

RURAL WOMEN'S

PROTESTS



IN NATAL IN

1959

## **THESIS**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts (Gender Studies) of the University of Natal – Durban Campus.

By

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Date: 18 November 1999

**Declaration of originality:**

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all sources

I have used or quoted have been indicated or acknowledged by means of completed references.

By

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to: Firstly my children

**ROWEENA & LARUSHIN**

Who have been a source of inspiration to me in my study, and who, it is hoped, will grow and develop into gender sensitive individuals.

Secondly, to the women whose courage inspired the writing of this thesis.

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## ABSTRACT

In the 1950s, apartheid policies in the Natal countryside served to oppress the majority of African women more than they had ever been before. Yet ironically, it was their being 'left behind' by the system of migrant labour that goaded them into taking overt action against their condition in 1959. The aim of this mini-dissertation is to trace and explain their struggle against "grand apartheid". These women were a force to be reckoned with, and the government of the day felt temporarily threatened by their actions.

This study vehemently rejects the misconception that the African women of the rural areas of Natal were docile, slave-like individuals, who placidly accepted their position. The protest marches in the 1950's, more especially 1959, proved African women to be strong-willed and determined to succeed against all odds. These women emerge as anything but placid and docile. History has shown us that women's oppression is not simply a matter of equal rights or discrimination under the law. African women struggled to be recognised as human beings, no different from any other race.

In the early 1950's African women, in most parts of South Africa, became more politically active. They played a significant role in the 1952 Defiance Campaign. Shortly after that a " Women's Charter " was adopted. It sought the liberation of all people, the common society of men and women. It took women like Lilian Ngoyi, who made history in 1956 by leading 20 000 women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria in protest against passes for women, to ignite rolling mass action in the various Provinces.

This thesis tells of the contemporary struggle of African women in the 1950's, more especially 1959, in Natal. This is a tribute to the countless African women

who have made courageous sacrifices in order for change. It is through their radical and somewhat aggressive stance that we have a lot to be thankful for today. We must be mindful of the fact that in the Apartheid era the law itself was used to oppress people. In our new-found democracy it is pleasing to note that the law is somewhat gender sensitive, so that it does not discriminate against men or women in its application.

Many of us who research African women are mere observers, who digest what we read, hear and see. Many of us do not understand the complex African way of life. We tend to employ Eurocentric theories and assumptions, which instead serve as a handicap. Thus the African woman is seen as a victim of the African male, and of traditional customs and practices. We fail to see that African women did from the outset, have varying degrees of economic independence, and that colonialism was responsible for depriving African women of their political as well as economic status. These women can claim a degree of triumph in that in the wake of the mass protest action, it took the government years to implement its policy of passes for women.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

" Feminism as a political movement has organised and mobilised women to struggle for change, it has sought to lobby for policies and changes to laws that reflect this understanding of the need for gender sensitivity and awareness in all social, political and economic life, and it has, more recently, attempted to, itself recognise the fundamental relationship between race, class and gender. In so doing, it also recognises that no single theory can explain the oppression and subjectivities of race, class and gender. " (C.Swart,1990: p.94)

In the South African context, not all women are oppressed equally: there are different levels of oppression depending on race and class. Many high powered African women hold the view that they are Africans before they are women. Hence many African women argue that most of their priorities are different from those of white feminists. One cannot doubt that in Africa the energies of both the men and the women are needed to eradicate such obstacles as imperialism, racism, as well as class and sexual oppression.

History reveals that during the Second World War, 1939 – 1945, large numbers of African men and women made their way to the cities in response to accelerated industrialisation. Life in the city appeared to be more appealing and lucrative. After 1948, the Nationalist government's policy of apartheid tried to reverse this flow of people by declaring urban workers 'temporary sojourners' and sending both men and women back to the rural areas. It tightened up pass laws for men, and by 1952 it decided that pass laws were also necessary for women. Passes were seen as a means of control over

where African people worked and lived. The Nationalist government feared that the influx into urban areas would mean overcrowding, unemployment and an increase in crime. African people posed a very real threat to white workers, for they were prepared to work for a wage which was by far less than that demanded by white workers (Liberal Party papers on Economic Policy:P.C. 2/9series).

It was for this reason that African people were now taking over jobs that were once white dominated. Another important factor was that farmers and white households who paid their workers a pittance, could not compete with the lucrative wage offered by industry (see appendix 1). This led to a dire shortage of labour on the farms. It was for these reasons that passes were looked upon as a solution. Passes ensured that workers could be controlled and compelled to go to places where their services were needed. The threat to force women to carry passes led to the huge woman's anti – pass campaigns of the 1950s. The fact that rural women made this heroic stand and took to the streets startled most people. Nobody expected rural women to play an active role in politics. It was something expected of women living in urban areas only. In the rural areas the burden of all agricultural work was falling on the already leaden shoulders of the women. Starting in the 1950's the reserves, restyled " Bantustans ", were also restructured to serve a crucial political control function. Apartheid as control, was most forcibly felt by African women in the form of influx control and pass laws. These served to make women aware of their oppression as Africans and as women, hence a decade of militant and sustained protest amongst them. Politically, the late 1950's was a turbulent period. There was unprecedented mass political action by African people. It was the women who retaliated in a most vociferous manner. All of the regions where the 1959 revolts by women were recorded, were in fact recorded in the Natal Province. There were none recorded north of the Tugela ( in what was

Zululand ). Furthermore, this thesis ends before the Bantustans were actually created, and thus " KwaZulu " as a nominal homeland, while on the horizon, is not part of the time-frame of this work. For these reasons I would use the appropriate contemporary designation " Natal ".

Women were seen by older African men, as well as by women themselves, as the reproducers and socialisers of children, their sole responsibility was caring for the family. The migrant labour system was responsible for the rural areas being predominantly female. Economic deprivation and a threat to traditional patterns of life posed a major problem to women especially. In the rural areas the woman's supportive and domestic role helped reinforce her subordinate status, hence the surprise when women in the rural areas took their lead from their urban counterparts. The authorities were not prepared for the huge wave of unrest and demonstrations that it set-off through out the province.

In 1955 it was announced by the then Minister of Native Affairs that African women would have to carry pass books for the first time, effective from January 1956. This tyrannical extension to women of the oppressive pass laws provoked nationwide demonstrations. Two National women's organisations helped strategise the campaign – the A.N.C. Women's League, founded in 1943, and the nonracial Federation of South African women (Fedsaw), founded in 1954. Women remained involved in the anti – pass campaigns until these ended in the Sharpeville Massacre on 21<sup>st</sup> of March 1960. The A.N.C. and P.A.C. were banned, and Fedsaw had its leaders restricted. On 1<sup>st</sup> of February 1963, the power of the state defeated the women, all African women were compelled to carry passes. What we must remember, however, is that the women had not given in easily. They were by no means meek, for it had taken the government nearly ten years to enforce its policy. Furthermore, out

in the rural areas retaliation against cattle dipping and dipping tanks ensued in 1959. The women in the rural areas had in fact caught the authorities unawares and demonstrated to them that they were a force to be reckoned with. However, the role played by rural women against policies that affected and threatened to interrupt their tradition, social life and economic power, is a very neglected area of study.

## **CHAPTER 2 :**

### **CHRONICLING THE REVOLTS**

In early August of 1959, many reserve areas of Natal flared in revolt, and the main participants were women. Initially, dipping tanks were the target of their anger, but soon they were massing outside magistrates' courts, destroying identity papers and threatening agricultural extension officers. At first the women's actions seemed spontaneous and disorderly; only towards the middle of August did they become more determinedly organised. By the end of August calm had returned.

What caused this outburst - extraordinary in the light of the supposed 'docility' and 'obedience' of rural women? The scale of involvement is significant: some 20 000 women were involved, and the total amount collected in fines across the province was nearly £20 000. (Walker 1982: 232) In the previous month, July 1959, urban women had initiated their own mass protests in the region against municipal beer monopolies ; the storm centre of these protests was the largest urban informal settlement in the province, Cato Manor. Cato Manor was unplanned, and as a result of its spontaneous creation far less controlled and policed than any of the townships set up as a result of government planning. Because of this freedom Cato Manor was a haven for all those who were illegally in the urban areas, or whose livelihood contravened the multitude of rules and regulations governing the lives of Africans. The sense of freedom so characteristic of it meant that at weekends and holidays it was a central meeting-place; over weekends the population of Cato Manor almost doubled, many visitors being rural dwellers (Yawitch 1977:1). Given both the nature of urbanisation in Natal and the multiple ways in which town and countryside were linked (discussed in the following chapter), an obvious question to ask is whether these urban and rural protests were related in any

way. This chapter will examine what the available literature has to say. Since there is so much more material on Cato Manor, this survey begins with the urban end of the continuum.

Cato Manor was generally considered by the authorities to be overcrowded, unhygienic and crime-ridden, in short a slum which they were trying to get rid of. Many women who left the rural areas of Natal, found a home in Cato Manor. Women formed a large percentage of the "illegal" population who were threatened by the removals. Few women living in this area had legal employment or official permission to be in the urban area of Durban (Walker 1982 :231) Cato Manor was famous for its shebeens and shebeen queens, for women living in the area were able to generate an income by engaging in illicit beer-brewing. It is therefore little wonder why women in Cato Manor especially, poignantly resisted the laws that made beer-brewing illegal and demonstrated their defiance against Municipal beerhalls. It was evident that all intentions by the National Party government to restructure African urban life was strongly contested by the people. Central to these plans was a desire to increase the capitalisation of inner city land by clearing it of African people and allowing white ownership and residence (Mabin 1992). In early 1959 the Municipality not only issued pass books and yielded freely to influx control raids, but it also engaged in shack demolition and mass removals. These factors were responsible for the underlying tension that was brewing in the people of Cato Manor.

This literature survey shall focus on what the following authors have to say about the protest action of women more especially in 1959, in both urban and rural areas, not only in Natal but throughout South Africa: Walker, Yawitch, Ladlau, Bazilli, Hafkin and Bay, Wells and Edwards.

When placing this thesis in context one needs to be mindful of the circumstances facing African women. Hafkin and Bay (1976) endorse the view

that in Africa, the economic independence of women is less a mark of privilege than a matter of necessity; women take responsibility for their economic well-being because they must, in the same sense that Western men traditionally accept "natural" economic responsibilities for themselves and their families. From such evidence I was able to get a sense of the kind of life that prevailed in South Africa before colonisation. This insight made it quite safe to assume that colonial impact far from liberating African women, actually diminished the prerogatives and rights they formerly enjoyed. They had lost political as well as economic status under colonialism. When they introduced their systems of colonial rule, Europeans failed to see that African women had political roles and institutions in their societies. There is consensus of this from Walker (1982), Wells (1993), Ladlau (1975) and Yawitch (1977). The apartheid policies implemented, aggravated the situation that prevailed in the late 1950s.

Wells (1993) also cites this as being one of the major reasons why during the 1950s, African women in other urban and rural centres continued to demonstrate their militancy and willingness to go beyond strictly constitutional forms of protest. In both Lady Selborn, near Pretoria, and Cato Manor, near Durban, when women's passes became linked with rehousing schemes, doubling the threat to unqualified women, strong resistance was met with excessive police force, resulting in numerous deaths and injuries. Ladlau (1975), brings in the rural dimension by focusing on the fact that in rural Natal, forced cattle-dipping schemes imposed at the same time as the introduction of women's passes, triggered an explosion of bitter resistance. At this point one can include the many other burdens that were placed upon rural women, which is the main focus of this thesis.

Yet, nobody was prepared for the outburst when it came, they were less prepared for the huge wave of unrest and demonstrations it set off throughout the province. Police raids on illicit beer-brewing and shebeens in Cato Manor



provided the spark (Walker 1982:231). The women were successful in preventing their men from supporting Municipal beerhalls. Initially these protests were confined to the urban areas, and later spilled over into the rural areas. A closer look at the factors responsible for the discontent in both areas reveal that the women, collectively, were demonstrating on common ground – their social and economic disempowerment! Walker (1982) and Yawitch (1977), viewed Cato Manor as the catalyst that provided rural women with a model for their own demonstrations and protests . They also agree that the ease with which the unrest spread was facilitated by the geographical situation in Natal, where town and reserves are in close contact.

Despite the protests by women in the rural areas being a crucial part of our history in Natal , it is a period which has been neglected by social scientists and historians . Apart from the first quite comprehensive works of Ladlau (1975) and Yawitch (1977) which helped me immensely in understanding the ethos that prevailed in the rural areas in the period in question, I found that many of the other researchers have, however, only made mention of the rural protests in the course of their analysis of urban protests. There is no doubt that urban protests in the late 1950s have been the centre of focus, and the available literature by Walker (1982), Edwards (1994), Wells (1993) and Bazilli (1991) bears testimony to this.

Edwards's work presents a very detailed account of the social composition of Mkhumbane (Cato Manor) for the first time. This I found to be very helpful in putting the rural protests in perspective. However, one does need to be mindful of the fact that the contemporaneous rural protests ought to take its rightful place in history too, for the 1950s was a decade in which concerted attempts were being made to implement 'grand' apartheid policy in rural areas. Massive removals in terms of the Group Areas Act got under way in the mid-1950s. These were the first large- scale removals to be caused by apartheid. (Platzky and Walker 1985: 99). Just as the women in Cato Manor had attacked

the most obvious manifestation of their discontent- the beerhalls, so too did the women in the rural areas attack the dipping tanks. The reasons for this are related to the Betterment Schemes and the profound effect they had on rural life (Yawitch 1977: 6). In both instances women reacted against legislation that would have led to the disruption of their traditional social and economic system. One finds that although Yawitch (1977) and Ladlau (1975), did focus on the contemporaneous rural protests, they fail to provide a detailed account of events which depict the quick pace of the protest action and the support it received in terms of numbers ; together with the names of the various places affected on any given day. I firmly believe that these encapsulate the thrust of the struggle, for women, despite the constraints that were meant to handicap them, showed their strength in numbers.

In the light of the rural protests having been subjected to neglect, I had to rely on primary sources for my information . Though I found this area of research most fascinating , I experienced a number of problems in locating good sources with regard to rural protests in the late 1950s. Existing records are vague and tend to either ignore or underplay the crux of the protest marches undertaken by women. Furthermore, as Hooks (1981) points out, that quite often material available omit to acknowledge the fact that African women were placed in a double bind; to support women's suffrage would imply that they were allying themselves with white women activists who had publicly revealed their racism, but to support only African male suffrage was to endorse a patriarchal social order that would grant them no political voice. Although Hooks focuses on Black American women and men, given the circumstances in which African women find themselves one can see more broadly that Black women in the world in general have been caught in this " double bind " .

These are the types of sources used for this study, together with their limitations:

a. Participants:

None of the participants in the rural resistance campaign was interviewed by the press, nor were there any diaries or letters I could lay my hands on. They speak mainly through their actions, which were reported in the press at the time. As well as through papers kept in files belonging to the Liberal Party, Bourquin, Laviopierre, the A.N.C. and the court.

b. Newspapers:

The microfilm of the newspapers mentioned in the bibliography, was of poor quality. This made reading very difficult, with the result I had to make arrangements to have hard copies at my disposal. These revealed that the Illanga newspaper did not give very detailed coverage, and seemed to have relied on white owned press for a description of the events. The editorials did however comment on the political importance of the actions of the women.

The Mercury and Daily Newspapers gave detailed eye witness accounts of the protest by women in the rural areas. But the women were often portrayed as "agitators" who were very destructive and irrational. The reports, most often, failed to examine or focus on the underlying factors that were responsible for this reaction from women.

c. Municipal Records:

It is also evident that local officials refused to deal with the protesting women directly. Instead, they tried to convince African men that they should control their womenfolk. There is no doubt that most officials saw the women as being undisciplined, rather than as having real grievances.

d. Interviews :

With the help of Dorky Mhlambo, a social worker from Prince Mshiyeni Memorial hospital in Umlazi, I tried to form a network with the following hospitals: Port Shepstone, C.J. Crooks, King Edward VII and McCord. This, unfortunately, proved to be a futile effort, for the patients we were able to locate were too old and in every instance lost their trend of thought and digressed.

It is perhaps, for these reasons too, that social scientists and historians have somewhat marginalised the rural protests by being, in a way, silent on them. I did experience difficulty in locating material. In the course of my research I found the works of Walker, Yawitch, Wells, Edwards and Bazilli very useful, in that they helped me gain a perspective of the 1950s, more especially, the late 1950s, which was crucial to this study.

## **CHAPTER 3:**

### **THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT**

By the 1950s, land shortage meant chronic poverty for many in the reserves. On their own, women had very little leeway in dealing with such a situation. Customary law treated them as perpetual minors, which meant that they were unable to make any decision, in person or in writing, without the permission of their legally recognised, male, guardians. Even if children were starving, women were not allowed to sell the family cattle for food, neither were they at liberty to admit ill children to hospital. Furthermore, should a husband die, a woman's position on the reserve was even further threatened. A widow was rarely allocated land of her own, as homestead property was inherited by males only, and if she had no adult son, then a male relative of the deceased acted as guardian and assumed the rights of husband. It was extremely difficult for an older woman to resist such social pressures. It seems as if this was one of the reasons that prompted a number of older women to take an active part in protests when they flared in the rural areas of Natal. (Bourquin: KCM 55268)

Life in the rural areas was becoming unbearable for women in general. The migratory labour practice brought with it a great deal of discomfort for women living here. They now had to bear more and more the brunt of the domestic economy. In traditional polygamous society each wife was entitled to her own living, cooking and store huts, and to gardens for cultivation. She and her children had the support of her husband and kin, to provide her with social status, and to assist in the more onerous tasks when needed. Men moving into the urban areas brought a distinct break down of this structure. There is no doubt that with migratory labour the responsibilities of men lessened and that of women increased.

What follows suggests, very strongly, that the Betterment or Closer Settlement schemes that were created by Proclamation 116 of 1949 were, in very large measure, the reason behind rural women's militancy. There is every indication that the Betterment scheme was being tried in the areas later on most affected by the revolt. This in itself suggests that the rural protests were not merely a spill over of urban action, but rather a reaction to policies that were to have far reaching consequences on the lives of the women more especially, in the rural areas. This scheme was implemented by the government in an attempt to improve methods of crop production, land usage and animal farming in overcrowded and eroded African rural areas - a deterioration due precisely to segregationist and then apartheid land policies. By the mid-1950s, these policies were in clear need of modernisation if people were to be contained within the reserves.

This scheme meant a severe disruption to land use systems in the coastal reserves, where settlement patterns and land use had previously been organised around each homestead. Each village area was to be divided into three parts by government officials: one for grazing, one for crop production and one for residential purposes (Tomlinson Commission). Land was now to be allocated to the head of each family, and not to the wife, as had been practice in the past.

It appeared as if the women were the primary targets of the Betterment scheme, since most men were out working in urban areas, and Betterment entailed a far greater degree of bureaucratic interference in, and proscription of, daily domestic decision-making processes. In terms of Betterment, it became necessary to relocate people, a move which was resisted because traditional social/domestic units were being replaced by unfamiliar, larger, more concentrated residential units. There would now be a far greater

separation between agricultural and domestic labour, as fields would now be much further from homes. The scheme also made compulsory the growing of a stipulated minimum amount of vegetables, in addition to maize. Also because of the absence of men, enforced afforestation and fire-break construction fell squarely on the shoulders of the women. These activities had to be undertaken without any monetary reward.

Also in pursuit of the governments' aim of stabilising the reserves, the number of cattle had to be reduced, according to 'scientific' quotas. Cattle culling struck at the very foundations of the rural social and economic order. Cattle symbolised wealth and provided a source of *lobola*. People were instructed to present their cattle to government officials for assessment, and then for culling. African people, with reason, ignored these orders (Yawitch 1977:7). In response, officials then set up a system whereby cattle were assessed when they were brought to be dipped. Dipping was compulsory once a fortnight, possibly to prevent the spread of diseases since the division of the reserves. People who did not bring their cattle were fined 5 £ per head. There were deep reservations about the dipping of the cattle in government- controlled tanks, even before dipping was linked to culling. People were of the opinion that it was responsible for the poor condition of their cattle and that it made their bulls impotent. To complicate matters, they came to believe that if they did not willingly allow their cattle to be culled, their cattle would be poisoned during the dipping process (Yawitch 1977).

Furthermore there was a sudden, unexplained decision to compel women to fill the tanks without any monetary gain to them (Natal Mercury 1959). Women were already burdened with the social and economic pressures of rural life. They became militant and aggressive because this was heavy and exhausting labour. It was therefore little wonder why women in the rural areas chose the dipping tanks as their main target of attack. It is very clear that the implementation of the Betterment scheme on rural women led to a profound

social dislocation and it brought with it economic distress. It was therefore that rural women followed the example set by women in the urban areas, and took to the fields in protest. They took out their anger on the very structures that posed a threat to their way of life.

Also in 1959 came the decision to raise poll tax paid by all adult males from 1 £ to 1 £ and 15 shillings with an additional 10 shillings local tax for each wife, this in effect was a further burden on families already facing the wrath of a recession. Influx control meant that men could not move around freely in urban areas in order to obtain jobs. Economic factors were undermining accepted customs in everyday life, and were important causes of the unrest in 1959. Women in urban areas like Cato Manor sympathized with their rural counterparts, for they had come to the urban areas to escape the intolerable conditions in the reserves, to be united with their husbands and families and to find some sort of income. They therefore resented the laws that made entry to and residence in town so difficult. One finds that women in both rural and urban areas were experiencing the brunt of the apartheid policies that were being put into practice. Life for the women was becoming more and more burdensome.

The apartheid government had also put into place many acts in order to try and curtail the movement of women. One such act was, section 10 of the Natives (urban areas) Consolidation Act Number 25 of 1945, which was later amended, stipulated that no African male or female would be allowed to remain for more than seventy-two hours within the urban area unless :

- a. He/she has, since birth, resided continuously in the area, or
- b. he has worked continuously in such an area for one employer for a period of not less than 10 years or has lawfully resided continuously in such an area for a period of not less than 15 years, and has thereafter continued to reside in such an area and is not employed outside such area and has not



during either period or thereafter been sentenced to a fine exceeding fifty £s or to imprisonment for a period exceeding six months, or

- c. such a African is the wife, unmarried daughter or son under the age at which he would become liable for payment of general tax under the Native Taxation and Development Act ,1925 (act no.41 of 1925), of any African mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) of this sub-section and ordinarily resides with that African. (Memorandum,Department of Bantu Administration, 11<sup>th</sup>March 1959).

Further to this, the procedure in the employment of African women was as follows: "Unless she is exempt" from the requirements to obtain permission to remain in the urban area as set out, or has been granted permission to reside in the urban area, no African woman should seek or take up employment unless she has obtained permission to remain in the urban area for that purpose. (Act No.15 of 1911).

Such measures underlined the fact that African women were seen as a threat and were therefore not allowed to remain for too long in urban areas. The converse of this reveals that the government of the day was, perhaps, short-sighted in that it did not recognise the very threat that existed when women were forced to return to the rural areas. A proclamation issued in terms of section 9 of the Natives (urban areas) Consolidation Act, did little to help the situation which was brewing since it called for all Africans in the urban area of Durban, with certain exceptions, to reside in a location, "native" village or "native" hostel. Only African women who were bona fide domestic servants, who occupied accommodation approved by the urban local authority, which was provided by employers on premises occupied for residential purposes exclusively, or primarily by the employers concerned, were exempted from these provisions.

The home brewing of beer (**for sale**) was illegal. Beer had instead to be purchased from municipal beer halls. This created a great deal of dissatisfaction, since traditionally, women had brewed beer to earn an income from the men who purchased the beer. Because this economic source was now under very real threat, the women were more disposed to a rebellious and militant stance. There had been a beer monopoly in Durban for decades, but the threat of a typhoid epidemic in June 1959 caused the Durban Corporation to decide to radically increase and improve sanitation measures in Cato Manor, and to eliminate any conditions conducive to the breeding of flies. The refusal of the inhabitants of Cato Manor to do away with the large quantities of illegal liquor negated the health measures taken by the authorities. The final straw for the women was when municipal labourers were ordered to enter Cato Manor and destroy all stills (Ladlau 1975). This was when women began to retaliate against Municipal beer-halls, not only in Cato Manor but throughout Natal.

The way in which the riots spread has much to do with the geographical situation of Natal and with the homegenous nature of its African population. Natal is the smallest province in South Africa. Unlike the others, its Native Reserves are situated close to the major urban centres, resulting in a greater volume of traffic between the towns and reserves and at shorter intervals than elsewhere. Whereas, in the Transvaal would only return home to their families once a month, in the case of Natal, this would be increased to weekly visits (Drum Magazine, October 1959: 24). It was this constant movement from urban to rural areas and visa versa, that helped transmit news and ideas rapidly. Many parents, for example, had their children with grandparents in rural areas while they worked in town, visiting them as frequently as they could. Migrants, also maintained strong links with their families in rural areas. The distinction between town and country was blur. Hence the impact of events in Durban were likely to be felt more intensely and sooner in Natal than elsewhere. (Yawitch 1977:3). The mass media, in the form of newspaper and

radio reports, helped to transmit information between the urban and rural areas. Thus, by the middle of July 1959 the rural areas were well aware of the militant stance of the women in Durban. All evidence points to the fact that economic deprivation and change threatening traditional patterns of life bore heaviest on women. It is therefore not surprising that it was the women who were in the forefront of the demonstrations that were to follow.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **A CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROTESTS, 1959**

In the absence of a concise and comprehensive chronological account of the protests in rural areas, I had to source newspapers to construct one in order to capture this very intense period in our history. It is estimated that about 20 000 women engaged in protest action in most parts of Natal, over a period of approximately two months. This detailed account also helps us to understand the pattern of the protest action that occurred in this period, as well as to take cognisance of the fact that most often a number of women at a time were seen to be gathering in various parts of rural Natal, despite the constraints under which they lived. The women were not deterred by the fines imposed or the pending jail sentence. This chronological account reveal that African women were more than determined to stand as a united force , and that towards mid-August 1959 more and more women took part in the protests despite being threatened and treated badly by the police force. They epitomized a commitment and solidarity that was rare.

In February 1959, a number of African women and children were removed from the urban areas of Durban to the reserves (Bourquin). This meant that the political ideas as well as up-to-date reports from Cato Manor and the surrounding shack areas would filter through to rural women, as has already been argued, the A.N.C. was a major force behind the women's protests in the urban areas, and now with certain women being compelled to return to the reserves, this could well have been the route by which the A.N.C. was able to gain a foothold in the rural areas. Evidence available point to the crucial role played by the A.N.C. Women's League, in helping the women to plan and

strategise. With the result protests which were initially violent, and attracted negative criticism from the media, later became peaceful yet determined.

With the intermingling of urban and rural life, ideas spread and women soon realised that measures had to be taken to denounce the impositions placed upon them. Their very way of life was being eroded, and this had to be stopped. There are parallels between the retaliation of women in the urban and rural areas, against the structures of oppression. On the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1959, women armed with their sticks, cane knives, hatchets or pieces of firewood marched to the municipal beer-hall in Cato Manor. Their intention was to prevent African men from entering and purchasing beer (as already mentioned, when in the past this was a source of income for African women, who brewed beer and their men purchased it from them). All evidence points to the fact that the intention of the women was not to go there and cause havoc. Reports of the time indicate that this protest would have remained peaceful had Mr Bourquin, the Director of Bantu Administration, not threatened the women by saying that he was going to ask the South African Police to deal with them. The S.A.P. exacerbated the problem when they started beating the women without any cause, it was only then that the women gave vent to their anger and frustrations on vats and canisters in the beer-hall. Hence one finds that the hatred between police and the people was strongly felt and dangerous during this period. Even in the rural areas, in August of 1959, there was a strong police presence at all protests.

The protests at Cato Manor caused a state of tension throughout Durban. On examination of the factors one has to acknowledge that the basic and ultimate reason for the protests was an economic one. However, economic factors must be seen against a background of intense stress and of upheaval caused by increasing change in all spheres of life (Yawitch 1977:6). This seems to be one of the reasons for the parallels between urban and rural protests. It was

also common practice for women in the urban areas to arouse and incite women in the locations, given the peculiar fragmentation of Natal.

Despite his high handed approach at times, Bourquin did realize that there was an economic pinch and he therefore motivated for the wages of the African people to be increased. One needs to remember that Cato Manor played an important role in inciting women in the townships and locations. The Grobbelaar Committee report of February 1960, looked into the disturbances and rioting in Cato Manor. The Committee mentions a strong A.N.C. support system present, at the time of the disturbances. The impression that was created in the minds of the public was that any demand by organised Africans was the work of so called "Agitators" or "political elements", this was the very impression that the women fought against. They had very real grievances that needed to be addressed by the authorities concerned.

The women of Cato Manor presented a memorandum to the Mayor of Durban on Friday 10 July 1959, airing their grievances over the ruthless use of influx control, revenue making via municipal beer-halls, restrictions imposed on Africans to hold meetings in African locations, provocative police raids which violated the rights of people and the low wages paid to men. The women accused the officials of being dictatorial and unsympathetic. They also expressed a lack of confidence in Bourquin and accused him of hiding behind regulations. What seems to emerge was that the people who were active were not sophisticated African women, but rather ordinary people, most of whom were underpaid. Zulu women asserted their independence by entering the public protest sphere. This was a new concept since the Natal code of Native law (1891) had enshrined in it that women had to be subordinate to men. Women were now no longer afraid to voice their immediate frustrations over issues that affected their daily lives. This, however, did not tackle the root causes of the problem. There were a few people who were in the forefront during this period, and they were very sympathetic towards the plight of the

African women. One such person was Mildred Lavoipierre, from the co-ordinating committee on welfare of African women and children in Durban, who worked slavishly to make the authorities concerned see the error in their ways. Her papers reveal an unstinting persistence in her letters to Mr S. Bourquin. She emphasised the need for a stable lifestyle for African people. She showed empathy towards the constraints under which the African women lived.

Appendix 2, dated 15<sup>th</sup> February 1961, is a record, kept by the then Department of Bantu Administration, from 1958 – 1960, which details the protests which took place over this period in question. Its significance for this argument is that it barely mentions rural protests, even though (**as we shall see,**) they were as significant as the urban ones. The officials concerned seem to have, for some reason, 'blanked out' the rural revolt. In view of the fact that there is no adequate overview of the events that took place in rural Natal in this period, I have chosen to use this very detailed chronological account. Some of the emotive words that I have selected to quote from these reports reveal a biased attitude towards the women involved in the protests. This detailed account also helps to focus on the persistence of the women, as well as a determination to achieve their aims against all odds. Despite the trying conditions that faced them daily, there is no doubt in my mind that their sacrifices were second to nothing!

9<sup>th</sup> July 1959.

>"Political elements seen behind Native agitators "(caption)

Mr P.J.Potgieter, the Bantu administration and Development Department's senior information officer, described the protests as being, " part and parcel of this new-fangled fashion of female defiance. "He went on to say that," most of

these women had not the faintest idea why they are demonstrating, and the political elements are exploiting their ignorance to incite them to irresponsible actions such as has happened in and around Durban lately. "Women were told that the men themselves should lodge complaints over low wages and work permits. Recruiting took place, and women arrived the next day in even greater numbers.

>In a separate incident, 24 African women who were arrested in Verulam on a charge of public violence, were released on bail of 10 £s each. The case was adjourned until July 14. (Natal Mercury)

11<sup>th</sup> July 1959.

>African women, squatted on the steps of Durban City Hall demanding a minimum wage of 1 £ per day for all African workers. Mayor, Councillor W.E. Shaw, agreed to receive a deputation from the Natal Women's League of the A.N.C. on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July 1959. The women were to be represented by Dorothy Nyembe and Florence Mkize, the chairperson and secretary of the A.N.C. Women's League.

> "Angry " women stoned buses at Cato Manor. They refused to allow the Municipal buses into Lamontville until the women arrested in the recent Cato Manor disturbances had been released. (Natal Mercury).

15<sup>th</sup> July 1959.

>The court-yard was packed with about 400 women, awaiting the hearing of 69 African women on charges of violence and creating a disturbance at Durban beer-halls in June.



>The 38 African women who were charged with creating a disturbance at the Victoria Street beer-hall on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1959 were remanded to 23<sup>rd</sup> of July 1959. The magistrate, Mr J.V. van der Merwe, ordered that warrants of arrest be issued for the 8 African women who failed to appear and that their bail of 5 £s each be estreated. (Natal Mercury).

16<sup>TH</sup> July 1959.

>Trial of the African women involved in the beer-hall disturbances continue. The situation that prevailed at that time was described as being "inflammable" and "tense".

>Councillor W.E. Shaw met with eight members of the Natal A.N.C. Women's League. He informed the deputation that he was only prepared to help them if "lawlessness and violence were removed from Cato Manor and other trouble spots in the city". Once this was achieved he pledged his support for "an impartial and independent" investigation into the cause of the riots. He was even prepared to support the establishment of a Judicial Commission of Enquiry. (Natal Mercury).

20<sup>th</sup> July 1959.

>In a four hour long meeting, with about 2000 Africans in attendance, Mr C.C. Elston, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Durban, listened to the grievances of the African people. Residents complained:

- had to drink corporation beer and not what they made themselves;
- complained about appalling sanitary conditions in Cato Manor;
- refuse was not collected frequently;

- not enough public conveniences;
- no drains, this led to conditions in which diseases spread;
- need for a hospital in the area;
- ambulance services inadequate;
- alleged that shack demolition was carried out without regard to where the occupants were to go.

The Commissioner promised to investigate the complaints. (Natal Mercury)

21<sup>st</sup> July 1959.

>A group of African women stoned two municipal, non-European, buses parked at the Lamontville terminus. Little damage was caused. No arrests were made.

>Police detained 65 African women at the central police station for causing a disturbance. The women "stopped traffic and taunted the police". They were arrested, warned not to take part in anymore public disturbances, and they were later released. (Natal Mercury)

23<sup>rd</sup> July 1959.

>25 African women were sentenced to six months imprisonment for public violence. The charge arose from a disturbance at the Rossburgh beer-hall on the 19<sup>th</sup> June. Each woman had half of her sentence suspended for three years on condition she does not commit any offence involving violence in that time. The prosecutor added, "rioters cannot be treated with kid gloves. Only a

substantial sentence will act as a deterrent to rioters and help to bring the position in the city back to normal." (Natal Mercury)

28<sup>th</sup> July 1959.

>Report deals with "dwindling" beer-hall profits. This indicates that the women's protests were successful. (Natal Mercury)

>A detachment of police stood by when about 500 "chanting women converged" on the Umzinto Magistrate's Court. Mr J.C.Jackson, the chief magistrate, received a deputation of three women, who said that they did not want to carry reference books and demanded a minimum wage of 1 £ a day. The women also asked to be allowed to work in Durban. Mr Jackson addressed the women outside the court and told them their demand was premature. If they were to be paid 1 £ a day, the price of food would increase.

He agreed their wages were low and promised to send their request for an increase to the Chief Bantu Commissioner. He said, "employers could not be forced to give substantial increases." The women dispersed without incident. (Natal Mercury)

4<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>Two women were fined 5 £s or 20 days in the Durban Magistrate's Court for creating a disturbance at the Rosburgh beer-hall. (Natal Mercury)

5<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>Police arrested 112 African women after they had “smashed” a dipping tank and “threatened” a European dipping inspector at Indudutu, near Umkomaas on the Natal South Coast. The women objected to having the cattle being dipped. After “ripping” the tank they filled it with stones. Police had estimated the damage at 100 £s. (Africans were compelled to dip their cattle every fortnight to prevent tick fever and red water).

>Evidence of A.N.C. involvement in the six week long potatoe boycott. There were no signs of an end to the boycott, which was supported by the Africans. (Natal Mercury)

8<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>Police from Umkomaas and Scottborough were rushed to Indudutu and Amahlongwa reserves when African women began “smashing” cattle dipping tanks. Women, according to police, objected to paying to have the cattle dipped. They therefore “ripped apart” sections of the tanks. Arrests were made. (Natal Mercury)

10<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>Police were sent to a nearby reserve in Natal after reports of a “clash” between two opposing groups of women. It was understood that a large group of anti-reference book women “waylaid” another group of women who were on their way to collect their books. The “anti” group tried to dissuade the “pro” group without success, and the two groups “clashed”.

>In a separate incident in Escourt, about 100 African women "armed with sticks" took part in a demonstration "outside a beer-hall in the area. 40 were arrested by the police. In retaliation, women later" stoned and damaged" a bus near the Escourt Police Station. (Daily News)

11<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>At Umbumbulu, the police "had to forcibly disarm" many African women in a crowd of about 400, who marched on the police station "waving sticks and chanting" slogans. In the crowd were 199 women who had been warned to appear at a special court on a charge of "maliciously wrecking" a dipping tank on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1959. According to the police, the women "refused" to drop their sticks when they were asked to. Of the 199 women charged with wrecking the dipping tank called before court, pleas of not guilty were accepted from three. Charges against two others were withdrawn. The 194 were each fined 20 £s (or eighty days). A further three months imprisonment was in each case suspended for three years on condition the women were not convicted of a similar offence in that time.

>Six African women were each fined 7 £s 10 shillings (or six weeks), at the Umzinto Magistrate's Court. They were found guilty of being "in possession of dangerous weapons". Evidence was that the women marched on the police station at Sawoti, about 20 miles from Umzinto. (Natal Mercury)

12<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>In Port Shepstone, about 400 women – members of the Cele and Mbele tribes, congregated outside a trading store and "demanded" for the Magistrate and the Government Agricultural officer to be sent to meet them. It was

reported that the women were "noisy and armed with sticks". They wanted their grievance investigated, which was, that they were previously paid to keep the fire-break around the forest reserve clear, but now they had been told that it was a tribal responsibility. The women dispersed once they were promised that the matter would be investigated. (Daily News)

13<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>African women were reported to have "demonstrated " near Port Shepstone and in the Table Mountain location near Maritzburg. About 200 women "smashed" a dipping tank in the Table Mountain location. Damage was estimated at 150 £s. According to police women protested against the forcible dipping of the cattle as a measure against East Coast Fever.

>By 13 August 1959, it had been reported that 75% of all dipping tanks in Natal had been destroyed (reported to the Daily News, by Lt-Col. B.L. Gildenhuys, Maritzburg's District Commandant). Just as the women of Cato Manor "attacked" the beer halls, which were the object of their discontent, women in the rural areas began "attacking" the dipping tanks.

>At Richmond, thirty- five of the thirty-six African women who were arrested at a trading store at Groothoek the previous day, were convicted for "creating a disturbance". Each was fined 20 £s (or three months). Half the sentence was suspended for three years on condition that they are not convicted of a similar offence during that period. (Natal Mercury)

14<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>A gathering of about 500 African women asked Mr S. Bourquin, the Director of the Durban Council's Bantu Affairs Department, to suspend the laws

governing influx control and the issue of permits to African people to seek work in the city. He informed the women that his department had no power to amend the laws, but he promised to pass on the requests to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner. (Daily News)

>Neither police, nor officials could explain the "mysterious destruction" of dipping tanks in scattered parts of Natal. It appeared to be the night work of "organised gangs of African women." In Pietermaritzburg alone 11 out of the 23 dipping tanks were destroyed. "In every case it was found that the damage was done by women."

>In Inchanga, an officer and twenty constables "were sent to deal with" a large gathering of African women who tried to damage a dipping tank. Two of the women who were armed with pangas were arrested.

>Other incidents occurred in Durban, Port Shepstone and the Greytown areas. According to police, African women protested against the forcible dipping of cattle against East Coast Fever, Gall Sickness, Red Water, Tick Bite Fever and other diseases.

>At Camperdown, an officer and fifteen men were sent to disperse 200 African women. They had blocked the National road and refused to move until they had spoken to the African Commissioner.

>On this day, a threat was also issued by the government, that cattle moved from one area to another without a dipping certificate would be destroyed by officials. (Natal Mercury)

15<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>250 African women gathered at the Municipal beer-hall in Retief Street, Pietermaritzburg. They sang and chanted. It is understood that a group of

thirty women had hired a bus in Durban to come to Pietermaritzburg. "When the women began screaming and creating a disturbance, the police were called out to deal with the situation". There was a baton charge on the women who in turn retaliated by throwing bottles and stones at police from a nearby block of flats. Police were eventually able to disperse the mob, but "a few of the women made their way to town creating a disturbance."

>At Sutherlands Police Station, near Edendale, a group of about 250 "angry" women gathered to protest over the arrest of thirty women. These women had been arrested earlier in the day by police for being in possession of dangerous weapons. The women, many of them from outlying districts, had previously joined in Pietermaritzburg with local African women in an organised protest for higher wages.

>At Umzinto, 84 African women were fined 5 £s (or one month) when they appeared on charges of "creating a disturbance and trespassing." They tried to "commandeer a bus to take them to Port Shepstone to interview the Native Commissioner." When the owner of the bus refused, the women were alleged to have created a disturbance on private property.

>At New Hanover, a trial of 600 African women took place. They were charged with "creating a disturbance ", 87 were found guilty. Of these 71 were sentenced to four months imprisonment and each of the 16 got a suspended sentence of two months.

>In the Table Mountain area, the police were informed that women "were massing to destroy" dipping tanks, government buildings and schools. Police were deployed to the area.

>The main "trouble spot" was the district of Harding. "A mob of Maci tribesman marched" on the town. For the first time we see such a strong reaction from the men. "Residents of Harding and the environs were in a state



of alarm. Farmers flocked into the town for protection." The state of "tension" began after the conviction of thirty African women. They were sentenced to 12 weeks imprisonment, with 4 weeks of the sentence suspended. A party of women went into the reserves and secured the help of the Maci tribe to free the convicted women. At 1.45 am about 200 African people armed with sticks, shields and assegais marched down the main road to the Harding gaol. Their demand for the release of the women was in vain. The police force from Port Shepstone, Kokstad and surrounding districts gathered in Harding.

>The following afternoon, police discovered that a railway line between Port Shepstone and Harding had been blocked by wood logs. Police put up a road block between Harding and Weza to prevent traffic from entering Harding. Nine plantations were set alight by protesters. (Natal Mercury)

17<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>There was "mob rioting" in Pietermaritzburg. The districts affected were Plessislaer, Edenvale and Sobantu village. An appeal was made by the A.N.C. and the Natal Indian Congress (N.I.C), in a joint statement, for whites and non-whites to do nothing "to aggravate a situation already charged with tension and bitterness." These political parties demanded an impartial enquiry into the happenings of the past week in order to prevent a recurrence of such events.

According to evidence obtained by these parties, it would appear that an unprovoked assault was made by police, without warning, upon a number of African women who were gathering in an enclosed playground opposite the Retief Street beer-hall. It was also alleged that police assaulted a large number of non- European onlookers and passersby.

>At Harding the African people showed their resentment of the New Settlement scheme. They showed disapproval by burning several tents which had been erected by government employees in the reserve. This resulted in the arrest of thirty African women. The women were also accused of killing and disembowelling farmer's sheep. (Natal Mercury)

18<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>At St. Faiths near Port Shepstone, about 1200 African women from the area and surrounding districts demonstrated against poll tax and influx control regulations. Women "staged a protest" in front of the police station. Two women also waved tribal shields, usually reserved for menfolk. Two police saracens and sixty- five police reinforcements were at the scene. The leader of the demonstrating women was dressed in the uniform of the A.N.C. Other women dressed in A.N.C. uniform led the crowd into singing and chanting while they awaited the arrival of the Native Commissioner from Ixopo, Mr.W.F.Bayer. To the "annoyance of the women" he only arrived late that afternoon. The women were asked to be patient while their grievances were passed through the proper channels.

>About forty African women "demonstrated" on the farm of Mr.G.W.Hammond, in the Umtwalumi district ,which is situated on the south coast of Natal. They were annoyed by the fact that their menfolk had been refused a wage increase. The dispute had arisen after the African men, employed as cane cutters, had demanded a wage of one £ a day and had been refused. The women who were "incensed" by the refusal "marched onto the cane field and took away the cane knives from the men and then marched with them to Mr. Hammond's home."

>In a separate incident in Umtwalumi, police patrolling found a group of women "armed with sticks and stones", preparing to board a bus which they had halted by a road block of logs. The police believed that the women were retaliating against the European owner of the bus, who had previously laid a charge of trespass against some of them. The women were dispersed and no arrests were made.

>The dipping tank of the Amatata reserve was found filled with stones. Police from Inanda stood by as work on clearing the tank began.

>In Pietermaritzburg, damage caused by "rioters" to school buildings amounted to twenty nine thousand £s.

>About eighty African women were arrested at Highflats when they "commandeered a bus and demanded" to be taken to the Native Commissioner in Ixopo. The bus broke down and the women were arrested. The women were charged under the Motor Vehicle Ordinance. (The bus was overloaded and the women had refused to pay their fare). (Natal Mercury)

19<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

Brigadier C.J. Els, assistant Commissioner of the S.A.P., blamed the A.N.C. for the disturbances in Natal. Strong contingents of police made mass arrests of African demonstrators at Highflats, Umsinsini, Isipofu and Hlokgozi on the South Coast of Natal and in Edendale near Pietermaritzburg. In thirty six hours more than 300 African women were arrested, convicted and fined or imprisoned for periods of up to four months without the option of a fine.

>In Umtwalumi, four fires were started on the farm of Mr. G.W.Hammond and four on the farm of Mr.T.Wilkes. "African women demonstrators had refused to allow" the African men to work. It was reported that if no work was done then

both farmers would face heavy losses, for burnt cane had to be harvested as soon as possible. The damage was estimated at several thousand £s.

>Police arrested 118 African women on the Umsinsini Sugar Estate in the Umzumbe district. The women had ordered the African men to hand over their cane knives. The women were each fined ten £s (or two months). None paid their fines and were sent to the Umzinto gaol.

>A large crowd of women gathered in Dweshula to await the result of the Port Shepstone Conference, where eight delegates met the additional magistrate.

>At Isipofu women formed a human chain across the road. They rolled huge boulders on the road and successfully obstructed traffic. 75 of the demonstrators were arrested. They were fined twenty five £s (or three months). They were put into Umzinto gaol with the 118 who were convicted of trespassing (the 119 who were awaiting trial were also at the Umzinto gaol on charges of "malicious damage " to dipping tanks.)

>More than 100 African women stopped two lorries and a bus near Hlokozi. They "commandeered the vehicles and ordered" the drivers to take them to Ixopo. All the women were arrested when the lorries were driven straight to the police station and the bus broke down. All 126 women were sentenced to four months imprisonment with hard labour, without the option of a fine.

>A delegation of eight African women from Mehlomyama, about 26 miles from Port Shepstone, went to the Bantu Administration Commissioner to air their main grievance, that they had been forced to clear the fire breaks around the Mtembenkulu forest for three years without being paid. They claimed that they had to also use their own equipment. They also complained about influx control, taxation and wage increases. A crowd of about 200 women gathered outside Dweshula Trading Store to await the return of the delegation. At about

4.30 pm. the crowd was approximately 2000. The delegation returned and addressed the women, the crowd dispersed without incident.

>Women also "gathered and demonstrated" at Richmond, Greytown, Impendhle, Donnybrook and Creighton areas. (Natal Mercury)

20<sup>th</sup>August 1959.

>Trouble and African unrest spread to Escourt. Hundreds of women began to demonstrate outside the Municipal beer-hall on Albert Street.

>In Pietermaritzburg, seven African women were "charged with creating a disturbance" in the Ashdown Local Health Committee area. They were found not guilty and discharged. Women were alleged to have prevented members of the public from making lawful use of certain transport facilities. They were arrested after refusing to allow a bus to continue on its way and chasing the driver. (Natal Mercury)

21<sup>st</sup>August 1959.

>A police sergeant was "hit in the mouth by a brick and several demonstrators were injured" when about fifty policemen baton charged "a mob " of African women opposite the Escourt Police Station. The women were protesting over the arrest of forty- eight women after a similar demonstration outside the Albert Street beer-hall. Thirty-eight women were charged with public violence. Bail of 10 £s each was not paid, the women were remanded until the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 1959. Six women were fined 20 £s each for "malicious damage" to property. Four women were fined 5 £s each for carrying dangerous weapons.

>In Cato Manor youths stoned a Durban Corporation bus.

>Approximately a hundred African women gathered outside the Ixopo Court complaining about the imposition of taxes on unemployed African people.

>In Port Shepstone, at the Emmanuel Mission Station, sixteen African women were arrested for " obstructing " a dipping inspector from entering. Later, a further fifteen women were arrested for "creating a disturbance". The thirty one women were tried together and sentenced to 25 £s (or 3 months), 15 £s (or 2 months) being suspended for three years, on condition that they are not convicted on a similar offence in that time.

>Nine women were arrested for trespassing on a farm, down the lower south coast of Natal. They were fined 20 £s (or 2 months). (Natal Mercury)

22<sup>nd</sup> August 1959.

>In the Natal Midlands town of Colenso, "a mob" of women stormed the Municipal beer-hall .

>At the Mdahal reserve, near Port Shepstone, more than 300 women were arrested when they "tried to hinder" operations. The "chanting" women also "threatened " to damage dipping tanks.

>In Malvern, about 100 women staged a protest by sitting on the main railway line between Natal and the Transvaal. They later dispersed quietly.

>At a trial 228 women were found guilty of "interfering" with the dipping and were fined 25 £s (or 3 months) – a total fine of 5,700 £s.

>At Umzinto, 150 unarmed women marched into town to air their grievances with the magistrate. (Natal Mercury)

25<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>In Pietermaritzburg, eleven African women "armed with heavy sticks" were arrested in the Swartkops location, after 150 women attacked locals going to buy potatoes. (Daily News)

>In Camperdown, police led a baton charge on "a mob" of women. About 200 African women gathered, demanding to see the Native Commissioner. There was a stand off between the police and the women. (Natal Mercury)

26<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

>Eighteen African women were charged, in the Port Shepstone Magistrate's Court, with obstructing a dipping tank inspector in the Southport area. Fifteen of them were fined 25 £s (or 3 months) and three of them were discharged. The women were "brandishing" sticks.

>At a government appointed wage board, most organisations called for an increase in the wage for unskilled workers. (Natal Mercury)

28<sup>th</sup> August 1959.

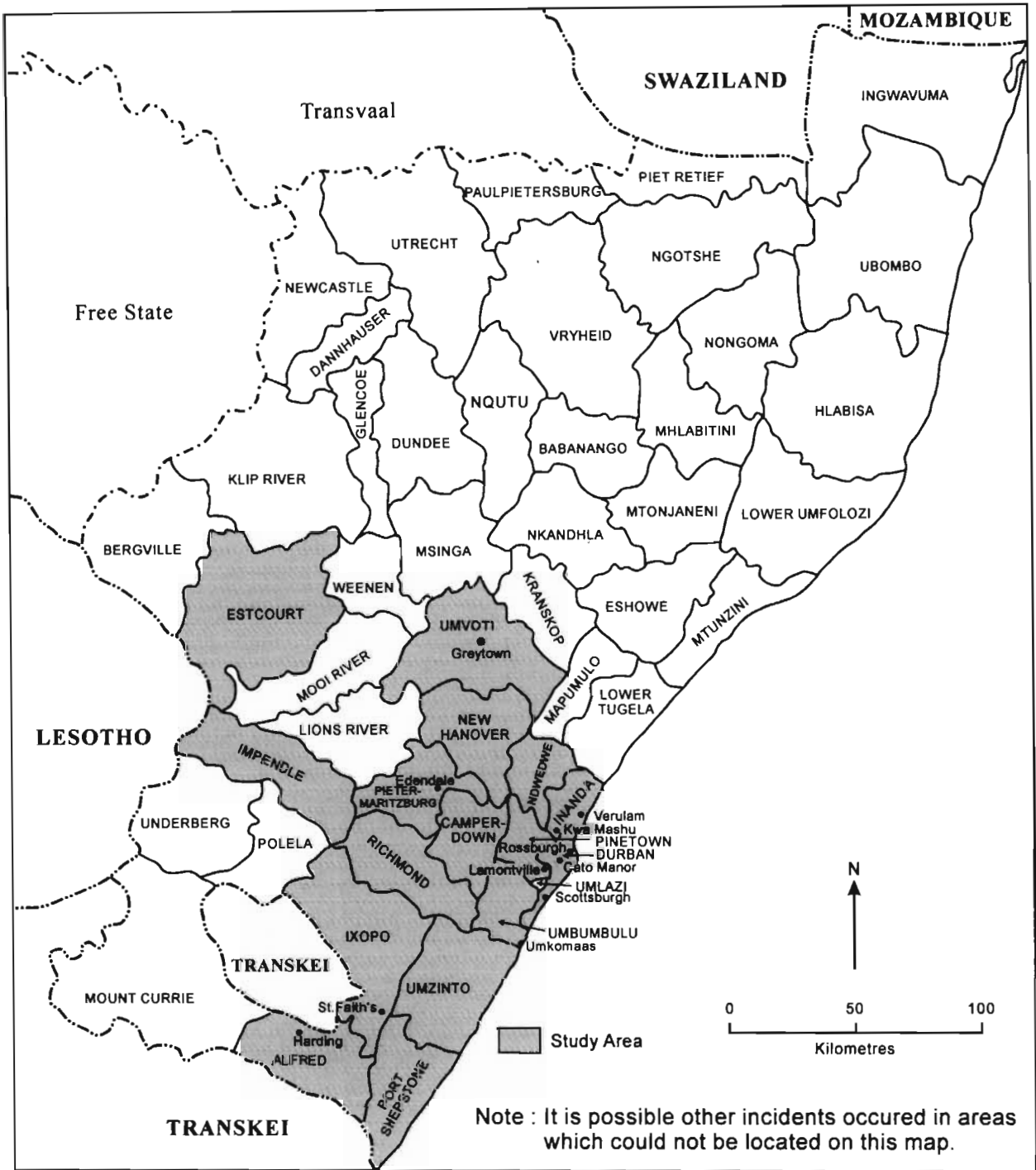
>In Ixopo, eighty African women marched to the Native Commissioner, Mr. W.F. Bayer. The women complained about taxation. He promised to forward their complaint to the proper authorities.

>Near Harding, a group of African men gathered to pay their taxes, a mob of about thirty African women tried to discourage them from doing so. The men "retaliated and chased" the women. The men then paid their taxes.

>In Pietermaritzburg, the appeals by 469 African women, who were recently imprisoned for damaging dipping tanks in the New Hanover District, were heard in the Supreme Court. (Natal Mercury)

The women persevered in this fashion in the months to follow, despite the wrath of police and government officials. Nothing was able to deter their efforts in trying to secure a humane and justifiable life-style, not even their menfolk. The words in inverted commas were taken from the articles themselves, I find that they tend to portray the African woman as being irrational, delinquent, unruly, violent and confrontational, rather than someone who tried to secure a stable and humane life-style against all odds. There is no doubt that the women persevered against trials and tribulations that would have intimidated many an individual. This detailed time line and patterns of outbreak in the various rural areas serve as a reminder of the unity and determination of these courageous women. The map gives us a sense of how the revolt spread geographically.

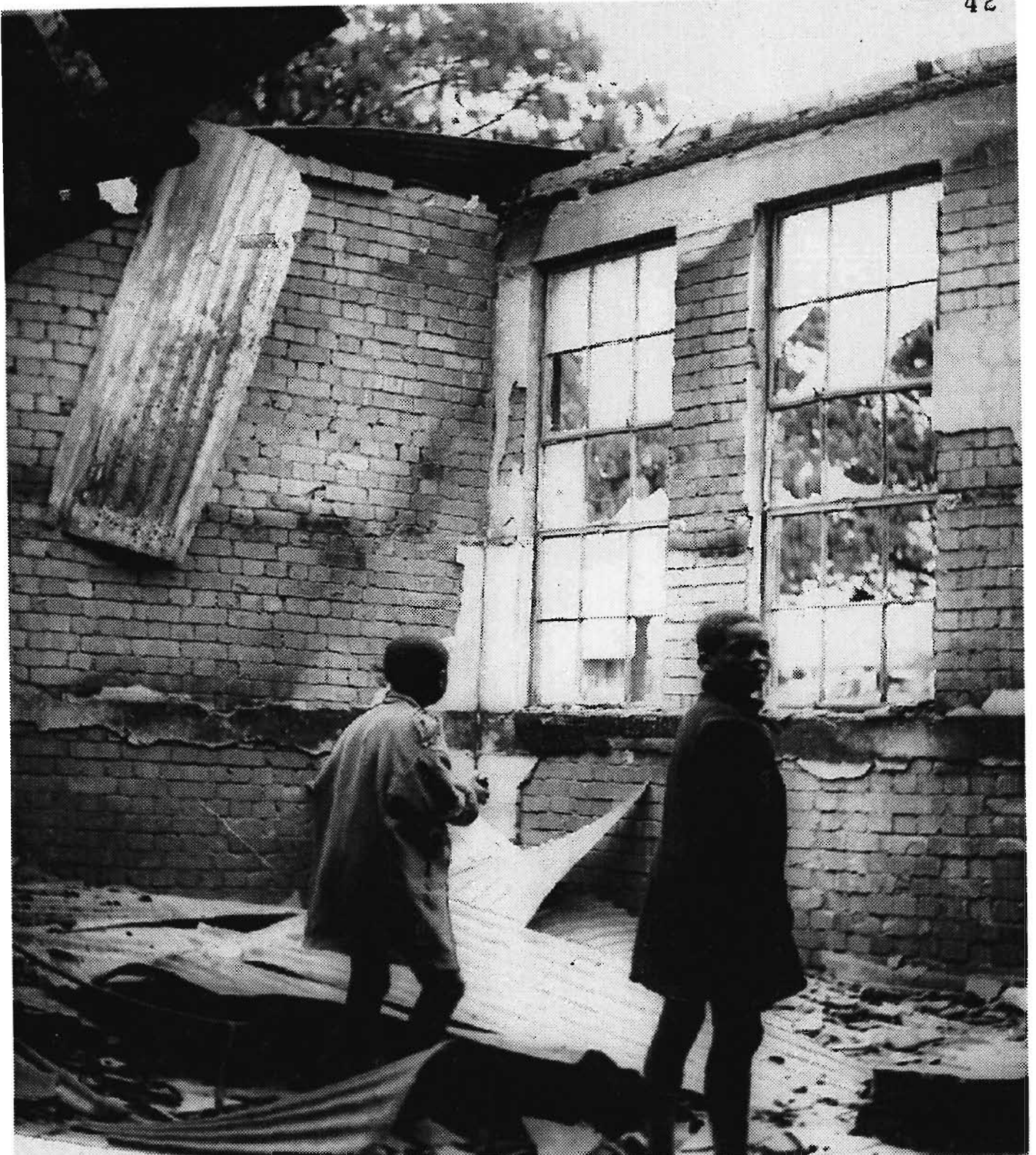




Map of the Rural Protests in Kwa Zulu- Natal in 1959.



Brandishing sticks, women demonstrate outside the Cato Manor beer hall. Singing and chanting they danced back and forth in front of the building, which they were prevented from entering by a file of police. [ 18:06:1959]



Two Native youths poke among the ruins and ashes of one of the classrooms in the Higher Primary School at Sobantu Native Village, Maritzburg, after the fire, which destroyed three-quarters of the school during the rioting there.

[17:08:1959]



Head Constable C.J. Nel assures anxious townspeople of Harding in Natal that ample police reinforcements are in the town to deal with any further trouble with Natives before a meeting of residents met on Saturday to discuss the emergency area. [17:08:59]





This photograph shows one of the buses brought to a halt by Native women who blockaded the road in the Isipofu area on the Natal South Coast.

[18:08:1959]



With policemen perched on its massive superstructure, ready to go into action at a moment's notice, a heavy Saracen armoured car rolls along a dusty road at St. Faiths. [18:08:1959]



A CARTOONIST'S conception of "The Load" carried by Africans in South Africa. The newspaper The World published the drawing in line with its editorial policy although it opposed the Pound-A-Week work boycott because it refused to give editorial support to a project of the Congress of Democrats

(Munger, 1961: p.598)

## **CHAPTER 5:**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE PROTESTS**

The *Golden City Press* of 23 August 1959 gave eight reasons as the cause of rural unrest, largely independent of events in the city. These were: dipping tanks, forest clearance, closer settlements and to a degree dissatisfaction with chiefs (women were afraid that the Betterment Schemes, which most chiefs had sanctioned, would disrupt what they considered their traditional way of life), reference books (women feared that these would prevent them from moving freely and could be used to regulate other aspects of their lives), increased taxes, influx control and police provocation.

All these point to the fact that life was becoming increasingly restricted for and demanding on women. One also needs to be mindful of the fact that previous waves of rural protest, like the Bambatha Rebellion of 1906 in which land shortage had become a burning issue for Africans in many parts of Natal and was a major reason for that uprising (Marks 1986: 91), as well as the protests during 1927 and 1928 which tackled the burning issues of evictions, wage levels and labour conditions on white farms, and were primarily responsible for disseminating the radical message in the most turbulent districts of Umvoti, Kranskop and New Hanover (Cope 1993 : 164) , were essentially 'male' protests. However, by the late 1950s with the extent of migrant labour the women were left behind, and this is a very stark emergence in the rural protests that were to follow. Women felt threatened because of the links between reference books, labour bureaux and migrant labour. To add to this there was a financial burden of 3s 6d for each reference book. Moreover women had to go against cultural practice and remove their doeks (headscarves) for photographs for the reference books. The authorities showed scant sympathy or respect for tradition. One also needs to bear in



mind that most of Natal's African people are Zulu speaking. The importance of this for the transmission of news lies not only in the fact that Zulu would provide a common means of communication, but also in the possibility that particularly in the rural areas a still important tribal and historical consciousness might increase any intentions to resist (Yawitch 1977: 3). The newspaper reports, as shown in the previous chapter, together with radio reports must have also aided in spreading the word into the country. It is important to note that the Cato Manor riots and the beer-hall boycotts were specifically women's resistance movements. It is possible that women in the rural areas were inspired by their urban sisters.

During the period July 1959 and August 1959, two months, more than 10 000 African women were involved in disturbances at Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Verulam, KwaMashu, Inchanga, Camperdown, Richmond, Ixopo, Highflats, Harding, Umtwalumi, Port Shepstone, Isipofu, St. Faiths and the Table Mountain areas. The fines against the women totalled 7,130 £s (Natal Mercury, 21<sup>st</sup> August 1959). This is a very conservative estimation against *Drum magazine's* claim that about 20 000 women took part in all, with the fines imposed on them by magisterial courts across the province amounting to almost 20 000 £s (Drum Magazine, October 1959).

Many were quick to denounce and condemn the actions of the African women. The criticism came from people who failed to recognise their own short-sightedness and short-comings. It was inevitable that the methods adopted by the Municipal Department of Bantu Administration in implementing government and council policies could not be entirely disassociated from the precipitating causes of malaise and unrest.

Not all political parties agreed with the Nationalist policy. The Liberal Party for one, viewed the African reserves as integral parts of an inter-dependent South

African community, and did not believe that they can be or should be developed as separate, isolated and unique economic units. It supported policies to make work in the rural areas more productive, better paid and more attractive (Liberal Party Policy Paper:P.C.2/9 series).

The South African Institute of Race Relations, in a letter tabled at a meeting, urged that efforts should be made for the establishment of a Judicial Commission of Enquiry. When considering the action of the African women in the urban areas, the chairman of the Natal regional committee, Professor H.Pollak, urged for a Judicial Commission of Enquiry and said, "Much of the unrest, we believe from our limited investigations, stems from the application by the council of three government measures – influx control, slum clearance, rehousing under the present economic condition and the prevailing low rate of unskilled wages."(Natal Mercury, July 16<sup>th</sup> 1959, page 13). One finds that there is a certain reluctance on the part of the authorities concerned, to acknowledge that the problems of the African women were anything but trivial.

The inhumane manner in which shacks were demolished in Cato Manor, the ridiculous conditions attached to the issuing of beer permits, influx control, the pass system, a disregard for African demands, were some of the reasons for the unrest in both urban and rural areas. Furthermore, African men and women were paid appallingly low wages in both areas. The police were also responsible for aggravating the situation by their ruthlessness. To the African women, the police represented tyranny and injustice, the law was different for white and black, so the rule of law was rejected and despised. It was no exaggeration to say that a pathological hatred of the law was developing, largely because of the harshness of those laws and the way in which they were administered. The women became frustrated and dissatisfied with making continued representation to the authorities when they never saw the results of such representations.

It was because of the lack of concern shown by the authorities, that the women played a leading role in organising concerted violence. For the first time in local history the African women were the ring leaders. It is impossible to dismiss this mass female temper as an accident of provocation. One needs to remember that the general background of economic conditions invariably press more grievously on the woman than the man. This was certainly a strong contributory factor for women taking the lead in this.

One also finds that the contentious subject of passes for African women was tackled by the Black Sash Movement. A tenet of the Black Sash was that laws which adversely affect the happiness and stability of the family are unjust, unjustifiable and immoral. African women had every right to contest and retaliate against the pass system, for the ultimate purpose of the pass was to regulate the comings and goings, and generally regimented the lives of African women. This was irrespective of home ties, children, marital attachments, and all the other elements of normal freedom. Although the carrying of these passes was not generally enforced, the threat hung over the women's heads ever since the Natives Act (abolition of passes and co-ordination of documents) was passed as long as 1952. The pass laws resulted in a steady deterioration of race relations. During all that time there simmered, and sometimes boiled over, a resentment prompted by fear of what that law would inflict in terms of liberty.

This act was responsible for stirring a gnawing discontent in the minds and hearts of African women. The Black Sash, because of its tenets was able to ventilate the subject fearlessly, and tried to probe the truth of a situation that was rooted in racial unrest. Women also complained that influx control was leading to a break-up of family life. They were unable to bring their sons and daughters to live with them in Durban. Women feared that family life, already

so adversely affected by influx control applicable to men, will be even more disrupted when it is applied to women.

The contemporaneous rural protest movement saw organised gangs of women, systematically and wilfully destroy government dipping tanks throughout the province. The raids had been so well planned and followed one another so quickly that the police were unable to put a stop to the destruction. The disturbances in Natal, which began in Cato Manor, sporadically continued to spread into the rural areas of the province. There was certainly a need to determine the causes and then to take decisive steps to avoid future unrest. African people, particularly those in the rural areas, were known to be normally law abiding. The authorities had made little attempt to find out why they were reacting with violence against European administration.

It was expedient of the government to lay the blame for the Cato Manor riots on the Durban City Council as the local authority responsible for its administration, the latest outbursts were directed against government administration. African women had come to regard the dipping tanks as a symbol of the government. It was this general dissatisfaction with government policies that was the cause of African women damaging or destroying 75% of the dipping tanks in Natal's African reserves. What was originally a protest against unpaid labour, that of maintaining the dipping tanks, had developed among the African women as a symbol of their frustration. In the past, the government paid labourers to keep the tanks filled with water and dip fluid, and to maintain surrounding fences and fire breaks. But the government had transferred these maintenance responsibilities onto the tribes.

Work was delegated on government instruction to the women, thus placing an extra burden on the already laden shoulders of the rural women. The work

was no doubt strenuous, requiring women to carry water from the nearest source to the dipping tank. This was done by rotation, if a woman missed her turn she was fined. To add to matters, dipping was done every fortnight and the women received no pay for their services. Women felt that it was pointless to protest to their chiefs because the chiefs themselves appeared to be the tools of the government. Hence the militant stance of the women. It appears as if the example set by women in the riots at Cato Manor had propelled the women in the rural areas into action.

It is little wonder why women reacted to their newly bestowed ownership of the dipping tanks by smashing them. One finds that the "anti-dipping tank" movement gained momentum. Other tanks in the reserves of Natal suffered similar treatment. There is also evidence of an element of ignorance with regard to the purpose of dipping. Women expressed concerns that the dipping did more harm than good. They felt it caused sterility in bulls, it was responsible for the poor condition of the cattle, cows were not giving enough milk as a result of the dipping, and this in turn caused starvation among the people. They further rebelled, because if they did not bring their full herd to the tanks they were fined, and cattle that were sick had to be slaughtered.

Women in the rural areas felt that no one paid any attention to their complaints, which also included passes for women, a £ a day and the low level of wages. They therefore took to giving vent to all their pent-up fury over their grievances in a militant fashion. The women expressed their resentment at the rigid application of influx control which they claimed prevented many potential bread winners from seeking employment, to the poll tax which was raised from one £ ten shillings to two £s five shillings, and to the additional one £ levied in some reserves for education. The governmental policy which seemed to be most resented, was the proposed system of Closed Settlements under the

Betterment Scheme. It was met with a tremendous amount of resistance because it threatened to disrupt the traditional way of life of the women.

Although the disturbances may have been instigated by outside influences, the object seemed to have been to draw attention to the grievances of the people. The protests had certainly succeeded in attaining this. It was also clear that violence for the most part was directed against government and municipal property. There is also evidence that the Harding trouble originated as far back as the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 1959, the women became resentful when the Native Affairs Department decided to undertake soil conservation work which necessitated that some of the fields be "grass stripped" and some of the huts be removed. After having learned that some of their people would have to be moved, the women mobilized and destroyed the building belonging to the Native Affairs Department.

It is also evident that very heavy fines were imposed on the women. Those who were arrested could ill-afford to pay these fines and at times had to bide their time in gaol, it was all in the name of sacrifice. Many women who were arrested for assembling in large numbers, and were in gaol had to be released towards the latter part of 1959, since the court decided that a policeman was not a person in authority under the section of Proclamation 168 under which the women were charged. Their refusal to disband was therefore not an offence (Daily News, 25<sup>th</sup> November 1959). In late 1959 and early 1960 leaders of the Indian Congress, the African National Congress, the Natal Indian Congress and the Liberal Party raised funds for bail and payment towards lawyers fees of those women arrested. These parties formed a network of important support systems for African women. Since the South African Communist Party was banned at the time, the Liberal Party gained membership in the rural areas of Natal, for at that point in time, it seems to have been the only party open to men and women of all races, and the added

bonus was that it offered a clear alternative to the apartheid policy of the Nationalist Party.

The protests also helped highlight that not enough was being done to develop the existing African rural areas to provide a means of living for the African people. The Tomlinson report, points out that every African male between the ages of 15 to 50; who is not mentally or physically retarded, at some time or another, seeks work in the "white" areas, and here he spends most of his productive life. Further it is stated that the African male shows little inclination towards farming, but has great aptitude for the monotonous demands of industry. This reveals that the main cause of discontent among women was an economic one, for it was the woman who managed the income of her husband and she also helped supplement it. It was for this reason that women, despite being handicapped by their domestic responsibility to their children and little farms, engaged in protest action which stunned the province. Women had become politicized, and had seen their situation in terms of a wider dispensation. This was a giant leap for women given their subordinate status within society, as well as their primarily domestic preoccupations. There is no denying that women have generally been excluded from politics, and African women more especially were made to seen as lesser individuals. However, 1959 saw the most spectacular crises instigated by women all over Natal .

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Historically, comparatively little attention has been paid to the struggle of African women against the oppressive measures taken by the government. Given the unusual fragmentation of Natal, there was constant movement of women between urban and rural areas, and in this way women were able to act simultaneously their defiance of the system. There is no doubt that these women should be admired for the bold political initiatives which they displayed, given the period in question. In the late 1950's, given the economy and the low wages received by men, it was virtually impossible for them to go on strike, or to display the militancy seen in the womenfolk. Together with the fact that many employers raised wages by small amounts in the wake of the June riots, this too may have dulled the men's enthusiasm for action (Yawitch 1977). One cannot ignore the fact that the women emerged as a formidable force over this short period of time.

There has been much debate by contemporary feminists as to why African women, despite their militant stance, were unable to overcome gender oppression. I am of the opinion that herein lies the problem, for it is people from the outside, who are not authorities on the African way of life or the underlying doctrines that may exist, try to impose their Eurocentric ideas and values on African women. The Oxford Dictionary describes feminism as being "the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes", it tends to obscure the very important differences and inequalities that exist among women - those of class, race, geographical location, political ideologies, ethnicity, and so on (Bazilli:1991). Hence the term "womanism". As an outsider, I would say that my research has made me realise that it is "womanism" rather



than "feminism" which is of importance to African women. It is for this reason that they so energetically defended their roles as mothers and home-makers, and for the first time emerged as a political force. The strength and militancy of the women can be seen in their chanting, handclapping and defiant dancing.

Women resisted the draconian system of control which came in the form of the Reference books. This was most certainly an oppressive system which was intended to govern and control the every move of African people. Their very lives depended on a mere Reference book. African women proved that they were not going to sit back and passively allow the government to implement policies that would infringe on their domestic and economic lives. What emerged from this was boisterous public demonstrations by women, who were prepared to suffer untold agonies. Women from rural and urban Natal were able to maintain their female solidarity. There is no denying that the women endured severe treatment in the hands of the police and in prison, but the sheer persistence of the women leaves behind a legacy to be admired.

One has to acknowledge that African women took the lead in challenging and resisting all laws which they felt were unjust. The unrest that it triggered off in Natal bears testimony of African unity. However, the press reports during this period of resistance do not give the women involved any accolades for their perseverance. Despite the efforts of the women, to this very day, many of them endure a heavy economic disability because they have commonly to support their children without financial assistance from the father of the children. To add insult to injury many African women were seen as "minors" in the eyes of the law, and until recent times were denied the right to house ownership and tenancy. Our new constitution has enshrined in it the following: Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Equality

includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms (Chapter 2: Bill of Rights).

In this particular case where the women acted in a political way and revolted against governmental authority they were seen as a fundamental threat. That is why the authorities refused to listen to women. To have done so, would not only have meant accepting their grievances but also accepting women on an equal basis to men – an acceptance that threatened the fundamental political and social assumptions (Yawitch :1977). All indications are that the women of Natal will be as militant in the new millennium as they were in 1959, although what precise form their militancy will take has still to be seen.

AFRA (Association For Rural Advancement), which was formed in 1979, was a response to the massive and continuing hardships imposed on African people in rural Natal by government policy of uprooting and relocating them. The objectives of the Association are broadly:

- a. To monitor, enquire into, record and publicise the social and economic position of rural people in Natal.
- b. To take action to alleviate hardships, discrimination and oppression suffered by them in as far back as the 1950s, and to encourage their social and economic advancement. (AFRA Report: P.C.29/3/1/1).
- c. The protest of the women in the 1950's also helped to politicize people and motivate them to prepare for the armed struggle in 1960. This thesis was able to show the prominent role played by women in fighting for liberation. By 1959 the spirit of the people, women especially, was high and they displayed defiance. Tensions arose against Apartheid policy, and the people wanted the

Nationalist government out.

- d. The government in turn adopted a “no nonsense” approach, and political parties like the A.N.C. were banned.

Many of the women sent to jail were not “agitators”, as described by the press, but rather people who had had all they could take of being pushed around. What happened in Natal marked the beginnings of a kind of running – battle with the authorities, sometimes violent and at other times non-violent. African people were beginning to feel the full weight of apartheid. They had had enough of it and were trying to throw it off. Because the burden on the people was getting heavier the resistance to it showed less restraint. What happened in Natal was not an isolated outburst but part of a growing militancy in rural areas such as Pondoland, Zeerust, etc., against “grand apartheid”. For most part the women were acting in defence of an eroded way of life. Yet, more was involved than respect for tradition and convention. The act of organising and protesting was in itself a politicising and radicalising experience for the women who took part (Walker: 1982). Although, in some of these protests the gender composition was not entirely female, the general point remains.

Our newfound democracy has had little impact yet on the day-to-day lives of millions of ordinary South African women. This unhappy certitude bears intolerable testimony to the harsh inequities that still face the vast majority of women in this country. The South African constitution is one of the finest in the world; it champions the protection and enhancement of the rights of women. As a foundation for gender equality it cannot be faulted. It is unfortunate, however, that it is not implemented in the home, work place, political arena and social milieu, the very places where men and women fraternise. Sadly, there still exists a chauvinistic mindset in our country.

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APPENDIX 1:

An enquiry into farm-labour conditions

in KwaZulu-Natal.

MEMO

AN INQUIRY INTO FARM-LABOUR CONDITIONS IN NATAL.

1. INTRODUCTION:

This inquiry is by no means exhaustive. It only covers a limited number of Natal's farming districts and it cannot claim to present a complete picture of conditions as they are throughout the districts with which it does deal. One thing is clear & that is that, while there are generally recognised standards of treatment of farm-labour within most districts, there are, at the same time, considerable variations within districts. The inquiry is, therefore, only intended to give a general picture of farm-labour conditions in some areas of Natal and its shortcomings should be recognised. At the same time it is worth making the point that published information on farm-labour conditions in Natal hardly exists. These findings are important because they give some idea of what such conditions are -- and they will be more important if they provoke more detailed examination of the conditions of one of the least favoured elements in South Africa's labour force.

Before the war the 6-months-in/6-months-out labour system was widespread on Natal farms. The essence of the system was that a family residing on a farm was expected to supply labour on the basis of a man working for six months and then being relieved, for the next six months, by another male member of the family. During his six-months "in" the man would receive very little, if any, pay. This six-months work was a man's stint in return for the right to live on the farm, to cultivate the fields which would be allocated to him by the farmer, and to keep a certain number of stock. He was expected to earn the bulk of his cash income during his 6 months "out". During this time he would either find work in town, or on some government or other project, or on another farm, or perhaps even on the home farm. In this last case he would be paid the higher wages to which non-resident, casual workers were entitled. In some areas the labour-farm system was common. A farmer would own a second farm, away from his home farm, usually in the thorn country in an area such as Weenen. A certain number of families would live on the labour farm. They would probably be allowed to keep more stock and to plough more land than those on the home farm. In return for those rights the men would be expected to serve their six-months term each year on the home farm and to be relieved, at the end of that period, by another member of the family. On both labour and home farms it was generally expected that young women would be provided to work on the six-months arrangement, in domestic service on the farm, before they got married.

The inquiry which follows shows the 6-months system still to be operative in some areas, but it is obviously dying out and being replaced with all-the-year round work accompanied by higher wages and a reduction in the amount of arable land and the number of stock to which a resident labourer is entitled.

2. BERGVILLE:

a) Introductory: This is an agricultural and mixed-farming district bordering on the Drakensberg. Most labourers live on the farms on which they work. The "six-months" system is still found but very rarely. It is occasionally retained by the older farmers. Younger farmers usually run their farms on the basis of a labourer working for 11 months each year. The labourers themselves prefer this system, partly because influx-control prevents them from getting well-paid work in town during their six-months "out". Labour farms are practically unknown and there are only about two wealthy farmers in the district who still have them.

b) Wages:

Labourers (casual or permanent):

Usual wage..... R6-50 per month.  
Occasionally only R4 per month.  
Exceptionally..... No pay at all.

FARM WAGESBERGVILLE:Wages(continued):

Youth under about 16 years..... R3 to R4 per month.

Tractor drivers up to about..... R14 p.m.

Indians in charge of several farms, up to R25 p.m.

Women on reaping, hoeing, washing etc. 20-25 cents per day.

o) Stock:Cattle:

On larger farms 10 head permitted for each married worker with a maximum of 20 per household. The average per family is probably 7 to 14 head.

On smaller farms the average per family would be about 5 head.

Goats:

5 goats maximum per family.

Fowls:

No limit.

Pigs and horses:

Allowed on some farms.

The value of milk consumed and surplus stock sold in a year is roughly estimated at R100.

d) Ploughland:

On larger farms a married worker would get 15 acres to plough and plant.

On smaller farms the average would be about 5 acres.

In a good season a family could hope to reap about 7 bags of mealies per acre, worth R3 per bag.

e) Rations:

Working labourers receive two meals a day. The basic element is phuthu(thick, dry porridge) but to this would usually be added either beans, salt, separated milk or sugar. Meat is only provided when an animal dies or bull-calves are killed. Casual workers are given three meals a day.

A family without ploughland will be issued with a bag of meal per month -- 180 lbs worth about R4-20.

f) Uniform:

In terms of new dairy regulations, dairy-workers must be provided with uniforms, proper washing facilities etc.. Otherwise there is no regular issue of uniform. The farmer sometimes gives his workers clothes as Christmas presents.

g) Leave:

Men who work all the year round are entitled to a months leave, without pay, each year. Christmas Day and Good Friday are holidays.

h) Week-ends:

Where Sundays are worked a man will get one full day a month off. On other farms he will get every, or alternate, week-ends.

i) Hours of Work:

Roughly dawn to dusk with an hour off for breakfast and an hour for lunch.

j) Fuel:

Cow-dung is widely used, or wood is collected. Both are free.

k) Notice:

The minimum notice a farmer is required to give a worker is one month. In practice this usually amounts to at least 3 months. The family leaves when it has found

FARM WAGES.BERGVILLE:Notice(continued):

a place to go to. It is entitled to reap its crops and to remove any building materials brought on to the farm by it.

1) General:

Members of a farm-labourer's family are expected to work for the farmer, the sons as full-time labourers from the age of 16 and the women when they are required.

The farmer will usually help out with medical expenses should their be illness amongst his workers.

3. BULWER/UNDERBERG:a) Introductory:

Underberg village is very close to the Drakensberg and farming conditions on farms between the village and the mountains are not dealt with in this inquiry which is concentrated on the area towards Bulwer and away from the Drakensberg. This is a mixed-farming area by tradition but there has been substantial conversion to timber-farming. Many private farms have been bought by large timber companies.

The general practice is for farm-labourers to live on the farms on which they work. Exceptions to this rule are the company-owned timber farms and some private farms adjoining local "Reserves". In these cases men live in compounds and usually go home at week-ends when they are off duty. Private farms working on this system are in a minority and the facts below relate to privately-owned farms dependant on resident labour.

The "six-months" system is no longer found. Men work for a certain time and then ask for time off. Labour farms are unknown.

b) Wages:Labourer:

The maximum seems to be about R6 with no ration of meal. On another farm a man may get R4 plus breakfast and lunch. On another farm he may get R2 plus a bag of meal. On another farm he may get R2 plus a ration of meal and sugar but without being provided with meals at work.

Tractor drivers and other specialists:

There seems to be no provision for paying higher wages to men who have acquired skills although in some cases they appear to be paid an extra R2 per month.

c) Stock:

2.

In general labourers are still entitled to keep stock. The numbers seem to range from about 2 to 8 head per worker and there does not seem to be a definite limit set. When he thinks a man has too many the farmer will tell him to get rid of some. These surplus will be sold privately or on the local stock sale. Stock are not kept for sale but for domestic and lobola purposes. They are sold only if they must be, either because the farmer has said so or because of some crisis of illness, litigation etc.,.

d) Ploughland:

The practice of giving labourer's ploughland which was supposed to provide them with the bulk of their own food is being abandoned as uneconomic from everyone's point of view. Farmers who previously helped their workers with ploughing, fertiliser and time-off to cultivate, now tend to give rations instead. Each homestead will, however, still be entitled to a garden plot.

FARM WAGES.

EULWER/UNDERBERG:

e) Rations:

In some cases a working man receives a monthly bag of meal as his basic ration. Occasionally there is also a sugar ration to take home and often this will be supplemented by milk and meat to take home, the latter only when an animal dies or is slaughtered. A man who receives a monthly bag of meal is expected to bring his own phuthu to work with him. Milk to add to the worker's own phuthu will be given to him by the farmer at meal-times. The man may also bring his own meat or other flavouring with him.

Workers who do not receive a monthly bag of meal will be provided with two cooked meals a day. The main item would be phuthu and it would be supplemented by sugar or beans on occasion, with milk as a usual supplement.

If milk goes sour it will be issued to workers as anasi.

f) Uniform:

As a rule no uniform is provided. On one or two farms overalls are issued to tractor-drivers. In a few cases farmers buy blankets, boots and great-coats in bulk and issue these free to workers.

g) Leave:

There seems to be no fixed arrangement. A man will work for a certain time and then ask for time off. He may only take a few weeks or he may take several months. He will not be paid while he is off.

h) Week-ends:

On some farms the men will get alternate week-ends off, from noon on Saturday until Monday morning. On others they will get every third week-end off, from Friday night to Monday morning.

i) Hours of Work:

Generally the rule is dawn to dusk although the morning start may be up to an hour after sunrise. There are breaks for meals.

j) Fuel:

Wood is usually available free on the farm. Where it is not it can usually be fetched from close at hand and will not cost anything.

k) Notice:

Usual practice is to tell a man he must leave but give him the opportunity to find a place to which to go. In exceptional cases a strict, one month's notice will be applied. The worker is entitled to take crops with him or to be paid out for anything he has not yet reaped. He takes anything he has contributed towards his house with him.

l) Housing:

On private farms this is of the traditional type and a worker who moves on to a farm will usually draw pay and rations while he is building. Substantial buildings are provided on timber farms.

m) General:

Women are expected to work at peak seasons and will be paid 10 cents a day for about 5 hours work. On piece-work they may earn more. A woman can probably earn R10 to R12 a year in this way. Children also do work of this kind. Some farmers pay medical expenses, but not all.

FARM WAGES.  
GINGINDLOVU AREA:

a) Introductory:

This is a sugar-farming area. The position described is that which applies on a private cane farm, not one owned by a big company. Conditions on this farm are almost certainly better than those generally found on private farms in this area.

It is estimated that, on private cane farms in Gingindlovu, about 30% of the labour force is resident with the balance drawn from local "reserves", Northern Zululand and Pondoland. Migrant workers get the same pay, rations and uniform as residents and are accommodated in a compound. On this farm, if a migrant worker from Pondoland works a full six months the farmer pays his fare home at the end of that period.

Pay is based on the "ticket" system. A "ticket" consists of 30 days of completed work.

b) Wages:

Cane cutter-Basic pay for one ticket.....R10 but by exceeding his task a cutter can earn up to an extra R2 per week. It is also customary for a man who works straight through from Monday to Saturday to be credited on his ticket with the following Sunday.

Drainers and weeders can earn a maximum R9 per ticket.

Tractor-drivers can earn a maximum of R20 per ticket and qualify for an annual bonus equivalent to a month's pay.

Women and boys and girls of resident families are encouraged to work.

Women can earn .....R9 per ticket.

Girls can earn .....R7-50 .. ..

Boys can earn .....R6 upwards.

Non-resident boys .....R5 upwards.

Sons of residents who themselves live on the farm are expected to work there and not away from the farm.

c) Stock:

No large stock permitted, only pigs and poultry.

d) Ploughland:

No ploughland is allotted but each family gets a small garden plot.

e) Rations:

Each resident worker gets a weekly ration of:-

14 lbs mealie meal.

1 lb beans.

2 lb samp.

1 lb sugar.

1½ lb meat.

1 gallon beer.

A migrant worker gets the same through the compound kitchen and on some farms children also receive milk.

f) Uniform:

Labourers.....grain bags.

Indunas and tractor-drivers.....overalls.

g) Leave:

Induna ..... 2 weeks paid leave per annum

Tractor driver .. 1 week's .. ..

Others..... no leave.

h) Week-ends:

Work usually ends at 1 p.m. on Saturday & workers are then off until Monday morning.

FARM WAGES.GINGINDLOVU:

- 1) Hours of work:  
An average of 8 hours a day.
- j) Fuel:  
Firewood is free.
- k) Notice:  
A resident family would generally be entitled to one month's notice. No building materials would be removed by a departing family except for drift-wood it might have collected on the beach.
- l) Housing:  
The tendency is towards the provision of substantial housing (brick and asbestos) providing a family with two rooms a kitchen and a verandah.
- n) General:  
On most farms some children attend school and, in some cases, schooling is subsidised by the farmers.

5. IXOPO/DONNYBROOK AREA:

This is primarily a mixed-farming area but one in which timber-farming is common. There appear to be four different farming systems in operation of which the two most commonly found on privately-owned farms are set out in detail here. The other two systems are: a) found on a small group of farms mainly owned by Coloured families. The "six-months" system still predominates and the men work mainly in Durban. The women and children are sent money spasmodically and appear to be very badly off. When working on the farm the men are paid from R1 to R3 per month. Four head of cattle per family are permitted. b) farms owned by timber companies. Labour is recruited, paid 50 cents a day or more (according to skill), and fed and housed by the company. Hours of work are roughly from dawn until completion of the day's task and weekends are free except when a man is required for fire-duty.

The two main groups are the following:

GROUP 1:

- a) Introductory:  
This system is found between Ixopo and Donnybrook. The labourers are resident and work throughout the year.
- b) Wages:  
Unskilled labourer.....R5 per month.  
Tractor driver or other skilled man..R8 to R10 p.m.
- c) Stock:  
No stock are permitted.
- d) Ploughland:  
As a rule no ploughland is provided but each family gets  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 acre for a vegetable garden.
- e) Rations:  
These vary slightly according to the size of the family but on average a family would get:-  
1 bag mealies (value about R4-20) per month.  
2 pints milk or 4 pts skimmed milk per day.  
The little potatoes from the potato harvest.
- Working men are provided with their breakfast and lunch

FARM WAGES.IXOPO/DONNYBROOK:

by the farmer. The meals would usually consists of:-

Breakfast: Phuthu plus sugar or arasi.

Lunch: Phuthu plus beans or pumpkin, cabbage or occasionally meat.

f) Leave:

Varies from farm to farm. Some farms give a month's leave on full pay each year, others less, or shorter periods more frequently.

g) Uniform:

Labourers are not usually provided with uniform. Tractor-drivers and dairy-workers get overalls.

h) Week-ends:

Saturday is a working day. Sundays are free except on dairy farms where alternate Sundays are worked.

i) Hours of work:

Dawn to one hour before dusk with  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour off for breakfast and an hour for lunch.

j) Fuel:

Wood is collected free.

k) Housing:

Traditional, wattle-and-daub type huts are built by the workers themselves.

GROUP 11:a) Introductory:

The system described below is that generally found in the Ixopo area proper. There are exceptional cases of farmers who draw their labour from labour farms and house it in compounds but most farms are worked by resident families.

The "ticket" system is used, a "ticket" consisting of 30 days of completed work. Pay is drawn when a "ticket" has been completed and not by the month. It is estimated that it usually takes 4 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  months for a worker to complete 3 full tickets.

b) Wages:

Unskilled labourers.....R4 per ticket.

Skilled labourers e.g. fencers or a man who trains oxen R6 to R7 per ticket.

Tractor-drivers would not necessarily be paid more than ordinary labourers although they usually would and could earn.....R8 to R10 per ticket.

Women working at peak seasons and, say, hoeing for 3 days and then spending 4 at home.....R2 per ticket.

Girls working regularly in the garden...R4 per ticket.

Girls .. .. house... R5 .. ..

Migrant labourers.....R6 to R7 .. ..

o) Stock:

6 cattle (usually 4 oxen and 2 cows) allowed per family.  
1 horse allowed.

Chickens and pigs are kept round the home.

At 6-9 months an animal is regarded as full-grown and the farmer would tell the owner to get rid of one of his cattle. He might do this by slaughtering one for a family feast



FARM PAGES.IXOPO/DONNYBROOK:

or by hiring grazing at 30 to 50 cents per animal per month. Alternatively he would sell one animal. Most families would sell an average of a beast a year and would expect to realise from R50 to R90 from such a sale.

d) Ploughland:

A family can expect to be allocated about 4 acres of good land which should produce some 40 bags of mealies (worth approximately R3-50 per bag) per annum.

e) Rations:

No rations are issued to families. Workers, however, are provided with breakfast and lunch along the same lines as those in Group 1 above. Farmers are increasingly tending to buy supplementary foods such as pro-nutro.

f) Uniform:

Labourers.....no working clothes provided.  
Domestic girls..... working clothes provided.  
Milkers and tractor-drivers... overalls provided.  
Raincoats are issued by the farmer when it is wet but are retained by him.  
Clothes are often given to workers as Christmas presents.

g) Leave:

Some farmers give one month's leave on full pay a year. Others give 3 weeks without pay on completion of 3 tickets.

h) Week-ends:

Dairy farmers expect their workers to work alternate week-ends. On other farms men work every third week-end.

i) Hours of work:

Dawn to one hour before sunset, with  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour off for breakfast and an hour for lunch.

j) Fuel:

Wood is collected free.

k) Notice:

A family which gets the sack expects 3 months notice to move. It may, but often will not, take building materials it has provided for its home with it.

l) Housing:

Traditional type built by the worker himself.

m) General:

Amongst farmers in both Group 1 and Group 11 it is customary to give free medical assistance and to encourage the farm children to go to school.

6. LIDGERTON:a) Introductory:

This is another mixed-farming area. Most of the information which follows applies to a dairy and timber farm with labourers resident on the farm and working all the year round. Conditions on this farm are almost certainly above average.

The "six-months" system still survives in places in the district although mostly only on more remote farms some miles away from the main Durban-Johannesburg railway line.

FARM WAGES.LIDGETTON(continued):b) Wages:

Labourers and tractor-drivers.....R8 per month.

On this farm a responsible young man who supervises the loading of timber trucks & has certain responsibilities in the dairy is paid R12-00 per month.

All workers in the timber section of the farm can earn a monthly bonus of from R2 to R4 and, in the dairy a bonus of up to R2 per month for exceeding the milk quota. Women can earn R2-50 to R3 p.m. stripping bark for 2-4 hours a day.

On the six-months farms a labourer is paid R3 to R4 p.m.

c) Stock:

On this farm no stock are allowed although a beast may be brought on to it for a month or so prior to slaughtering.

On the six-months farms probably 2-4 head of cattle per worker would be allowed. Milk consumed and surplus stock sold would be worth R50 to R100 per annum to the family.

d) Ploughland:

None is provided but each family is allocated a garden of  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 acre which is ploughed and contoured free of charge by the farmer. This garden could produce 0-7 bags of mealies.

On the six-months farms the allocation of land varies tremendously.

e) Rations:

On this farm they are:

180 lbs meal per month for man, wife and children.

120 lbs meal for a married man without children.

2 lbs sugar per working man per week.

1 pint milk per working man per day.

About 2 lbs calves' meat per man per week.

These rations are issued throughout the year, including the time when the man is on leave.

f) Uniform:

Overalls are provided.

g) Leave:

A man works 12 months and is then entitled to 30 days leave, on full pay and rations, less the number of days work he has missed during the year, whether through sickness or other cause.

h) Week-ends:

Saturday midday to Monday morning once a month.

Many farmers with milking machines give every other week-end off.

i) Hours of Work:

8 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours per day in winter. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours in summer.

j) Fuel:

Firewood is free, plentiful and close to hand.

k) Notice:

A man with stock would be given 3 months notice, one without stock, a month. He takes with him anything he may have contributed to the house he occupies.

FARM WAGESLIJGETTON(continued):1) General:

Most children in this area go to school. On this farm there is no obligation on women or children to work although a grown-up boy, living with his parents on the farm, would be expected to work.

7. MOOI RIVER:a) Introductory:

What follows is an estimate of the usual conditions found on farms within a ten mile radius of the town of Mooi River. It is predominantly a mixed-farming area. Within the area probably 90% of farm labourers are resident on the farms on which they work, although half the farmers will, in addition, employ 1 to 6 casual workers. These "casuals" may work on the same farm for several years. They may be young, unmarried men or they may have homes in the "reserves". A few farmers seem to have thorn labour farms still but there appear to be no such farms in the area surveyed here. Such farms would operate on the six-months system. They would still be found in the Middlecrest area and in the Drakensberg. Pre-war a large number, if not the majority, of Mooi River farms would have been worked by men from thorn labour farms.

The general rule today seems to be that the further from Mooi River a farm is the lower the cash wages will be, the more cattle will be allowed and the more common the six-months system will be. For instance, a farmer who permits 3 head of cattle on his "home" farm may allow 8-15 head on a 'Berg or thorn farm. A number of Mooi River farms have grazing farms in one or other of these areas and in some cases in both. Men from these farms may come to work on the "home" farm on the six-months system.

b) Wages:

Labourers: Average starting wage for a resident worker would be R6 per month.  
The lowest is R5 and the highest R10 p.m.  
Non-resident labourers, would earn R6 to R10.

Tractor-drivers: A man starts at from R7 to R10 and may rise to R14 per month.

Men in charge of pigs, the dairy etc. get more than the basic wage.

An Induna may get up to R20 per month.

Women may earn R3 to R10 as domestic servants.

Women and children can earn 15 to 30 cents a day on casual seasonal work or more on task work e.g. picking peas.

c) Stock:

The average allowance in this area is 3 nature stock & it is estimated that the sale of surplus brings in only about R20 per annum.

d) Ploughland:

Most farmers no longer give an allocation of ploughland although families will have gardens. Rations are given in lieu of land and in only a few cases is it still the case that land is given instead of rations

e) Rations:

The usual basic ration is a bag of mealie meal weighing 180 lbs for each worker to take home each month.

In addition some farms provide breakfast and lunch consisting of phuthu and either sugar, skimmed milk or meat

FARM WAGES.MOCI RIVER(continued):

and, occasionally, beans or pro-nutro. The provision of meals by the farmer usually depends on how far from their homes the men are working. If they are working near their homes, they will go home, if they are far away they will be fed. Sometimes it is the practice for the children to take food to the men in the fields.

f) Uniform:

Ordinary labourers usually get nothing.  
Tractor-drivers ..... overalls.  
Dairy-workers ..... overalls.

Some farmers give working clothes as Christmas presents.

g) Leave:

One month's leave per annum, in some cases on full pay, in others on half pay.

h) Week-ends:

Where there is no milking or feeding to be done farm workers will get every Sunday off. Where there is work to be done on Sundays they will either get alternate week-ends off or one off a month. This would be from Saturday noon to Monday morning. Mixed farms may give a week-end a month and alternate Sundays.

i) Hours of Work:

Winter: 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. with  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  hrs for breakfast.  
 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Summer: 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. .. .. .  
 2 p.m. to 6 p.m.

j) Fuel:

Firewood is available free.

k) Notice:

A resident labourer is usually entitled to 3 months' notice and to take with him any building materials he has supplied himself. Thatch and poles are considered his.

l) Housing:

A few farmers are starting to provide brick or block houses but usually the labourer builds his own wattle-and-daub home.

m) General:

Most children are within reach of a school and probably attend it at least from the age of 10 to about 14. The standards are low but they are taught to read and write up to a point. All resident adult men are expected to work on the farm. Sons are not encouraged to live on the farm and work elsewhere. Married women and unmarried girls who have left school are expected to work if required.

Before the War the six-months system generally applied in this area and it is probably true to say that schooling for African children was frowned upon.

Most farmers assist with medical expenses, transport, loans, supporting the family when the worker is ill, or in other times of domestic crisis.

FARM WAGES.8. NEWCASTLE/UTRECHT AREA:

This is the only area covered by this inquiry in which the "six-months" system is the general rule. There are a few farms where it has been abandoned, but they are very much in the minority. Across the Buffalo River, in the old Vryheid Republic, conditions are worse than elsewhere.

In Newcastle District the work boom of the 1950s resulted in much of the land being bought up, for grazing purposes, by Free State farmers. The farmers don't live on these farms -- as they, and other "thorn" farms abutting on the Msinga area, probably provide labour for their owners on their farms in the Free State and the Transvaal.

There are a number of different categories of farms in this area. An attempt has been made to give some details of conditions in each and then to conclude with a general summary for the whole area. The three broad categories of farmers are:-

- a) owners of farms where the labourers are resident,
- b) big game farmers owning several farms in Natal & over the border,
- c) Labour-farm owners.

The first category can be further divided into two, and this has been done for present purposes.

A(i) Farms with Resident Labourers which have been owned by the same White family for several generations.a) Introductory:

On these farms a feudal, paternalistic relationship prevails and there is generally goodwill between the farmer and his labourers. The six-months system is in force, one member of the family being expected to work on the farm while others earn money elsewhere. Before influx-control the practice was to go to Johannesburg.

The farmer usually settles disputes and helps if there is a medical crisis or a harvest failure. The young people are getting restive and increasingly dissatisfied with this way of life and are drifting to the towns, in spite of the difficulties put in their way.

b) Wages:

As a rule no wages are paid. At the most a man would receive a token R1 per month.

In addition to the six months' stint a man must work, girls of suitable age are expected to work in or around the house. Adult men and women may be called out to perform certain tasks at certain seasons. No wage is paid for any of this.

c) Stock:

An average of 5 head of cattle per adult male worker is allowed.

d) Ploughland:

A family is entitled to between 2 and 5 acres. From this land it will expect to reap between 5 and 10 bags of mealies, probably, on average, enough to provide its basic food for 6 months.

e) Rations:

Actual workers will be given phuthu and either skimmed milk or brown sugar twice a day. If an animal dies, there will be meat.

f) Hours of Work:

Sunrise to sunset.

FARM WAGES.NEWCASTLE/UTRECHT(continued):g) Week-ends:

Sundays are free except for essential chores and some farmers also give Saturdays off.

h) Fuel:

Cow-dung is used mainly, sometimes wood. Both are free.

A(11) SMALL UNECONOMIC FARMING UNITS NEAR A TOWN e.g. at INGOGO, near Newcastle.a) Introductory:

At Ingogo there are a large number of small farms the owners of which work in Newcastle. The farms are left in the hands of a relative or an African employee during the week and the owners return to them at week-ends. The farmer has invariably been forced by his own circumstances to find work in town and the conditions of his workers are correspondingly poor. The relationship between farm-owner and resident-labourer is very much a business one. The farmer needs the labour and the labourer needs somewhere to live. The six-months system usually applies.

b) Wages:Resident labourers:

During their six months "in", get no pay or maximum R1 p.m.  
During their six months "out", R1 to R4 per month

Casual labourers are paid R1-50 to R6 per month.

Women and Children do household work, laundry etc., for nothing.

c) Stock:

Seldom, if ever, more than 5 head to a family. Some families are too poor to afford any stock at all.

d) Ploughland:

This is provided but it probably only produces about six bags of mealies a year.

Rations, week-ends, hours of work and fuel are the same as for the previous category.

B BIGGER FARMERS OWNING SEVERAL FARMS IN NATAL OR OVER THE BORDER.a) Introductory:

Many farms in this part of Northern Natal are in the sole charge of Africans. The advantages to the African are obvious. He avoids constant nagging from a resident employer, provided he attends to the stock and fences, he is left in comparative peace.

In general the krashead on a farm with an absentee owner will not be paid, although he may have considerable responsibility. His sons will work for the farmer and be paid R1 per month or, more often, nothing. The main cash income of the family must be provided by another son, or sons, who will be away working somewhere else. The young men, and sometimes the girls as well, will do their stint on the home farm, generally for nothing, and will then return home. The attractions of life on these farms are the larger number of stock allowed, the greater acreage of ploughland provided and the more dignified relationship which exists between worker and farmer.

One man in charge of 5 farms is paid R10 per month and is allowed ten head of cattle and ten acres of land. A skilled worker such as a lorry- or tractor-driver may be paid R5 to

FARM WAGES.NEWCASTLE/UTRECHT (continued):

R10 per month. On the other hand, he might be paid nothing.

C. FARMERS WITH LABOUR FARMS.

The purely labour (as opposed to labour cum grazing) farms are found in the "thorn" country towards Masinga. The farms are overgrazed and neglected and the relationship between farmer and labourers is often strained. The labourers' attitude might well be voiced in this way:- "The white man has come to fetch us to work on his farm--we go reluctantly---we will do our stint grudgingly---we are not concerned how much he grouses at us---eventually we will get back to our homes."

Summary for the Newcastle/Utrecht Area.a) Introductory:

The six-months system is still almost universal. Where it has gone out, wages and general conditions seem better.

b) Wages:Six-months system;

During the six-months IN..... NO PAY to R1-00 p.m.

During the six-months OUT..... R1 to R5 p.m.

Eleven months system;

A man may earn up to R10 per month.

c) Stock:

A family will usually own 2 to 10 head. Some families providing a number of workers might own 20 head or more.

There is a general reluctance to sell cattle. Rather than do this a family will loan them to people who do not have their quota (under the old Zulu "ukusisa" custom) or some farmers will graze them for 30 to 40 cents per head per month. They will, however, be sold to meet an emergency or when all delaying tactics have finally failed. On a big farm a man might realise up to R400 per annum from his stock. R50 would probably be a fair average for an animal sold. On the bigger farms, at least, milk would be plentiful.

Goats and horses are sometimes allowed and a few fowls will be found at most homes. These will not usually be sold but will be used occasionally for family purposes.

d) Ploughland:

The usual amount provided is 2 to 5 acres. The favourite crops are mealies and mabela. Enough mealies will usually be reaped to last the family about six months (5 bags) and the mabela will be used to brew beer, some of which will be sold.

e) Rations:

Workers will be provided with two meals daily consisting of phuthu and brown sugar or skimmed milk on the smaller farms.

f) Uniform:

On the better farms overalls are provided, on others no working clothes are issued. Girls working as domestic servants are usually given uniforms.

g) Leave:

On the 11-months system a man will get a month's leave on full pay.

FARM WAGES.NEWCASTLE/UTRECHT(continued):h) Week-ends:

Sundays are generally free. English-speaking farmers tend to give Saturday afternoons off, Afrikaans-speaking not.

i) Hours of Work:

On some farms these are sunrise to sunset.  
On others..... 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tractor-drivers work 8 hour shifts, including night-shifts if necessary.

j) Fuel:

Cow-dung; or wood are always available free.

k) Notice:

The usual is 3 months and a man is entitled to reap his crops.

l) General:

Many families live under a pall of insecurity. They are even afraid to improve their land too obviously; in case the farmer should decide he wants it and then sack them.

At least one male member of each family is expected to work on the farm and women-folk are expected to do household work. At weeding and reaping times( a total of about 1 1/2 months) women can earn 25 cents a day.

Some farmers help their labourers with fertiliser, do their ploughing for them, provide bulls and give medical help when necessary. As in all areas, there is considerable variation between farms.

9. WINTERTON:a) Introductory:

This is a mixed-farming area adjoining the Bergville district and to the South of it. Before the war a worker in this area, employed on the six-months system, would be paid R3 for the entire six-months period i.e. 50 cents per month. Nowadays, although the six-months system is still found, it is dying out and labour-farms have virtually disappeared.

b) Wages:Labourers:

A man working the six-months system.....R1 or R2 per month.  
A resident on the 11 months system..... up to R6 per month.  
A non-resident worker.....R6 to R8 per month.

Tractor-driver or Induna might earn up to R12 per month or R8 plus ploughland or a mealie ration.

A young woman living on the farm would be expected to do domestic work for R1 a month or less -- in some cases R1-50 for the entire six months.

A young woman from off the farm.....R3 per month.

Women get seasonal work, e.g. hoeing, at 15 cents a day.

On some farms girls must work for a full six month stint receiving neither pay nor uniform.

c) Stock:

The average allowance is 5 head of cattle per kraal. If the kraal provides a number of workers this number may be increased. Cattle provide milk, the basis for lobola contracts and are occasionally sold. The value of milk consumed and stock sold in a year might amount to R60 to R80.



FARM WAGES.WINTERTON(continued):d) Ploughland:

A resident labourer will get 2 to 3 acres allocated to him and this should produce a total of about 10 bags of mealies per year.

e) Rations:

A worker, whether resident or casual, will be given meals consisting of either phuthu and salt or phuthu and sugar. Residents will get two such meals a day and non-residents three. Non-residents may get an occasional issue of milk or an ox-head.

f) Uniform:

Labourers will not receive any.  
Tractor-drivers on some farms would get overalls.

g) Leave:

One month's paid leave is usual for all-the-year-round workers.

h) Week-ends:

Sundays are generally free. Where there is dairying or pig-keeping, milking and feeding on Sunday morning and evening would have to be done.

i) Hours of Work:

Sunrise to sunset, six days a week.

j) Fuel:

Cowdung or wood is collected free. Wood is not plentiful in this area.

k) Notice:

This is supposed to depend on the contract which should be in writing. Three months is the usual for resident families.

l) Housing:

A resident labourer usually builds his own, traditional, Zulu-type hut and removes it if he leaves the farm.

n) General:

On the six-months system, as elsewhere, one son relieves another. The father may be excused from working altogether if he has several sons. On one day each week all women are expected to render free service to the farmer, generally around the house.

The following were the conditions of service of a man who was interviewed in the Winterton area during the course of this inquiry:-

The man worked the six-months system and he was paid R6 for the entire six-months period that he worked. He received 2 meals a day consisting of phuthu and a little sugar. He was allocated 3 acres of land from which he expected to reap 4 bags of mealies, over and above green mealies consumed by the family. He kept 9 head of cattle. On the farm on which he lived the women could earn 15 cents a day, in season, for hoeing etc..

In conclusion, how close do the wages in cash and kind, set out above, approach the minimum necessary to enable an African father, working on a farm, to keep his family in reasonable health?

At the end of 1958 the S.A. Institute of Race Relations worked out the minimum requirements of an African family of five (father, mother and 3 children) living in Johannesburg. Expenditure was allowed for under the headings of food, clothing, rent, fuel, cleaning materials, transport and 'other' (tax etc). The food requirements were based on a minimum diet worked out by the Department of Nutrition which provided for a monthly ration as follows:-  
Meat 18lb 12oz; Milk 97 pints; Beans 15lbs; Mealie meal 58lbs; Samp 45lbs; Brown bread 33 two-lb loaves; Potatoes 18<sup>3</sup>lbs; other vegetables 60lbs; sugar 20<sup>1</sup>lbs; margarine 4<sup>1</sup>lbs; lard 7lbs; tea 3lbs; salt 3<sup>2</sup>lbs.

This was regarded as the minimum diet necessary to keep the family in reasonable health.

In late 1964 a survey was conducted in Pietermaritzburg, using the same estimates of minimum requirements that the Institute had worked out, to establish the needs of a similar family living and working in that city. The figure arrived at was just over R48 per month. Using this as a basis an attempt was then made to assess the minimum requirements of a domestic servant working in Pietermaritzburg. Allowance was made for food and uniform received at work and reductions were made in the estimated requirements of the family for every item of necessary expenditure except tax and educational fees, which were taken to be irreducible. The figure arrived at came to R35 per month. The assessment was made on the basis of the domestic servant's family being reserve-based. The monthly requirements of such a family are probably very similar to those of an African farm worker's family, with these exceptions. The domestic worker will receive most if not all of his food at his place of work, and the farm worker will not have to pay transport costs and his fuel will normally be free. With these adjustments it appears that the basic monthly requirements of a farm family of five are roughly as follows in mid-1966:

Food	25.75
Clothing	6.50
Soap	60
Tax	29
Schooling	2.32
TOTAL	<u>35.46</u>

These figures make no allowance for medical expenses or for such other recognised present day needs as furniture, tobacco, recreational expenses, church dues etc. It should also be pointed out that although farm workers may not pay rent they generally have to build and repair their own homes. Taking everything into consideration it seems fair to say that a farm family today should be earning the equivalent of R35.00 per month if it is to maintain itself at a minimum standard and that it is a wage of this standard that farmers should be aiming to pay.

Because the income from gardens, lands and stock and from the earnings of members of the family other than the father vary so enormously, it is very difficult to work out how close the farms, in the districts quoted in the text, come to the desirable minimum. The impression is, however, that, in most districts they are still a long way short of it. Individual farmers themselves will be able to estimate, from their knowledge of their own farm conditions, whether and, if so, by how far they are falling short of the desirable minimum.

## APPENDIX 2 :

Department of Bantu Administration's records  
of unrest by African people in  
KwaZulu-Natal(1958-1960).

P.O. Box 154,

DURBAN.

15th February, 1961.

NATIVE UNREST IN DURBAN 1958 - 1960.

(Instances of disturbances and unrest in other parts of the Country, especially in other parts of Natal are included on account of their effect on the Bantu people in Durban and on account of the fact that insofar as Natal is concerned, Durban is a strategic centre for subversive elements).

- April, 1958. Pamphlets issued by "Natal Protest Week Committee" in which ex-chief Luthuli calls for people to support "stay-away" strike planned for 14 - 16th April. Strike action to coincide with the 1958 General Elections.
- 10th April, 1958 : Director of Bantu Administration and his officials and the Deputy Commissioner of Police address a "Sicoco" assembly of Durban Native Indunas asking them to assist in overcoming the proposed "stay-away" strike. Large-scale infiltration of A.N.C. members causes meeting to break up in disorder. Speakers are shouted down.
- 14 - 15th April, 1958 : Notwithstanding strenuous efforts by agitators and a leaflet campaign, proposed stay-away strike proves to be a failure. Authorities launch counter measures. Police and Bantu Administration Security Corps guard and patrol vital installations and lines of communication.
- May - September, 1958 : A.N.C. uses Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board to whip up feelings against the City Council and its officials.
- 21st September, 1958 : Director of Bantu Administration addresses public meeting of (500 - 600) Cato Manor residents, to counteract opposition against proposed removals.
- Early 1959 : Indications that A.N.C. is intensifying its propaganda campaign. Distribution of leaflets. Propaganda directed against reference books, matters relating to Kaffir beer and the resettlement of people from Cato Manor. The Chief Superintendent reports on rumours of impending violence, instigated by the A.N.C. during the winter months.
- 4th to 14th January, 1959 : Anniversary of outbreak of the 1949 riots is observed and celebrated by the Cato Manor people. Inspectors move freely about in Mnyasana shack area, urging people to prepare to move.
- 19th to 23rd February, 1959 : Vacant and unoccupied shacks in Mnyasana demolished.
- 21st February, 1959 : A.N.C. Public meeting in Cato Manor addressed by ex-chief Luthuli. He advocates opposition to the removal of people from Cato Manor.
- 23rd February, 1959 : Protest gathering of women and children at Department of Bantu Administration Head Office at midnight.
- 24th February, 1959 : Native women squat in relays at Bantu Administration Head Office where they spend whole day and night. Evidence of political agitation and that the event is sponsored and organised by African National Congress.

- 25th February, 1959 : Large crowd of female demonstrators break into Director's office, and become aggressive. Arrangements made for deputation to meet the Mayor at 3.00 p.m. at the Grey Street Women's Hostel. Deputation demands open air meeting and fails to appear at the Hostel.
- 26th February, 1959 : Crowd of belligerent women demonstrate outside Department of Bantu Administration Head Office. Again a very large party break into the Director's office. Crowd incited to smash up building. S.A.P. "Riot Squad" called in. Women taunt the police.
- 27th February, 1959 : The Native female demonstrators move from Ordnance Road and about 30 are found squatting on City Hall steps. Evidence that this move sponsored by A.N.C. A meeting between His Worship the Mayor and a deputation is held in No. 3 Committee Room.
- Saturday 28th February, 1959 : Officials and S.A.P. visiting Mnyasana area have to withdraw to avoid any incident because of the challenging attitude of the crowd.
- NOTE. A detailed account of the "February, 1959, Disturbances" is given in Annexure "G" of a confidential paper by the Director of Bantu Administration entitled "Memorandum on certain matters of concern to Bantu Administration proceeding and surrounding the Cato Manor Disturbances of June, 1959." This report is dated 12th February, 1960.
- 1st March, 1959 : Large crowd observed re-erecting shacks previously demolished in Mnyasana area.
- March, April and May, 1959 : A number of African National Congress pamphlets distributed. Considerable agitation especially at the S.J. Smith Location.
- 24th April, 1959 : Chief Superintendent informed boycott of beerhalls would start on 24th June, 1959. A.N.C. pamphlet issued a few days later setting out plans for boycott.
- 17th June, 1959 : Beerhall boycott commences with attack by women on Cato Manor beerhall.
- 18th June, 1959 : Trouble spreads and attacks made by women on beerhalls in town. Director and Chief Superintendent endeavour to address many thousands of irate women in Cato Manor. Cars and buses stoned. Buildings burned. Trouble spread to Lamont, Umlazi Glebe, Chesterville and S.J. Smith Location. Dughan Native areas swept by wave of arson and pillage. Drastic police action. £100,000 damage. Beerhall boycott continues for about 8 weeks - would-be drinkers intimidated.
- 26th June, 1959 : Non-European public meeting at Currie's Fountain attended by many thousands. "Freedom Day" called by A.N.C., N.I.C., C.O.D. and S.A.C.F.U. Pamphlets advertising this meeting widely distributed.
- 9th July, 1959 : Native women attack beerhall at Verulam.
- 12th August, 1959 : 350 women in Port Shepstone district demand interview with Agricultural Officer and Magistrate.
- 13th August, 1959 : District Commandant S.A.P., Pietermaritzburg reports 75% dipping tanks in Natal Inland Police Division destroyed.
- 14th August, 1959 : 85 Native women fined at Umzinto for creating disturbance. Demonstrations and disturbances reported in Exopo, Hibberdene, Camperdown, Port Shepstone, Inanda, Wartburg and other Natal centres. 35 Native women at Harding convicted

for malicious injury to property.  
 Demonstrations in Pietermaritzburg. Beer boycott, rioting,  
 burning of 3 African schools in Sobantu and other Native  
 Municipal buildings.

- During July and August, 1959 : Boycott of potatoes and so-called "Nationalist" goods (tea, cigarettes etc.) instigated by A.N.C. whose agents visit private householders and shops, destroy any such commodities found and intimidate householders and traders. Reign of terror in the making.
- 12th and 13th December, 1959 : 47th Annual Conference of the A.N.C. held in Durban. 31st March, 1960, fixed as "Anti-pass Day" and 15th April, 1960, as "African Freedom Day". Further country-wide demonstrations arranged for 26th June, 1960.
- 20th December, 1959 : Pan African Congress Conference held in Orlando.
- 24th January, 1960 : Nine South African Policemen murdered whilst on a liquor raid in the Kwa Tiki area, Cato Manor.
- 10th February, 1960 : Demonstration by Natives arising from shack demolitions at Ezinkawini, Cato Manor. About 60 Natives squat on City Hall steps in the early morning. Various requests to delay or defer the Ezinkawini removal. Deputation addressed by the Director of Bantu Administration. Agreed to meet at Department of Bantu Administration offices on 11th to hear the Mayor's reply to their demands.
- 11th February, 1960 : Deputation informed that the Mayor not prepared to accede to demands for immediate suspension of slum clearance. A.N.C. claims that it is not satisfied with manner in which removals being carried out.
- 16th February, 1960 : First "Incident" at Sondoland. Two white S.A.P. attacked in vehicle and escaped. Traders flee to towns. Trouble in rural areas increases and spreads from that date onwards.
- 21st February, 1960 : Public meeting at Clermont Township - residents told Durban Corporation has acquired title deeds to their properties and they would have to move. A van with loudspeaker toured Clermont Township urging residents to attend this meeting.
- 22nd February, 1960 : A.N.C. members led by Bishop Reeves staged silent "Anti-pass" demonstrations in Johannesburg.
- 21 - 23rd March, 1960 : Start of Pan African Congress Anti-pass campaign - "no bail, no defence, no fine" - burning of passes etc. Tense atmosphere throughout Union of South Africa. Sharpsville - 69 killed, 178 wounded. Rioting in many Reef towns and in Cape.
- 24th March, 1960 : Government banned public meetings.
- 28th March, 1960 : "Day of Mourning" called by ex-chief Luthuli. Rioting again took place on the Reef and in the Cape. A.N.C. and P.A.C. banned (Unlawful Organisations Act No. 34 of 1960).
- 30th March, 1960 : State of Emergency declared. Trouble continued in Cape and on Reef. Situation in Durban very tense and buses stoned - workers intimidated and attacked.
- 1st April, 1960 : About 10,000 Natives march via various routes from Cato Manor to demand release of "leaders". Police open fire in Durban and Clermont Township. Baton charges.

4th April, 1960 : Serious rioting in Lamontville. Police forced to open fire at S.J. Smith Location. Workers intimidated and beaten up.

6th and 10th April, 1960 : Police, Military and Naval detachments surround and search the S.J. Smith Location and Gato Manor Emergency Camp. Large quantities of dangerous weapons confiscated, many arrests.

Period 31st March to 9th April, 1960 : During this period demonstrations, riotings, burnings, intimidation and attacks on people and buildings by Natives took place in all provinces of the Union.

March, 1960 : Rioting in Nyasaland.

During June and July, 1960 : Numerous A.N.C. and I.N.C. pamphlets issued.

9th December, 1960 : Public meeting to have been held at Currie's Fountain banned. The banning of this meeting followed a subversive pamphlet issued by "Joint Congress" on 9th December, 1960.

11th December, 1960 : Pamphlet issued to Sumtseu Location residents urging them not to pay rent.