there if you want unemployment benefit. This boss here, we've asked him for our P60 more than five times and he keeps telling us excuses why we can't get it. He won't show us any papers. He just sweet-talks us. Me and the cook, we went down to the tax office about three months ago to see if we were registered and they said they'd look into it but we haven't heard anything from them yet."

Tied accommodation is still used widely, due to the long and late hours demanded by restaurant work in city centres. These were the housing conditions of one waiter in Birmingham.

"There's five of us in this three-bedroom house. Four of us share bedrooms. I share with another guy with a curtain across the room to separate off our parts. It's basic, very basic, but it's free so you can't complain. There's no heating or anything like that so it's pretty cold in the winter. And if you want hot water you have to put 50p in the meter and wait half an hour before it warms up. Anyway, we all get up about half an hour before we have to start work, so we just wash in cold water. It doesn't sound too good, does it? But for us it's just a place to sleep. I'm just biding time until one day when I can get out of this business. I don't want to live like that all my life."

The relatively recent arrival of Chinese refugees from Vietnam has provided some restauranteurs with an alternative source of cheap labour. "They push the *dim sum* trolleys around at lunch time for £1.50 an hour. That's if the boss will hire them. Normally, they don't want to know Vietnamese", it was told by a community worker in London's Soho. Vietnamese Chinese as a rule are casually employed on a part-time but permanent basis. Informal earnings by such means entails low pay and minimal employment rights. Most Chinese from Vietnam, however, remain unemployed or consigned to other areas of low paid work (see Baxter 1986).

Racialism continues to be a feature of restaurant work. Unpaid customers' bills are still deducted from employees' pay and the police at best still treat racist attacks and harassment as a 'civil' matter, showing what is perceived by Chinese workers as obvious favour to racist offenders. Less than one third of serious racist attacks on waiters were calculated to be taken to court, whilst lesser incidents generally went unreported (Chinese Information and Advice Centre 1987). The following case, reported in City Limits (Hughes 1987 pp.6-7), is just one example.

"A group of customers decided to pay their bill in coins, stacking them up in towers on the table. When they got up to leave, one knocked the piles over, sending the money flying. When a waiter tried to stop them leaving until it had been counted, a woman in the group hit him over the head. The waiter - who had his hands full of dishes - pushed back. She produced police ID, and said she was going to charge him with assault. Another customer objected, and offered to be a witness for the waiter. He was told to shut up, it was none of his business. When he announced he was a journalist, the group apologised and left.

Bow St police station defends its record of dealing with incidents, and describes its relationship with the community as good. 'They don't understand the limited powers we have...'"

The widely publicised case of "The Diamond Four" (1987) is another recent example in which four Chinese waiters each were sentenced to two years imprisonment for affray following a violent fight started by a group of drunken customers refusing to pay their bill. Whilst it was one of the waiters who originally called for police assistance, it was the customers whom the police escorted to hospital whilst the waiters were taken straight to Bow Street police station, denied access to an interpreter or solicitor and offered no medical attention until after they had been charged. No statements were taken from Chinese witnesses (either workers or customers) despite names being offered and none of the waiters sentenced had any previous police record.

Local community workers told of informal "walk-outs" by restaurant staff in London's Chinatown at an average rate of three per year. The competitiveness of the Chinatown labour market combined with the absence of unionisation and formal recognition, however, militate against more sustained and effective collective action. There are numerous examples of failed attempts by Chinese workers to assert their rights against Chinese employers. During 1986, for instance, one waiter wished to persue action through an industrial tribunal against his new employer who had flatly dismissed all employees upon acquiring ownership of the restaurant. A local Chinese community employment worker who offered him support was vicously beaten by two henchmen in front of both the employer and the aggrieved waiter, who subsequently dropped the case. The most successful incident to date has been an official (Transport and Geneneral Workers' Union) strike by four Chinese workers employed at the Brighton branch of Wheeler's Restaurants (1986 -1987). Mobilising considerable support both amongst Chinese workers in London and from the local labour movement, the strikers were offered an 'out-of-court' compensatory settlement of £20,000 between them in respect of unfair dismissal. Many other Chinese workers, however, feel such action was only possible against a non-Chinese employer.

In addition to restaurants there are a range of food-related companies - manufacturers, wholesalers, distributers and retailers - where wages and conditions are rarely better than for waitering and cooking. One example

was a trip le faceted operation which manufactured beansprouts and supplied Chinese businesses with frozen foods and mushrooms. Employees numbered approximately twenty five, only half of whom were Chinese. The others were Irish, Afro Caribbean, Asian and English. These were the experiences of one former worker:

"The workers between themselves were very nice. We all got on. But the boss, he was miserable and nasty. Whenever he liked, he would order you down to his office and moan and groan about you to your face, like "you're ripping off the company." Sometimes he would tell the drivers they had stolen a bag of beansprouts or some mushrooms when they made deliveries. Then he would tell them they were too lazy and should do more to get more cutomers and spend less money, like on petrol or something on deliveries. He would moan and groan and say "I'll sack you if you don't get better" but with no real reason.

There was this old man who was like a night watchman for the company. In the daytime he helped to pack the beansprouts but he was working there twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, because upstairs in the warehouse they provided him with a bedroom. It was quite a nice bedroom compared to average. But he had to sleep in the place and make sure it was okay during the night and for that they only gave him £30 to £40 a week, something like that. I would imagine he was around sixty. Mary, my friend, she used to get his shopping and I asked her one day, "Why do you do it?" And she told me, "Do you know, they won't let him out". Not at all. Not in the daytime, not at nightime, no holiday, nothing. At nightime, they just locked him in. There was about two or three locks on the outside main door. And as far as I know, that was the only way out, so if there was a fire or anything, he would just stay locked in there. Or if he had a heart attack or anything, no-one would know. Because he was illegal, he couldn't get a job anywhere else, so he had to take anything so he could support his son, who was at college in London. The boss said he didn't want him to get together with his friends or anything and steal some beansprouts or mushrooms or something else. Then when he opened that wine bar, he told him he didn't have enough money so he just sacked him. But he was always spending money on himself. Just after he sacked that man, he bought his son a Rolls Royce electric toy car, like a peddle car but electric. So I didn't believe he was broke. I think he just sacked that old man just to warn the other workers. That man got nothing at all, just the sack.

Mary, the other day she was telling me, she works overtime six days a week. She only has one hour or half an hour off around five o'clock every day. And she has to start at 9.30 until 12, when the wine bar closes, six days a week, no holiday. And they pay her £160 a week. When she added it all up, she worked out she was getting under £2 an hour, just like the bar maid who only worked half the time she did. So she said it wasn't worth it.

He promised to raise my salary but he didn't and he never gave me any responsibility because he didn't trust me. He didn't trust anybody. It was really depressing to go in everyday and hear him talk to the workers like that. So I had a row with him and left."

The English foreman of the company confirmed the general situation. When asked about his wages, he replied

"They're alright I suppose. They didn't used to be, not when I first came. In fact, this job is the lowest paid job I've had. Mind you, the last job I had I was taking home over £70 a week, so I couldn't really expect to get that kind of money again, could I? Not for someone like me. It was all on commission you see. The reason why I left that job was because I wanted to work regular hours - nine to five, Monday to Friday. But here sometimes I work six to ten. Must be mad."

The Chinese owner of the company had a different view of matters.

"The one thing I really want to do is set up a better controlled business - like a football team. I don't agree with some things about the English way of life. That's why I need Chinese workers: the English won't work Sundays. Another thing is the English are under contract to themselves - not the company. In England they've got unions, where people gather together to make trouble. I feel, the more people I employ, the more they can gather together and organise against me. There's not much problem of that here now because they're not very well organised. This ring leader at the moment - he doesn't really care. I always sack them before they have a chance to do anything if they look like trouble-makers. My ambition is to get the capital back as soon as possible so I can invest it in other things, like property or another business, not necessarily Chinese."

Another growing business, a bakery and cake shop employing an ethnically mixed workforce of ten, thrived on the flexibility of labour, as explained by the owner.

"The workers don't have a specific pattern. They don't have a specified time to work. They all do a little of everything. As long as it gets done at the end of the day, that's all I care about. It has to be like that, or else you go down the drain."

This man, who had himself experienced considerable superexploitation and racism as a boy, also worked long hours for the business. Moreover, he lived in the staff house (which he owned) "to be like one of the staff". But unlike one of the staff, his immediate goal was "to get the business running itself" so he could retire early and live on the profits. To this end, the owner was seeking to employ labour as cheaply as possible.

"I'm actually trying to get two employees from back home to help run my business. And I can tell you, it's a tough procedure. There's probably people here who can do it but I want someone who is fresh ... - I mean, someone who will bring fresh ideas to the business and improve the image of the Chinese race in this country."

Many companies which service the Chinese take-away shops and restaurants do not employ an exclusively Chinese staff. Indeed, one large importer and wholesaler remarked how such a practice was "bad for business". He employed people of particular ethnic origin corresponding to particular tiers within his organisation as an obstacle to collective organisation. Chinese workers merely "fronted" his company in direct deals with the public. Another owner of two supermarkets expressed the advantages of a similar arrangement: "When you're running a restaurant, it's difficult to get a good chef from Hong Kong. Nowadays you have to pay a high price for it. But running a supermarket, I can get local workers."

CONCLUSION

The economic and social profile of the Chinese community in Britain has changed dramatically over the last thirty years. During the 1960s most of the Chinese arriving from Hong Kong and China were men who entered the 'chop suey house' trade as cheap labour, a situation created by the development of colonial Hong Kong tied to the interests of the domestic British economy. Within ten years, however, the fragile market position maintained by the small scale Chinese capitalists was usurped by multinational fast food conglomerations, following the inevitable logic of capitalist accumulation in the food catering industry. In response, many Chinese resorted to self employment, opening family shops selling similar food to the 'chop suey houses' which preceded them except with lower overheads and fewer outgoings. Necessarily dependent upon the supersweating of family labour, however, these take-away food shops are a microcosm of exploitation and oppression for women and children in particular, often storing dire consequences for those concerned.

As the pace of technological development and competition heightens within fast food catering, the relatively static market position of the small Chinese family shops reflects the diminishing significance of the ethnic petite bourgeoisie in the industry and the increasing marginality of ethnic Chinese capital against the international grip of companies like McDonalds. Conversely, but again in line with the laws of capitalist development, there has also emerged a small but nonetheless distinct

bourgeoisie within the Chinese catering community in Britain. As they consolidate their operations, the polarised interests of capital and labour within the Chinatown economies become crystallised such that class divisions cut deeper than ethnic solidarity. In the light of this contemporary situation, the final chapter returns to the original dichotomy posed between culturalist and historical materialist analyses for understanding Britain's Chinese 'business' community, ending with a consideration of the political initiatives which flow from them.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

INTRODUCTION

This last chapter draws together the central themes and findings of the study, arguing conclusively for an alternative way of understanding the apparent 'business' orientation of the Chinese community to that most commonly adopted. Since the main points of contention are in terms of analytical perspective, the fundamental argument of this thesis is not limited to an understanding of the Chinese exclusively. Therefore, following a review of the implications of political economy analysis for the main subject of this study, the discussion is finally broadened to address some of the wider political issues which project from it.

THE STUDY

Fundamental considerations of methodological approach are seldom taken up in the plethora of studies which address themselves to the entrepreneurial endowments of ethnic communities. All too often, cultural myths and popular stereotypes are preferred to any serious analysis of the historical material conditions which have structured the situations which it is attempted to explain. In the case of the Chinese, this has led to the reinforcing of the idea that the economic and social existence of many Chinese communities throughout the world somehow continues to be defined by the enduring customs of traditional China. The work of Light (1972 & 1980 op cits); Wong (1979 op cit) and Bonacich (1973), to name but a few, are cases in point.

This study has sought to penetrate beyond simple description of the phenomenal world and the rhetoric of culturalism. Guided by the analytical methodology of Marxist political economy, it has rejected implicitly the explanatory value of ideal typical constructions and culturalist, idealist or biological generalisations. As Engels [1] wrote,

"Men make their history themselves, only they do so in a given environment which conditions it, and on the basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other - the political and ideological relations, are still ultimately the decisive ones, forming the keynote which runs through them and alone leads to understanding."

The essential and definitive relations which characterise a society are those of its economic organisation of production. Under capitalism, society is polarised primarily along the axis of capital and labour. Such a starting point is not inherently crude and deterministic (a criticism often levelled at Marxist studies) but one which seeks to recognise the totality of dialectical tension between the economic base and the political, juridical and ideological relations of the superstructure of a society at a specific period in history. Indeed, it is only through a recognition of the process of international capitalist development that a comprehensive understanding of the economically distinct Chinese community in Britain can be achieved. The mere fact of the ethnic niche in itself, however, affords little analytical mileage. Therefore, it has been to the historical dynamics of class conflict that this study has looked in order to understand how the position of Chinese in the ethnic catering industry has been structured and sustained.

This is what has been understood by Marx's premise, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx & Engels 1973 p.504 op cit). In order to interpret the specific, it is necessary first to grasp the whole. To make sense of the subjective daily experiences of Chinese people working in Britain's fast food catering industry requires taking cognisance of the objective economic and political forces that have shaped the nature of their migration. These have their roots dating back as far as China's subordination to the expanding British capitalist empire over a century ago.

The systematic incorporation of societies throughout the world into an unequal global capitalist system has displaced countless populations. Prior to sustained contact with the West, China had remained a relatively self-

contained and static society for centuries. The asiatic mode of production which characterised pre-colonial China mitigated against large scale migration or trade and entrepreneurship. Subsistence agriculture for direct domestic consumption supplemented by animal husbandry and handicraft production had formed the basis of the traditional Chinese economy. Rigid sexual divisions of labour were defined according to the convoluted relations of family, lineage, village and clan hierarchies. Such institutions were sanctioned and presided over by an autocratic bureaucracy governed by an imperial despot. The advent of the capitalist colonisers from the West brought this society to an abrupt end, destroying its economic base and scattering millions of people throughout the world. Chinese in the southeastern provinces (the area most accessible to Western sea trade) suffered the worst effects of this penetration.

Men, women and children were scattered under indenture to the factories, plantations and mines throughout the British empire and the New World. Sometimes they worked alongside Black African slaves, such as in Cuba. Mostly they filled the labour shortages left in the aftermath of the abolition of slavery. It was this "coolie" diaspora that stamped a common economic, social and political distinctiveness upon the establishment of many overseas Chinese settlements throughout the world.

This process did not develop in a uniform way. In societies like Peru and Guyana, Chinese freed finally from indenture largely became integrated with the local economy and society. In other situations, such as that of South Africa, a tightly regulated flow of Chinese labour ensured that "coolies" were deported as soon as demand ceased. Where more favourable rights were offered to longer established ethnic populations as formal colonial domination receded, (sharecropping rights to freed slaves in Jamaica and socio-economic priveleges to native Malays in Malaysia being two examples), many local Chinese were relegated to economically marginal lines of subsistence, such as self-employment and small scale trading. Throughout southeast Asia, the association of the Chinese presence with the era of Western colonial rule has rendered Chinese communities particularly vulnerable to being scapegoated for the devastation caused by Western imperialism. In such situations, Indonesia and Vietnam being extreme

examples, the economic and social isolation of local Chinese has become acutely pronounced.

In countries of the Old Commonwealth, (America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and not least, Britain), official and unofficial 'white' population policies have systematically subordinated Chinese labour, legally, economically and socially. Disseminated through the press of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, horror stories of the "yellow peril" popularised anti-Chinese feeling. They peddled ideas of inherent animosity between Chinese and indigenous workers, justifying racist laws and contributing to a climate ripe for anti-Chinese agitation. Such strategies successfully weakened organised workers during periods of labour unrest. Britain's particular course of Chinese exclusion from the domestic labour market is charted in the Merchant Shipping Acts of 1894 and 1906, the Aliens Act of 1905, the 1914 Aliens Restriction Act and its Amendment of 1919 (the same year of anti-Chinese 'race riots' at Cardiff, Newport, Barry, South Shields, Liverpool, London, Manchester and Glasgow). It was under conditions such as these that the ethnically exclusive Chinese laundry shops became established.

Today, the ethnic Chinese economy is grounded quite firmly within the catering industry in Britain. However, as some might believe, this is not the product of deep-rooted cultural mores re-emerging under a more liberal environment. Once again, the historical material factors conditioning this situation provide the answer as to how and why it has arisen. These start with the development of British Hong Kong in the economy, geography and polity of South East Asia. Its unique political and geographic circumstances gave rise to the colony's rapid industrialisation immediately following the end of the Second World War and Mao's rise to power in China. The swift transformation of agricultural production from rice cultivation to vegetable cash cropping that this entailed during the 1950s and 1960s dispossessed many former rice farmers of their livelihood. To obviate the social effects of this process, emigration to Britain was encouraged by the colonial administration.

The migrants came at a time when the general demand for workers in the declining manufacturing and emergent service industries was coming to an end. The conditions under which Chinese entered Britain was therefore structured by the demands of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962, of which the underlying aim was to syphon workers more specifically into sectors of labour shortage by means of the work permit and voucher system. The work permits under which the vast majority of Chinese migrated required that a job be procured before departure and that the Department of Employment be satisfied that no other suitable workers already in Britain were available to do the work. Moreover, permits and vouchers were issued for an increasingly narrow range of occupations, namely in hospitals, hotels and catering (for which there was an exclusive quota system until 1979 (Phizacklea 1983)). Bound by these strictures, the largely unskilled New Territories Chinese were left with little option but to exploit their ethnicity as a specific qualification for entry to Britain. As such, they swelled a specialised niche in the burgeoning catering industry which relied specifically upon Chinese labour to serve Chinese food. Once the informal channels had become established to facilitate migration in this way, they quickly became viewed in Hong Kong as the standard route for entry to Britain. However, to understand how the Chinese community was subsequently affected by further developments in catering necessitates a more specific examination of the historical course of the industry.

Consuming food outside the home (whatever its ethnic character) was something that had become launched on a massive scale during the Second World War. Maximum productivity demanded by the exigencies of war at a time when millions of younger men (many of the most productive workers) were conscripted into armed service meant that women filled their places in the labour force, drafted into the 'War Effort'. To ensure most efficient use of their productive labour, subsidised meals were introduced to the general public on an unprecedented scale, socialising a particularly laborious reproductive task previously performed by women in the home. This provided the initial stimulus for the development of catering production. Yet as the War drew to a close, state control of public meal provision (with the exception of institutional provision in schools and hospitals) had already begun to give way to private interests. By the end

of the War, meal prices rose as a result of the rapid deceleration of investment into catering production and the withdrawal of state subsidy. However, as increasing numbers of women re-entered the labour force during general conditions of post War economic expansion, so too grew the potential market for 'eating out', precarious though it was. This market was met largely from low investment, low profit small scale enterprise.

The key to success in post War popular food catering was cheap and flexible labour. The colonial status of Hong Kong rendered Chinese workers from the New Territories a ready source. Channelled into 'ethnic' catering jobs as a result of the imposition of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act and the special quotas set aside for workers in hotels and catering, Chinese migrants made use of informal networks between Britain and Hong Kong to facilitate immigration sponsorship, employment recruitment and housing. Whilst such a system allowed many Chinese to gain their first foothold in Britain, it was nevertheless predatory and highly exploitative of catering workers. The lifestle demanded by working in the ethnic Chinese catering niche was unsuitable for family settlement such that the majority of women and children remained in Hong Kong supported economically by husbands and fathers in Britain. Eventually, however, they too emigrated under the threat of increasingly stringent immigration controls, often after years of separation. In the ethnic economy in Britain many Chinese women and children suffered acutely from the double burden of being economically and socially dependent upon husbands and fathers as well as employers. This compounded the disorientation caused by uprooting and moving to an unfamiliar and hostile society.

The 1970s marked a watershed in the fortunes of Chinese catering, for it was beginning in this period that the American-led onslaught of fast food catering outlets brought about a relative decline in the market share of Chinese 'chop suey houses'. This change represented more than just a simple shift in market positions. The growth of large, fast food capital was predicated upon a concerted effort both to raise the productivity of catering labour and to transform the mass consumer catering trade from the narrow confines of craft based production to factory production. This was achieved by massive investment in the technological assets (or 'fixed

capital') of catering production leading to a rise in the organic composition of catering capital. The economies of scale achieved by the fast food chains immediately undermined the competitive position of smaller scale craft based capital units such as 'chop suey houses'. Thus, the expansion of the popular market for 'eating-out' continued apace with the capital costs of production, the rate of competition and the squeeze on profits. In short, the fast food boom induced a rationalisation within popular food catering - part of the endless 'shake-out' of capitalist competition. Seen within this context, it was clearly the economics of necessity rather than individual preference that forced large numbers of Chinese into operating smaller, cost-cutting family take-away shops. The transformation of the Chinese catering industry was not, however, an automatic or mechanical process but one which rested upon the conscious decisions of those concerned. This discussion has sought merely to identify the factors which informed those decisions. These included not only the competitive pressures of the fast food expansion but also by the rise of organised racism, shrinking job opportunities in the general labour market and the availability of family labour, making the option of running a small business appear the most accessible.

Hand-in-hand with the economic shift within Chinese catering towards smaller, family-run take-away businesses went a transformation of the social class composition of the Chinese community. From being predominantly waged workers, a large number of Chinese joined the ranks of the petite bourgeoisie. Contrary to popular belief, however, there is no evidence to suggest that turning to self-employment in order to retain a foothold in the trade represented any material social or economic advancement. Indeed, running a family take-away shop has been commonly viewed by those concerned as a socio-economic trap in which the conditions of self-exploitation and oppression within the family are invariably intensified. Women and children have borne the brunt of this, such that their limited opportunities for economic and social integration have remained virtually static over a generation. At the same time, the conflicting interests between capital and labour within the Chinese community remain as fraught as ever, despite common illusions in the bonds of Chinese ethnicity.

COMMUNITY AND CLASS

In so far as the abundant cultural stereotypes about the Chinese often find support from Chinese people themselves who purport to speak on behalf of the community, the structure of 'community' politics deserves careful consideration. There are two perceivable strands to Chinese community politics; that which tends to be represented by community workers (almost invariably maintained by the state) and that which represents the more self-organised sections of the Chinese population. The former are widely recognised as voicing more 'grassroots' concerns since they are cast necessarily into the professional role of 'service deliverers'. However, the extent to which community workers champion 'grassroots' causes varies considerably. A prodigious example is the Chinese Information and Advice Centre in London, which is noted for its high profile campaigning role in exposing and combatting oppression and exploitation within the ethnic community. However, it is an exception to the rule.

The other, more self-organised aspect of Chinese community politics is heavily dominated by business interests. It is the 'community politicans' thrown up by this arena who are the most vociferous in promulgating cultural stereotypes and ethnic insularity. An example of this was a statement made emphatically by a noted businessman and Secretary of a regional Chinese association:

"Chinese people love the family - not the individual person. They've got a very different attitude to work. If they don't get any time off for a month, they will know it's for the good of the family. It's the family that's the basic unit, not the individual. This is very-rooted in Chinese culture. English people don't understand it."

Another example was the very wealthy Chair of a Restauranteur's Association in London, who told an officer of the London Borough of Westminster, "We are a proud, self-help community. We neither need nor want grants from the government like some other ethnic minorities." Similarly, Robert Ng in an article entitled "My People" (1986 p.32) asserted that "accepting state-help is seen by some to have brought some degree of dishonour or 'lost-face' to one's family, since traditionally, our teaching has been 'self-help' and 'self-reliance' in order to keep our heads high."

Whilst virtually all Chinese community organisations are headed by the rich and powerful, they nevertheless draw significant tacit support from the petite bourgeoisie and even some Chinese workers. This is due to reasons which relate to the specific conditions of Chinese settlement in Britain. Firstly, the general history of the Chinese community within the last twenty years has been characterised in large part by self-employment and small business ownership which mitigate against class collectivity. Hence the politics of the ethnic community strike a large degree of resonance with the Chinese experience. At the root of this, however, is the level of racism in society which has created a situation in which racial subordination and ethnic divisions are part and parcel of living and working in Britain for most Chinese. In this sense, the 'ethnic platform' of the community politicians accommodates the experiences of racism and economic ghettoisation that many (especially working class) Chinese have confronted in migration. The other side to the coin is that the economic and social marginalisation of the ethnic catering industry has actually made sustained unionisation or labour organisation extremely difficult. Chinese employers are in general vehemently anti-union and in the larger cities where there is a large Chinese presence, some have consolidated their economic power through informal syndicates which act as a strong economic and physical deterrent to those who may wish to organise in opposition.

For the successful ethnic capitalist there is a distinct material benefit to be gained from the continued oppression of the majority of Chinese in Britain, for this ensures that they remain a cheap and captive source of labour. The politics of cultural determinism, political sectionalism and ethnic insularity therefore reflect and strengthen their specific ethnic class interests. The ethnic bourgeoisie may still be oppressed on one level; they still may suffer a degree of economic and social confinement and in this sense they may be drawn towards anti-racist posturing. However, the benefits they derive from an unequally structured capitalist system place their interests in a qualitatively different position from those they employ, whether Chinese or non-Chinese. It is their ideas which dominate a large section of community politics at the present time, reflecting in microcosm Marx's maxim that "the class which is the prevailing material force of society is at the same time its ruling

intellectual force" (Marx & Engels 1975 op cit in Callinicos 1987 op cit p.99). Because the very nature of Chinese 'community politics' is rooted in ethnic difference and cultural distinction, it is an arena ripe for ethnic entrepreneurs with a stake in the status quo.

Castles et al (1984 pp.215-220) discussed the role of ethnic bourgeois and petit bourgeois community leaders in relation to the containment of potential social disruption to the system: "State strategies of crisis management are designed to offer privileges to the minority petite bourgeoisie, in order to secure their coooperation as agents of social control" (p.216). Indeed, the hegemony of 'community politics' amongst Britain's Chinese is both underpinned and strengthened by the local and national state. A good example of this was the case of an owner of a thriving restaurant chain (and notable 'community politician') who was only narrowly unsuccessful in obtaining substantial grants from his local Economic Development Unit and Manpower Services Commission to train young Chinese waiters and cooks for his restaurants through the Youth Training Scheme. This project, although unsuccessful, was only one of a myriad of ethnic business initiatives which do receive sponsorship by the state in part recognition of the economic opportunities denied to black and ethnic minorities. The apparent contraditions and complexities which immediately present themselves in such situations, however, merit careful consideration if their full implications for those concerned can be understood clearly and in context. This is attempted in the final section of this thesis.

MANAGING THE CRISIS: ETHNIC MINORITIES AND SMALL BUSINESS PROMOTION

By dealing with some of the more wider reaching issues of the day which relate to the position of the Chinese in Britain, the practical significance of the study is brought to the fore. As a strategy which has been adopted by both the Parliamentary Left and Right over the last few years, the encouragement of Black and ethnic small businesses has caused considerable confusion amongst its practitioners, such as in the case described above. Often, the confusion remains unresolved, mainly through a lack of clarity of understanding. This study of the Chinese, however, hopefully contributes

towards clearing the way for the essential nature of the problem to be grasped.

The positive encouragement of ethnic minority interests (of whatever nature) is commonly perceived to be a recognition of the disadvantage these groups face and a desire to rectify the situation. For this reason, promoting their business opportunities appears to be an act of anti-racism, a principle espoused traditionally by the political Left. The argument runs as follows: Black and ethnic minorities tend to be under-represented in the business sector. This is because of racist practices by the banks (especially in granting loans; see for example, Home Affairs Committee 1980-81 para 220) and other business institutions, compounding the general context of racism which systematically has structured the inferior chances of black and ethnic minorities for economic choice. In other words, "Small firms owned by Britain's ethnic minorities suffer even worse disadvantage than the small business population at large and are seriously under-represented in the business life of Britain" (GLEB p.6). If disadvantaged groups wish to set up business for themselves, then attempts must be made to remove the potential barriers so as to facilitate their proportional representation in the entrepreneurial sector and redress the imbalance. It is on this basis that the popular appeal of the promotion of ethnic enterprise has grown considerably over the last few years.

The practices adopted to promote ethnic minority businesses have assumed a variety of forms. These have ranged from publicity (conferences, printed literature, etc) extolling the economic and social benefits of Black entrepreneurship to practical assistance in capitalising and developing emergent initiatives. Local authorities, particularly in the larger cities in which they are mostly Labour-led, have developed ethnic enterprise schemes. The London Borough of Brent, for example, has established a Brent Enterprise Centre and Hammersmith & Fulham Council has set up the Black Business Development Association. Many others provide Economic Development Units with a specific brief to judge sympathetically projects proposed by Black and ethnic minorities, a directive which receives considerable public exposure. Likewise, education authorities are offering an increasing number of courses for the 'community entrepreneur', such as those run by the Ethnic

Minority Business Development Units at the Polytechnics of Middlesex and the City of London or South West London College's Community Enterprise Section.

The translation of principles into policy practice has followed in the wake of the Home Affairs Committee Report on "Racial Disadvantage" (1980-81) and Scarman's Report (1981). Focussing upon the situation of Afro-Caribbean businesses in particular, the Home Affairs Committee assumed without question the 'regenerative powers' of the small entrepreneurial firm:

"Not only does self-employment provide an alternative source of income particularly important for those who are disadvantaged or discriminated against in their search for employment, but it also contributes to the regeneration of the urban areas in which the majority of ethnic minorities live. The previous Government stated in their 1977 White Paper that "the minority groups living in inner urban areas need to be given a full opportunity to play their part in the task of regeneration" and the present Government have strongly emphasised the role of small firms in regeneration in the inner city." (para 216)

The Report advocated correcting the racial imbalance of economic opportunity through the proliferation of more Afro-Caribbean and Asian businesses: "It is thus in the interests of the whole community that obstacles to the full participation by members of any minority group in the creation and running of small business should be removed" (ibid). The aim was to create a situation, described by Wilson (1983 p.63), in which entrepreneurship could be seen "as one option in a range of economic possiblities facing individual members of the non-white ethnic minorities." Scarman's Report (1981 op cit), commissioned to investigate the "Brixton Disorders" earlier that year was not centrally concerned with Black and ethnic business. However, he did note (pp.167-168) that

"The encouragement of black people to secure a real stake in their own community through business and the professions, is in my view of great importance if future stability is to be secured... A weakness in British society is that there are too few people of West Indian origin in the business, entrepreneurial and professional class."

The conception of the regenerative role of small business voiced by the Home Affairs Committee and Scarman has been expressed also by the Commission for Racial Equality:

"We believe that a genuine and equal partnership between the black business community and government and private sector agencies could be a powerful force for revitalising economic development in areas which so desperately

need a substantial and speedy injection of entrepreneurial spirit and activity."
("Black Business Report: A Strategy Paper", March 1986 p.9)

THE IDEOLOGY OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMY

The economic reasoning in favour of promoting ethnic enterprise articulated by the CRE and accepted implicitly by Scarman and the Home Affairs Committee stems from the contemporary popular faith in small businesses for wealth creation, urban regeneration and a solution to the present crisis of capitalism. It is the ethos of 'the moral economy' (Bechhofer & Elliot 1976 op cit).

Pressure to rationalise production by squeezing out least efficient capitals and encouraging investment in the most profitable sectors, triggered by international recession following the oil crisis of 1974, has posed problems of management for many world governments. Not least of these has been the British state, which has presided over a declining economy and falling competitiveness for over a decade. Keynesian policies of expansion, through which it was hoped to resolve the crisis by massive state 'spending', soon were dropped in favour of a strategy wedded to the ideals of the traditional, liberal 'free market' upon the election of Thatcher's Conservative government in 1979. This change of strategy made small business ownership a central plank of government attempts to revive the flagging fortunes of British capitalism. As Bechofer and Elliot (1976 op cit p.197) put it,

"With the economies of the West in some disarray, with the fear of deep and lasting economic recession, the orchestrated protest of small business has helped carry into power a number of right wing governments which will try (in more or less good faith) to protect and even to restore the moral economy of the petite bourgeoisie."

In what Andrew Gamble (1974) has termed 'the politics of support', the ideologues of the 'laissez-faire free market' argue that Britain's economic decline is attributable to the decline in the moral fibre of the population. More specifically, they believe that the traditional values of property ownership and enterprise have been obscured and thwarted by an overly bureaucratic state which has created since the War a nation (or rather, a

working class) paralysed by its dependence on social welfarism. To restore economic vitality thus demands breaking the dependence upon the state and dismantling monpolistic trade, whilst encouraging entrepreneurship. Their conclusions drew justification from The Brookings Report on the British Economy (1969), which stated (p.375), "Business is a second choice (for the best people) ... they tend to retain the Civil Service as their model and settle into a trustee role of gentlemanly responsibility that is hardly conducive to rapid innovation." The ideals of 'the moral economy' have been clearly articulated by Thatcher herself (15/03/76 Conservative Party Council, Harrowgate), as Bechoffer & Elliot (1981 op cit p.94) pointed out:

"Hope is being strangled and as a result those indispensable qualities of imagination, enterprise and drive are being stifled... Self reliance has been sneered at as if it were an absurd suburban pretension. Thrift has been denigrated as if it were greed ... decent, honourable ambition ... and to save and to acquire a modest capital or property is savagely penalised by taxation."

Despite the growth of state and monopoly capital, the small business sector as a whole remains buoyant because of its flexibility to respond to and capitalise upon new and potential areas of production. In this way, the competitive environment of the small business world is seen to engender innovation and efficiency (see for example, Schumacher 1974). This stands against what Jacobs (1969) described as the "sterile division of labour of big business", which was said actually to discourage innovation so as to preserve existing trading hierarchies. Because of this contrast the relationship between small and large businesses is seen to be symbiotic, if not essential to an advanced capitalist economy. Smaller firms could enjoy the patronage of larger firms, which in turn had at their disposal a range of cheap and flexible subcontractors. Thus, small businesses represent what Bechhofer & Elliot (1974 op cit p.123) described as "the custodians of certain 'core' capitalist values": they embody society's greatest entrepreneurial virtues. In line with this, small business owners are seen as "the pioneers of economic progress ... 'generous' people; witness their much publicised acts of benevolence and charity" (ibid p.17; see also C. Wright Mills 1951).

THE POLITICS OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ECONOMY

The rhetoric of virtuous independent enterprise has been accompanied, rather inevitably, by an array of political initiatives to encourage the creation of small businesses:

"The aim must be to change the atmosphere and environment for the business community, to create anew conditions in which men and women of independent spirit will see it worth their while to use their skill and enthusiasm to start or expand profitable enterprises. This must be the goal for all business of whatever size, and the whole of Conservative economic strategy should have that purpose." (Conservative Central Office, "Small Business, Big Future" cited in Scase & Goffee 1982 op cit p.12)

Since small businesses are believed to be not only a source of wealth but also jobs, the deprived 'inner cities' have been targetted as areas for particular attention in the attempt to curb rising unemployment and industrial decline through small business generation. In this way, they are seen to be a means to reverse the long-term pauperisation of urban areas. In this vein, the prognosis of GLEB (op cit p.8), that "The creative dynamism of London's ethnic minorities can be a major contribution to the provision of jobs and the reversal of London's de-industrialisation" was virtually identical to that of the Home Affairs Committee (1980-81), Scarman and the CRE (1986 op cit p.2): "The encouragement of ethnic minority small business is a means of creating jobs and is part of the process of regenerating the whole economy" [2].

Repeated civil disorder during the last decade, which brought Black people very much under the spotlight, has forced central government to focus upon the promotion of ethnic minority small businesses. 'Business in the Community' set up in 1981 was one of the first central government programmes of this nature. During its first five years of existence it was involved in the creation of three hundred and fifty enterprise agencies, the provision of venture capital resources for high risk small businesses, the conversion of redundant buildings and the encouragement of company support and training schemes (Rigby 1987). More recently, Employment Minister Kenneth Clarke has announced plans to establish a nationwide network of 'black enterprise agencies' intended to create jobs in inner cities, beginning with the opening of an experimental agency in North Kensington funded by central government to the tune of £50,000 (London Standard

11/2/87 p.5). Other initiatives include the Inner City Partnership Programmes funded under the Urban Programme, which have adopted as a principle the role of co-ordinating public and private sector investment initiatives, in which the encouragement of small firms in the local community became a major feature. The ethos of Partnership and similar schemes have culminated in the creation of Enterprise Zones, another concept which upholds the traditional petty bourgeois demand of removing the 'over-regulation' of the state to provide a climate for 'freer trade'.

The assets to capital and the capitalist state of the small business sector were formally recognised in the Bolton Report (1971), the first official government inquiry on the subject. In subsequent studies, the essential reasoning of the Bolton Report has been unquestioningly upheld (for example, the Wilson Report 1979; Kazuka 1980). The most important premis disseminated by Bolton was that small firms were the seedbed of large firms: in other words, 'great oaks from little acorns grow'.

"The private sector of our economy as we know it today originated almost entirely through the establishment and growth of small firms. Almost all the present large firms started off as small firms and grew, in one way or another, to their present size." (1971 op cit para 3.7 p.29)

In this sense, whether amongst ethnic minorities or the majority population, the promotion of small businesses is a strategy which has made bedfellows of both Conservative and Labour administrations, being rooted in the economics of the 'moral economy'. The consensus, however, is grounded in a right-wing solution to a right-wing analysis of the crisis, albeit daubed to varying degrees with the veneer of anti-racism. Table 18 below summarises some of the most important attempts by the state to put into practice its ideological faith in the capabilities of small businesses.

Such intiatives have not been confined to the state machinery. Large companies have to a limited extent also shown an interest in the promotion of ethnic minority small firms. One example is the UHURU project in Tower Hamlets, which received help from Business in the Community to set up new businesses (Gibben 1987 p.29). The voluntary sector also has sought to carve out a role in enterpreneurial development. Schemes such as the Paul Bogle Enterprise Trust provide exclusive funding for black enterprise. The Community Business Conference, to take another example, recommended that

attempts be made to set up a London Wide Community Business Unit (Watling 1986).

TABLE 18: GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES TO ASSIST SMALL FIRMS IN BRITAIN 1979-81

1. Business Start Up Scheme
   Outside investors buying shares in new small trading companies obtain tax relief at rates up to 75% on investments of up to £10,000 per year.

2. Loan Garantee Scheme
   Government will garantee 80% of new loans for between two and seven years, on values of up to £75,000. The remaining 20% is carried by the financial institution carrying the loan.

3. Other Financial Benefits
   Coporation tax liability has been reduced. The VAT threshold has been raised. Trading losses can be offset against tax more generously. Redundancy payments of up to £25,000 are free from tax if the money is used to start a business.

4. Premises and Planning
   An extension programme of the building of small factory premises has been undertaken. Eleven Enterprise Zones have been created within which planning restrictions are much less onerous and where rates relief is given over a ten year period.

5. Information and Statistics
   The number of forms which government issues has been substantially reduced. On the other hand, the businessman can obtain advice on a variety of topics from Small Firms Information Centres.

6. Employment Legislation
   This has been relaxed for small firms employing less than twenty people who are not liable for claims for unfair dismissal by workers employed by the firm for less than 2 years.

7. Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Source: Storey 1982 p.211

What appears to be lacking in this affront of business development initiatives is any challenge to the underlying logic of the 'small business, moral economy'. It is not disupted that any programmes for entrepreneurial promotion should encourage equitable Black and ethnic participation. Black

and ethnic minorities have as much right as whites to be business owners. What *is* challenged is the underlying assumption that black capitalism can solve the economic crisis and put an end to racial inequality and oppression any better than can white capitalism.

THE REALITIES OF BLACK AND WHITE SMALL BUSINESS

Overall, the small business sector employs up to 4.4 milllion people and produces approximately twenty per cent of Britain's total Gross Domestic Product (Bechhofer & Elliot 1981 op cit p.93). Thus, whilst significant, it clearly exercises only a minor share of control over the economy. In 1900 the top one hundred British companies accounted for only fifteen per cent of total national output: by the mid-1970s they accounted for over half (Hannah & Kay 1977 p.1). The numerical quantity of small firms does not reflect their economic size. Indeed, even in terms of numbers, historical evidence points to a long term decline in small businesses. Between 1911 and 1975 the amount of small business owners fell by fifty per cent (Scase & Goffee 1982 op cit), a direct result of the accelerating pace of industrial concentration. The reality of the small business sector is that whilst it may be subject to short periods of revival and even growth, in the long term it is subordinate to the economic power and interests of the state and monopoly capital.

Such is the context which dictates life for Chinese in the ethnic catering industry. The superexploitation necessarily demanded by the typical Chinese family business intensifies the subordination of Chinese women and children in a racist society. Jobs are certainly 'created' for members of the family but often at the expense of personal social and material development. Few jobs are generated outside the family. Those that are tend to demand very long hours, a high degree of flexibility and offer relatively low pay. Formally established terms and conditions of employment are scant and the usual channels for negotiating improvement are kept firmly under control by organised employers. As a result, most Chinese ethnic catering workers hold an attitude of transience to their jobs, hoping one day for better opportunities. They remain in their jobs

because they are aware of their limited chances on the open and racist labour market.

History has shown that the Chinese have entered self-employment and small business employment because they have been left with little alternative, a reflection of their economic subordination to the interests of large scale capital and the state rather than of their entrepreneurial vigour. Under these conditions, the 'upward mobility' of a small minority of Chinese has rested upon the continued oppression and superexploitation of the majority, as Chinese firms are forced into ever sharper competition with the capital intensive, international companies in the catering industry. Factors such as these are often ignored in the politics of ethnic small businesses stimulation. More specifically, such politics fail to recognise how racial oppression is rooted in the unceasing drive to accumulate profit, the central principle of the capitalist mode of production. In this sense, the social inequalities created under capitalism can never simply be 'reformed' away by attempts to tamper with its symptoms. Attempts by a capitalist state to encourage the establishment of a tier of people with a stake in the system from the ranks of an oppressed minority is at best naive and at worst reflects a cynical attempt to co-opt sections of the black and ethnic population into managing the terms of racial oppression and class exploitation. This was crystal clear to Bobby Seale (1968 pp.71-72), an active leader of the Black Panther movement:

"Those who want to obscure the struggle with ethnic difference are the ones who are aiding and maintaining the exploitation of the masses of the people: poor whites, poor blacks, browns, Red Indians, poor Chinese and Japanese and the workers at large ... We fight racism with solidarity. We do not fight exploitative capitalism with black capitalism. We fight capitalism with basic socialism. And we do not fight imperialism with more imperialism. We fight imperialism with proletarian internationalism."

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

[1] There are abundant sociological definitions of culture. However, a suggested complement the definition contained in the text would be Firth's: "If society is taken to be an aggregate of social relations, then culture is the content of those relations... Culture emphasizes the component of accumulated resources, immaterial as well as material..." (Firth, R: Elements of Social Organization, Watts, 1952, p.27).

[2] The term 'Asian Americans' refers to people living in America who are of Far Eastern descent. This contrasts with British terminology, in which the word 'Asians' signifies people from the Indian sub-continent and their descendants.

[3] For a fuller discussion of Park's concept, see
Stonequist, E.V: The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict, Russell and Russell, 1961, New York

[4] Although the social relations which characterised traditional Chinese society were not identical to those of European feudal society, they were essentially feudal in nature (see Chapter 2 for fuller discussion).

[5] Some writers who claim adherence to Marxism adopt an alternative perspective on the role of ideology to the one proposed here. Following in the tradition of Althusser, for instance, Hall (1980) and CCCS (1982) discuss the reproduction of racist ideas in terms of their *relative autonomy* from the material relations of production. However, since these differences do not have a direct bearing on the main discussion, they are not addressed in this thesis. See

a) Hall, S: "Racism and Reaction" in Commission for Racial Equality: Five Views of Multi-Racial Britain, CRE, 1980, London
b) Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies: The Empire Strikes Back, Hutchinson, 1982, London

[6] For a fuller discussion of sociobiology, see

a) Baxter, S: "Sociobiology: A Racist Synthesis"
Doctoral Research Working Paper presented at
the Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations
University of Warwick, July 1985
b) Barker, M: The New Racism: Conservatives and the Ideology of the Tribe, Junction Books, 1981, London
c) Gordon, P. & F. Klug: New Right, New Racism, Runnymede Trust, 1986, London

[7] The 'dual economy' was a characterisation developed to describe the contemporary configuration of American capitalism. A distinction was drawn between *centre* and *periphery* firms in terms of the capital composition which structured each sector. 'Centre' firms were the mainstay of the American economy. Capitalised on a grand scale, they served "national and international markets", used "technologically progressive systems of production and distribution", were organisationally "corporate and bureaucratic" and were "vertically integrated through ownership and control of critical raw material suppliers and product distributors" (Averitt 1968: p.7). 'Periphery' firms, by contrast, were "relatively small" and often "dominated by a single individual or family" (ibid). Markets and profits for 'periphery' firms were restricted and borrowing difficult. Technologically less advanced than 'centre' firms, those in the 'periphery' were highly subject to fluctuations in the economy. See

a) Averitt, R.T: The Dual Economy, W.W.Norton, 1968, New York
b) Galbraith, J.K: The New Industrial State, Hamish Hamilton, 1967, London

CHAPTER 2

[1] See for example,

Baran, P: The Political Economy of Growth, Monthly Review Press, New York 1957;
Emmanuel, A: Unequal Exchange: A Study of the Imperialism of Free Trade, Monthly Review Press, 1972, New York
Amin, S: Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism, The Harvester Press, 1976, Hassocks
Frank, G: Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment, Monthly Review Press, 1979, New York
Cardoso, F.M. & L.Faletto: Dependency and Development in Latin America, University of California Press, 1979

[2] Prior to China's unification and the Ch'in dynasty, land tenure had been controlled by an aristocratic elite, despite being nominally under the tutelege of the emperor. This pattern of ownership was formally recognised during the Shang Yang reform (c. mid fourth century BC) under Ch'in and its regulation fell increasingly under governmental control. The period between the Ch'in to Early Ch'ing dynasties thus witnessed the consolidation of trade, cottage industries and farming under a single governmental apparatus. One of the reforms introduced by Shang Yang (a minister for agriculture) was the 'equal field system' according to which the state granted limited land tenures to peasants who in turn accepted various fiscal responsibilities. The latter part of the eighth century, however, saw the surrender of state powers in this arena to private control. Fixed taxes were replaced by levies proportional to the amount of land owned and cultivated. This system entailed the burgeoning of huge, privately owned estates (the owners of which were enmeshed in the ruling bureaucracy) and a corresponding growth in tenant farmers.

[3] The 'asiatic' mode of prodution was a pre-capitalist mode of production with the following characteristics: *(a)* The major division in society was between the state apparatus and agricultural villages. *(b)* The state taxed and absorbed the economic surplus of the villages for two main reasons - to finance infrastructural investments for the whole society eg. irrigation projects, flood control and roads, and for its own luxury consumption needs. *(c)* Each village possessed the land in common and communally shared the produce.

[4] North China Herald April 30th 1864, quoted in Chan 1982 p.517

[5] Alcock's report quoted in MacNair, H.F: Modern Chinese History, Selected Readings, Shanghai, 1927, pp.409-410

[6] Cole, F-R: The Peruvians at Home, London, 1877, p.199; quoted in Stewart 1970 p.97

[7] D.J. Williamson to Secretary of State, Callao, Sept.20 1870 (No.11), Consular Despatches, Callao 6; quoted in Stewart 1970 op cit p.97-98

[8] "Memorial of Nine English Shipmasters to the Lords of the Privy Council of Trade", June 27, 1854, London; quoted in Stewart 1970 op cit p.97

[9] D.J.Williamson, op cit. in Stewart 1970 op cit

[10] Gibb, American Despatch To Secretary of State, Lima, November 13, 1874, No.107 (Peru 28); quoted in Stewart 1970 op cit p.225

[11] Figures for Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia are added together

[12] All references in this paragraph are from sources held at the Runnymede Trust library. More detailed references than those given in the text were not obtainable.

[13] Denby, C. in Forum September 1899, taken from Review of Reviews 1 December 1899, quoted in May 1973 (Introduction)

[14] Whilst the Act did not specifically mention the exclusion of East European Jews, it is widely renowned to have been instituted for this purpose: see for example Gordon and Klug 1985 pp.1-2; Rees 1982 pp.77-79

[15] "Report on Miss Robinson's allegation re Chinamen" (undated) in file dated 1 February 1911, HO45 11843/139147/18, quoted in May 1978 pp.113-114

[16] Figures from the 1911 Census reveal that the ratio of Chinese seamen working for British ships (including those temporarily resting) totalled roughly five thousand, out of a total of seventy three thousand for foreign seamen (May 1978 p.115).

CHAPTER 3

[1] McBride, T.M: The Domestic Revolution, Croon Helm, 1976, London quoted in Wiggins 1985

[2] Watson defined the *Mans* lineage as "direct lineal *[male]* descendants of a common founding ancestor who settled in the Hong Kong region nearly 600 years ago... Since surname exogamy is strictly enforced in this part of China, all wives must be brought in from other villages" (Watson 1975 pp.18-19)

CHAPTER 4

[1] Ownership of the growing pub trade is dominated by the major brewery companies and operated through franchises. A similar situation pertains to the hotel and travel industry. Trust Houses Forte, the largest British catering company, for example, owns two hundred hotels in the UK and the Post House chain. The firm has pioneered motorway service stations and airport catering in Britain and now supplies over one hundred and twenty international airlines with cabin food (London Food Commission 1986 op cit).

CHAPTER 5

[1] Letter to W. Burgius Jan 25 1894, p.694 in Marx, K. & F.Engels: Selected Works, Progress Publishers, 1973, Moscow

[2] Employment in small firms is believed to possess further advantages in that it is geographically tied to the locality and less vulnerable to the national and international mobility of large companies. Taylor (1981), for instance, discussed the political importance of co-operatives in tackling problems in the local community, how localised firms could be instrumental

to local authorities in establishing control over local economy and the benefits of locally spent profits for alleviating local unemployment. Falk (1983) to take another example, argued that small businesses often were more resilient and less prone to disruptions (for example, through industrial action) than large firms. This was said to be achieved through more personalised management styles derived from closer working between management and employees. As it was put by a Conservative Party Pamphlet (p.1, cited in Scase & Goffee 1982 op cit p.12), "More than one job in three outside the public sector is in small businesses. If they were encouraged to do so they could become the main source for new jobs."

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PRINCIPAL ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

Birmingham City Council: all service departments, Race Relations & Equal Opportunities Unit, Women's Unit
Birmingham City Museum
Birmingham Community Relations Council
Birmingham Health Authorities
The British Refugee Council, London
Central Independent Television PLC
Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations, Coventry
Centre for Urban & Regional Studies, Birmingham
Chinese Community Centre, Birmingham
Chinese Community Centre, Soho
Chinese Information & Advice Centre, London
Commission for Racial Equality (Birmingham & London)
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