

**NEGOTIATING THE BOUNDARY:
THE RESPONSE OF KWA MASHU ZIONISTS
TO A VOLATILE POLITICAL CLIMATE**

by

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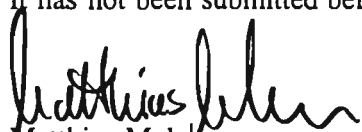
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. All references used have been acknowledged. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.



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Durban, November 1993.

ABSTRACT

Previous studies have demonstrated that Zulu Zionists remained peace-loving and politically quiescent in times of racial segregation and political injustice. Since then the political situation in South Africa has shifted dramatically and, despite the dismantling of apartheid structures and the unbanning of major Black political organisations, political violence and instability have become the order of the day. The main concern of this dissertation was therefore to explore the response of Zulu Zionists in Kwa Mashu to such a volatile political climate and to ascertain whether they can uphold their reputed apolitical attitude.

It emerged from fieldwork, conducted in Kwa Mashu, Durban, over a period of 22 months, that their social boundaries, group cohesiveness and religious identity are threatened by the negative side-effects of an increased politicisation. Like their fellow township dwellers, Kwa Mashu Zionists are expected to take sides and are exposed to political propaganda and intimidation. Young Zionists, in particular, are prone to violate the apolitical stance of their church, for they are not only marginalized within their congregations but they are also the main object of political pressure and recruitment. However, it was found that the majority of Zionists successfully resisted being drawn completely into political participation and insisted on the retention of their religious values. Those who choose political partisanship defend their religious convictions and hold out against taking part in violent political competition. To counteract the intrusion of politically related damage and to prevent their youth from religious alienation, Zionists no longer exclusively emphasise the negative implications of politics but acknowledge the inevitability of being conscious about it. Zionists thereby reach an acceptable definition of politics which does not endanger group-cohesiveness and does little harm to their social boundaries.

The conclusion reached in this study is that Kwa Mashu Zionists confront the encroachment of politics by transforming it into a harmless form of political consciousness. In this form Zionists can assimilate politics and employ it as an instrument for achieving their goals in the upliftment of the economic poor and the socially disadvantaged.

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INTRODUCTION

'I do not like politics, because in my point of view, many people are involved in politics and they end up in bad trouble. Or they end up in situations where they cannot pull out of the problems. That's why I don't like it. During Sunday I go to church, and when I come back from church, I sit with my family and it ends there, that is over. I do not want to involve myself in politics, because I have seen that it has some bad results for people who involve themselves in politics in any way.'

Rev. Xulu, a Zionist minister, August 1991.

'Zionists, by their (public) image, feel inferior. Also the leadership is illiterate and conservative and normally distance themselves from politics. This does not necessarily mean that the Zionists are unaware of what is going on in politics. The worst mistake that people make is to take Zionists for granted, politically. This is wrong, because Zionists understand apartheid and Zionists understand politics'

Claytus Mbonambi, a Zionist youth, October 1991.

The quotations above are two different statements, made by Kwa Mashu Zionists of two different generations in a time when political rivalry and violence has reached its peak in South Africa. More specifically, both statements may paraphrase the intention of this dissertation, that is to investigate the circumstances of the religious and social life of young and old Kwa Mashu Zionists in a volatile political climate and, eventually, their response to it.

Hitherto, urban Zulu Zionists have been described as peace-loving, non-violent and politically quiescent; and as a religious community that withdraws from rather than participates in most secular activities which take place in their social environment (cf. Sundkler, 1961:295; Kiernan, 1974:89; Williams, 1982:12). Yet in the wake of South Africa's political and economic transformation, i.e. from an apartheid to a truly democratic society which provides equal opportunities and prosperity, a conflict with dramatic proportions has arisen. Tragically, this conflict predominantly affects those who had also been the victims of apartheid, namely Black South Africans. Here the dissent between the major Black political organisations has caused a situation that not only demands outspoken political awareness and

affiliation, but that also results in many deaths and has destroyed property of individuals and families.

One can thus expect that Zionists, as a part of the Black community, do not remain unscathed and that their reported apolitical and non-violent attitude is severely jeopardized. This may be especially so among Zionist youngsters, whose peers are arguably in the forefront of the (violent) struggle for political liberation.

In how far, then, has the quiescent and neutral stance of Zulu Zionists changed, and what are their strategies for solve the problems they encounter in contemporary South Africa? In order to answer this question my research is concerned with various aspects, all of which contributed to the way in which young and old Kwa Mashu Zionists respond to a volatile political climate. To conclude this introduction, I will briefly outline the points of discussion of the chapters to follow.

To begin with, I will discuss the circumstances and my personal impressions of the fieldwork environment in Kwa Mashu. At the same time I shall introduce the methods of research and fieldwork, as well as giving an account of the problems I encountered in the field.

This is followed by chapter two, in which I intend to discuss the reasons for my research and how the different components thereof developed. Most of it is based on the distinctive characteristics of Zionism, which will also feature in this chapter.

To provide a platform for a better understanding of Zionist thinking, acting and, subsequently, responses, I shall move on to introduce a number of old and young Kwa Mashu Zionists from different congregations. By means of various case studies, chapter three aims to illustrate the everyday life -both religious and secular - of Zionist elders and youngsters.

On the basis of the preceding chapters, and in consulting some anthropological interpretations, a closer look at the aspects of Zionist boundaries and religious identity is

taken in chapter four. Particular reference will also be given to the way in which Kwa Mashu Zionists are perceived by their fellow non-Zionist township residents.

This leads on to the maintenance of Zionist boundaries and neutrality, which is the subject of chapter five. Boundaries are generally erected *against* something. The examples of how Zionists were regarded by the general public in the previous chapter, may in part explain why Zionists erect a barrier around themselves. How they build and control this perimeter with the outside is discussed followed by an analysis of their internal structures. The organisation of internal and external relations is interpreted in the design and support of Zionist boundaries. The boundaries are in place in order to cope with the external pressures from the socio-political environment, and to perpetuate the established internal religious structures of old and young, male and female, rank and status.

Chapter six sets out to comprehend the external and internal threats Zionists in Kwa Mashu have to deal with. Here the negative and threatening side-effects of the present political climate in South Africa is spelt out, together with the ways it affects the township community. Zionists are part of that community and have to respond to whatever the political climate creates. It is therefore the aim of the first part of this chapter to generally outline the extent of political violence, educational inadequacies and generational antagonisms. This gives the lead to focus more narrowly on one crucial aspect of internal arrangements, i.e. the relationship between Zionist leadership and Zionist youngsters. The discussion also concerns external boundaries in as much as young Zionists are being marginalized within the church structures and consequently run the risk of being sucked across the boundaries into the political battleground - which would pose an internal threat.

Subsequently I shall investigate to what extent the aspects discussed so far affect the maintenance of Zionist ethics and boundaries when it comes to confronting the political situation in Natal and Kwa Mashu. To begin with, the degree of political involvement and consciousness among Zionist elders is investigated. By means of various case studies, including the opinions and viewpoints of political leaders, chapter seven aims to illustrate how far Zionist elders are able, or rather willing, to hold on to the apolitical non-violent

ethics their churches preach. Also, how do they justify their actions; should they indeed cross the boundaries upheld by Zionist rules? Moreover, this chapter intends to give a reflection of individual aspirations and anxieties in times of political changes, pressures and violence.

Naturally the same considerations also apply to Zionist youngsters, and will hence be dealt with in chapter eight. However, much more is involved as far as young Zionists are concerned. They are caught between submitting to the authority and discipline of their elders, and at the same time fending off an unequally high amount of pressure from the secular world. Zionist youngsters, it will be shown, find themselves in a situation where they have to make a *choice*; whether to religiously affiliate or to give in to the attractiveness of politically related activities expounded by their secular peers.

Finally, I would like to point out that, in order to protect the identity of my informants, *all* their names have been changed accordingly.

CHAPTER ONE

FIELDWORK IN KWA MASHU

1.1. Introduction to a Volatile Township.

On the evening of Wednesday, May 30, 1990, I went to Kwa Mashu, a Black township situated approximately 25 km north-east of Durban, South Africa (see Appendix 2, map), to begin my fieldwork among Zulu Zionists. I sat in the car next to my supervisor, Professor Kiernan, who had agreed to introduce me to a Zionist minister he had kept contact with since he had done his own fieldwork in Kwa Mashu.

Apart from the gratefully acknowledged opportunity to be introduced to the field, it was also Professor Kiernan's experience and familiarity with the township that strongly influenced my decision to conduct research in this specific area. We had both previously discussed the options of me carrying out my fieldwork elsewhere, and perhaps using the contacts of fellow students who lived in either of the townships around Durban.

However, my attempts to organise my own contacts through acquaintances remained unfruitful and further links to Zionists I had previously met in the course of a fieldwork exercise (as part of a third year project of the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Natal, Durban), could not be established, for they came to Durban only sporadically and had their home communities in the rural areas of the Natal Midlands or South Coast. I therefore opted for Professor Kiernan's suggestion to begin my fieldwork in Kwa Mashu where I could build up my own network of informants after his initial introduction.

Although it was not the first time that I went to a Black township, I faced that trip on May 30, 1990, with mixed feelings. Firstly, as we were entering the periphery of Kwa Mashu, I suddenly realised that the period of *talking* about and *preparing* for the fieldwork was over. This thought evoked such 'stage-fright' in me that I was, in fact, tempted to ask my supervisor to return to Durban and postpone this trip to some other time. My apprehensive mood was further reinforced by stereotypes and warnings I had picked up from the mass-media and numerous White South Africans: Black townships are dangerous and volatile; they are places where people get murdered and where a White person, in particular, should not go - least of all at night and if so only with a firearm. At the same time I became aware that, once Professor Kiernan had introduced me to the field, I would be on my own in an environment that was still remarkably foreign to me.

I tried to suppress these feelings by focusing my thoughts on issues I had anticipated since the time I started researching Zionism in South Africa and Natal, namely to meet and visit Zionists in their homes or at their places of worship, and to hopefully learn from them a lot more than books can teach. Equally reassuring and encouraging were my supervisor's comments on his own positive and rewarding experiences whilst conducting fieldwork in Kwa Mashu.

It was already dark when we drove through the streets of Kwa Mashu. As there were few road signs indicating directions, I made an effort to remember certain buildings and street corners to know where I had to go when I returned. Eventually, after we had been driving through the township for about ten minutes, we arrived at our destination: the home of the Zionist minister, Mr. Shabangu, and his family.

It was the official beginning of my fieldwork and this very first meeting with Mr. Shabangu turned out to be an experience that repeated itself whenever I met a new informant for the first time. Contrary to my initial expectations - I imagined I would be able to ask a set of prepared questions right away - the meeting was marked by a process of approaching each other and establishing a basis of mutual trust between myself as a fieldworker and Mr. Shabangu as the Zionist informant.

From the outset of our conversation, which was held in English, Mr. Shabangu was very polite. Yet from his cautious attitude towards me he seemed to be reserving judgement about me. This was revealed by him talking through Professor Kiernan rather than talking directly to me. He began to ask me questions about myself (eg. where I came from and how big my family was; what I was studying; why I had chosen to study Zionists; what I intended to do with the information I gathered; whether I was afraid to work in a Black township; what religious affiliation I held; and my impressions about South Africa coming from Germany) which I answered forthrightly. Through this process of inquiring about my past and my identity as a student of Social Anthropology it was apparent that he was forming an opinion about me. Gradually, he began asking me questions directly and by the end of the evening it seemed that he was satisfied with my trustworthiness and my status as a regular visitor to his religious and social community.

By comparison the recognition of and adaptation to the field environment were harder than taking the hurdle of establishing the first precious contacts. Though it was relatively uncomplicated to gain physical access to the township (no permits of any kind were required) I found that anything beyond *arriving* in Kwa Mashu was subject to the tense and unsettled situation that prevailed there throughout my fieldwork period. This situation was due to a number of calamitous circumstances which escalated the conflict in the township.

To begin with, after more than 30 years of its existence, Kwa Mashu was no longer isolated but had become subject to population pressures. These pressures had predominantly arisen from the rapid growth of informal settlements, which bordered on an already densely populated formal community with a high unemployment rate and a limited and insufficient infrastructure.

Not only did this result in frequent disputes over scarce resources, but it contributed to the increase of crime and quarrels between opposing political representatives from the squatter communities and Kwa Mashu, respectively. Additionally, Kwa Mashu experienced the devastating effects of political rivalry and violence, which had culminated in the greater Durban area a mere three to four months prior to my first visit in the field. Attempts to precisely forecast sporadic eruptions of violence to make my trips safer would have been in

vain, because nobody knew where it would strike next. The only thing one could predict about the violence and bloodshed was that it was recurring in its nature.

'People don't trust each other any more,' said Mr. Khuzwayo, a Zionist I met on my second visit to Kwa Mashu. 'They are jealous and they are very angry. But it is not only a case of ANC supporters fighting Inkatha supporters. There are other things that create the violence. The (economic) sanctions against South Africa, for instance, make everything even worse. There is just no work. People are dissatisfied and infuriated. Here, in Kwa Mashu, 29 out of 30 people have no work, but most of the remaining 29 have children and families to look after. The one man who got a job might only be a bachelor with nobody to look after. So the people kill him. They are envious. If people see that you have a car, they want it. If they think you have money, they try to take it. Sometimes they might even think that you are a police informer, just because you have some money and nice clothes. Just the other day, they killed a guy in the neighbourhood for these reasons. If they see that you have a good lifestyle, you are in trouble.

On the other hand, White people think that all we do here is killing each other and that there is fighting all over the township. That is not true. But there are places which are very, very unsafe to go to, like the K-section (of Kwa Mashu), for example. You should never go there. It is a very bad place and very dangerous. If you are a White man, like yourself, it is even worse. People there will think that you are a policeman or a spy from the government. The minute you drive through there they will shout at you and throw stones at your car. I don't go to areas like this myself. It is too dangerous, especially after dark. I can only tell you this: If you get lost anywhere in the township or you have an accident, or people start to turn on you, just run, get out of this area and drive to the next police station.'

Khuzwayo's account of the situation in Kwa Mashu and his subsequent warnings were reiterated by a number of Zionists and Kwa Mashu residents I met in the beginning of my fieldwork period. I had consequently no guarantee as to why, where and when violence would erupt next, and whether or not I could end up being a victim of hostilities myself. In fact, politically motivated bloodshed as well as thuggery in Kwa Mashu had grown to such indiscriminate proportions that nobody knew who would be the next target.

In the course of my first visits I also realised how misinformed and protected White South Africans, including myself, have been from the true impact of violence and distress in Black townships. News reports, for example, could have never covered the extent of fear and terror of being a potential target of brute force and destruction. With regard to Kwa Mashu Zionists

Mr. Shabangu put it as follows:

'You must not raise suspicion. There are areas here where it is not possible for us (as Zionists) to meet, although many Zionists live there. That is to say that during the violence if you were holding a meeting there (in a particularly violence torn area of Kwa Mashu), the only possible conclusion of the people outside is that they think "these people in the church meeting are preparing a war", or something like that. Or even that we would make other people fight. So these thugs might fight back and our people scatter. Zionists then run away and have their meetings somewhere else'.

Taking such statements into account my scope of fieldwork was consequently limited and I had to find a way of coping with that situation. The use of a firearm or any other weapon for personal protection was out of the question. Not only did I consider the use of physical force repulsive, but the mere possession and carrying of a weapon would have undoubtedly shattered my credibility among Zionists and their fellow township dwellers and, above all, would have put me in more unnecessary danger. Furthermore my inability to converse adequately in Zulu (even English is not my home language) would have severely hampered my attempts to call for calm in a violent or threatening situation.

I therefore opted for the following strategy. Until I felt that I had sufficiently adapted to the situation in Kwa Mashu, and until I was able to speak at least a couple of sentences in Zulu, I decided for the present to concentrate my visits on the quieter areas of the township. I also hoped that future informants would then be able to guide me safely through the more violent areas and help me to establish some contacts there. However, it was a year and a half after I had started my research that I was able to visit a part of Kwa Mashu notorious for violence and youth gangs. Until then I was not prepared to venture to such sections, because I was frightened. Gradually, I overcame this barrier with the support of Zionist informants and interpreters, who diminished a great deal of my anxieties by making me feel secure wherever I went in their midst.

On a late Saturday evening in August 1991, for example, I went to one of these volatile areas to witness an all-night service of a Zionist congregation. Throughout the night (I left at about five o'clock on Sunday morning) I felt comfortable and protected. Even my car was safeguarded by young Zionists, who took turns in keeping an eye on it.

1.2. Impressions of the Field Environment.

Unlike Durban, which has a colourful and eventful history of more than 150 years, Kwa Mashu is still an 'infant' in historical terms. In order to relocate residents from Cato Manor, a slum area which in the late 1950's housed more than a hundred-thousand people, the first buildings in Kwa Mashu were erected in 1957. One of the main reasons for the relocation of Cato Manor dwellers was the absence of proper sanitary facilities and the overcrowded living conditions which inevitably evoked widespread disease and epidemics. On the other hand, Cato Manor bordered upon the growing White residential Durban suburbs, threatening the policy of racial segregation. The increasing crime rate and the violent conflict between landowners and dissatisfied residents finally led to the end of the settlement of Blacks in Cato Manor (cf. Moeller, et. al., 1978:6; Kiernan, 1984:221f.; Hughes, 1985:340f.; Booth, 1987:93). Divided into a number of neighbourhood sections (in consecutive order from A to N), Kwa Mashu covers an area of more than 15 square kilometres. Having initially been administered by the Durban City Council and the Port Natal Administration Board, Kwa Mashu was eventually transferred to the administration of the KwaZulu Government on 1 April 1977 (Booth, 1987:97). As far as the total population of the township is concerned a definite number can only be estimated. This is due to the above mentioned rapidly growing informal settlements in and around Kwa Mashu, where job-seeking migrants and refugees from violence-torn areas in Natal move in on a daily basis (cf. also Deport, 1990:16). However, recent official reports state that the formal area of Kwa Mashu Township today has a population of 136 465, with an average annual growth rate of 1,13% (the 'informal' population was not estimated). In the areas I visited, the 'official' resident of Kwa Mashu usually lived in one of the two-roomed or four-roomed houses, still dating from the time when the township was brought into existence by the South African Government. Yet I noted an increasing number of modern, self-designed or government subsidised housing, and though I only saw two of these houses from the inside (These modern homes did not belong to Zionists, but belonged to acquaintances and non-Zionist informants I visited socially) they certainly catered for better living conditions through more living space, advanced insulation and sanitation systems, for instance. The 'informal' resident, however, has to endure much worse. Driving through one of Kwa Mashu's informal sectors I got the following impression:

The already badly maintained township roads, which are marked by an abundance of potholes, turn into muddy, bumpy and nearly impassable narrow alleys, when one advances into a typical squatter settlement. Most of the time, however, there are no 'roads' at all, and one has to walk to gain access to the settlement. The makeshift housing consists of gathered material such as corrugated iron, pieces of wood-fibre boards, cardboard and plastic awnings. There is usually no electricity at all, and residents have to rely on candles, an open fire place or gas lamps and cookers in order to have light, heat and a facility to prepare food. At the same time, insufficient and almost non-existent water supply, sanitation and refuse removal, pose a general threat to the basic health safety of Kwa Mashu's 'informal' residents.

Though the majority of Zionists I visited belonged to the severely economically disadvantaged subgroup of Kwa Mashu's population, none of them lived in a squatter camp. Instead their houses usually consisted of the already mentioned two or four-roomed buildings, which were erected about 35 years ago. The rooms inside have an average size of about 12 - 15 square meters, and some Zionist families have improved their living space by transforming the front porch into an extended living room, or adding further rooms at the back of their houses. Without exception, all the homes I visited had a corrugated iron roof, based on a structure of wooden beams. Ceilings, to divide and insulate the rooms from the roof, had not been installed. Due to the lack of this insulation I spent many hot (summer) and cold (winter) evenings in these little houses. From the outside most of the houses were secured by a fence or at least by a hedge. The windows usually had burglar-guards. If the family could afford it, they had the outside of their houses painted. Otherwise the brick structure was still visible or simply covered with a brownish coloured roughcast. Only two Zionist homes I visited had an additional garage in their backyard. However, since both families were not able to afford a car, these garages were used for family festivities (e.g. weddings), church meetings, or to keep chickens.

The following account of Rev. Shabangu, whom I introduced earlier, and my own description may illustrate the history and interior of a Zionist home.

'My family and I came to Kwa Mashu in June 1961. This was when we were relocated from Cato Manor to come here. We moved into one of these new standard

four-roomed houses, and we were the first occupants. In these times there were not as many houses here as there are now. Anyway, the house was still too small for my family. My mother was living with us, and after a couple of years my first three children were born. So we had to extend the house. It was not easy, though. Only after we lived here for six years I got a permission from the township superintendent to add some more rooms. I had to give him a detailed plan of what exactly I was going to do. So we made some drawings and handed the plan in. I don't know how much it was, but I had to pay for the plan to be permitted. We could not start for some time, because the plan itself took over six months to get through. We started building in June 1967 having applied for it in January 1966. What we did was to build two additional rooms in the back and extend the front verandah into a bigger living room. In fact, where you are sitting now that was once the verandah.

I had to do all the work by myself. Sometimes friends or family members helped me. The building material was also hard to get and I had to get it all the way from Durban from a builder. The material was very expensive at that time, its is even worse now. I remember I paid about R 1098 for the wood, bricks, wooden mortar. What was the most expensive item were these stones, 7 x 8 inch stones, that was very, very expensive.

It took me almost a year to do the job, because I worked during the week, and could only work on the house during the weekends. As it is now, the house has seven rooms, that is three bedrooms, a lounge, a dining-room, a kitchen and a bathroom. We are now seven of us living here permanently. It is myself and my wife, three sons and my youngest daughter. Then there is also the little son from my first born daughter. She lives somewhere else, because she has to work out of town. But there are, as you can see, always other people around. Sometimes we have other grandchildren or relatives staying here for a couple of days.'

Although Shabangu could not give me an exact figure, I estimated his house to have no more than 100 square metres of living space. Accordingly, most of the rooms are tiny and narrow.

On entering the Shabangu home through the front door, one steps immediately into the living room. Most of the space is taken up by a three-piece reddish lounge-suite covered with springbok skins, an easy chair and a small wooden wall-unit. The wall to wall carpet is covered with transparent plastic mats to keep off the dirt and to avoid premature wear and tear. There is no wall-paper on the wall, however, as in many other Zionist homes, the walls are embellished with calendars, a picture of the Last Supper, and a wooden cross. Here a couple of china-sculptures, and a vase with plastic flowers share the space. Moreover, there

is a little cupboard with glass-doors where the family's best china and photographs are displayed. In addition, a couple of pot-plants enhance the cosiness of the living room. Being both employed in the public service, the relatively decent income of Mr. and Mrs. Shabangu (together they earn around 2 800 Rand a month)¹ enabled the family to afford a colour TV set, a HiFi-system and a video recorder. These home entertainment items, which are bought on terms, are highly valued and are to be found in few Zionist households. In fact, as Rev. Shabangu told me, 'a lot of church members come to my place, usually on a Saturday afternoon, to watch their favourite sports programme here.' In a sense, his TV becomes the focus of a gathering of his congregation.

This extensive description of the lounge takes into account its importance for the Zionist household. It is the centre of the house, where the family communicates most, where friends are met and entertained, where Rev. Shabangu has his 'office' as the church leader and where occasional church services are held. All the other rooms also have electricity, are furnished decently and the kitchen provides all the modern appliances which are needed to cater for a large family.

Yet not every Zionist family is as fortunate as the Shabangus in having more than one wage earner to contribute to the household. Quite a number of houses I visited were tiny two-roomed buildings with portable gas-stoves in the kitchen, a toilet in the backyard and very few pieces of furniture which were collected over the years. Also, since many Zionist families of my acquaintance consisted of about six to eight people, the living conditions were usually very confined. The problem increases when Zionists have to accommodate fellow church members from branches outside Kwa Mashu, especially before and after all-night services. One respondent told me:

'We have to put the visitors in the lounge. Then they just sleep in the chair or on the floor, wherever they can find some space. So, sometimes we have to send relatives back to the rural areas if they stay here to find some work, because we should always be able to provide sufficient room for our church and prayer meetings.'

These confined living conditions are typical of most of the township houses and, as one non-

Zionist respondent told me, created an awkward, if not tense relationship among family members, especially between young and old.

'Just imagine' he said, ' how the township living conditions totally distort the traditional rural housing conditions, where families had a couple of houses or kraals to accommodate them. The family structures here in the township houses are under a lot of strain, because the family members have no room for privacy. How can a father, as the head of the family, retain his authority and dignity if he has to change his clothes or even stand naked in front of his children?'

Another, and rather annoying, factor hampering the living environment are rodents, which frequently upset township dwellers and Zionists alike. More than once I witnessed mice running along the floor or roof beams, or cane-rats traversing the backyards. Billboards in different parts of Kwa Mashu advertise rat-poison -unimaginable in one of Durban's White suburbs. Rat-poison, of course, also threatens the health of the family, especially children who might inadvertently eat some of it. In order to protect children from poisoning, many Zionists, like Mr. Nxumalo and his family, keep cats in their households:

'We don't keep them as pets. We keep them so they can get rid of these creatures (mice and rats). Sometimes I give our cat some raw meat to eat, so it gets used to the taste and goes out to hunt.'

With regard to pets I soon realized that there were no dogs to be found in Zionist household, despite the fact that these animals were ubiquitous throughout the township. When I asked Mr. Nxumalo about his he replied that

'until about three to five years ago, we did not tolerate cats and dogs in our homes. Though some of us have cats now, we would never tolerate dogs. We don't think that they are unclean or something. But they are a nuisance, because when we have a meeting here they will bark, run around the house or harass people. That would disturb our services, so we keep them out.'

Then why not keep dogs outside the house to scare off trespassers or intruders?

'No!', Nxumalo answered, 'If somebody wants to rob you, they do it. They don't

care about the dog, they just shoot it. Furthermore, I have nothing to hide and if somebody comes to my house in peace, he is always welcome and should not be frightened off by a dog.'

Other animals frequently kept in Zionist homes are chickens. They are usually kept in the backyard, but nobody feels disturbed if they walk about the house or even breed in the living room, which, at times, caused a lot of amusement (or distraction) during my visits and interviews.

1.3. Conducting Fieldwork: The Methods, Rewards and Difficulties.

The actual process of getting started in the field was slow and sometimes difficult, and even after I had been introduced to Mr. Shabangu I had to be patient and await opportunities to build up and gradually extend my network of Zionist informants. Eventually, after six months in the field and with the kind cooperation of Mr. Shabangu, I had established a good relationship with Zionist elders and youngsters of two different congregations who then assisted in introducing me to other Zionist congregations and their members. Cultivating relationships to begin with gradually led to better and more informative exchanges as familiarity was increased. Consequently, between May 1990 and March 1992, I had the opportunity to meet the adherents of 16 different Zionist congregations (see also Appendix A). Three of the congregations were constituent units of nationwide churches. The remaining 13 belonged to small churches of a local span, confined to the Durban metropolitan region. The average membership of the congregations I studied varied from 35 to 150 individuals (these figures are estimates of Zionist ministers and elders and may have been inflated or have referred to more than one congregation).

The fieldwork initially entailed attendance at Sunday afternoon services of all 16 congregations I studied (more than once in several cases); in addition I made visits to the all-night weekend meetings of three different Zionist communities. In that way I had the opportunity to make myself known and to be introduced to the congregation. Being continuously present at these services then proved to be vital for further contacts and the

extension of a wide circle of respondents. Altogether I personally met and interviewed 82 Zionists. 52 of these were younger people aged between 15 and 35 years, and 30 of these were Zionist elders over the age of 35, of which 12 were leaders (ministers).

Interviews were conducted predominantly in Zionist homes and, to a lesser extent, at Zionist meeting places after a Sunday or an all-night service. My goal was to interview each informant without the distracting and interfering presence of others, in an uninterrupted period. However, occasionally this was not possible and the presence of family members or friends may have inhibited or otherwise influenced the responses of some interviewees.

During one particular interview session a Zionist minister, who had agreed to talk to me, happened to have a couple of mates from his work around at the time of our scheduled meeting. In the beginning this did not bother me, for I knew then from experience that, in cases of one-to-one interviews, other people in the room would usually withdraw after a period of introductions and small-talk. Yet this time the minister's friends lingered on and made no attempt to grant us privacy. Instead they choose to listen to a sports programme on the radio and became soon afterwards engaged in a heated discussion over the ill-fated efforts of a local soccer team to score the deciding goal. As a guest it would have been rude for me to intervene and ask for the sport enthusiasts to keep their voices down. It would, however, have been the right of the minister to ask his friends to do so.

To my misfortune he did not seem to be disturbed by the ongoing arguments in the background, and he was quite content to proceed with the interview under the given circumstances. Soon the minister got too distracted by the ongoing sports transmission and the meeting eventually turned into a general debate about whether or not South African soccer could meet the standards of European sides. With regard to the initial purpose of my visit I was rather disappointed, but I also felt that insisting on the interview would have spoilt my future relationship with this Zionist minister. More than once, similar situations occurred and I had to discipline myself over and over again to be patient and wait for my turn.

I always went into the field with a basic set of questions serving as a general framework, but the actual course of the interviews (as I have just pointed out) was usually determined by the

answers and individual mood of each Zionist respondent. I had to be flexible, therefore, and be prepared to follow the route along which my informants led me. In this way very often new ideas and questions arose and subsequently enhanced the outcome of the inquiry. Most of the time I was allowed to make use of a tape recorder that I carried with me. Sometimes, however, incidents like the following between myself (M) and a Zionist informant (Z) happened:

M: Would you mind if I use a tape recorder to record our dialogue?

Z: What is this thing you have there?

M: Actually, it is a dictaphone. With it I can tape what we say.

Z: Why would you do this?

M: So that I do not forget some of the information you give me.

Z: But it is so small that thing, how can it work?

M: It has a tape inside, just like music tapes, and it works with batteries.

Z: So it takes everything I say?

M: Yes!

Z: I don't think I like that. Everything, you said?

M: Yes, everything. Even the noise that comes from the road.

(The informant took the recorder in his hands and inspected it)

Z: To be honest with you, I don't like to talk into that thing. I have never done that before.

M: That's fine. Do you mind if I take notes in my little booklet here, instead?

Z: No. I think that is ok.

(Extracts from fieldnotes, Friday, 26 October, 1990).

In cases like this, when Zionists expressed reservations about the tape recorder intruding on their privacy I took written notes on the spot and put the recorder out of sight.

Whenever possible the interviews were conducted in English. This did not pose any problem for the Zionist youngsters and most of the elders I met, who spoke English fluently (and even taught me the odd new word or two). In cases where informants could speak no English at all, or felt more comfortable replying in Zulu, I depended on the assistance of interpreters. I was fortunate to have had two such interpreters in the course of my fieldwork, both of whom were ex-Zionists, with some familiarity with the general topic of my research, yet sufficiently at a distance from it, not to exercise too strong a bias for or against any statements made during an interview. Although, at the beginning of my fieldwork, I had completed a six month course of introductory Zulu at the University of Natal, Durban, my knowledge of the language was not adequate enough to conduct interviews in Zulu without the help of an interpreter. Yet my modest efforts paid off, as being able to exchange greetings in Zulu with individuals and congregations. I was at least able to identify and introduce myself in their own language and, of course, my knowledge of spoken Zulu improved, though not very dramatically, in the course of my fieldwork.

It was not always possible to keep up regular contact with every Zionist I met. Accordingly, some respondents made it clear to me or my interpreters that they did not wish to be interviewed again, or they simply lost interest.

On a hot Sunday afternoon in November 1991, for example, one of my interpreters and I called on the house of a Zionist elder who had, two weeks previously, invited us to meet him and some of his fellow church members. When we arrived at the arranged time nobody was there and we decided to wait. Almost an hour passed, and there was still no sign of this Zionist gentleman. At this stage the inside of my car was unbearably hot and I became increasingly upset about the prospect that the afternoon might be wasted in such a fashion. Eventually, the man we had been waiting for, appeared from the back of his house and beckoned my interpreter to come and talk to him. After the two had talked for approximately 10 minutes my interpreter came back to the car and handed me a piece of paper with a telephone number written on it.

'He said he couldn't make it today' the interpreter told me, 'because he had just come back from visiting friends in another township. But here is his telephone number at work. He said you could call him there and arrange a new appointment'.

During the next week I found out that this particular number did not exist. My next phone call was then to my interpreter. I told him that I could not reach the Zionist elder and that I doubted that he really wanted to see me, especially after he, as I assumed, had hidden in his house on Sunday in order to avoid us.

'Yes, I don't think he wants to talk to you.' my interpreter answered. 'You see, we (Zulus) believe that it is rude and impolite to say something negative to another person in a direct way. Instead of saying: I don't want to talk to you, this man was avoiding you so as not to offend you. Although he did it in a different way as you might have done it, his message was clear. I think he rather not give you an interview.'

I never found out what the reason for this reaction of the Zionist elder was, but I learned that my access to the Zionist community had its limits and that I, although being interested in their religion and sympathetic to their social environment, was not always welcome in their circles. Moreover, I came to acknowledge different forms of politeness, which I might have otherwise - without the explanation of my interpreter - misinterpreted as a gruff rejection.

I experienced similar incidents also with regard to Zionist youngsters. Since Zionist youth is a major focus of this thesis, it would have been ideal to interview and meet the total youth population of all 16 Zionist congregations with whom I had contact. Yet again, there were certain obstacles such as refusal, delays or lack of interest that prevented the realisation of this goal.

At times, my fieldwork did also have its embarrassing moments. During an Easter meeting of a Zionist church in Madadeni, Newcastle (Northern Natal), I was 'haunted' by a rather corpulent woman who, as a resident of Madadeni, came to see what all these Zionists were gathering for. I noticed that she had been around the meeting for quite a while, and she had already approached me once and asked me whether I could take a photograph of her. Seeing me with my tape-recorder, writing-pad and camera, she probably assumed that I was a reporter of some sort. I kindly declined her request and she went on her way. However, while I was talking to three Zionist elders, she advanced towards me again and wanted to know my name. In fact, she was shouting at me. My informants gently tried to ward her off,

but to no avail. She insisted on knowing my name and continued to shout at me in Afrikaans and Zulu. Eventually I gave her my name, shook her hands and she took off. Unfortunately, this was not the last I was to see of her. Wherever she saw me then, she came running towards me, wanted me to tell her that I love her (which I reluctantly did), and finally demanded that I marry her. At this stage, everybody around was tittering and laughing. Rev. Shabangu, who went with me on this trip to Madadeni, became quite angry after a while and tried to talk sense into the woman. 'I think she is not right upstairs', he said. I was 'cursed' with that woman for the rest of the day and whenever I saw her approaching me again, shouting 'Baas, Baas!', I pretended not to hear her and tried to ignore her. Later, I was told that this woman was mentally retarded. For weeks after that meeting, Rev. Shabangu and I shared amusing moments remembering this incident.

Turning our attention back to Kwa Mashu, it must be stressed that I was not able to live there during the time of my fieldwork. The already mentioned political instability and ever present violence at the time would have been a risk to both my potential Zionist hosts and myself. These circumstances, therefore, ruled out participant observation in the strict sense. I could not be a witness to violent episodes in township life (which usually took place under cover of darkness). Nor could I observe a debate or dispute, which was carried on between elders and youngsters within Zionism over the issue of political involvement. Thus I was not able to witness open expressions of disagreement, for the debate did not take the form of public discussion or overt confrontation. The only way to find out about such dispute and debate was through inquiries and interviews at times when I did have access to Kwa Mashu. Because of school and working commitments on the part of my informants, their availability was restricted, and my time in the township was put to best use from late afternoon on weekdays and over the whole weekend.

Approaching the task of doing fieldwork in Kwa Mashu was a unique experience for me. Not only did I have to familiarize myself with the socio-political circumstances that prevailed in Natal and in Kwa Mashu, I also did not quite know what to expect once I got started. After all, beside the fact that I went out to study a particular form of religion I also and foremost attempted to meet its adherents who, like the majority of Black South Africans, had to deal

with suspicion and fear on a day to day basis. Hence, it was a question of whether or not I would be accepted as a person *and* a researcher. Consequently, despite being armed with the information of my previous literature research, I understood my fieldwork task as a continuous process of learning - during which some expectations proved to be quite different from reality. The emphasis was on a qualitative study, rather than research based on quantitative methods. In order to find out what Zulu Zionists *do* and *think* on a person-to-person basis, I thus omitted the use of questionnaires and of interviewers other than myself. Moreover, I considered the material of exclusive individual interviews and talks more valuable than short statements put down on a sheet of paper. Also, an employed interviewer might have inadvertently distorted the gathered information, for he/she might not have been as familiar with the research topic as I was. I am aware, however, that the use of an interpreter also has its shortcomings. Whatever they rendered to me was certainly not always free of their own interpretation, and sometimes they may have withheld information I would have valued if I had understood Zulu. Such circumstances could not be helped, but I believe that my personal presence at least allowed me to write down my individual impressions of the interviewee and the place of the interview.

Whenever I met Zionists I was expected to explain the purpose of my enquiries. After all, religious values and behaviour are very personal and intimate matters, and certainly not to be given away to somebody who appears on the doorstep on a Saturday afternoon. Further discussion about the specifically political convictions of the church members concerned evoked an even more sensitive reaction. Here fear and distrust were the natural obstacles I encountered in the course of many interviews, and Zionists commonly replied with a counter-question: 'What is *your* favourite political party?'. In that case, and to emphasise my neutrality, I usually referred to the fact that I had no political affiliation whatsoever. Yet that answer in itself would have been too vague and may have caused my informants to believe that I did not care about the political plight of South Africa. I thus always added what I truly believed in, namely that I thought that every political party had a right to stress its conviction and policy (in a peaceful manner) and that it was its democratic right to do so - as long as everybody respected each other for what and whom they represented. This is as far as I would commit myself with regard to my own political viewpoints, and I realise that such an

answer may have not satisfied every respondent.

In order to achieve mutual trust, therefore, an allowance for a period of getting to know each other was unavoidable. In some cases that period could take two weeks, in others six months or it did not even begin in the first place. Accordingly, my field-trips were constantly occupied with constructing new relationships, building them up and finally cultivating friendships. This, of course, could not be done by randomly visiting one person or church after another, i.e. by opting for quantitative research methods. Instead, regular and purely social visits to respondents were of great weight. Social visits in particular often revealed behaviour and events which would not surface during an 'official' visit. I was thus able to obtain important information while I was having tea or simply watching soap operas or soccer on television with some of my respondents (more accurately, friends).

Such gatherings, I believe, obliterated or at least diminished the status difference between researcher and informant. In my experience both sides felt more comfortable and the initial hurdles of conversational constraint could be overcome to a large extent. It was a chance to see Zionists being Zionists *outside* the formal arrangement of their church. Zionist conceptions of certain values started to make sense when I met adherents during their everyday life. Formalities were mostly put aside and many Zionists made me feel very much at home, that is, I was accepted into their family circle. Through such close relationships a mutual trust was negotiated and became invaluable in extending and securing further contacts. At the same time I did and still consider such close relationships as one of the biggest rewards fieldwork can offer. After a number of visits to a particular Zionist family, for example, I was invited to stay and join the family for dinner.

'I would have never thought that a White man would sit at my dinner table.' said the head of the family, who was also a respected minister of his congregation. 'I am 62 years old now and for most of my life White people called me "boy". They never considered me as a grown-up. I never believed that we could sit together, and some White person would be a guest in my house, eat with me and talk to me from adult to adult.'

I, on the other hand, felt extremely honoured and although tea and biscuits were frequently

offered during interviews and social visits to Zionist homes, this dinner with a whole Zionist family gave me a warm feeling of acceptance and friendship. For the Zionist family and myself this evening meal was a unique experience.

Finally, having completed my research and fieldwork, I am not so arrogant as to expect to have discovered the definitive truth about Kwa Mashu Zionists. This, I believe, is for them to decide. I am also aware that in some cases respondents deliberately withheld personal information, and insisted on their privacy, which was, of course, their privilege to do.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 1

1. With a current exchange rate of a little more than 5:1, 2 800 South African rand equals 560 British pounds, or at a rate of roughly 3.5:1, 800 US dollars.

CHAPTER TWO

The Development of Research Components

The aim of the current chapter is to point out the main components of my research, i.e. those features of Zionism I intend to emphasise against the background of contemporary South Africa, Natal and, especially, Kwa Mashu.

To begin with, I will outline my personal motivation to study Zionists in Kwa Mashu under the particular circumstances of South Africa's political climate. Next, I shall discuss the distinctive features of Zionism, based on my own experiences in the field and the relevant literature. Finally, I would like to point out the relevance of some of these features to the discussion of my thesis.

2.1. The Impetus of my Research.

When I joined the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Natal, Durban, in April 1989, I enrolled as a PhD. student with the intention to study the role of youth in African Independent Churches with particular emphasis on Zionist congregations in one of the Black townships adjacent to the greater Durban area.

My first year in the Department was spent in familiarising myself with a new environment (i.e. travelling the Durban area and visiting some of the Black townships) and getting used to working academically in English. The last mentioned was partly done by reading introductory literature dealing with Social Anthropology and Religion. I also participated in

some of the Department's courses and seminars, which included a three week fieldwork exercise. Much of the time was, however, used to prepare myself for the forthcoming fieldwork period. This included random visits to Zionist services held at Durban's beachfront on an early Sunday morning, and scanning South African and international literature dealing with Zionism. I also kept close contact with my supervisor and other experts in the field of Independent Churches and Zionism in Natal in order to consult them on how to narrow and specialise the focus of my studies and subsequent fieldwork. Moreover, I was closely following the development and transformation of South Africa in 1989 and 1990 by paying attention to newspapers, television, radio and numerous articles in journals referring to that topic.

At that time the political conflict had reached its peak in Natal and the Black urban areas. Accordingly, this volatile situation more and more constituted a part of my regular conversations with my supervisor, and led both of us to question the impact it might have on Zionists who were, after all, renowned for shunning political participation and violence. After weeks of discussing and considering this aspect, we decided to re-direct the focus of my research and emphasise the significance of *conflict* and *politics* and the influence both factors might have on *religion*, as it is interpreted by Zionist communities, its elders and its youth.

The identification of conflict, politics and religion as providing the broad framework of my research was then substantiated by the following reflections.

Looking at the overall situation in South Africa, politics and conflict are inextricably linked. Over the past few decades, particularly during recent years, both aspects have become part of a vicious circle that has catapulted South Africa into the headlines of world history. In fact, politics and conflict seem to permeate every fibre of the country's social structure and society. The main cause for this rests in the perpetuation of South Africa's apartheid policy. Although initial steps have been taken to dismantle the injustices of racial segregation, apartheid is still alive and its aftermath the pivot of national political reasoning and decisions. Furthermore, politics in South Africa has been and still is to a large extent, a one-sided affair, which kept the doors to governmental participation closed to the Black majority. Thus,

conflict almost appears to be a natural occurrence, for segregation politics will inevitably evoke a reaction of conflict.

Until now, history has shown that, while the conflict in South Africa has escalated, it has nearly always been a response to political decisions or, rather, to grave political injustices and miscalculations. Mass actions, strikes and politically related violence have become the order of the day. Additionally, especially after the recent unbanning of major Black political movements, such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC), political rivalry has had a negative impact on the unity within legitimate Black and liberal opposition. In the dawn of a new and democratic constitution, South African politicians of every colour continue to appear as helpless bystanders who cannot, or perhaps will not, provide an antidote to the present day conflict and its tragic aftermath of increased poverty, social instability and loss of life. The highly explosive political climate in South Africa thus suggests that there is obviously no effective solution in sight to curb the ongoing dissension.

But *is* there a way out of conflict, other than a political one? Can *religion*, for instance, be employed as a healing and unifying counter agent to the political disorder in South Africa?¹ While acknowledging the influence exerted by established churches, such as the Anglican or Methodist church, which have however become involved, if only marginally, in the political process itself, my interest is in those churches who do *not* yet have the influence and financial means of their established counterparts, namely the African Independent Churches and among them the Zionists.

Ever since their rise at the turn of the century, Zionists and other so-called 'separatist' churches have been under the suspicion of being religious-political resistance movements operating under the cover of Christianity (cf. Report of the Proceedings of the first General Missionary Conference, 1905:178f; Lea, 1926:69). It became evident since then that Zionists in particular represented anything but a political resistance movement. On the contrary, Zionists are reputed to shun violence and politics altogether, as well as withdrawing themselves from most other secular activities (cf. Sundkler, 1961: 295; Kiernan, 1974:89;

Williams, 1982:12).

On the other hand, the political antagonism in South Africa puts a lot of pressure on every citizen, Zionists included, and, while I was preparing my fieldwork, the climate in Durban's Black townships was particularly tense and violent. Nevertheless, when I eventually started my research in Kwa Mashu in May 1990, I went into the field half expecting that Zulu Zionists would continue to resist any rapprochement with political issues and to forswear political participation. One of my main goals was, therefore, to find out to what degree these expectations proved to be valid. To achieve this I intended to investigate both the religious life of Zionists and their congregations and, to a larger extent, aspects and circumstances of their secular social world. I wanted to know how Zionist individuals and communities responded to a situation of conflict and politicisation. Were they affected by the ongoing violence and, if so, how did they cope with it? What *kind* of pressure do they experience from their socio-political environment? Are they seeking for a compromise to uphold their apolitical and neutral reputation; and under what conditions would Zionists be prepared to balance their religious conviction against threatening secular influences? With regard to the latter I intended to give specific attention to Zionist youngsters. Bearing in mind that it is predominantly South Africa's Black youth which is involved in the forefront of political mass-action, strikes and violence, I was interested in how far young Zionists would get mixed up with such actions. In other words, was their political stance and attitude different to that of their elders and what effect would that have on their Zionist membership and the prospect of ultimately constituting the future leadership of their congregations?

During my literature survey and the beginning of my fieldwork period I found that all the above mentioned questions are subject to and are interrelated with features that distinguish Zionists from other religious communities and their secular township environment. I therefore had to structure my research according to distinctive Zionist characteristics which will be outlined next.

2.2. Distinctive Characteristics of Zionism

The variety of African Independent Churches in South Africa is considerable. It all began when a Wesleyan minister, the Thembu Nehemiah Tile, left his mission church and established the Thembu Church in 1884. Tile is said to have grown impatient of European control (Lea, 1928:74) and thus reacted against the subjection of the Africans within the Wesleyan Church. Another Wesleyan minister, Mangena Mokone, followed Tile's example and eight years later, in 1892, founded the 'Ethiopian Church' (Shepperson, 1953:9). Mokone chose the name 'Ethiopian' after interpreting Ps. 68:31 ('Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God') as a hint for Africans to have their own self-governed African churches (ibid. p. 9; Sundkler, 1961:39). Henceforth, Ethiopianism stood for African churches that seceded from European mission churches such as the Wesleyan, Baptist or Free Church of Scotland².

In contrast, the rise of Zionism in South Africa took place slightly after the first Ethiopian churches were established. Founded in Chicago/Ill. (USA) in February 1886 by the Scottish born J.A. Dowie, the main teachings of the 'Christian Catholic Church in Zion' focused on divine healing, triune immersion and a puritan lifestyle. After it was merely a year old, Dowie already sent overseers and missionaries to the southern tip of the African continent to spread and teach the motto of his church: 'Salvation, Healing and Holy Living' (Sundkler, 1961:48; Mahon, 1986:170f; Oosthuizen, 1987:2f.).

At the turn of the century the new headquarters of the 'Christian Catholic Church in Zion' in Zion City/Chicago, had recorded some initial success in South Africa, having proselytized many Boers in the Orange Free State and the Cape Colony (Mahon, 1986:173). However, the initial interest among White South Africans began to dwindle very soon after, and Zionism began to make an impact on the Black population instead (Oosthuizen, 1987:12f.) The mission work, undertaken by overseers from America and by resident European ministers who had converted to Zionism, now concentrated on the increasing number of Blacks joining the church. Accordingly, seven years after its introduction, the first Black Zionists were baptized (Sundkler, 1976:43f.). Naturally, the earliest written reports about Zionism emphasised the church's mission among Blacks and the growth of its membership. 'Leaves of Healing', for example, mouthpiece of Dowie's church, enthusiastically announced

in 1904 that thousands of Africans had found a new home in Zion (Vol. XV, 25, 1904, cit. Oosthuizen, 1987:17). The church's claim to be the sole representative of Zionism in South Africa, however, did not last too long. Black church officials like D. Nknyane and E. Mahlangu soon left the 'Christian Catholic Church in Zion' to found their own churches and to do their mission work in South Africa and Swaziland, respectively (Sundkler, 1976:56ff.). These first secessions from Dowie's church, at the end of the first decade of this century, initiated subsequent foundations of new churches in Zion.

At present official reports show that in South Africa alone there are close to 7 500 different registered denominations of African Independent Churches (Oosthuizen, 1986:ii; Retief, 1991:4ff.). Of these churches Zionists are estimated to represent 43% or more than 3 200 congregations (Retief, *ibid.*), which already implies their weight and distinctiveness within the religious and social community of South Africa. Among the multiplicity of Independent Churches, the collective term 'Zionists' commonly marks the difference between them and the Ethiopian-type churches: Whereas Ethiopian churches, although separated from the parent body of protestant mission churches, remain fairly orthodox in their religious conduct and organisation, Zionists are generally characterized as 'prophet-healing', 'Spirit' or 'charismatic' churches (Sundkler, 1948:53f.; 1976:16f.; Turner:1968:23f; West, 1975:17).

Yet the term Zion or Zionist might not even appear in the name of a church that exhibits typical Zionist features, as was the case with four Zionist congregations I studied in the field. I found that, sometimes, 'Zion' or 'Zionist' merely serves as a part or supplement to a church name that emphasises 'Apostolic', 'Holy Spirit', 'Pentecostal' or even 'Ethiopian' (cf. Appendix 1; cf. also Sundkler, 1976:15; Kiernan, 1982:102). Accordingly one can assume that the interpretation of Christianity may vary in certain aspects. Nevertheless, from what I experienced during my research and what has been stated in the relevant literature, there are numerous features that churches of the Zionist type have in common and which underline their distinctiveness.

Perhaps the most prominent feature that emerges in Zionist churches is the generating and the use of the power of the Spirit (Zulu: 'umoya'). By controlling what, according to Kiernan

(1978:28) can be identified with the Holy Spirit of Christian belief, Zionists thus endeavour to fend off or, rather, heal physical and spiritual illnesses which afflict the individual (cf. also Kiernan, 1979:13; Williams, 1982:189f; Makhubu, 1988:63). For a healing to be successful, the Spirit is not simply 'evoked', but its presence and efficacy is linked to a set of rituals and symbolic meanings. Correspondingly, in the course of Zionist services I attended, a combination of communal prayers, dancing and rhythmic clapping of hands and the wearing of Zionist uniforms ensured the power of the Spirit. I could, however, not observe the use of flags, saltwater and ashes, the beating of drums and baptism by immersion, all of which are generally reported to be an additive of the above mentioned (cf. West, 1975:19; Kiernan, 1978:28ff.; 1979:14f.; Williams, 1982:183ff.; Comaroff, 1985:200f.; Oosthuizen, 1987:28f.; Makhubu, 1988:77f.). The actual manifestation of the Spirit during a service and healing process comes to the fore by prophecy and speaking in 'tongues'. Supported by the strength of communal prayers and personal ascetism (e.g. concomitant fasting which, I was told, can take up to four days) a Zionist prophet, inspired by the Spirit, can employ his visions to detect the causes of illness, and prescribe the appropriate antidote.

Very often speaking in 'tongues' is a sign that the presence of the Spirit is uttered through the prophet or, at times, through any other church member. Whenever I witnessed a prophet speaking in 'tongues' it appeared to be the culmination of communal prayers, songs and dancing. The very first time I saw this I was quite startled, because it happened almost unexpectedly. A prophet (in some cases several) would stand among the congregation - which builds a circle around the sick person who came and asked for his or her affliction to be healed - and join them in singing hymns or saying prayers. I noticed that, after a while, the prophet would become increasingly quiet, close his eyes and gently sway to the rhythm of a hymn. Then, with a sudden 'outburst', the prophet begins to speak in 'tongues', moves or even runs around the ill person. For the congregation this is the sign that the prophet is inspired by the Spirit, and they support him by singing even louder. The speaking in 'tongues', I perceived as a combination of unrecognisable syllables and words, and is usually done in such a high pitched and boisterous manner that some of the prophets I observed ended up with severe hoarseness or no voice at all at the end of a service. The verbal sets

spoken are then open to interpretation by others, and may thus contribute to further diagnosis and the treatment of an affliction (cf. also Sundkler, 1961:239, 247f.; Kiernan, 1976a:345; 1985:311). Altogether, the control of the Spirit, healing, prophecy and the speaking in 'tongues' can be identified as a significant feature of Zionist religious experience.

The total membership of each congregation I studied in Kwa Mashu and the greater Durban area varied between 35 and 150 adherents, i.e. they are rather small in size when one compares them to a congregation of the Lutheran church in the township, for example, where I once counted over 250 parishioners. Although there are always a handful of non-Zionists and sporadic visitors present at a Zionist gathering, the figures given relate to those members who *regularly* attend the weekly meetings and services. This gives rise to an additional Zionist feature, namely the cohesiveness and closeness of a Zionist congregation. Says Mr. Shabala, a Zionist minister:

'We all know each other very well in our church. We have been together for a long time and we know what everybody does, when somebody is ill or has problems at work. We always look after each other. It's not like in other churches (e.g. Lutheran, Methodist etc.) where people from all over the place come together for one hour on a Sunday and then go home again.'

In other words, the comparatively small size of a Zionist community generates intimate interpersonal relations. Here personal problems, anxieties and strivings are widely known and are included in the commitment and action of every other individual, in order to achieve religious and social unity within the group (cf. also Pauw, 1960:66; West, 1975:83; Kiernan, 1982:83).

Though Zionist congregations may be small in size, they offer a relatively wide variety of offices and positions. During the gatherings I attended I noted that, although the actual leadership of a congregation (i.e. ministers, general secretaries and prophets) did not exceed four to five male Zionists, there was always a group of five to ten church members who represented the positions of lower rank. Here men and, to a lesser extent, women supported the services as evangelists, preachers and preachers on trial. Sundkler observed similar

circumstances and described this as a tendency of 'over-staffing', which would often create 'absurd situations' in the church hierarchy (1962:127, 139). This may certainly be true in cases the author personally witnessed, yet to me the different positions rather appeared to have the character of teamwork. Here, through the distribution of different positions with different ranks, the control of the group rests on the whole community and not on a mere single leader. Accordingly, West (1975:69ff.) and Kiernan (1982:104) pointed out that an extended hierarchy and increased opportunity of participation would in fact enhance the religious organisation of a Zionist group, and reinforce the communal belonging of all members.

Zionism generally flourishes and has most of its adherents in urban, rather than rural areas; particularly in and around the townships of industrial centres such as Johannesburg and Durban. The reasons for a predominantly urban concentration of Zionist churches also explain, to a large extent, a number of Zionist features and their purposes: much of the continuous growth of urban Zionist churches is built on the disadvantaged social and economic environment in which Zionists dwell. Kwa Mashu is symptomatic of such an environment and Zionist groups here, as reported elsewhere in the country, are able to provide communal harmony and order, which helps members to adapt to and cope with urban conditions (cf. also West, 1975:196f; Kiernan, 1985:97f.) Moreover, since the majority of Kwa Mashu Zionists also belong to the poorer and less educated mass of township residents they can identify with those who are in the same predicament. What Zionists can offer to them is a system of self-support and improvement, that addresses the grievances of the physically sick and socially handicapped (cf. also Sundkler, 1961:122; Kiernan, 1974:86; 1985:98; West, 1975:80f.; Williams, 1982::21f.; Comaroff, 1985:255; Makhubu, 1988:65f.) Altogether, as Kiernan puts it, Zionists can be seen as a religiously imbued welfare society which unremittingly tries to subdue the existential problems of poor urban Blacks by the ingenious management of available resources - for instance healing, a puritan lifestyle and assisting each other in times of need (1985:98).

A feature closely related to Zionist attempts to counterbalance the disorder outside their church communities is the strong belief in sorcery. Sorcery is understood to be mystically

damaging and the source of almost every illness (cf. also Sundkler, 1961:254; Williams, 1982:48; Kiernan, 1984:224; Schoffeleers, 1991:4). Such illness can be caused by personal feelings (e.g. envy or jealousy), physical afflictions or social and psychological distress. Basically, every non-Zionist is suspected of being an actual or at least a potential sorcerer. This is especially true of those who are known to use traditional medicine ('umuthi'), which is regarded as utterly harmful and believed to be employed for the infliction of illnesses. At the same time, Zionists equally condemn consultations of traditional diviners ('izangoma') and herbalists ('izinyanga'), for they use and produce the damaging medicine that can help to commit sorcery. Contacts with the aforementioned are also prohibited in cases of physical illnesses which are not believed to have been caused by sorcery.

'Sometimes,' as a Zionist elder confided to me, 'especially when somebody has a bad flu or a broken arm, there is little we can do. We can pray for him, yes. But if a person is really sick then we must send him to a medical doctor in town. But we don't advice them to go to a herbalist ('inyanga'). We don't trust these guys.'

Otherwise, in order to combat sorcery and consequent afflictions, Kwa Mashu Zionists stated that they generally rely on communal prayers and healing, a service they occasionally also extend to non-Zionists (which, in turn, naturally appeals to potential members). Once again it is the mutual commitment of the small religious community that generates the strength to counteract a mystical threat from the outside (cf. also Kiernan, 234; Williams, 1982:215).

The considerably large number of different Zionist churches countrywide has, to a certain extent, been attributed to their tendency towards fragmentation (Sundkler, 1961:165f.; West, 1975:75; Kiernan, 1985:92; Makhubu, 1988:101f.), which appears as another outstanding feature of Zionism. A layman might perhaps agree with the rather unfortunate remark made by Davies and Shepherd (1954:181), that the fragmentation of Independent Churches rests on the 'fissiparous tendency' of the Bantu. But, of course, the multitude of Zionist groups does not come about through the blind operation of such simplistic mechanisms. Rather, there are two contributing factors. Firstly, the more a church grows, the more difficult its organisation becomes. As soon as a church has established numerous congregations it is increasingly burdensome for its leader to maintain his religious authority and to cope with

the management of every congregation. Also, as Kiernan points out, leaders may fail to keep up the close contact, because they cannot afford the time and financial effort it would entail to keep all their congregations going (1985:92). In such cases branch leaders might take the opportunity to establish their own church.

The second reason for secession, apart from the growth factor, is that of competition.

'A lot of my members want to become leaders.', the Zionist minister Mr. Ngubane told me. 'There is nothing wrong with that, initially. But what happens if there are too many leaders? Who decides what? They go here and there and I don't know what they do. People become jealous and rival each other. No, I always keep the number of official leadership positions in my church low. I must be able to control them.'

In accordance with such statements, young and aspiring preachers, deputy leaders and ministers of large congregations might be dissatisfied with the way their church is led, and feel that their religious aspirations are hampered by the older leadership. Moreover, within his church and its variety of offices, a Zionist has the opportunity to achieve what he is prevented to do otherwise: to take over responsibilities and leadership positions in a still predominantly segregated society. An ambitious person can thus establish his 'own' following, and later take the advantage to break away from his church (cf. also Sundkler, 1961:297; Kiernan, 1982:107).

A further and, in relation to the subject of my thesis, very important and distinctive feature, is the Zionists' renowned apolitical and non-violent attitude. This feature has received widespread attention, generally coinciding with my own findings which I will discuss in the course of this thesis. Here the dominant impression given is that Zionists refrain from participating in political issues. It has been argued that Zionist churches seem to accept the rather unprofitable social and political circumstances they share with other Black South Africans, and come across as law abiding citizens who seek to solve the negative side-effects of their day-to-day life within their religious community (Sundkler, 1961:295; 1976:308f.; Kiernan, 1974:80ff.; Williams, 1982:12; Makhuby, 1988:67f.; Schoffeleers, 1991:14f.). Other sources more or less confirmed that Zionist political quiescence, however, added their

anticipation or disappointment in Zionists emerging as an organized resistance and anti-apartheid movement (Mafeje, 1975:169f.; Comaroff, 1982:262). With regard to the Zionist communities I studied there was no sign of the last mentioned. It came to light, instead, that they understand their churches as a sanctuary from the omnipresent (or ubiquitous) disorder that permeates their social, economic and political environment. In total contrast to a disadvantageous secular world a Zionist congregation equips its members with the capacity to gain control over their lives and gives them an opportunity of individual display and development (cf. also Sundkler, 1976: 318f.; Kiernan, 1985:97f.; 1986:9; Makhubu, 1988:68f.).

The characteristics outlined above provide an overall picture of the distinct Zionist way of life, which indicates the following significant aspects. To begin with, Zionists appear to create *boundaries* between themselves and an environment that represents disorder. That is they distance themselves from a world that has caused various forms of distress and affliction which Zionists endeavour to overcome. With that they underline the mainstay of their religious work, namely to offer an antidote to poverty and ill-health. This concept is supported by a common Zionist *identity* which emerges from within a small and close-knit congregation that shares responsibilities, promotes group support and acknowledges the established congregational hierarchy.

By minding their own business and striving to offer a sanctuary from the disorder outside their communities, Zionists signal their exclusiveness and *neutrality*. Accordingly, in order to emphasise and maintain their religious work and values, Zionists discourage and shun any dealing or interaction with damaging secular and mystical agents. These influences, generally identified with the unstable and insecure socio-political circumstances and the potential risk of being exposed to sorcery, are a variety of *threats* a Zionist group has to deal with. In addition the broad features of Zionism also indicate that there is a threat from within a Zionist congregation: The strict limitation of leadership positions, combined with a relatively low level of education of older high ranking church officials, can, at times, cause younger and ambitious Zionists with unfulfilled leadership aspirations to secede from their churches to establish their own.

Eventually, the described features signify that Zionists *respond* to threats in their own distinctive way. In this regard, Zionist congregations emerge as welfare societies that set out to counteract, i.e. respond to the negative influences of an overall hostile environment by means of healing, mutual care and self-support. Internal dissensions, which may affect the communal cohesion and harmony, appear to be obviated by an extended hierarchy that allows a great part of the congregation to participate in its control.

Having indicated the significance of boundary, identity, neutrality, threat and response to Zionism I shall now continue to look at these aspects more closely and outline their relevance as research components by giving prominence to selected literature which dealt with the extent of Zionist political involvement.

2.3. Zionists and Politics

Since I will subsequently be dealing with a variety of accounts of Zionism and its relation to politics, I wish to briefly establish a general distinction of the term 'politics' and its implications, for the term itself appears rather flexible and open to diverse interpretations.

Deriving from the Greek verb 'politike' ('the skill of public administration') the term politics has been considered by many philosophers, social scientists and sociologists. Weber (1926, cit. in Meyers, 1977:31), for example, viewed politics as a means of striving for authority and power in order to achieve idealistic or egoistic aims, and subsequently taking pleasure in the prestige that is thus provided. Furthermore, politics is also taken to mean exerting influence on the distribution of power (Weber, 1961:78). Summing up, Weber stresses that 'political' generally stands for the relations of authority within a political organisation or the state, i.e. government (1947:142).

Smith carries Weber's thoughts further, and states that the combination and interplay of relations of authority and power are characteristic of a political organisation. According to

the author, the ultimate aim of a political organisation is the regulation of public affairs (1968:194). In this regard Radcliffe-Brown (1940:XIV) argues that the framework for a political organisation is provided by some sort of territorial structure, which would underlie every human society. Though 'territorial structures' do not exist among Zulu Zionists in Kwa Mashu, they have erected symbolic barriers, aiming to maintain their exclusiveness and religious ethics. Likewise, a combination of authority and power, as suggested by Weber and Smith, is exercised by Zionist leaders, ministers and prophets (cf. also Kiernan, 1976). Nevertheless, that does not transform a Zionist church into a political organisation that employs political means to influence the distribution of power, in order to regulate public affairs. My intention here is to view Zionists, renowned as peace-loving and apolitical, in the context of South Africa's historical and present day distribution of political power and authority. Consequently, instead of asking whether Zionists show the signs of a political organisation, I believe it is more appropriate instead to investigate whether Zionists are reported to have developed a political behaviour or consciousness. To second this suggestion it must be said that, within the consulted literature, I could find no evidence that brought Zionists anywhere near a definition of being a political organisation.

However, over time there has been agreement among a number of authors that Zionists do indeed withdraw from, and display a reluctance to become involved in politics. The explanations provided by these authors as to why Zionists display this distinct behaviour have historically been diverse. This is particularly so with regard to the extent to which Zionists are apolitical, and the reasons for this stance. For the remainder of this chapter I shall therefore highlight the development of the debate on Zionist political quiescence. While it will become clear in the course of this dissertation that Zionists retain their apolitical attitude, the reasons for and means of doing so have shifted.

Historically, the foundation (at the turn of this century) and subsequent development of African Independent Churches, of which Zionists are a prominent part, has been eyed with suspicion and concern. It was commonly feared that new churches would evoke an African consciousness leading to political opposition. The South African government, in particular, observed the growth of Independent Churches with reservation. It feared that - fuelled by the

slogan 'Africa for Africans' and the fact that numerous founding members of the South African Native National Congress (later ANC), in 1912, had been leaders of Ethiopian churches - these churches would serve as mouthpieces of, and supply leadership for, African Nationalism (Shepperson, 1953:13f; Kamphausen, 1976:478ff.)³ But, as Shepperson stresses, any possible political fervour within the Ethiopian movement and other Independent Churches was spent by the end of the 1920's. Thereafter they no longer served as a basis for political action.

At one stage during my fieldwork I spoke to a Zionist leader about the past of Independent Churches in South Africa and the claim that they had been involved in politics. What I asked him then was whether he could remember his father or grandfather (both of whom were ministers in D. Nkonyane's 'Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion') mentioning anything to him in that regard. He thus replied:

'From my grandfather's side, I can't remember anything. But from my father I know that he didn't like apartheid and the pass laws. He liked Albert Luthuli (former president of the ANC) because he was for peace and he wanted us Blacks to have more rights. But he (his father) was not a member of the ANC. He just concentrated on the church and said "if you want peace, you must pray for peace".'

That leader, who knew the history of his church very well, also stated that, to his knowledge, his church had never attempted to engage itself in the political liberation of Black South Africans.

On a larger scale this is confirmed by Sundkler who contends that those voices, which claim that the rise of Zionism is based on political reasons, clearly miss the mark (1961:295). For him the few instances of radical party affiliations of some Zionist groups do not offer sufficient proof of a political trend. Instead, Zionists were known to be loyal towards the government, and any resentments against Whites may have emerged as a result of thinking that they were ritually unclean (55). Sundkler, though not overtly suggesting the existence of Zionist boundaries and neutrality, later indicates these aspects by stating that after 1948 the Zionist church became a refuge, providing an emotional outlet in an apartheid system.

He also foresaw a change in the political climate, which would lead to radical upheavals, thereby posing a threat to Zionist communities. Sundkler predicted that during such a time the churches, rather than becoming politically active, would respond by providing centres of prayers, help and inspiration for their adherents (1976:308, 319). On the whole, Sundkler's account of Zionist involvement in political issues can be summed up as follows: The acceptance of the, for Africans, still unprofitable social and political circumstances and, secondly, the church as a refuge and a place that warrants self-esteem and individual development.

Lanternari (1963) pursues Sundkler's suggestions when he investigates Zionism as one of the 'Nativistic-Religious and Messianic Movements' that strive to fight racial segregation and other disadvantages, imposed by colonial administrators. Because of its comparative task Lanternari's work does not focus entirely on Zionism, yet the author substantiates the indication that Zionists withdraw from active political participation and emphasise neutrality. Although, as he implies, Zionists had every reason to contest the political and social dilemma they found themselves in, they would appear to solve the respective problems *within* their congregations (38). By giving an explicit account of typical Zionist features, Lanternari moves on to characterize Zionism as religious escapism which would be in contrast to religious movements who would seek salvation by immediate action, such as military struggle or direct determined opposition to colonial or oppressive forces (312). Instead he identifies Zionism as belonging to the category of 'endogamous messianic movements' that opt to find salvation by withdrawing from the dominant society, and by establishing a society and a world of their own (314). Within the bounds of that society, or rather church community, an individual may thus achieve true liberation through spiritual, cultural and ethical upliftment (312.).

Entering the field many years after Sundkler's and Lanternari's observations the circumstances of the socio-political environment are much more tense and complicated. South Africa today is going through a period of political transformation which is accompanied by widespread violence and political rivalry. In that process, opposing factions do not shy away from verbal abuse, malicious intimidation and, sadly, senseless murder. It is arguable,

therefore, whether the characteristics emphasised by Sundkler and Lanternari still apply to Zionists in Kwa Mashu in the early 1990's. At least in the years building up the present political conflict, Kiernan and Williams all but confirmed these characteristics among Zionists in the greater Durban area.

Kiernan discusses intensively the reluctance of Zionists to get involved in extra-church affairs. Prior to his conclusions Kiernan refutes the assumption that both the foundation of the Independent Churches and the Zionist exclusiveness, are a sign of anti-Europeanism and rejection of the White caste, since these allegations were not coherently articulated by the congregations themselves (1974:80f.). Furthermore, Kiernan sees no point in why a Zionist community would seek to erect a barrier which already exists. He stressed that the common attitude towards Whites was neutral. Instead, Zionists seemed anxious to exclude themselves from the rest of the township, so as to maintain their puritan lifestyle and to be forearmed against anything that could shatter their religious philosophy of life (82). The Zionist attitude of exclusiveness would play an even bigger role in terms of taking political sides or developing a political consciousness. Kiernan found that, in the early 1970's, Zionists in Kwa Mashu took no part in township or any other politics. They were seemingly more interested in the American attempt to conquer the moon than in Chief Buthelezi and his first steps as head of the emergent KwaZulu government. The author concludes that most Zionists do indeed shun political life like most other secular activities. For Kiernan this is but a clear aspect of the exclusiveness Zionists practice in the face of other Africans.

In a more recent article, Kiernan underlines his suppositions. With regard to politics, he emphasises that one does not become a Zionist to do away with apartheid, to stop urban migration or to get better jobs for everybody. Rather the individual joins the church with the intention of gaining some control over his or her own life and circumstances (1986:9).

Though basically substantiating Kiernan's findings, Williams (1982), however briefly, reports that some Zulu Zionists were willing to take political sides. During his fieldwork Williams spoke to a Zionist minister who seriously considered signing up the members of his congregation with the Inkatha movement. That was in the late 1970's, which means that

Inkatha had just been initiated and was not yet a political party. Still, this minister apparently thought twice, because he feared that if his members joined Inkatha, the fees demanded by the organisation would have the effect of diminishing contributions to church funds (12). It is unfortunate that Williams did not pursue the minister's intention further, in order to find out whether or not some of the church members actually did join Inkatha, and for what reasons. Otherwise Williams observed that there were no attempts or a willingness on the part of Zionists to organize themselves as a protest movement. Rather than opposing the social and racial domination of the South African government, and notwithstanding a long experience of injustice towards Black people, Zionists appeared to the author to be law-abiding and reliable citizens (ibid.).

What *has* changed, however, is that Kwa Mashu Zionists today can rarely maintain their neutrality and exclusiveness from the secular world without justifying it. This is particularly so in matters political. To back up my research I also interviewed and spoke to non-Zionists and representatives of Black political parties. Thus, in many instances I learned that Zionists were actually blamed and scolded for their withdrawal and pronounced political neutrality. The ANC member Mr. Sibisi, for example, put it this way:

'It is time for Zionists to wake up and join the struggle against the oppressive regime. How can they expect that anything changes if they sit back and show no commitment to resistance?'

In most cases I found that such statements of disappointment were made without acknowledging the spectrum of Zionist ethics and values, i.e. the reasons *why* Zionists refrained from political participation were hardly ever considered.

Some years back the thoughts of this ANC respondent were also entertained by Mafeje (1975). It is a pity though - and this is, I admit, because I have come to respect Zionists and their principles - that Mafeje, while not contesting the fact of Zionist political disengagement, adds another dimension by judging and condemning it. Writing just prior to the Soweto uprising of 1976 and drawing on earlier fieldwork experience in Langa (Cape Town), Mafeje dismisses Zionists as an 'underdeveloped' product of Christianity who draw their membership

largely from uneducated 'pagan and semi-pagan' migrants (170). In this, he claims to reflect the view of the community at large, which regards the Zionist church as a 'fake' church, as opposed to 'genuine' churches, where the members are more educated and respectable (169). In continuing to label Zionists as 'fake' churches, he very much doubts that they and other 'primitive rebels' are the answer to the problem of White supremacy. Mafeje is convinced that all the Zionist church officials have no means of changing anything at all, mainly because of their low standard of education (174). While underlining once again the political apathy of Zionists and reproaching them for their political timidity, Mafeje's less than dispassionate assessment reasserts the apolitical profile of Zionists. He is unable to hide his frustration over the fact that Zionists will not march to the beat of a different drum.

Far less judgemental with regard to a potential political resistance of Zionists, and definitely more thought-provoking, are Comaroff's considerations. One of her concerns was whether Tshidi Zionists in Bophuthatswana developed and maintained a spirit of resistance after, as she says, being peripheralized by the forces of colonial capitalism (1985:260). In her analysis of the Tshidi community as a whole, she argues that it is engaged in the process of reasserting control in order to cast off the shackles of domination. However, she continues, it appears that the structural predicament of the community condemns it to be continuously dependent on this very domination (261). In how far then, Comaroff asks, can one assess the Zionists in such an analysis? Could it be, for example, that Zionists deliberately ignore reality, thereby unwittingly putting their imaginative power at the disposal of an apartheid regime they should protest against? Having reiterated Mafeje's question, she provides a different answer. Comaroff proposes that, by looking beyond the conventionally explicit domains of 'political action' and 'consciousness', Tshidi Zionists are indeed political by making a statement of protest (196). In her perception this protest arises as an expression of cultural resistance. In other words, Tshidi Zionism can be seen as a 'symbolic counterculture' (191) which resists the dominant order by subverting the cultural symbols which they have received from missionary protestantism. Having thus turned the structures of Western orthodoxy inside out and subsequently reconstructed them to serve their own Zionist interpretations of Christianity, Tshidi Zionists counterbalanced and separated themselves from their marginalised status within a neo-colonial society. According to

Comaroff Tshidi Zionism, in being opposed to the dominant order, can be perceived as a statement of denial, wherein marginality is transformed into esteem and subordination into defiance (213). Despite her insistence upon Zionism's inverted political statement she somewhat contradictorily concludes that at some point in the future it will shake off its otherwise 'apolitical escapism' and transform symbolic resistance into a definite political stance (262). Ultimately she therefore concedes that Tshidi Zionists are fundamentally apolitical.

On the whole, Comaroff's proposition is certainly very interesting, though her findings cannot be applied to the predicament of Kwa Mashu Zionists. Unlike their Tshidi counterparts, the present crisis confronting Zionists in Kwa Mashu is not one in which they are pitted against the dominant order and which they can resolve by cultural or symbolic subversion. Instead the threat proceeds from the politics of opposition which presents itself in a raw and violently physical form. It is to no avail to adopt cultural-symbolic means to cope with this political pressure. Furthermore, the crisis is of such recent provenance that sufficient time has not elapsed to allow them to develop a culture of resistance to it. Their only recourse is through strategy, as we shall see.

In the course of this dissertation I will try to point out that the strategy of Kwa Mashu Zionists is based on dialogue and negotiation between old and young and between the congregation and the socio-political environment. Through this conversation, they can achieve an acceptable balance between church and politics, without forfeiting their communal boundaries and religious identity. It will appear, therefore, that their strategy adopts the character of a positive (i.e. acceptable to them) reaction, rather than resorting to a pro-active response which would include active participation in political resistance.

The same line of thought is pursued by Schoffeleers (1991). By evaluating the causes of Zionist political acquiescence, he emphasises the role of healing which, as he defines it, refers to the totality of activities and ideas that are meant to correct or alleviate physical, social and spiritual disorders and afflictions (1991:2). Accordingly, Schoffeleers underlines that he did not intend to investigate whether Zionist churches are being used as channels for

voicing protest against the subordinate position of Blacks, but rather whether their widely acknowledged political acquiescence is a general characteristic of such churches where healing assumes a prominent part of the religious conduct (5).

Schoffeleers discusses a list of reported factors which would certainly contribute to the apolitical attitude of Zionists, namely the rejection of European culture, the quest for and opportunity of leadership (as opposed to the chances of personal advancement in a racially segregated society), the fear of state reprisals and the desire to counteract socio-economic disadvantages within their own community (12). Yet to Schoffeleers these statements appear in essence to be secondary factors of the debate. Instead he makes the interesting proposition that healing is to be identified as the root cause of Zionist political acquiescence. He substantiates his proposition by drawing attention to the 'modern' or Western form of biomedical healing and to traditional healing, both of which would be comparable to Zionist ritual healing. He argues that all three healing systems embrace the character of political acquiescence, because all of them tend to individualise, and thereby depoliticise, problems 'which more often than not are political' (ibid.). This would be particularly so when a patient experiences tensions from the world around him or her, or may think him or herself unable to cope with the demands of society. The point Schoffeleers is trying to make is that a patient's resulting illness is often perceived as a form of deviance which may upset the social order. Healing then re-establishes the order by putting the patient under scrutiny (and suspicion, in the case of sorcery), prescribing a remedy and, eventually, reintegrating the patient into his or her social or religious community (16).

With regard to Zionists, Schoffeleers identifies ritual healing as a mechanism of social control that compensates spiritual, social and political ailments. Since the church can provide a therapeutic service through its healing practices, a Zionist would not seek improvement of his or her physical health or social status through public medical services or by political means, respectively (14f.).

Towards the end of his article the author makes the interesting remark that 'healing equals conservatism' (18), an equation that sums up his argument that healing aims to regain the

status quo. In other words, Zionist ritual healing does not aim to challenge or change what is outside the religious community, but focuses on re-establishing the order and cohesiveness within. In this way, and here I do agree with Schoffeleers findings, Zionist healing is connected to their political acquiescence. The author also demonstrates that 'conservatism' enables Zionists to keep their boundaries intact and signal their neutrality to the outside. Furthermore, individual identity, temporarily weakened by damaging influences, is reinforced to complement the identity of the group, its values and its ethics. I would like to add, however, that Schoffeleers did not consider the physical and violent impact of political altercation which currently poses a threat to many Black South Africans. It is thus debatable whether Zionist ritual healing can continue to foster political acquiescence when confronted with the effects of raw political violence.

Moving on to identify the problems I want to pursue in the course of this thesis, I would like to consider Fernandez' debate on the comparative influence of modernisation on religious movements (among them Zionism) in Western and Southern Africa (1969), for his emphasis on transformation may serve as a further specification of my research aims.

One of Fernandez' main arguments is that these religious movements are interested foremost in 'microcosmogony', i.e. in establishing a universe of their own in which to dwell; instead of trying to change an environment which, being subjected to modernisation, stimulates the breakdown of kin and community ties. They would thus attempt to recreate the experience of a community and enhance their endeavours by tending to be apolitical, self-isolating, self-sufficient and self-indulgent (1969:5). Such 'endocentric' movements would not aim at changing the larger economic, technological or political order. Instead, they would respond to modernisation - which is, as Fernandez explains, in itself a process of transformation to new values, identities and even realities - by creating a sanctuary which caters for and protects the spiritual needs and social ailments of its members (6f.). Within these sanctuaries a transformation takes place that establishes another, more meaningful and gratifying world in which the members of the respective religious community can identify and find salvation (21).

Hitherto Zulu Zionists have reportedly accomplished this by transforming disorder into order. They limited the intrusion of harmful agents -deriving from the mystical threat of sorcery and an environment that has been deliberately transformed into a disadvantageous segregated society - by maintaining their boundaries and emphasising their neutrality. Through healing, group-support and mutual care, Zionism transforms its membership from sanctuary seeking and ailing individuals into a harmonious religious community that fosters salvation, self-respect, acknowledgement and a common group identity. Thus Zionists appear indeed to have created a microcosmos which enables them to deal with and function better in the larger society (macrocosmos).

Projecting Fernandez' argument into the current South African socio-political circumstances, I suggest that modernisation can now stand for democracy and that the transformation from the unjust structures of apartheid to a purely democratic society is predominantly political. Against that background I want to investigate the problems Kwa Mashu Zionists are arguably battling with. Looking at the aspects we have identified above, one can assume that Zionist boundaries and identity are exposed to a new kind of threat. Whereas a Zionist congregation has so far been able to successfully counteract the threat of mystical violence (i.e. sorcery) and provide an antidote to social, political and economic hardships, healing and mutual care may no longer suffice to confront the transformation outside their communities. At the same time the volatile political transformation in South Africa is characterized by the demand that individuals take sides, and more and more people resort to political activism. Since we are dealing here with urban Zionists, they are less isolated than Zionist congregations in rural areas, for example, and their microcosmos is thus constantly scrutinized by other township dwellers and representatives of Black political organisations. How then, can a Kwa Mashu Zionist congregation hold on to its apolitical and neutral stance and prevent its members, especially youngsters, from being lured into an overt and participant political struggle? Here a transformation is already taking place: There is a constant debate between elders and youngsters which seems to alter the traditional structures of authority, and tries to negotiate between the perpetuation of the existing religious values and social ethics and the opportunity to choose a different means of transformation to a meaningful and gratifying life.

These are the aspects and problems I found Kwa Mashu Zionists to be dealing with in a time of change and uncertainty. I therefore intend subsequently to demonstrate how Zionists manage to balance the contrasts between their religious convictions and the secular influences to which they are exposed. In what follows I reflect on how old and young Zionists see themselves and one another in their social environment.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. Chidester (1992) claims that the present conflict in South Africa is essentially religious in nature, ie. a competition over powerful symbolic resources; cf. 154ff; 160ff.
2. To accentuate their independence, some of the Ethiopian church leaders like H. Dwane, for example, were seeking affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church in America (Lea, 1928:77; Shepperson, 1953:10; Moeti, 1981:6). However, the initial enthusiasm born out of the relationship between the Ethiopian movement and the Afro-American members of the A.M.E. Church began to wane in the early years of the 20th Century, and even Dwane left the A.M.E. Church to establish his new church, "The Order of Ethiopia" in 1900 (Moeti, 1981:176ff).
3. Two tragic incidents seemed to confirm the existing anxieties of the South African Government. The first was the Zulu (Bambatha) Rebellion of 1906 where Ethiopian ministers were accused of seditious preaching and of being enthusiastic leaders of rebellious groups (Stuart, 1913:420f.; cf. also Marks, 1970). The other incident was the Bulhoek Massacre of 1921 during which more than 120 adherents of Enoch Mgijima's Israelites were killed by government forces, as a result of illegally occupying government land (Sundkler, 1961:72f.; cf. also Edgar, 1988).

CHAPTER THREE

Religious Affiliation and Secular Aspiration : The Everyday Life of Kwa Mashu Zionists.

Spending time with Kwa Mashu Zionists, i.e. attending their meetings, visiting their homes 'officially' and socially, not only helped me to pursue my research goals. It also gave me an impression of how Zionists, as urban Black South Africans, live and participate in their everyday life. I also learned about their religious past and their expectations of the future.

The intention of the following chapter is to introduce a number of Zionist informants and to show how they consider the circumstances of their religious and social life. Case studies of elders and youngsters may elucidate how Kwa Mashu Zionists differ or agree on aspects of their day to day activities. For the most part with these case studies I will use unedited versions of information, as they were given to me by the respective respondents.

3.1. Zionist Elders.

I have already indicated that it was not always possible to keep contact with every Zionist I met, and that some relationships I had established in the field were closer than others. Accordingly, the Zionist elders I will introduce below are part of the core of key informants whom I could visit regularly and to whom I could talk repeatedly and at length. Some of them were prepared to share an abundance of information with me, consequently they will appear again in subsequent chapters.

3.1.1. Siphon Vilakazi

Rev. Siphon Vilakazi lives with his wife and three children in a four-roomed house in Kwa Mashu's D-section. He is 62 years old and the minister of a large congregation of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion. The total membership of his congregation consists of 120 adherents, 43 of which are young members under the age of 35.

3.1.1.1. On being a Zionist.

As it was the case with so many other Kwa Mashu Zionists, it took a couple of visits into the field until Rev. Vilakazi and I established a relationship of mutual trust. Before that while we talked about Zionism in general, many of our conversations focused on my being there, the purposes of my research and my personal background. My actual initiation into being accepted as a trustworthy fieldworker happened when I attended a Sunday afternoon service of Vilakazi's congregation in July 1990. Here Vilakazi introduced me to his Zionist community in order, as he said,

'to see whether they will accept you. They have already been asking what this White guy is doing in my home. I explained it to them, but they also had to see you.'

During the service I had to stand up and state the purpose of my presence. I told the congregation that I read a lot about Zionists in books, but that my research could only be done if I was allowed to be with them, talk to them and, above all, learn from them. I emphasised, furthermore, that I did not wish to intrude upon their community as an investigator (which could have given the impression of me being a South African government official or policeman), but that my presence was of a peaceful and empathetic nature. I believe that I was successful, because as the service ended almost every member came and shook my hand and welcomed me into their midst. Walking back to Rev. Vilakazi's home, he confirmed as much.

'I think they liked you. It's not every day that a White person comes here, so they

were suspicious. They even thought that you would preach to them, but I told them that you could only do that in German, and that nobody would understand.'

The latter he said with a smile and I was glad that he 'saved' me from embarrassment. Nevertheless, that afternoon was the beginning of a good relationship between Vilakazi and myself, and he began to tell me more and more about himself.

'I've been involved in Zion all my life. In fact, I was born into it. Both of my parents were leaders, so it was natural for me to become a Zionist. My mother told me a lot about it when I was little, but I only understood more about it when I was older and went to church myself.

Until 1962, when I was 34 years old, I was an ordinary member in the church. But in this year my father died and the congregation decided that I would become the new minister of the church. Now, although I was already married and had children, I was still very young then. So I had to wait and prepare myself for that position. My mother and the elders helped me to do that and in 1965, when I was 37 years old, I took over from my father. But this is only my case here. It is not the rule of our church that a son is taking over, but I was elected by the decision of the congregation.'

His position as minister of a Zionist congregation keeps Rev. Vilakazi very occupied. Apart from the weekly services and meetings, as well as regular visits to church members, Vilakazi is also involved in the decision making and administrative planning of a church that has congregations in Natal and the Transvaal.

'We usually have our annual meeting of ministers and leaders of our church in Newcastle (Northern Natal). This is where our headquarters are. This meeting is once a year, in October. But when something important comes up and we have to make a decision, we meet at another time.

In our last meeting, for example, we discussed the costs of running such a meeting in the future. Since we have yet no official building in Newcastle, we always have to hire a hall or something, and that costs a lot of money. So we decided that we should increase the contribution towards food and accommodation, so that everybody pays at least R 10 per day. We also discussed the running costs of our churches. In Transvaal and Natal our church has nine church-houses altogether (Vilakazi's congregation, however, meets in a class room of an old school, which is free of charge). These church-houses are getting old now and we had to see what we can do about renovations, paintings, repairs and so on. So we discussed whether we have to

make combined savings for that matter or if we leave it up to the people of each congregation. Finally, we decided that each community has to look after its own church or meeting hall and ask its members to contribute. But there were only 24 out of 40 ministers present, so we had to adjourn the vote to next Easter Friday (when the second annual meeting of Vilakazi's church takes place), where all the ministers should be present. However, since these problems have been brought up, the ministers could then go home and tell the community about it, and prepare them for our annual church meeting on Good Friday.'

The aspect of money and church finance also led to a situation where Vilakazi's responsibilities as a leader demanded that he make a decision about the future of his church. In the mid 1980's the church came to a split and Vilakazi belonged to the group of ministers who supported this move.

'About five to six years ago, we were all still together under Nkonyane, the grandson of our founder Daniel Nkonyane. We were about 65 ministers and we only had one headquarters in Charlestown (a small town in Northern Natal). But then ISCOR (a South African coal mining company) wanted to take over the land where our headquarters were, because of the coal. There was nothing we could do, because of the Group Areas Act. We didn't have the money and the rights to keep that land. We then moved to Madadeni (Newcastle's Black township) which was to be our new headquarters. There, we wanted to build our new church. At this time Nkonyane asked the ministers to contribute and collect money for the church project. After two to three years when we thought the time is ripe to build the church, we discovered that there wasn't enough money. Apparently, Nkonyane hasn't managed that problem well and we thought let's put somebody else in his place who might do it better.'

In explaining Nkonyane's attitude, Vilakazi told me how, when he had just married, his mother refused to accept the help and care of his wife. His mother wanted to do everything on her own, even the cooking, and his wife was not to interfere in her day-to-day household business. Vilakazi then asked me how I would describe such a behaviour, and I answered: stubborn.

'See', he said, 'that is exactly what Nkonyane was. He was stubborn! He wouldn't take any advice on financial management, not even from his best friends. We then had a committee which told him: We leave you as a leader, and we make our own

decisions, especially in the case of our church headquarters. Nkonyane still wouldn't listen and said: "No! Go out!". So then the split came and now you have those who stick with Nkonyane and those who were going. Our leader now is C. Ndelu, but we will not change the name of the church, we are still referring to our church as Nkonyane church in commemoration of our founder. For other people it has to be a Nkonyane as leader all the time, like in the Shembe church, where the leader is always a Shembe. But the name of the leader doesn't matter, it could also be a Dlamini, for instance. Today, the Ndelu faction is bigger than the Nkonyane one.'

What appears to be more important to Vilakazi than discord over financial management and leadership abilities at the top of the church's hierarchy, is the perception and identification of church members with Zionism - as defined by the church - at a congregational level. Here a significant sign of belonging and sharing of Zionist values is the wearing of a Zionist uniform.

'Wearing our uniforms is very important to us. It shows everybody who we are and what we do. As it is, in our church, we have two different colours. The basic colour is white. This is why you see all the men wearing white gowns and women are wearing their white blouses and white skirts. Then we have the colour blue, which men wear as a sash and women as a skirt. Other Zionist churches also have the colour green, but we have that colour only when somebody is sick.'

This statement already indicates that the colours worn by Vilakazi's church members symbolize different meanings. He thus interpreted the symbolic purpose of each colour as follows.

'White stands for peace and purity. It is what our church stands for, and it tells others that we are peaceful and innocent. In other words, we don't want to cause harm, but we want to help others. When somebody wears the blue, that shows this person can help those who are sick. Women who are wearing the blue skirts, for instance, are prayer women in our church. They can pray for somebody who is sick to get better and to be healed. It's the same when men and prophets wear their blue sashes. It shows you that they can help and pray for somebody to be healed. Green is usually not used as a part of the uniform. Only when somebody is sick. Say, for instance, when you have a headache, I would tell you to wear something green. Nobody is forced to do that, but it is like one of those gowns you wear in a hospital that indicates that you are a patient and that you undergo treatment. In that way, those who wear the green are the patients, and those with the blue on their uniforms are the

doctors to help them.

What the uniform means to me is that, if I come in white, it has to do with peace. People see us, and the colour tells them that, like a white sheep, we are peaceful and for prosperity. If I wear the blue, it advertises me for the person I am: I wear blue so I can go for prayers and help the sick. If I come in green, then you know that I am not well and that I need somebody to pray for me.'

It is evident that wearing a Zionist uniform implies responsibility for the individual. Correspondingly, Vilakazi's congregation does not allow new members to wear a uniform as soon as they join.

'Firstly, somebody must be recommend you and introduce you to our congregation. In this way we can see what kind of a person you are and for what reasons you come to join us. Also, we like our members to be married and a family person. You've got to be with us for some time, that is, you have to be "in the game'. Usually, after some time, you join the others in praying for the sick. When we think you can do it (praying for the sick), you are allowed to wear the blue and then you get the uniform. With kids it's different. They are with their parents and just wear white until they come to the age or get married, and are able to join the prayers.'

If the uniform is a sign of acceptance within the Zionist group, what does it do for a Zionist outside his or her congregation? Can a uniform, for example, be seen as a protection against damaging secular and mystical influences?

'No, the uniform is no protection as such and it is no demarcation. However, it advertises you. It says that you are for peace and that you are there to help people. The uniform has only to do with praying for the sick.'

Though the uniform in itself may not be seen as protection, I suggest that it acquires a protective character, which emerged from Vilakazi's symbolic referrals to it. In my understanding, the emphasis on the colour white as a symbol of peace has the connotation of a white flag, which, in a hostile environment, signals neutrality and withdrawal from

potential conflict. At the same time, Vilakazi's allusion to uniform-wearing Zionists as 'white sheep' not only accentuates the placid and quiescent character these animals are identified with, but it also signifies that Zionists are *united in peace*. Combining white with blue sashes or skirts, the uniform may symbolize an entity where unity and peace are fundamental to provide help and healing - which simultaneously obliterates the 'white flag' as a notion of 'surrender'¹.

The symbolic significance of the uniform also epitomizes what Vilakazi regards as the essence of being a Zionist, namely group solidarity, healing and mutual care.

'People come to my church because they want to be healed and they want security. We can give them both, because we help each other and we are there for each other. You see, in other churches (e.g. Lutheran or Catholic), there is nobody there for you. We (Zionists) go from door to door but they do not. Of what use is a minister when you can meet him only once a week for two hours? What if you are sick during the week, or you want to pray with the minister during the week? If somebody is sick or needs help we will come to him and pray with him. The next day we go somewhere else, and the person we prayed for the day before might even come with us. But what if you see your minister only once a week? No, that is not right.

Also, when somebody dies we will be there. I remember when my father died in 1962. Everybody was here, the leaders and ministers and members of our church. Although he was very sick, my father knew that we were with him and that we prayed for him. He could pass away in the midst of his family.'

3.1.1.2. Secular Activities.

Like so many of his contemporaries, Rev. Vilakazi had only a basic school education.

'I only went to school for about five years. It wasn't much but at least I learned enough to get around and now what's going on in the world. Some of the older people in my church can't even read or write properly. I went to school, but I don't have a degree like you have.'

The only 'degree' Vilakazi has is his drivers license, which is put to good use, because it

provides him with a regular income.

'Though I don't have a car myself, I work as a driver for a pharmaceutical company in Overport (a suburb of Durban). For years, I used to make deliveries with a motorcycle, but now I am driving one of these VW-buses and make deliveries up and down the Natal coast and in town. It is very hard work, because sometimes I am on the road the whole day and drive long distances. Or you have to stay with customers and wait until they have something to send back with you. But I am not complaining, because these days you are lucky to have some work in the first place. Many people are out of work.

I have to leave here (Kwa Mashu) at six o'clock to start my work at half past seven. I am taking the bus into town. So I usually get up between half past four and five o'clock, have a cup of tea and some porridge for breakfast and leave for work. Coming back in the evening is a bit more complicated. Sometimes, when I return late from a delivery, I miss the bus to Kwa Mashu and I have to wait for another one. Then I only come home at, let's say, eight o'clock. Work normally finishes at five, but as I said you never know what comes up and you end up coming home very late.'

Considering the worst circumstances, Vilakazi's working day, including the time needed for commuting to and from Durban, consists of between 12 and 14 hours. There is thus little time left for recreational activities.

'When I come home I eat my supper and I just want to relax. So what do I do? I usually watch the news on television, because I want to know what's going on. But my favourite is sports. I like to watch soccer and boxing. Sometimes I get up early in the morning to see a fight live from America. My wife thinks I am crazy to do this, but I like it. I like it, because these guys fight fair and with a referee. It's not that they fight to kill each other, like it happens all around us. But when somebody gets knocked down, they get up and shake hands. They part as friends, because it's only a sport.

Otherwise I sit here with my wife and my family. We discuss problems at work or at school, whatever comes up. I also have to do paperwork for the church, planning the meetings and services. At other times, I have to visit members of the congregation, maybe because they are sick, or it's a birthday or they just want to talk to me. On weekend, unless I have to work on a Saturday morning, there is only church. That means I have to get ready and prepare my service for Sunday, or sometimes I have to go and visit one of our branches somewhere else. So you see, it's little time for other things than work and church. But this is my life.'

3.1.1.3. Expectations of the Future.

'What can I say about the future? All I can say is that I want to keep my job, so that I can feed my family. But there must be peace in this country. The way people go on right now is not right. There is too much violence. We must respect each other, all these killings are useless and make people suffer.

I would also like to be able to live in a better place than this. Why can I not be your neighbour, for example. Maybe things change and we can all live together. I wouldn't mind to have a bigger house and live in a quiet place. As you can see it's always noisy here, people are too close together and sometimes they (thugs) just cut off the electricity. Then we sit here with no light and telephone. What if something happens to you? But a new house costs a lot of money and we Blacks don't earn enough to afford that - even with housing subsidies from the KwaZulu government. As long as I can live peacefully with my family and even enough to make ends meet, I think I am alright. But things could be better, and maybe my children will be better off some day.'

As far as the future of his congregation and Zionism is concerned, Rev. Vilakazi appeared quite optimistic and confident.

'Zionism will definitely go on, as long as nothing detrimental happens to it. That is, until something or somebody comes and says to us: no more Zionists. But nothing will finish it (Zionism), because at this moment it is only increasing. There are many new members, not only in my branch, but all over. People seem to be sorting themselves. They see that they have a place here. Some come for healing and others join because we are so close and look after each other. It also happens that somebody comes to be healed and after we prayed for him he just leaves again. But most feel that they have to join, it is sort of a must when you have been healed. You are one of us then. I think Zionists will always be there.'

Yet a certain effort had to be made to keep the youth attracted to the church.

'I see it here and in other churches that youngsters tend to run away, because they cannot cope with our rules and think that we elders are too conservative. Sometimes they decide to join the Methodist church, for example, because they have more money than we do and therefore more to offer. So we must try to make the church more attractive to the youth. I thought about getting other ministers from outside the

Zionist church to speak to us about how they do it. Maybe we could pick something up, especially about theological education. I want to put more enthusiasm in the youngsters that they contribute more in the church. I know they can do it and that they are willing to do something. But I don't know where to pick it up from and what and how to change.

We should also change the pattern of our services and meetings. We have to follow a certain pattern of how to do a service. As it is now these services take too long, there are too many breaks and people come late. So people, especially, youngsters, get bored. I say we need a time pattern and put the service in an order. Mr. Ndelu, our leader, is quite aware of this problem. However, I am younger than many elders and ministers, and some old people will not listen. They are like rusty nails: When a new nail is bent you can bend it back in shape; but when a rusty nail is bent, and you want to bend it back into shape, it will break! So we have to be very careful in order to accommodate both sides.'

The overall impression I make of Rev. Vilakazi, both as a private person and as a Zionist minister, is that of a dedicated family man. Not only is he the head of his own family, which he values very much and for which he strives to provide financial and social security, but he also comes across as the caring and concerned father of his religious family, i.e. his Zionist congregation. Just like his own family, Vilakazi looks after his religious community, in order to gain health, mutual prosperity and a harmonious and peaceful future. In that way, he symbolizes and displays what Zionism stands for.

3.1.2. Adolphina Zungu.

Mrs. Adolphina Zungu is 47 years old and lives with her husband, two of their daughters and two grandchildren in an old two-roomed house in Kwa Mashu's B-section. Mrs. Zungu, as well as her husband and two daughters, are members of the Christian New Salem Church in Zion. With its headquarters in Bloemfontein (Orange Free State), the Kwa Mashu congregation of the church consists of 130 members of which 25 are under the age of 3

3.1.2.1. On being a Zionist.

My first meeting with Mrs. Zungu was a mere coincidence. It happened on one of those

Saturday afternoons during which one of my interpreters and I went around Kwa Mashu' B and D-section to make random visits in Zionist homes known to him. On many occasions we were rejected and people refused to talk to us, which is why we spent at least one Saturday afternoon a month 'scouting' for new informants. In Mrs. Zungu's case we were lucky. She had seen my informant before, knew that he was a 'good lad', and invited us into her home. Inside, we took a seat opposite Mrs. Zungu and her daughters, and after we had been served with cold drinks I started to explain the purpose of my visit. Mrs. Zungu listened without interrupting and eventually said

'This is the first time a White person comes to my house. But I can see that you come in peace and that you want to know about our church. That is a good thing, because people always think that we (Zionists) are primitive. That is rubbish. I think we are as good a church as any other.'

Our first visit was short, however, for Mrs. Zungu had promised her daughters to baby sit their children later in the afternoon. We agreed that I would return in a week's time, and when I saw her again she greeted me by saying:

'I am glad that you came back. I didn't think you would. My daughters said "how can you trust a White man? They never keep their promises." But you came and I am glad.'

I perceived her acceptance of my 'intrusion' as a great gesture of trust, since she was usually alone with her daughters due to the absence of her husband who worked as a mine-labourer in Johannesburg.

'I am with Zion for 27 years now. I was 20 when I joined the church in 1964. Actually, it was my late mother who joined first. At this time both my mother and I were Lutherans. We went to church every Sunday, but one day my mother fell sick. We didn't know what it was exactly, but she became thin, thin, thin. We then went to a doctor in town who told us that it had something to do with her stomach. So we got the medicines, which were very expensive and my mother took them. However,

they did not help and my mother was still very ill. Then she had a dream about this man who could help her. This man was a prophet in the church we belong to now. So my mother went there and the prophet helped her. The prophet told her that her sickness had something to do with the fight my mother had with a neighbour. He told her that an evil spirit was causing her anger and her pain. So they healed her and my mum was feeling better. That is when she joined, and we all followed suit. I mean, I saw what was happening to my mother. She found peace in that church and that's where I wanted to be as well.

After a year I got my uniform. It happened on a Sunday afternoon during a service. There were three of us. We had to stand in the middle, and everybody was singing and praying. We all had to tell our sins, but the only thing I could think of was that I was sometimes very jealous of others. Then the prophets came, turned us around and slapped on our backs. It is for your sins to come out, to get rid of them and to be pure. After that we went to a little river where we were baptised. Three times we were dipped in the water, and then the minister blessed us. So I have been baptised twice, once as a Lutheran and now as a Zionist. From then on I was a full member of the church and allowed to wear my uniform.'

Ever since Mrs. Zungu witnessed her mother being healed by the Zionist congregation, her commitment and dedication to the church increased. Thus over the years she was able to achieve an influential position in the hierarchy of her congregation.

'When I saw how they helped the sick and pray for them I wanted to do the same, because it helped my mother. Today, I am sort of security in the church. I sit at the entrance when we have a church meeting. During the proceedings of the church I stand there by the door. I'm the guard of the church and I make sure that, whoever comes, comes in peace and wants to be with God.'

The importance of Mrs. Zungu's position rests on a number of responsibilities, which I observed during most of the Zionist services and meetings I attended. 'Guards' or 'gate-keepers' stand or sit at the entrance of a hall or room wherein the Zionist congregation gathers. The function of the 'gate-keeper' is primarily to regulate and control the traffic through the entrance. This is particularly the case when guests or people not known to the congregation require admittance to the service, or when Zionists from a different congregation come to visit. Before they can enter they have to state the purpose of their visit

to the 'gate-keeper' and confirm that they come in peace. It is then up to the 'gate-keeper' to decide whether or not the permission to enter can be granted. I have never seen anybody turned away, but in the case of admission the 'gate-keeper' interrupts the proceedings of the meeting inside and announces the arrival and the purpose of the visit of the new-comers.

In effect, Mrs. Zungu exercises control. She guarantees that an unwanted intrusion into the circle of the community is prevented by screening the trustworthiness of the guests and newcomers. In this way, she also maintains the boundaries of her congregation and keeps them intact. This responsibility in itself indicates that Mrs. Zungu has advanced to a position, which is built upon her own identification with Zionism, and the mutual trust between herself and her congregation (cf. also Kiernan, 1974:83).

Mrs. Zungu's attention is not entirely directed to her Zionist community, however. She and other women from her congregation sometimes go to neighbours to offer their prayers in times of sickness or mourning.

'Especially when somebody dies, people need us. Often they call us to pray with them, even when they are from another church. But they are happy when we come and pray with them. If it is a neighbour who passed away, and we knew him well, we sometimes make a little donation towards the funeral. It is not much, but it helps the family. I think when we are there, they know that they are closer to God. We are not only doing this because we are Zionists, but also because to let people know that we are mourning with them and feel their grief.'

While the help and assistance of Zionists in times of sickness or grief is appreciated by many of her fellow township residents, Mrs. Zungu also confirmed that it was not always 'easy' being a Zionist.

'You see, people look down on you. They think that we are inferior and not a good church. They say that, because we have no church buildings, or because our ministers did not have enough education. Sometimes people also make fun about our uniforms. These people are blind, they judge us on what we look like and not what we are.'

3.1.2.2. Secular Activities

Since she was a teenager, Mrs. Zungu has had to help supporting her family, which prevented her from getting the school education she would have liked to have had.

'My father died when I was 16, I think I was in Standard 6 then. I had to drop out from school and look for some work, because I was the eldest and somebody had to support my mother. Although she was working as a maid in Durban, it was not enough money for her and all of us. So I had no choice and leave school. I would have liked to go for a good education and maybe pass matric, like my oldest daughter did.

After a while I got a job on the Berea (a White Durban suburb). But I didn't like it there. The people there were not very nice to me. So when I was, I think, 25 I got this job where I am now. I am working in a leather manufacturing business in Durban. It is a tough job and very tiresome. I sit on one of these sewing machines and make handbags, belts and purses. Although my husband sends money from Johannesburg, it is good to have some more income. At least I can send my children to school.

When I come home from work, I continue working. I design and sew curtains for other people. Usually, after work, I go and buy the fabric in a shop in Durban for R 19,99 a metre. When they are finished I can ask about R 80 for a curtain that fits a double window. The market is good at the time and my curtains are quite popular. I take orders and sell them on a Saturday morning in a little shop in D-section. It is a good extra income and I enjoy doing it' ².

Apart from work and her duties at church, Adolphina Zungu has only little time left for leisure activities.

'Really, I don't need much spare time. The church fills me out, I like going there. So it's not "business". However, I like to listen to the radio, especially Radio Zulu when they have this gospel programme on. They are singing very nice songs there. I also enjoy playing tennis. We have two tennis courts down the road, and sometimes I go there with my daughter. It is fun and keeps me fit. Some (Zionist) churches don't allow sports, because they think it is against God's will. We think there is nothing wrong with sports, as long as you stay with the church. What I don't do is what we in our church don't like. So I don't go out and drink liquor or bet on horses, for instance. That is not good, because you get drunk or end up having debts and any other kind of mischief. That only leads you away from God, and you worship liquor and money and not Him. This is why it is against our church rules to do so.'

3.1.2.3. Expectations of the Future.

In the light of South Africa's social and economic instability, Mrs. Zungu's outlook in the future is foremost concerned with the betterment and economic advancement of her family.

'I want my children to be able to get good jobs and for the little ones (grandchildren) a good education. But even if you have matric you don't get a job, like my oldest daughter. I think it's because the country is in a very bad state. There is too much poverty and hatred. Hopefully, that changes. I am too old to change anything, but I am sure everything will get better and my children and grandchildren will prosper. Everyday, I pray for that.

Myself, I just go on with what I do. I work and I go to church. That is all I have and I do not complain. As to the future of my church, I am optimistic. I think we will always be around, no matter what the others think of us. As it is, we get many new members these days, young and old. They are all coming to pray to God, because we are all praying there. You see, they know that they are safe under God, and when they are under God He will help them. We are here before God, and people appreciate that. So, yes, I think Zionists have a good future.'

Altogether, the example of Mrs. Zungu indicates how Zionism compensates an individual for the losses and disadvantages in an environment, which has so far only provided social injustices and economic inadequacies. Although the financial strain and low standard of education typify the lot of the majority of Black South Africans, she nonetheless finds self-esteem, recognition and salvation within a religious community of peace and stability. It appears that, to her, Zionism is not just an interpretation of Christianity to believe in, but, more prominently, a creed that is actively *lived* and passed on to others.

3.1.3 Phineas Hlongwane.

Though Mr. Hlongwane, his wife and his two children now reside in Clermont (a township ca. 30 km west of Durban, cf. Appendix II), he remains affiliated to the branch of the Ethiopian Holy Apostolic Church in Zion in Kwa Mashu's D-section. The 40 year old is the

general secretary of his church which has, according to his estimation, close to 5 000 members throughout the provinces of Transvaal, Orange Free State and Natal. In the greater Durban area the total membership of different branches amounts to 'around 2 500 parishioners' with almost 1 500 members under the age of 3 In Hlongwane's congregation I could count up to 100 adherents.

3.1.3.1. On being a Zionist.

I met Mr. Hlongwane the first time when I was in the house of the ministers of his congregation. It was on a late Sunday morning and I was waiting to join the minister and his family for the service, scheduled to begin at one o'clock at a nearby school. While I was sitting in the lounge with everybody around me busy putting on their uniforms and getting ready for the service, a man entered the room and dropped exhausted in an arm-chair opposite me. He sighed, took out a handkerchief and wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead. He leaned back, closed his eyes for a moment and then looked at me.

'I am sorry, it just took me two hours to get from Umlazi to Kwa Mashu. I went to an all-night service there, and after that I had to rush back here to be with my group. I haven't had my sleep yet. It's almost like being a businessmen, no sleep and lots of stress'.

He laughed, and then introduced himself as Phineas Hlongwane, the general secretary of the Ethiopian Holy Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa. Considering his exhaustion, I decided not to bother him with any questions. However, after I introduced myself he agreed to meet me and talk to me about himself and his church at a later stage. Since Hlongwane worked in Durban and had his own office (cf. also below), I usually went to see him there during the week at lunchtime. That suited both of us, because we could set up meetings on short notice and it only took me 10 minutes to get there from the University campus.

'I have been a Zionist all my life. In fact, I would just say that I was born in the church. My parents were both members and my father was a minister here. When he died in 1963, Mr. Xulu (the present minister) took over, and he is still the minister

of this branch. As a child I did not understand much what was going on in the church. I just went there with my parents. But when I was at school and got older, I realized that the church was profitable to me. We were doing something there that was entertaining, namely singing. I still like singing, and for a long time I was also a chorister in a choir outside the church.

First, I liked the music and the melodies of our hymns. But then I also understood the meaning of them. We sing about peace and the Lord, and what he has done for us. In our songs we praise God and Jesus. It is part of us being Christians. That is the other thing that binds me to the church, being a Christian. We all come together under God. We pray to Him and we pray for each other. With God's help and with the help of the Spirit we can heal those who are sick and who look for healing and comfort. Also, as Christians we don't drink and we don't smoke. The church prevents me from doing that, because you don't need that to be with God. When I look at my school mates now, they all drink and smoke and they look a lot older than me. They cannot help themselves. But this can't be the way. You have to be saved, and you have to be pure. This is why I am a Zionist.'

After he got married in 1976, Phineas Hlongwane was appointed as a youth leader in his church.

'It was not an easy position, because many youngsters turn their back on the church. I tried to make it more interesting for them by introducing what I call "Bible reading competitions". I used to give them the scripture to read, and when we met after church, I asked them about it. In that way I could make them to use the Bible and to learn more about God. We also talked about our church and why it is we do certain things, like healing. I think it helped and many of them understood. There are other Zionist churches I know, they don't have youth leaders. There, youngsters are just members and nobody looks after them. It's a shame, because they are our future and they should like and understand what Zionism is, instead of running away.'

Mr. Hlongwane's efforts as a youth leader were rewarded when, in 1988, the leader of his church, Archbishop S D Sibiya appointed him as general secretary.

'I am very honoured to have this position. It has a lot of responsibilities. Now I have to travel all over the country, attend meetings here and there. I have to look what the congregations need and how they are coping. I also tell them about the decisions of the headquarters and report their progress and concerns back to the leader. I am very busy, but I like doing it. Now I know much more people in our church and together we can find ways to improve and prosper.'

An important part of being a Zionist is for Mr. Hlongwane the wearing of the Zionists uniform, which he sees as an essential part of his church.

'The uniform shows *what* you are. By wearing it we introduce ourselves. We, in our church, wear green as the basic colour. When you look at green you think of grass and this is what it stands for in our uniform. You see, wherever you walk or go, somewhere there is grass. So what it means is that, wherever you go, you can see *us*. People know that we are there for them and they can come to us when they need us. White (worn as sashes or blouses) is the colour of peace and purity. It shows what we are *in* the church and what we pray for. Whenever you see one of our members wearing something of a different colour, or no uniform at all, you know that this person is ill and that he is going for prophecy so he can be healed. But you never see us wearing red or black. Black is an evil colour, it is the opposite of white. It is darkness, but we are for light. As far as red is concerned, we don't wear it, because we see in it the blood of Jesus when he was crucified. When I wear the uniform it shows you that I am with Zion. This is what I am and what I believe in.'

What emerges from Hlongwane's description is that the uniform *displays* Zionism, its religious values and work. In a sense, it 'advertises' its wearer and tells people: here is somebody who cares and who comes in peace; somebody who can offer salvation and harmony. The emphasis on the colours green and white can furthermore be interpreted as an overt and recognizable symbol of counteraction and comfort in times of illness or misfortune (i.e. 'black') and bereavement (i.e. 'red'). There is no stagnation or resignation, for if green is perceived as a symbol of grass, it is also a symbol of growth and - once the grass has been trimmed or stood on - resurgence of erstwhile strength and shape. Arguably, this is what Phineas Hlongwane identifies himself with as a Zionist.

3.1.3.2. Secular Activities.

Having left school after he had completed Standard 8, Mr. Hlongwane was one of the few among his peers who had a reasonably high standard of education ('Some of my friends didn't even go to school.'). He was thus able to make a choice about his professional career, instead of taking on casual jobs or working as a gardener in a White household.

'I was never really interested in technical things or science. I was more into organizing, writing and book-keeping. This is why I started as a trainee clerk in a Durban factory. I enjoy this kind of work and now I am a clerk in this security company here. It is a lot of paper work. That is, I have to arrange the schedules and shifts for the security guards who work for us. I also have to liaise with customers, if they have complaints or want to have a contract with us. Sometimes, I help out with the accounts of our company. We are not a big company, but we are doing alright.

When I come home in the evening I am usually very tired. But I don't want to waste any time just sitting there being lazy. If I don't have to do business for the church, or go to meetings, I meet with members of our church choir. As I mentioned to you before, I was singing in a choir in the township. But then I left there and built up, what you call, a little choir in our church. We all like singing and our choir shows that there is some progress in the church. My wife is also in the choir, so we can sing together there.'

Although he would like to spend more time with his family or friends, there is not much time left for Phineas Hlongwane.

'If you are a Zionist, there is always something going on. There are meetings, funerals, visits to members who are sick or old - anything. Especially when you are the general secretary, you have to be there for them (members).'

3.1.3.3. Expectations of the Future.

Taking the present socio-political circumstances in South Africa into consideration, it comes as no surprise that much of Hlongwane's concerns and expectations are dealing with the improvement of the status quo.

'The way it is at the moment, it cannot go on. There is too much killing and people are losing faith in God. We are all brothers and sisters, Black and White. We must all live together, and I know that we can do it. Most of us, we want peace. We don't want to fight. We want to have a job and look after our families. I think South Africa is changing now. There are promising signs, and the leaders are talking. So, yes, I think one day it will be better. I will be able to come and visit you in your neighbourhood without people saying: What is this Black doing here? We don't know

him. What is he up to? If we all believe in one God, we can all be one under Him.'

Since the beginning of 1993, Hlongwane and other Zionist leaders also initiated a programme which aims to secure and enhance the future of Zionism.

'Initially, there were only four of us, all from different Zionist churches. We are what you call "directors". What we did is, we came together and formed a committee with the goal to motivate the Zionist system. Ultimately, we want to achieve that Zionism is all over Africa, we want to include everybody. At the moment we are at the beginning. We go around and introduce ourselves to the Zionist churches here in Natal. We want them to be able to see and understand *why* Zionism is so important to us all. We tell them *why* we are Zionists. Then we ask the ministers to join us. So far we have nine ministers from different churches in Natal, and we meet once a week here in Durban. I think our future will be successful.

Basically, our committee has three aims. We want to uplift the Zionist churches educationally, spiritually and physically. What we mean by educationally is that, as you know, many of us elders are not very educated. They also have no theological training. So we want to promote Zionist scholars to go to University or Bible school to get a better education in everything and theology. If we achieve this, then we have an educated "mouthpiece", which can go into the public and teach Zionism. Also, they can pass on the education to our members. This leads on to our spiritual aim, which is to make our members more aware of the Bible. Our people must know what the Bible means and what they can get and learn from the Bible. The physical aim is actually to get sponsors for our ideas. Maybe there are organisations who can donate some money to us. We are also looking for employers, for instance, who employ Zionists. That would help us. Through this there will be more money in our (Zionist) community. Just recently, we approached a candle-making factory and asked them for Zionists to get a job there. I think the outlook for this is good. These are our ideas. We are only at the beginning, but I think our future will be successful. I am not expecting a future on my side, but I am expecting a future for all of us in the church. But as I have been appointed as general secretary, I would say that people are looking at me and see that there is a progress that is coming.'

Hlongwane's case demonstrates how an individual Zionist utilizes his determination and acquired skills to uplift and manifest the values and ethics of his religious community. In a way, he comes across as a manager-type who combines his clerical-administrative know-how with his vision of Zionist prosperity. Though he pursues his mission with confidence and new ideas, he evidently does not intend to remodel the structures and features of Zionism. Rather,

he brings to it the secular mode of 'business'-style leadership in order to make Zionism more dynamic and appealing to its members and potential proselytes. It is therefore not the *change* of Zionism that is on Hlongwane's mind, but its continuous improvement with regard to strength and prosperity.

3.1.4. Vusumuzi Sithole.

Mr. Sithole, a 58 year old resident of Kwa Mashu's B-section, lives with his wife, four children and three grandchildren in a four-roomed house which, at the time of my visits, was under construction in order to add another bedroom. Vusumuzi Sithole belongs to the Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion. His congregation in Kwa Mashu has a total membership of 52 adherents, of which about half are under the age of 3

3.1.4.1. On being a Zionist.

As was the case with Mrs. Zungu, my first contact with Mr. Sithole and some of his fellow church members was a fortunate coincidence. On my way to drop off my informant at his home, we passed a house and noticed that there was a Zionist meeting being held in the adjoining garage. We decided not to disturb the meeting, but instead asked a neighbour for the name of the family who lived there. During the following week my informant successfully got hold of the family and arranged for us to meet Mr. Sithole at the weekend. This time the garage was occupied by an old Opel stationwagon which was in rather bad shape. Sithole, who was attending to his car, put away his tools and came to greet us. Having introduced ourselves, he immediately began to question my opinion about German cars, apparently assuming some kind of expertise from a man who came from the country where the make of his car is manufactured. It may seem as an odd way to gain somebody's initial trust, but our half hour long discussion about the reliability and 'superiority' (once

they had been fixed, of course) of German cars did indeed help to ease my introduction to him as a stranger.

However, once we settled inside the house, Mr. Sithole began to question me about the purpose of my visit.

'Why do you want to know about us?', he asked. 'Don't you think that we are not civilized? My church is very small and we don't even have a building. Sometimes we even have to meet here in my garage. A lot of people laugh about that. So why us?'

At this stage I decided to abort my planned interview and instead spent the time of my visit explaining to Mr. Sithole why exactly I was doing research among Zionists. Apart from telling him details about my upbringing and studies, I emphasised my intention to learn from him in order to understand more about Zionism. I also gave him the option to withdraw his previous agreement to assist me in my research. It was clear that Sithole feared a 'hit-and-run' attitude on my part, i.e. that I would come in, get his information and subsequently disappear without showing any gratitude or appreciation (or even acting as a police informer). I thus offered to get in contact with another Zionist family who knew me well, and could vouch for my peaceful intentions. He felt comfortable with the idea and asked me to give him a week to find out. I agreed, and a week later, once he had put his scepticism to rest, Sithole rewarded me with his preparedness to welcome me as an occasional visitor.

I thus learned that Vusimuzi Sithole was 27 years old when he joined the Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion in 1960.

'I didn't grow up in this church here. In fact, ever since I was a child I have been a Roman Catholic, like the rest of my family. We went there almost every Sunday, but somehow I never felt anything there. I wanted to be closer to God. So I looked around and visited other churches, to see what they were doing. And then one day, I visited this church here. My father's cousin was a minister here. Nobody pushed me to be in Zion. Actually, I first had a look at the action of that church. You know, to see if it is a good church. And I fancied that one. All of a sudden I fancied it. Yes, I went to visit the other churches, but in your body and your spirit - I call it that way - you get the difference between Zion and the other churches. When you visit the church, you got to feel in your body and your blood that when you are in the church

something is happening to you. So then you realise that there is a light there. You know what I mean? Then you know that you meet God! I had that feeling when I went to the Zion church.

We follow the way Jesus has shown us to be with God. We pray together and we sing together. Everybody can come to us and we will pray for them. When somebody is ill, our church can heal him to find back to God.'

To Mr. Sithole being with God also means to find peace, and one should thus avoid jeopardizing that peace by getting involved in affairs God would not approve of.

'When you are with Zion you must be pure and you must have a straight heart. How can you pray for someone if you are not at peace with yourself. So everybody who is with us must come to church. If they don't go to church, they start to drink and they get in fights. People like this will get hurt or land in prison. They must come to church, so that they can find peace here. All we can do is pray for them not to get tempted. In fact, we preach it to them (members). I am a preacher in my church and sometimes I pray in front of the congregation and ask God to give us the strength to avoid all these things.

When I am with Zion, I know that I am safe. If something happens to me I know that the church can help me. For me, being a Zionist is a sort of belief in the Lord. I think to be a Zionist is the right way to believe in God. For instance, we Zionists wear gowns, just as Jesus used to. And we are still doing that. Also, we are healing the sick. We do exactly what Jesus was doing. That was what Peter preached: "Do as Jesus did!"'.

3.1.4.2. Secular Activities.

When I asked Mr. Sithole about his school education and professional career, he was not at all reluctant to admit that he went to school for only two years. And although his children could all read and write much better than himself, he pointed out that his low education never stood in his way to provide for his family.

'I have always found work to look after my family. I am very good with my hands. So I have worked mainly on construction sides. Nowadays I am working in a Brick

factory in Pinetown (cf. Appendix II). There are just a few of us working there, and we do everything ourselves. Some of us cut the bricks into different sizes and shapes. I am actually laying the bricks, once they are finished. For instance, when a customer wants a new driveway for his car or a new patio in the backyard. That's what I'm doing. Sometimes I work here (Kwa Mashu) for my neighbours, putting up walls and such things. They must provide the material and I can do it for them. When you look at my garage or this new room we build here, I have done all that by myself. Because I work in this factory, I also get a little discount on the material, or I take home the broken ones (bricks). I hope that I can finish (the new room) soon, because the family is growing.

I am getting old now and I don't know how much longer I will be able to work. My sons, they don't have any jobs. They finished school, but now they sit around here and do nothing. There is no work. So I just have to go on and wait until they can provide for me and my wife. It is not easy, but we cope.'

When he is not at work or attending church meetings, Mr. Sithole spends most of his spare time working on his old car.

'I bought this car from a scrap dealer two years ago for R 500. Now I slowly collect all the parts I need to rebuild it. It is mostly engine parts that are missing. But I am sure it will run again. Then I don't have to take the bus any more, or can go to church meetings in other areas. I also try to improve the garage you see there. As it is, now it is not very comfortable to have a meeting there. I need to put some more benches in there and a window. That is the next thing I am working on.

That is all I do when I am free. Sometimes I watch television. My kids always watch, which worries me, because there is too much violence on the screen. In the news, in the movies, everywhere. I don't need that in my house, so I switch it off. Sport and music programmes are okay. I watch that occasionally.'

3.1.4.3. Expectations of the Future.

Vusimuzi Sithole's thoughts and expectations of the future were a reflection of opinions given to me by many Zionist elders, including those I have introduced above.

'I want to live in peace with my family. I am not hurting anybody and I don't want anybody to harm me. What worries me is the unemployment around here. The

government has to do something about it. Just look around. There are so many people, grown-ups like myself, who sit at home and have nothing to do. How can they look after their families with no jobs? I hope that my kids get jobs soon. They already have their own kids to look after. I won't be around forever. The economy must improve and there must be better education for our children. As it is now, it's all in shambles. It can only get better.'

With regard to the future of his church and Zionism, Vusimuzi Sithole was far more confident.

'Our church will go on. It will survive, because of the good conduct of the church. As long as we have a place where we can worship, there will also be an increase in our membership. We do have people who come to us, they see that elders and youngsters are respected in our church. And they join, because they know that Zionists are always peace-loving. We don't go out and drink, we don't do things that could cause problems the following day. They come to us, because the Zionists are for peace. Zionist will always be there. Look around, they are everywhere.'

As a relatively poor and under-educated urban Black South African the choice of Zionism endows Mr. Sithole with the necessary perseverance and spiritual contentment to face and subdue his disadvantageous socio-economic circumstances. While acknowledging the hardships and responsibilities to make ends meet for himself and his family, he appears to be far from accepting them as a cause for self-pity and resignation. Instead, he identifies himself with a religious community which fosters mutual respect and which, by advocating a puritan and peaceful lifestyle, excludes itself from activities (e.g. drinking liquor) which may further jeopardize the existence in a socially and economic inadequate environment. Within Zion, Mr. Sithole finds religious belonging and prosperity. This may not altogether compensate for, but at least alleviates, his unfavourable secular existence.

Though it is not my intention to generalize, I can, however, say that the four Zionists I have introduced above represent the opinions and attitudes of the majority of Zionist elders I have met in the field. It has become apparent that, to them, Zionism is more than just a creed one adheres to on a Sunday. Zionism does not only rule their day-to-day routine, but it also provides meaning. It appears, therefore, that *belonging* to Zion is inextricably linked to

individual *identification* with and *commitment* to a Zionist community. The influences and circumstances of their secular environment are not denied nor are its benefits (i.e. work) underestimated. However, these elders draw a clear line between their spiritual and non-spiritual world. It is within the bounds of the former through which they aim to alleviate the damaging impacts of the latter, namely poverty, forlornness, and physical or mystical illness.

It also emerges that, although these elders are confident and optimistic about the future of their churches, there is concern about their youth who may or have already been drawn away from their Zionist communities. To underpin the following discussion, I will thus continue by introducing the significance of religious affiliation, secular interests and expectations of four Zionist youngsters.

3.2. Zionist Youth.

Getting in touch with Zionist youngsters was not as easy as I initially thought it would be. I soon realized that I had to go the 'official' route, i.e. I had to gain the trust of their respective elders first, before I was allowed to talk to the youth. Thus most of the first interviews and meetings with youngsters took place in the presence of church leaders or parents. Ideally, I wanted to talk to and meet young Zionists on their own, without the possible interference or inhibitory presence of their elders. I decided, therefore, not to go into much detail during these first encounters, but rather tried to arrange meetings where we could be on our own. I was usually successful in cases where I had already been introduced to Zionist elders and members of the congregation. Otherwise I also had to overcome the suspiciousness of youngsters who, in my experience, appeared to be much more inquisitive and reserved than their older fellow church members. One of the reasons for this may have been the fact that young Kwa Mashu Zionists are comparatively better educated than their elders (cf. also Chapter Six) and that their first impression of a White fieldworker was, to some extent, influenced by their contacts with non-Zionist peers (at school or at work) who are arguably at the forefront of the struggle against the injustices of racial segregation in

South Africa.

I was, nonetheless, fortunate enough to establish a good relationship with most of the 52 Zionist youngsters I met, and could conduct most of my interviews in relative privacy.

3.2.1. Themba Ndlovu.

Eighteen year old Themba Ndlovu lives with his parents, two sisters and brother in Kwa Mashu's D-section. He is a member of the Christian Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion.

3.2.1.1. On being a Zionist.

Being a Zionist has been a part of Themba's life since childhood. He grew up in a family which, for two generations, had adhered to the same church.

'Since my father and my mother are both Zionists, I can say that I was born into Zion. I don't really remember what it was like in the church as a child. My parents told me that, sometimes, they took me to church and sometimes they left me at home with my granny. When I was about 10 or 11 years old I went there regularly with my parents and there were always other kids around. I also remember that, when we kids got too noisy or something, some of the elders took us outside and stayed with us, and told us about the Bible. It's not that we were naughty, it's just that we didn't know what was going on. But I always like the singing in our church. That's what I liked first.

Today I know that the church is part of my life. We may not be as rich as the Lutherans. In fact, we are a poor church, we have nothing. But we are trying to do whatever God told us to do. We sing and we pray and we can help the sick. It is not like in other churches where there is a lot of excess, where people are allowed to smoke and to drink. This is not right. If you want to stick with God and the Holy Spirit you should not do such things. You have to have a clear mind. Another example is the baptism. Other churches just sprinkle the water on the forehead of the person baptized, whereas in the Bible the baptism took place in the river. We (Zionists) are going to follow the instructions as the Bible said. I feel comfortable in our church and I know that I am close to God when I am there. I go to church whenever I can. Every Sunday I go there to worship God, which is what we are here

for. Even my uniform, I always wear my uniform at church. Everybody does. It shows that we are together.'

However, at times Themba's religious affiliation is challenged or ridiculed by others, especially his peers at school.

'Sometimes you come across other pupils at school who pass on very bad remarks on the Zionists. They say, for instance, that we are not "westernised" and that our leaders are illiterate, and that we will never be in the position to be like the Lutherans or the Catholics. They mock us and laugh about the way we sing or dress. It doesn't really bother me, because I know that they don't really understand what we do. Sometimes I try to change their attitude. I invite them to come and see for themselves that we don't have that image. In fact, I've been doing that for a long time now. Whenever somebody approaches me, I invite him to come with me to church. Last year there were two boys from my class who came to our church. One of them is still with us. He likes it and I think he will stay.'

As far as his position in his congregation is concerned, Themba is aware that his young age prevents him from taking over any responsibilities.

'As it is at the moment, I am too young to be a leader or even to preach to my church. I am still, what you call, a youth here. First, I have to be married. Now I am just a member, I don't hold any position. What I can do is I can pray and sing with everybody. This is my responsibility. It is also a sort of responsibility to wear my uniform. It shows others to which church I belong and who I am. I am quite happy with this. I do not feel embarrassed, because the uniform is, let's say, a part of us'

3.2.1.2. Secular Activities.

When I first met Themba, in April 1991, he had just begun Standard 9 at school and intended to complete matric at the end of 1992. He told me that he was studying very hard to achieve this goal, in order to go to University. At this stage his favourite subjects at school were History, English and Music. Apart from his school commitments, Themba was involved in

a variety of activities which kept him very busy. One of these activities was a part-time job at a garage in Durban, which he took up to save some money for his time at University.

'The problem is that most of our youngsters haven't got the assistance from the student assistance (bursaries etc). You can only find that students can do matric, without realizing where he or she can go after the matriculation. And you will find that he or she will end up by staying at home after finishing with matric. You see, that is a problem. They do nothing, there is no financial assistance. It's not like in the White areas. In the White areas as from Standard 6 there is somebody who is responsible to guide them which way they must take. They make the students choosing for their general subjects. They can show them which vacancies there are, after the students finished matric. That is the problem in the Black population and also in our church. This is because I am working now. All the spare time I've got is on Tuesday and Wednesday, so its very difficult to meet my friends. Because during the week the others are working or at school. Everybody got their spare time on the weekends, but not me. On Sunday afternoon I go to church and otherwise I work. When I get home nobody (friends) is there. I have to be alone. I have to work on weekends, even after church.

At the moment I am a cashier at a Shell garage. Sometimes I have to work night shifts, for instance on Thursdays. Then I have to start at half past four in the afternoon and leave at seven in the morning. On Friday's it's the same. However, I am trying to get another job, because I am not satisfied with the wages. As it is, I only get R 2 per hour. R 2 per hour, that is a bad pay. But as of now, I have to save what I can get. The Universities are expensive and I don't know how to pay for them. My parents don't have the money to sponsor me.'

After I had known Themba for a couple of weeks we once exchanged our interest in leisure activities. I was surprised to learn that he was an active karateka, since karate is a martial art and I hitherto presumed that an active participation in this kind of sport would be shunned by Zionists. After all, karate trains and allows the use of physical violence in order to ward off an attacker. Themba, however, saw it slightly differently.

'I don't agree with that part (i.e. that Zionists may not be allowed to get involved in martial arts). When I joined last year, my parents even said that they liked it, because it makes me more active. Why should we not be involved in sports? As far as I know, God helps those who help themselves, you see. Let's say when I drive on one of the buses and some hooligans try to assault me, I will try to defend myself. I can't just sit there. God will help me, because I can help myself. It's like David in the Bible, God helped him too. But I would never attack. No! One day, for instance, one

of my colleagues at the garage was trying to assault me. I didn't want to attack, because he was drunk, very drunk. He messed everything up with the customers, and accused me that it was my fault. Then he hit me, very badly. I was very cross. All the customers were watching, you see. That is a bad habit that guy had. So I grabbed him and I hit him back. That was the moment when the manager came to us, and asked me what happened. I told him, and he fired the guy. So courage can serve you in order to defend yourself. My parents were very worried about this, because they don't like violence. But they were glad that I wasn't hurt too badly and that I could defend myself.'

Yet although Themba's parents seem to acknowledge their son's wish to practice karate as a means of self-defence, I asked him what his congregation would say to his involvement in martial arts.

'There are people who object, mainly the old one's. They can only say that it is not good for a Christian to be a karateka, because it will make you to assault people and to be an attacker. But I try, by all means, to convince them that this is not so. I have been using the example I told you, that God helps those who help themselves.'

Another Zionist youth I spoke to afterwards, however, rejected Themba's behaviour and said that

'the boy must leave karate and just concentrate on the church. It says in the Bible that we don't have to fight our enemies. God will fight for us. Now, he shouldn't worry about doing karate, because there is somebody who will fight his battles.'

It is apparent that Themba's interest in karate is not fully acknowledged by the Zionist community. Although karate (Japanese for 'the empty hand') is essentially an art of self-defence without the use of weapons, Themba's commitment to it is possibly feared to be the first step to active participation in violence, which would severely offend the Zionist ethics of peace.

3.2.1.3. Expectations of the Future.

Themba's foremost ambition for his personal future is to commence studying Law at University. He even came to visit me at my office on campus, and together we arranged for him to see a student counsellor who could give him advice regarding the syllabus and requirements to study for a Law degree. He describe the reason of his ambition as follows.

'My aim is to help our citizens. In fact, I just want to work together, or hand in hand with other people. I just like to communicate with them in order to save the law with them. Because I have realized that in the townships they have got so many problems which cause our people to leave their homes, especially the youth. They escape to all over the country, just because of the problems that we encounter in the townships. That is why I would like to work hand in hand with my community.'

However, Themba's enthusiasm to study Law was dampened by his parents who did not feel at all comfortable with his decision.

'My parents do disagree with my opinion. They say it's not good at all, just because, as they say, I would have to lie all the time. This is not good for the Ten Commandments, they say. Especially when you do Criminal Law. Whereas you have to help people, they might lie to you. You may not know whether he or she can tell the truth. So now you have to speak (as a lawyer) for those people, and maybe you will then lie too. That is why my parents don't want me to do it. I could not convince them yet. You see, to lie is not the truth. But, in fact, if a person did anything bad and has to suffer for it, you have to give him a chance. sometimes, they might be innocent. This is why I just want to do it. I want to serve for the law in the future.'

As far as his future in the church is concerned, Themba was not quite sure whether his professional ambition would interfere with his advancement in the Zionist hierarchy.

'I would like to be a leader in my church, sometimes. But when I am a lawyer, I will have to work a lot. So I don't know about that. But I will always be a member, because the church is where I feel comfortable. I always want to be a Zionist. I think our church has a good future, even if the others (i.e. non-Zionists) laugh at us. The only thing we need to do is to keep and get new youngsters. We should make the church more attractive to them. Anything that makes them being involved. If all youngsters stay, then our church will be much stronger.'

Perhaps the most outstanding feature Themba displays, is his determination to help others.

Instead of being deterred by the mockery of his peers at school and the worries of his parents about his professional career plans, Themba is determined to utilize his energy and abilities to ensure a good future for both himself and his religious community. There can be no doubt that he respects the rules and values of his church. In fact, he almost entirely approves of them. Yet to underline his strong devotion to law and justice, he is evidently prepared to enter a dispute between himself and his parents or elders. What the latter might regard as an infringement of Zionist ethics and boundaries, is seen by Themba as a further manifestation of Zionism as he perceives it: the maintenance of mutually recognized values which protect and help the individual.

3.2.2. Sandile Nxumalo.

Sandile Nxumalo is 27 years old and lives with his grandmother and sister in a little two-roomed house in Kwa Mashu's C-section. There he is a member of the Sanmaria Church in Zion, which has, according to an elder, a membership of approximately 75 adherents. Less than half of the membership consists of young Zionists under the age of 3

3.2.2.1. On being a Zionist.

Sandile is an orphan who lost his parents in a traffic accident when he was three years old. Since then he and his older sister have been living in the house of his grandparents. And it was through his grandparents that Sandile was introduced to Zionism.

'I started to join the Zionists at a very early age. One day, I think I was about six years old, my grandma took me to church. So at this time I was just following my grandma. When I matured I started going to the church out of sheer love. I began to like the church. I liked the way they were singing and I liked the way they preached. I knew that when I was in the church the Holy Spirit is helping me. In fact, the Holy Spirit is helping everybody. What can I say, I feel free in the church. There is nothing that depresses me, because God gives us light and tells us what to do.

The main aim of coming to church is to worship God, preach the scriptures. God has given us the truth. I believe in what God said, but to be with Him you have to live up to the truth and follow the rules. As Zionists we say that you must not drink or smoke or womanize. Now, everybody is tempted once. When I was about 15, for instance, I started smoking. I knew that our church was against this, because it becomes an addiction. All of a sudden you are hooked on it. It is the same with alcohol. People get hooked on it. But the only thing you should be "hooked" on is God. This is what we are saying. All these things will keep your mind away from God, because you go after what you are addicted to. So when I started smoking, I did it because I was curious. Everybody was doing it. But then I realized, no, this is not good for me. I didn't want to get hooked on smoking. You just have to see what is going on here (i.e. township). Many people get in trouble, because they are into alcohol and smoking. Sometimes it's like, one day you smoke cigarettes, the other day you try dagga (i.e. Marijuana). That is very bad.

As a Zionist I have to be loyal to our principles. It keeps me out of trouble and I can proceed further. There is a future for those who are loyal to the principles. God will reward them.'

Sandile pointed out that God rewarded him by letting him advance to the position of a preacher. For any further upward move in his congregation's hierarchy, however, Sandile would have to be married. Though he acknowledges that requirement, he nevertheless questioned whether it would have to be necessary at all times.

'Sometimes I don't understand why a young person cannot be given a higher post in the church simply because he is not married. Because, I mean, being unmarried, does it really mean that you are not good morally? Because there are married people who are not good morally, but who are leaders in their churches. So, I don't understand why sometimes an unmarried person should not be given a higher position. I mean, as long as he merits and shows good conduct and qualities, he could be given a higher post. But I can wait. I know that God will lead me, and if he lets me, I can take any part in the church. If God chooses me, I would like to be a minister.'

3.2.2.2. Secular Activities.

Sandile left school after he had completed Standard 8. By that stage, in 1981, his grandfather had been dead for a number of years, and his grandmother was living off her small pension. About to turn 18, Sandile felt it was now his turn to look after his grandmother and his

sister.

'I tried a couple of jobs. I would have like to be a driver but I didn't have a driver's licence then. I looked everywhere, and I went to all these places who advertised jobs in the newspaper. I finally got a job, the same where I am now (he works in the warehouse of a tool factory in Durban). The work is not very exciting, but it fills my stomach. In fact, I must thank God for this job, because many of my friends, they have nothing. They sit at home and have nothing.'

Regarding the relationship to his co-workers, Sandile could not recall any incident in which he had been ridiculed or laughed at because he was a Zionist.

'I don't have any problems with them. They don't harass me or anything just because I am a Zionist. Most don't even know what I am. I just keep quiet. If they drink beer or "iJuba" (Zulu beer) for lunch, they sometimes look at me if I don't do it. But they respect that I am a Christian. They don't try to influence me in any way. We just work together, and our relationship is okay.'

Otherwise, I don't mind mixing with people. All the spectrum. But the difference is that in the end I always put the scriptures first. this is where the last word is. So, obviously, I would not mix with people who are up to no good, like drunkards. As I said, otherwise I don't mind mixing with whoever. But I do not go to dance halls where they play this loud music and everybody is drunk. Although I like music. But not modern music. I only like music that belongs to God, like gospel music. This is why I like to sing. I like to sing any kind of song that belongs to God and to Jesus Christ.

When I am at home I read the Bible. Sometimes I watch TV with my friends, because I don't have one here (in his house). My best is the game shows they show in the evenings. As a youth I was also interested in sports. In fact, I used to play soccer when I was younger, but I left it. It's not only because of the regulations of the church. But now, the pleasure in the sport does not please God Himself. It just pleases the people in general. That was the reason why I left the soccer.'

Following up on the issue of him perhaps becoming a minister in his congregation, I asked

Sandile whether he had a girlfriend and planned to get married soon. After all, he was 27 years old and had a regular income. At least financially, he could afford a marriage.

'Jaah, well. I don't know. There is somebody I like. She lives just down the road. She does not belong to our church, but I know that she is a good Christian. I wouldn't say that she is my girlfriend, we just see each other. So I don't think about marriage. Maybe some day, if the right person comes along. It could be her.'

Would she have to convert to Zionism before they got married, I asked him.

'It would be nice. I think she would do it, because she came with me once. She liked it. But I don't think it is really necessary. If she loves me and respects what I am doing at church, than I guess it's okay. Maybe she will join later. You know that our elders are quite strict when it comes to girlfriends. They say you should only get involved when you are really serious (i.e. planning to get married). It is the law of our church. No girlfriends before you get married. So, as it is now, I just see how things are going.'

3.2.2.3. Expectations of the Future.

Looking at this future, Sandile was particularly concerned about the current political situation in South Africa. He even considered the possibility of living somewhere else, if he had the opportunity to do so.

'If I may be specific here, in Black townships the situation is very terrible, very bad. I, for one, wouldn't like to live here if it continues like that. I hope that we are looking at a New South Africa, whereby we are going to have a mixed country. I mean mixed races, where I could have my house next door to an Indian house and a White house, or whatever. So I am looking at that kind of situation. What I am saying here is, I, for one, would not like to live in a place where there is a lot of violence, simply because of the fact that the influence here is so great that even my future children would be influenced by the situation present in this country. I mean, in the Black townships as they are at the moment. To prevent that I would rather go to a place where I've got a number of people staying there in different places, who are all for peace. The place I would move to, if I could, is Swaziland. I don't know

Swaziland as such, but I have never heard any trouble from Swaziland at all. I think I could do there whatever I want to do, and live in peace. I feel, that if I go there I will definitely meet more Zionists.'

Notwithstanding Sandile's apprehension about the stability of his township environment, he expressed confidence about his own future in Zion and about Zionism in general.

'I think we will prevail, because we are for peace, so we can't do wrong. Wherever I go and whatever I will be in the future, I will be with the church. I grew up here and I am comfortable here. I will never change that.'

Reflecting on Sandile Nxumalo's case it emerges that he perceives his religious affiliation to Zionism as a philosophy of life which directs and gives meaning to his existence as a part of both his congregation and his socio-economic environment. In a way, his wholehearted identification with Zionism may also be a sign of gratitude and devotion to a community which has taken over the role of the family (i.e. parents) he never really had. This comes to the fore particularly when Sandile accentuates the aspect of loyalty. Consequently, he left no doubt that he would maintain and uphold the principles and values according to which he was brought up - no matter where he would go and what he would do. In other words, although he mixes with non-Zionists or may even consider changing his environment altogether, he insists on the continuation of his religious identity and values. Neglecting the latter would mean to disregard the heritage of his religious family.

3.2.3. Patience Mabizela and Thuli Kweyama.

The 17 year old Patience Mabizela and the 20 year old Thuli Kweyama live with their respective families in Kwa Mashu's D-section. Both young women are members of the Zionist congregation Believers in Christ. Patience and Thuli are among the about 40 young Zionists in their congregation who are under the age of 3 The total membership of Kwa

Mashu's Believers in Christ congregation is between 100 and 110 (an estimation of the congregation's minister).

3.2.3.1. On being Zionists.

Patience and Thuli are virtually inseparable. Not only are they best of friends and share most of their spare time together, but they have also been members of the same Zionist congregation since childhood. Patience put forward that for her it was a 'natural process' of joining Believers of Christ.

'I have been in the church since I was born, because my parents are here, too. They have been in the church for a long time, so I guess it was just natural that I went with them from the time I was a little girl. I remember that, when I was younger, my mother always told me that I must be under God, and that I had to go to church to be with Him. So I developed in the church, and I developed my love for God.'

Almost similar were the circumstances of Thuli's upbringing in the church.

'I started going to the church with my parents, and after some time I developed love for my church. In fact, I have been going to the church since I was born, but I only really found to Jesus about five years ago. Before that I was just going to church with no commitment at all. When I was 15, I had this headache. It just wouldn't go away. We went to a doctor, and he gave me some headache pills. But the pain was still there. My parents said that I must pray to the Lord, and that He would help me. Even in the church, one time they prayed for me. But I didn't go to the prophets (for healing). We just prayed to the Lord. And I got better. I prayed, and Jesus helped me. That's when I realized that it has to come from within. Nobody can push you to go to church. Sometimes kids are pushed by their parents, like in a family where father and mother go to church, and they expect all to follow suit. Well, I went with them, but in my case it is from within. This is the reason why I feel so comfortable in the church.'

I first met Patience and Thuli on a Sunday, just before the service of their congregation was about to begin. Accordingly, both were already dressed in their uniforms. I took the opportunity to ask them how they felt about wearing them, and how their township peers

would respond to that.

Thuli responded that she would not feel

'embarrassed at all. Why should I feel embarrassed? Maybe some (youngsters of her church) do, because they are scared what the others (non-Zionist peers) may think. I wear my uniform because it shows that I belong to our church, it is what I am. When you see me with my uniform, you know that I go along with our rules. You know that I go and pray to the Lord.'

Patience agreed and added that

'sometimes, people think we are not civilized because we are wearing our robes. Even some of our youth, they don't feel at ease wearing it. When you meet the other children in school, they are looking down upon you. They are mocking you because of the clothing. But they don't know, they don't know that I am comfortable with it. As it is, I am proud when I wear this.'

Although both maintained that they felt comfortable within their Zionist congregation Thuli, however, argued that some of her elders should become less strict, especially with regard to youth activities.

'I think they must change. Yes, I feel there should be limited changes. Like at the moment, they do not agree to any musical instruments played in the church. If they would be flexible and allow things like pianos or guitars to be played in the church, that would be nice for us. I feel that not enough has been done. I feel there are no bands, like if we would organise some music instruments, so that when we have visitors we could play something unique for those visitors. But we do not have such facilities, because some of our elders think that this is too modern. They think it is enough just to sing without it. But wouldn't God like it, if we could play nice music? I think this could be a good thing. Sometimes, I think they should listen to the youth.'

Patience, on the other hand, disagreed.

'On my way, I don't think so, that the elders must change. I think they must stay like that, because me, they satisfy me. I also don't want any responsibility, because when

I am there (i.e. in the church) I just want to be comfortable at all the time. So I can't say someone can do this (i.e. change), because on my way, I don't have any difficulties, I am always comfortable. But I don't know about the others.'

3.2.3.2. Secular Activities.

Apart from attending the services and meetings of their congregation together, Patience and Thuli regularly meet socially during weekdays and on weekends.

'We just sit together and talk', said Thuli. 'We read or talk about the Bible mostly. On a Saturday morning we usually go to town to look at clothes or go to the market. If we have the money we go to the movies. But they are very expensive. The last time we went there was two months ago. You see, it now costs R 8 to see a film, and if you take the bus to Durban it's another R 2,50. Altogether, that's more than R 10. When I ask my parents to give me some money for that, they say "No. You don't need to go there, it's a waste of money".

When I am on my own I am very interested in music, especially gospel music. I also like to sing, this is why I joined that choir here in Kwa Mashu. There are people from other churches and Zionists. It's called a gospel group. My parents don't mind when I go there, they say it's good to sing these (gospel) songs. Maybe we can have our own choir in the church sometimes, with all the instruments.'

Whereas Thuli was not at all interested in sports, Patience said that one of her favourite leisure activities was physical exercise.

'I play netball at school. We have a team there of which I am a member. Last year we took part in the school championships here in Kwa Mashu, and we came fourth. It's a very nice sport and maybe I will join a club after school. My parents do not have any objections to sports. They always say it is good to do some exercise. Otherwise, there are not many other activities that I do. But we are also sort of limited, because we cannot go to discos. We can do sports, but no discos. Personally, I do not like going to the discos, because I feel I am a daughter of God. I believe in God, and only the people that do not believe in God go to the discos.'

Thuli seconded that point of view and maintained that

'in the discos people do all the things we (Zionists) do not approve of. They drink liquor just to be happy. I don't mind dancing. I mean, I like dancing. But I don't need to be drunk for that. That is not right. You only get into trouble when you drink. When you are a drunkard, people will think not well of you. Sometimes, they also fight there. Usually, the boys fight about the girls. These discos are not good places to go to. Our parents would never allow us.'

Since visiting discotheques and dancing events usually involves a partner of the opposite sex, I asked the young women whether they had a boyfriend, and if so, how their parents and Zionist community responded to it. This question caused a somewhat awkward situation. Patience and Thuli looked at each other and kept quiet, whereas I feared that I had overstepped my bounds. As I was about to withdraw that question and apologise, in order to save our meeting, Patience came forward and said

'No, I don't have a boyfriend. I would not be allowed to have one. My parents say that I have to wait until I have the age to get married. Because what happens is this: you have a boyfriend and he wants to sleep with you. Then, he runs away and looks for another girl. They (parents) say it is alright to see each other, but you have to wait until you get married. The church says that you mustn't have more than one sexual contact, just one. And this is the one you should marry. So, no real boyfriends and sexual contacts before you get married.'

Perhaps encouraged by Patience taking the initiative, Thuli eventually confided to me that she did indeed have a steady boyfriend.

'Yes, I have got one. It's against the rules of the church. But I am not telling anybody. My parents, they don't know about it. I just have to be quiet about it.'

However, her main problem was not that she had a boyfriend as such, but rather that he was not a member of her church.

'He is not from the Zionist but from the Apostolics. What happens is that if we end up being married, I would have to join his church. This is the trend. It's some sort

of a rule that the women joins the church of the husband. I would have to do it, too, and I don't think my parents would like that. So at the time being I keep quiet.'

It must have taken a lot of courage for Thuli to tell me about her secret love-affair. I therefore did not pursue this matter any further by asking her about the prohibition on pre-marital sex. This, I believe, would have been a severe intrusion into her privacy.

Being the younger of the two, Patience was still going to school.

'I am in Standard 8 now, and I want to go for matric in two years. That should be alright, because I like going to school. What I like most there is Maths and English. Afrikaans I don't like. In fact, I have a lot of difficulties with it. I usually end up having a grade D for it.'

Thuli had finished her matric in 1990.

'Yes, I finished my matric. I even got my exemption. But I have no money to study at the University. It is too expensive. My parents can't afford it. They told me to go and look for a job. But there is no work out there. Now I am unemployed. I don't have a real job. I am just working at home when I have spare time. I like sewing, and I can use my mom's sewing machine. So sometimes other girls come to me and give me some fabric, and I can sew a shirt or blouse for them. I get a little money for that, and I can only save it.'

3.2.3.3. Expectations of the Future.

When we talked about their thoughts and expectations for the future, both Patience and Thuli expressed their hope that the situation in Natal would calm down. They both agreed that

'it would be nice to have a family, go to work and live in peace. We must not hate each other, but we must pray to God that he gives us strength and helps us. We must all be strong and believe in ourselves and God.'

Looking at their personal and professional future, the two young women put forward that their preference of work would be in the social or medical-therapeutic field. Patience, for example, maintained that

'after my matric I would like to go to University and study social work. When I study social work, I am able to help the people in our community, and look after them. There are many people here who need assistance. I think this is what a social worker does.'

Thuli, on the other hand, anticipated a job in the medical-therapeutic field.

'I prefer nursing. I like working with people and take care of them. I have already done some applications for nursing at the hospital and the University. So far, I did not get any position, but I have got hope that I will get it. I think I could be a good nurse, and I want to learn all about it. I hope I will get a chance.'

However indefinite the prospects of a professional future are for Thuli and Patience, both unanimously agreed that their spiritual home would always be their church. Yet with regard to the possibility of taking over a position their opinions differed.

'When I'm a little older, I would like to be the leader of the youth in our church.', said Thuli. 'I would like to arrange some fund raising so that the youth can get some instruments. We could have a youth choir with instruments. That would be nice. Otherwise I just want to be generally helpful to other members of the church.'

In contrast, Patience did not have such aspirations.

'My future in the church is okay, and I will carry on with the church. At the moment I would not like any positions as such. I only would like to work in generally promoting the fellowship within the church. I do not like being a leader, I like being a member. I do not like a position at all, because, as it is, I am too young and a position is too difficult and demanding. But I will always be a member.'

Altogether, Patience and Thuli displayed the same attitude and devotion towards their

religious community as Themba and Sandile. All four youngsters emphasised their commitment to Zionism and identified themselves with its religious values and ethics. Three of these youngsters were seemingly influenced by their religious upbringing when it came to making a choice about their professional future. By planning to become a lawyer, nurse or social worker, they obviously anticipate a career which embodies the mainstay of Zionism, namely healing, mutual help and care.

What has emerged, however, is that there are differences in the acceptance of and submission to the authority and control of Zionist elders. Though not questioning the leadership of their respective congregations as such, Thuli and Themba, in particular, have overtly scrutinised some of the Zionist rules which narrow the scope of opportunities and participation for themselves and their fellow church youngsters. They evidently do not intend to completely rearrange the structures of Zionism, but they do indicate the presence of young Zionists who wish to alter the limitations they are subjected to. Here the objective is to find more fulfilment and acknowledgement of personal interests in a religious community which is undoubtedly welcomed as a supporting and influencing aspect of their day-to-day life.

It appears, therefore, that dialogue between Zionist youngsters and elders is inevitable. Yet reflecting on the statements given by every informant, it also becomes clear that, in order to evaluate and determine the responses of Kwa Mashu Zionists to a volatile political climate, one has to consider the concerns and attitudes expressed by the individuals. These revolved around the maintenance of Zionist boundaries, identity and neutrality, as well as the impact of their socio-economic environment and the apparent marginalisation of the Zionist youth - all of which will be discussed in the following chapters.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. For a further and comprehensive discussion of Zionist uniforms; cf. also Kiernan, 1991
2. To have a second or even a third source of income to make ends meet is not uncommon in Kwa Mashu. In fact, there is an increasing entrepreneurial activity in the informal business market in the township. Krige (1987:11) reports that about 40% of Kwa Mashu households have at least one family member who is involved in informal activities. Apart from sewing, like Mrs Zungu, these activities range from the distribution of food and groceries, to services such as photography, herbalism, general repairs and panel-beating (14). Regrettably, positive action from governmental institutions to assist the informal sector has not yet been forthcoming.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Bounded Zionist Identity

Before I move on to establish an explanatory model of Zionist identity and boundary, I think it is important to elucidate the significance of both aspects by discussing the opinions and perceptions of Zionists arising from the environment in which they dwell.

4.1. The Popular Perceptions of Zionists.

Recalling statements made by some of the informants introduced above, it has come to light that Kwa Mashu Zionists are occasionally looked down upon, or are considered to be 'uncivilised', by non-Zionist township residents. In fact, such negative perceptions have accompanied Zionism from the time of its origin in South Africa until today. In the early years of this century, religious and governmental authorities featured Zionists and other African Independent Churches as somewhat ungrateful rebels, who left the 'path' of European Christianity in order to cause trouble within the established Christian and authoritarian structures (cf. Bridgman, 1904:174; Jacottet, 1904:92; Report of the Proceedings of the First General Missionary Conference, 1905:178; Lea, 1926:22f.). Even in more recent time, scholars of religion like Sundkler (1948;1961) and Fedderke (1965), sometimes, perhaps unintentionally, let their personal negative impressions flow into their discussions. By meticulously describing a Zionist service, for instance, Sundkler (1961:183-187) insinuates that the conduct and circumstances of such a service borders on primitive simplicity. In a later work, however, the author praises the history and lives of eminent representatives of this 'purely and gloriously Black movement of the Spirit' (1976:14f.). The missionary Fedderke (1965:7f.), on the other hand, completely rejects the phenomenon of Zionism and views it as a heathen religion which should be a constant objective of missionary work.

At the same level social scientists like Mafeje (1975) were at times tempted to consider Zionists far too judgementally. Against the background of apparent Zionist political acquiescence, Mafeje scolds them for being an 'underdeveloped' product of Christianity who would dwell on 'pathetic self-delusions' (1975:16ff.). Far more balanced are studies made by social anthropologists. Authors, such as Kiernan (1974-1991), West (1975), Williams (1982) and Comaroff (1985) allow Zionists to speak for themselves by providing comprehensive examples of Zionist rituals and social life. In view of this both Kiernan and West point out that, in the immediate environment of urban Zionists, the township, there is a predominantly negative or at least neutral attitude towards them. That is that Zionists are considered as being 'undereducated' and 'primitive' and are often targets of derision and mockery (cf. also foregoing chapter; Kiernan, 1974:88; West, 1975:201).

As far as White South Africans are concerned, the average person's knowledge of Zionists is usually quite peripheral. The general attitude towards Zionists, in my experience, is one of distant curiosity rather than being of a negative nature. Here the dominant colour bar, which still exists although no longer legally upheld in South Africa, is certainly the major contributing factor to evoke a certain amount of ignorance and insecurity towards everything that is Black South African and especially with regard to Independent Churches (cf. also West, 1975:1).

The impressions I gathered in the field virtually coincide with those of Kiernan and West. Almost twenty years after both authors completed their research, the attitude of fellow township dwellers towards Zionists has not changed much. Though I must emphasize at this point that I could not detect any open hostility towards Zionists. Instead the most common reservations concerning Zionists tend to surface in the form of the following factors.

Firstly, non-Zionist respondents often implied that Zionists are an embarrassment, not only to the community at large but particularly to other mainline denominations. It is generally held that the Zionist churches are of low status, too primitive and underdeveloped to co-exist at the same level with Anglicans or Lutherans, for example. This reproach is usually based on the assumption that Zionists have not yet succeeded in throwing certain traditional beliefs

overboard. This was pointed out to me by a political leader who furthermore insisted that

'the spiritual communication with ancestors during their services, clearly show that Zionism is basically an unworthy belief.'

Another given cause for embarrassment is the low educational standard of Zionist ministers. By mentioning this respondents doubt that Zionists are able to provide a sound ceremonial conduct and theological exposition within their congregations. These allegations are commonly supported with the reference to the frequent splitting of Zionist churches, which it is claimed, ultimately results in too many leaders thus making them too weak as a church to be taken seriously. Hand in hand with embarrassment goes mockery. Zionists are laughed at and some of their rituals are the butt of common jokes, especially among township youngsters. Thus Bheki, a 22 year old car mechanic, told me the following.

'I don't know what to think of them, but, you see, there are many jokes concerning the Zionist churches. Some people use to ridicule them, and they make lots of jokes about them. Even the way they pray and dance is a joke, especially for the (non-Zionist) youth. Especially in the shebeens. The Zionists don't go there. So you can hear the young guys joking about them. Like for instance, they are making jokes about the ministers and prophets, you know, the men with their funny long beards.'

Though I could not find that derision played a dominant factor in people's appraisal of Zionists, one should not underestimate that aspect. One respondent, for example, made me aware that it sometimes prevents interested people from finally joining a Zionist church.

'So, for a particular individual, who is maybe interested in joining that church, he will see the negative attitude towards that church, and he will say: "No, people will laugh at me. They will say all these jokes about me as well". So this person ends up not being a member of that particular church, he will not commit himself.'

The next and most common criticism of Zionists concerns their strict and puritan lifestyle. A large number of non-Zionists confided to me that they just could not cope with the Zionist

'way of life'. Zionist ethics would not allow them, for example, to indulge in drinking alcohol, smoking, gambling, gossiping or 'free' pre-marital sexual relationships. Also, a committed Zionist is expected to spend much more time in his or her church than would be the case for members of a Lutheran church, for instance.

'They (Zionists) have all these many meetings. They meet on a Saturday night, and that goes on throughout the night until the next morning. Then, you are tired, of course. But then they meet again. They meet on a Sunday afternoon. No, that's too much. I mean, the whole weekend in church? There is nothing left that you can do. To me, that would be too much.', one informant put forward.

Such considerations not only deter potential members, but also contribute to the decision of many youngsters to leave the church - an aspect which will be further discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Yet Zionists are not always regarded with such heavy reservation. One of their features, their group consciousness and mutual care, is openly admired. An adequate example in this regard are deaths and funerals in a Zionist community. Rev. Vilakazi (cf. chapter three) has already stressed that, should a Zionist be dying in his home, other members, as well as ministers and prophets, will stay with that person until he or she has passed away. If necessary, Zionists will spend days at someone's death-bed and comfort that person with prayers, songs and company. Rev. Shabangu, one of my main informants, put it this way:

'We do that, so a person can die peacefully. He (the person) knows then that he has done something in his life so that people come and be with him.'

In other words, it is an acknowledgement and celebration of whatever he may have achieved and comforts him with a sense of self-worth.

The funeral rites, too, accentuate the importance of mutual help and respect. Here Mrs. Zungu's example (cf. chapter three) has shown that Zionists, and women in particular, assured that relatives of the deceased, be they Zionists or non-Zionist neighbours, were

joined by members of the congregation to offer comfort and, if necessary, financial aid to conduct the funeral. In this regard Kiernan also observed that so-called Zionist 'support-groups' -initiated by Zionist women, who acted in compliance with the tradition that married women are the chief mourners - made sure that every deceased member had a decent funeral (1977a:316; cf. also West, 1975:83). Fellow township residents positively acknowledge this Zionist attitude, and occasionally ask Zionist ministers or elders to assist them during the time of a funeral and mourning. In such cases, Zionists do not hesitate to joining the prayers for the sick or the dead. In one case known to me, a Zionist minister even brought his whole congregation to hold an all-night service for a deceased member of a non-Zionist family. Remembering that particular incident, this minister told me:

'These people, they had never anything to do with us. They were only interested in politics. They never bothered me, but one day they changed their minds. Because, when you have a death at home, what shall I say, these people don't go to church. Now, when there is a death at home and those people don't go to church, they don't worry about the church, but they want somebody to bury the dead person. This is when they came to me. So before we buried that person, we went inside the house of the family. We went there on a Friday night, me and most of my congregation. Let me put it this way, we all prayed for the dead person in that house. We prayed all night. And then these people changed their mind about us, because we prayed for them and the deceased.'

Thus, by providing spiritual help and comfort to other members of their township community, Zionists are able to elevate their status and, probably, to attract new members for their church.

In contrast to the wider public of the townships, local political authorities tend to express their opinion of Zionists in a more subtle form. Though they do share the common reservations, Inkatha and ANC representatives alike revealed that their movements will have to become increasingly aware of churches whose wider mass of adherents profess to be apolitical. Accordingly, both Inkatha and the ANC have decided to avoid any negative propaganda and instead try to appeal to Zionists with the promise of cultural, economic and religious prosperity, as we shall see below.

Finally, there is the group of Zionist drop-outs (whose cases will feature more prominently in a subsequent chapter). Initially, one would think that church-leavers completely revoke their spiritual upbringing and consequently withdraw from Zionism altogether³. Edward Mtshali, for instance, a 26 year old radiographer, felt that his personal potential and ambition were restricted by membership and finally left the church he grew up in. However, although he later joined the Lutheran church, he still appreciates his Zionist upbringing. Mtshali maintains that Zionists should be respected for their peaceful and non-political attitude. Another case is Siphon Gumede, son of a prominent Zionist church leader. Being now the only non-Zionist in his family, this 31 year old science teacher stands by his decision to leave the church. Yet he prefers to continue living according to many Zionist standards, such as the prohibition on alcohol and promiscuity. He even visits his father's services from time to time, without however getting actively involved. Gumede, too, feels that Zionism has a place in the community, and that it could serve as an example of moral and ethical conduct.

The preceding opinions are not shared by Harry Dumisane, a 22 year old University student. He holds that Zionists are not strict and consistent enough to live up to their own rules. Dumisane claims, for example, that some Zionist ministers known to him drink excessively and have mistresses, i.e. the opposite of what they preach to their congregations. Hence it is Dumisane's impression that Zionists are not yet ready to be compared with the established churches.

Among informants in Kwa Mashu and other townships I visited, I noted that there was always an air of curiosity as far as Zionists were concerned. Since they are a visible constant presence in the townships, Zionists naturally become the subject of gossip and rumours. Some people know only very little about Zionists and tend to, almost needlessly, adopt the negative criticism of others. On the other hand, there were informants who made the effort to visit a Zionist service once or twice, to find out what Zionists could offer to them. As I mentioned earlier, there does not seem to exist any aversion to or complete repudiation of Zionists among fellow Black South Africans. Rather, despite all criticism, my impression was that Zionists are viewed as an inseparable part of the community. And according to the statements given by the Zionist informants above (cf. chapter three), there can be no doubt

that they also hold this view. Yet it emerged that they nevertheless continue to emphasize what is arguably the most distinctive feature of Zionism, i.e. their social boundaries and the aspiration to remain exclusive through neutrality. I subsequently intend to highlight this feature, because it plays a decisive role in the process of how Zionist individuals and communities negotiate their internal and external affairs.

4.2. Boundary and Identity

Being different not only as a religious but also as a social group, Kwa Mashu Zionists are engaged in a continuous process of substantiating their identity. Here the statements of identity promote the cohesiveness of internal church relations, and assist in the dialogue with the secular world. This gives us the lead to take a closer look at the aspects of identity and boundary, both of which are linked to the maintenance of Zionist distinctiveness. In order to establish an explanatory model within which to characterize these aspects in the Zionist context, I suggest approaching it through some selected anthropological definitions and accounts of broader significance.

The sources concerned are related to my discussion in so far as they deal with minorities, or rather ethnic groups, which exist in an environment where they constitute a culturally and socially different part of the overall population. And although the ethnic aspect does not apply to Kwa Mashu Zionists, they have nevertheless the character of a marginalised groups, because of their different interpretation of the Christian faith. Bearing that in mind, Barth's (1970) definitions are of considerable relevance for he stresses that, when dealing with the boundaries of ethnic groups and minorities, one should give attention to *social* rather than *territorial* boundaries. The significance of social boundaries is that they are supported by both individual and group identity which, in return, are strengthened by shared and recognized values, criteria and sanctions. According to Barth (15f.) group members are thus able to classify non-members as strangers, and also to maintain their own identity when interacting with persons who do not belong to the group. The author further points out that (ethnic) groups could, however, only persist as significant units if they continue to mark a difference in behaviour and culture. In terms of contacts and interactions with outsiders this would mean that, apart from upholding its identity, a group would also have to structure a

certain pattern of interaction and control, which then allows the continuation of cultural differences. Thus appropriate boundaries are created in order to maintain and generate ethnic or cultural diversity 'within larger, encompassing social systems' (17).

Yet, as Barth continues, the greater the differences of value orientations between a minority group and the total social system, the more constraints on inter-ethnic interactions they would entail. This means that those values of the total social system which are not tolerated, must also be avoided. If a person of the group fails to do so, he or she might be negatively sanctioned. Accordingly, he or she would be reluctant to act in ways which are not approved of, for fear that such behaviour might be inappropriate for a person of their identity (18). At the same time, the sanctions which may bind a person to group-specific values would not only be exercised by those who share the identity. Here Barth points out that, in a poly-ethnic society, members of other ethnic groups would, in a way, also support dichotomies and differences by ridiculing or disdaining the identity of an ethnic minority. There would thus be a tendency towards canalization and standardisation of interaction, as well as the emergence of group boundaries which maintain and generate the diversity (ibid.).

Barth's discourse becomes clearer when considered against the background of other anthropological studies focused on boundary and identity. Gmelch, for instance, undertook a comparative study of groups 'that don't want in', i.e. small and endogamous populations such as gypsies, artisans, traders and entertainers (1986:307). By analysing various such groups from Northern America, Europe and Asia, she came to the initial conclusion that separation from the 'outside' and from 'outsiders' proved to be fundamental in preserving the identities of these minorities (322). The extent to which this was achieved varied from group to group. North American and English gypsies, for example, defined every non-gypsy as ritually unclean and polluting, and hence discouraged any interaction with them. A limited interaction was only approved of in terms of economic transactions or brief and necessary encounters with public and governmental institutions (ibid.).

Another example put forward by Gmelch are the Spanish Gitanos, a group of artisans, traders and entertainers. Gmelch established that the Gitanos underlined their 'independent' identity

by rigorously avoiding state jurisdiction, compulsory military service, and formal registration with the state. Furthermore the Gitanos also emphasised their difference with a distinct code of dressing, which was totally opposite to the general public's perception of what one should wear and when (323). Group boundaries were marked by additionally insisting on selective interaction with the host society. This included a strong reluctance to have their offspring educated in public schools; the reason being that it would not only remove the children from the household's productive economy, but also threaten the extent of manipulation of them and, thus, of the group boundaries (325).

Similarities in group identity and boundaries are particularly found within the confined environment of a multiracial urban neighbourhood, as demonstrated by Engle-Merry. Having researched the effects of racial integration in a suburb of a major United States city, the author found that, despite many years of dense co-residence, neighbours of different ethnicity (i.e. Black, White, Chinese and Hispanic) remained strange to one another, and that misunderstanding and racial prejudice were still common (1980:59). Consequently, sharp boundaries between the different ethnic groups persisted. Engle-Merry could observe that each group, instead of seeking integration in their neighbourhood, were pulled closer together by the shared values of their ethnicity. Circles of friends and kinsmen were constructed, and their common identity was perceived as a valuable asset to secure assistance and help in their environment. Relationships within the ethnic group had thus to be in good repair, particularly in order to provide jobs, uphold friendships and social contacts (62). However, Engle-Merry maintains that, since the different social worlds occupied the same space, they would naturally encounter one another repeatedly. Frequent frictions were therefore inevitable, and solutions had hence to be found.

Accordingly, group boundaries were only crossed when necessary and unavoidable, e.g. when meeting persons of another ethnic group in a supermarket or laundromat (64). Otherwise the different ethnic groups kept to themselves, and emphasized their own identity through a continuous process of suspicion and prejudice. Neighbours of a different ethnic background were not just seen as people who do something 'we would not do', but were collectively regarded as the 'boorish' Chinese or Whites, for example. As a result suspicion

and prejudice strengthened and justified the need to maintain group boundaries (ibid.). Interesting to note here, especially in relation to the following discussion about Zionist youth, is the author's observation that youngsters and children, as well as the better educated, proved to be less concerned about keeping up the boundaries. Instead they were seeking for a common identity for the entire multiracial neighbourhood (63).

These examples support Barth's explanatory model in so far as they demonstrate that, first of all, ethnic or minority boundaries are commonly perceived as social rather than as territorial boundaries. Secondly, identity comes from within the group, that is when individuals share and recognize the same values or, as Barth puts it 'by playing the same game' (1970:15). Thirdly, boundaries can only be erected by identifying outsiders as different, and establishing a certain code of interaction with them. Eventually, social boundaries seem only able to be maintained by means of a coherent group identity. And younger members are relatively less constrained by the perception of boundary.

4.3. Signalling Neutrality: Zionist Exclusiveness.

Focusing more sharply on Zulu Zionists, I would like to introduce Kiernan's thoughts on boundary and identity, as they largely substantiate the opinions and attitudes put forward by my informants in chapter three. In order to put his discussion in a comprehensive context, the author underlines his own perception of both terms. Here Kiernan stresses that identity appears as a complex phenomenon which is related to different, yet interdependent, aspects. To begin with he points out that individual identity is a matter of contrary perceptions, namely that of one's own, and that of others. Consequently, an individual will have to make a constant effort to have his or her identity acknowledged by others. On the other hand, individual manipulation can be denied when a person is a member of a particular group, because a group identity is foremost controlled by its members (3). Furthermore, to emphasize a person's belonging within a group, a differentiation of inclusion and exclusion is to be made. This, as Kiernan continues, would thus already indicate recognized boundaries between groups and classes of people (4).

Additionally, identity generally consisted of more than one, in fact of various positional statements which are open to selection. Hence, as Kiernan suggests, the more selective one is in that regard, the more one stresses inclusiveness and belonging. Also, the more one responds to the question '*what* are you?'. In terms of religious identity, the reply to such a question would then naturally be a statement of close collective belonging, which, to some extent, already indicated exclusiveness (ibid.).

Finally, Kiernan explains that the combined elements of the identity cluster have different origins. Accordingly, some elements are *imposed* on individuals, generally by birth, which determines whether one is male or female, dark- or light-skinned. In such cases the individual has little or no control over his or her identity. On the other hand, there are those elements of identity, which can be *achieved* by the individual through personal choice and ambition (e.g. a certain profession or social status). Here a person can exercise control and is free to exchange one chosen identity for another (ibid.) With regard to the latter, the author puts forward that the choice of religious identity is not to be seen as a random act, but rather as the result of a rational process. After all, belonging to a religious group demands individual conformity with and commitment to communal convictions. It would therefore follow that people with shared interests and values tend to adopt the same religious identity (5).

Kiernan then moves on to demonstrate in how far his definitions apply to the Zionist context. Here, religious identity, i.e. Zionism, is not perceived as an individual but as a group identity (9). Yet both proved to be interdependent, to the extent that Zionist group identity is supported and strengthened by constant individual dedication. In other words, being a Zionist, that is identifying oneself *with* Zionism, appears to require unceasing individual effort and self-discipline. Specifically so to ensure the cooperation and mutual help a Zionist group needs to succeed in overcoming physical and spiritual, as well as social and economic, disadvantages (12). To prevent the latter a Zionist group, invigorated by its common identity, will draw a clear line between inclusion and exclusion.

In that regard Kiernan has already emphasized the Zionist attitude to withdraw themselves

from secular activities within and outside their township community (1974:80f.). Yet the erection of barriers between themselves and others does not come about as a process of mere ignorance or as an undirected drift into isolation, but is the result of a deeply rooted Zionist perception that views the outside world as harmful and threatening - the origin of social and economic hardship and ill-health. As a response to these negative influences Zionists exercise exclusiveness, which can only work if church members live up to the moral standards and puritan ethics Zionism prescribes. Staying away from gambling, drinking and smoking, and refraining from marital infidelity, promiscuity and gossip - in short, shunning the contact with non-Zionists who indulge in these activities - is fundamental for a church that encourages its members to lead a productive and abstemious life in order to overcome poverty and social distress (cf. 1974:89f.; 1985:97).

The purpose of Zionist exclusiveness does not only serve to get the better of social and economic hardships, but primarily to avoid and counteract the continuous threat of sorcery and thus inflicted illnesses. Here the paramount order of exclusiveness is to eschew any contact with sorcerers. For a Zionist, a sorcerer is usually somebody who is suspected of procuring harmful medicines ('umuthi'), and of subsequently applying it in a manner that is mystically damaging (Kiernan, 1984:225). At the same time any consultation or communication with traditional healers and diviners is equally forbidden, for they concoct and deal with the 'umuthi' banned by Zionists (226). In the latter case exclusiveness can be relatively easily maintained, since healers and diviners are publicly known.

The avoidance of sorcery is by far much more difficult. This rests in the conception that almost every non-Zionist township dweller, workmate or neighbour, is a potential sorcerer. Such a person, as a result of personal dispute or reputed dislike of Zionists, for example, may be in the position to inflict spiritual harm, misfortune or even physical illness through the use of 'umuthi' (229). To forestall and limit the risk of becoming a victim of any sorcery related affliction or illness, a Zionist will strive to live up to the moral and puritan standards of his church. However, no Zionist is totally immune to sorcery, which is expected to strike at any time (226). As soon as an individual's distress is believed to be caused by sorcery, the entire Zionist congregation has to take action, because the vulnerability of a single member

can affect the wellbeing and harmony of the group. To accuse somebody openly of sorcery would only increase the already existing suspicion and animosity many township residents entertain against them. Instead Zionists take on a defensive approach by closing their ranks and, through communal effort, generate the power of the Spirit in order to detect the source and design of the evil forces. Subsequently the afflicted individual can be healed and re-integrated into the religious community (231f.).

The perception of the outside world as a hearth of uncertainties and evil forces (i.e. sorcery), as well as the necessity for a healing procedure to be successful, is further manifested by the confined character of a Zionist service. By insisting that all the windows and doors of their meeting places are closed, by employing a 'gate-keeper' who monitors the coming and going of members, and by further asking their members to take off their dusty shoes before entering the meeting place, Zionists signal their difference and withdrawal from a ritually unclean environment at the time of their religious work (cf. Kiernan, 1974:83). Through the existence of such recognized boundaries, Zionist identity acquires its exclusive character, and accentuates the statement of collective belonging (84f.; 1986:12).

Altogether, when comparing Kiernan's findings with the statements given by my informants (cf. chapter three), it becomes clear that Zionist identity and boundaries can be understood as a mechanism that serves to maintain their religious convictions, while the group represents a marginalized unit within the overall Zulu population of Kwa Mashu and Natal. What has become evident in the additional (anthropological) examples given above does, to a large extent, also apply to Zulu Zionists. Identity is perceived as belonging, and therefore of equal, if not more, importance within the group; rather than being a mere statement to the outside. The cohesion of a group or minority, such as Zionists, builds upon an individual's commitment to acknowledge and recognize its values and standards. The cohesion is at stake should a member fail to do so. In other words, individual identity and group identity complement each other, and one obviously cannot be without the other: The 'I am' becomes more meaningful, and gets its direction from the 'we are'.

Therefore, a group identity must be protected. One option is that group members live up to

and support the chosen or imposed on (e.g. by birth) identity they have in common with the rest. The other way is to maintain the established boundaries, and to control the traffic across them. Whereas the maintenance entails the rules and definitions of both inclusion and exclusion, the control determines the structure and degree of interaction with others. A group boundary can thus be employed as a means to guarantee the preservation of group identity, and as a shield to ward off unwanted trespassing by both members and non-members.

With this we can now move on to investigate how Kwa Mashu Zionists maintain their boundaries in order to upkeep their neutrality. Particular consideration will be given on how they organise their external and internal relations.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

3. I must point out that I have not had the chance to speak to a person who has been expelled from the church - against his or her own free will
4. All Kwa Mashu Zionists I met were Zulu-speaking. It was significant to note that Zionists in Kwa Mashu unanimously stressed their belonging to Zulu history, culture and society. Furthermore, some leaders pointed out that their congregations would welcome adherents from other ethnic groups, i.e. Sotho and Tswana-speaking or even White South Africans (cf. also Sundkler, 1961:302ff.)

CHAPTER FIVE

Neutrality through Boundary Maintenance

In the course of the preceding chapters, I have already indicated that Kwa Mashu Zionists are facing a world of violence, political instability, educational inadequacy and poverty, which makes continuous attempts to intrude upon the set of their boundaries. A successful penetration would mean that the supporting pillars of Zionist boundaries, namely the shared and recognized values which mould individual and group identity, are also about to be affected. The maintenance of both boundary and identity thus depends on a balanced and well-devised management of the external and internal relations of a Zionist congregation. Such management defines and controls the extension of boundaries, and shapes the substance of Zionist identity. At the same time it is an unceasing process of setting the record straight, for Zionists have to deal with a mixture of imposed and alleged identities - caused by different perceptions of them by the non-Zionist public. This influence must not be underestimated, because it will certainly increase the Zionist effort to stress and exhibit their *own* identity and neutrality. The continuation of this discussion therefore calls for a closer consideration of the way Zionists mind their own business and organize themselves, in order to achieve the unity and discipline they need when confronted with external challenges.

5.1. Zionist Places of Worship.

Minding one's own business certainly requires an environment to which one can withdraw. In the case of a religious community this would mean a church, or at least a building in which services and meetings can be held. I have, however, already shown that Kwa Mashu Zionists are in a constant financial struggle to make ends meet. It is, therefore, not surprising that none of the churches and congregations I met could call a church-building their own. Consequently, Zionist leaders are very concerned about how to raise money for a proper

church-building. At times this can cause internal dispute and even lead to the splitting up of a church, as Rev. Vilakazi (cf. chapter three) has told us.

As a habit I always asked respondents after an interview whether they had any questions about my work or myself. Almost every time I was asked if I could help to raise money for a decent church. Here Mr. Abel Dlamini's (of the United Congregational Church) plea for financial assistance may stand for many.

'As it is we are very poor, and we don't have the money the big churches have. But we would like to have a nice building for our church. It doesn't need to be a fancy building, just a big hall where we can all meet. Maybe you have an answer. You come from overseas. I mean, our church is strong enough, but if the violence continues like it is at the moment, the church cannot progress because there is not any money that comes in from the other countries. If there is violence they will withdraw the money they spend (i.e. the continuation of international sanctions against South Africa). The future of the church is a point of money, the situation will not progress if we do not have any money to build any churches. I think the overseas countries can give us money, they know the situation is very violent in this country.'

Yet when I asked him which countries or authorities he had in mind Dlamini was rather vague. It clearly demonstrates that every possible source of financial help is considered, even if it appears to be as utopian as a foreign government coming to the rescue.

Due to the lack of own church buildings, some of the Zionist services I attended took place in the home of a minister or, in most cases, in a class-room of a nearby school-building. On one occasion I went to a service of Mr. Sithole's Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion, which took place in his garage. About 30 Zionists filled a space of not more than 30 square meters that had no windows and only two benches to sit on. There was no light, and after a while the garage became unbearably hot. Evidently, such places do not offer very much space and comfort for a whole congregation, though class-rooms often provide more chairs and tables to sit on. Also, a class-room usually allows a bigger radius of action for the healing part of a service.

When it comes to traditional all-night services where different congregations of a church

meet on a Saturday night, more space is usually needed. Thus, all the night services I visited were being held in a school-hall. These halls have the advantage that the host-branch can invite fellow congregations from all over Natal, or even Johannesburg. Moreover, the school buildings provide washrooms and cooking facilities for the visiting church members. Also, should there be a choir singing, a wedding or competition during an all-night service, the school-hall offers more room to conduct these various programmes.

Yet, more room usually has its price. Says Rev. Xulu:

'When we meet in one of these class-rooms, we don't have to pay. There is nobody there on a Sunday, anyway. But if we have our all-night meetings, and the branches come from Newcastle and the South Coast, we have to go out and hire a hall. That hall we had the other night cost R 50 to hire. So, now I have to go out and ask my members to collect some money. Usually, I have to pay in advance and then take the money from what we call the 'tithe of God'. That is that every member pays a little fee for the year. In my case, women pay about R 6 and men pay R 10. If they can afford it, they pay more. If the hall costs more than R 50, then we have trouble, because we need the money also for other things (i.e. funerals, garments, or food for gatherings).'

With regard to the 'tithe of God', Makhubu (1988:66) suggests that there are Zionist churches where members are asked to pay a tenth of their earnings every year. In the case of Kwa Mashu Zionists, however, the 'tithe' is a symbolic sum of two to approximately R 10 on average. From a Zionist church in Soweto (West, 1975:25f) we hear that their annual membership fee was on average R 1,80, which could be paid in instalments. Considering the steady devaluation of the Rand over the last years, the 'tithe' or membership fees of Kwa Mashu Zionists still match those by Zionists in Soweto.

Further, one should not forget to mention those small Zionist churches which are in the unfortunate position of not having any venue at all. This applies mainly to church members who work as domestic servants or gardeners in White urban areas in and around Durban. Their Sunday services have to be conducted in the open, on soccer-fields, public parks, or even on the green in the middle of a traffic-island. Though I did not make any long-lasting

contacts, I could observe Zionist congregations meeting on playgrounds in parks or on a traffic-island whenever I drove along the highway from Durban to Pietermaritzburg on a Sunday afternoon. The exclusiveness of a service in such places, and the tendency to keep the boundaries of a gathering intact -through controlled access and a differentiation of member and non-member - might be at stake here. Yet it was my impression that Zionists in such a position do not seem to let themselves be disturbed, neither could I witness any passers-by blaming Zionist for using the space. Occasional on-lookers and spectators appear to be no cause of distraction (cf. also Williams, 1982:93f.). This suggests that, under the given circumstances, Zionists are still able to maintain their exclusiveness even without the visible boundaries of an enclosed room or building.

Finally, how does one recognize a Zionist place of worship? I have already pointed out that Zionist gatherings usually do not take place in a building which can be regarded as a 'church'. Thus, if one does not exactly know where and when a Zionist service is about to take place there is a good chance of missing it. However, during the course of my fieldwork I became aware that there are three major signs indicating to the outsider that a Zionist service is in procedure:

- 1) Although a service has an 'official' starting time - on Sundays at about 11 o'clock, and on a Saturday night at approximately 10 o'clock - a European understanding of time and punctuality is not adhered to. A typical Zionist service is characterized through a constant coming and going of church members. Thus, knowing roughly the time of the service opening, one is likely to spot groups of Zionists walking towards the place of gathering.
- 2) If one comes closer to the building where the service will be held, one can hear the loud singing of the members who have already arrived. Non-Zionist township dwellers often complained to me that they were annoyed by the constant noise Zionist meetings would cause.
- 3) Finally, having arrived at the place of the service, one immediately becomes

aware of the shoes piling up next to the entrance. It is a clear indication that a Zionist service is being held in the room. Inside, everybody is barefoot or at the most wearing socks - no matter what the temperature on a cold winter's night might be. Shoes, as I was told by Rev. Shabangu, 'might be contaminated. You see, somebody might just walk across a piece of land where somebody has died, or has been killed. Maybe they walked across a piece of land where somebody is buried or some crime has been committed. So you have to take you shoes off, you must not take that dirt in.'

Consequently, the inside had to remain innocent and pure of sin by keeping anything ritually unclean outside - even dirt or dust from the streets of the township (cf. also Kiernan, 1976a:342).

Against the background of the already described living conditions of Kwa Mashu Zionists (cf. chapter one), the further lack of proper church-buildings indicates the potential strain they experience when exercising their exclusiveness. Their confined and impoverished environment does therefore not cater for an extensive freedom of action and of religious expression. The more important it seems to become to withdraw oneself from surroundings that offer nothing but disadvantages and disorder.

5.2. The Control of External Relations.

Being looked down upon as religious and social inferiors, Zionists tend to envelop themselves within a certain exclusiveness and social isolation. I have already shown, however, that this does not mean that Zionists would shun all contact with fellow township-dwellers or workmates. Like everybody else, they depend on relations outside the church community to secure their social and economic prosperity and, of course, to maintain an influx of new church members. Yet, external relations must be controlled and organised in a way that ensures the religious and ethical values Zionism stands for. The loss of control would certainly endanger the structures and integrity of a Zionist community. The organisation of external control does not differ much between young and old, although a contrast between accommodation on the part of the youth and cautiousness by elders is already marked.

One of the first remarks I heard during my fieldwork could easily be the most revealing one with regard to the mutual relationship between Zionists and the rest of the Black community:

'I think we are better off with a White government.'

Though the Zionist minister who said this was referring to the ongoing violence in the townships, thus branding the ineffectiveness or partiality of the KwaZulu police, it indicates an overall degree of mistrust in the competence of Black authorities. This comment can also be analyzed as a reaction of discouragement to the political climate Zionists are exposed to, and ultimately as a call for distancing from a community which, despite being neglected and disadvantaged by an apartheid system, is letting its own people down by continuing with violent acts and political nepotism. Consequently, Zionist exclusiveness, usually based on their religious and puritan standards, has acquired the additional factor of scepticism. The latter I could feel during almost every opening of an interview session. As I have described above, many Kwa Mashu Zionists put me on the spot when we first met, and asked for extended explanations as to why I was there and what my intentions were. Among many, Mr. Majozi, a 48 year old Zionist elder, expressed his suspicions by saying:

'You have come to my home and you want to ask me questions. I think I can trust you, but how do I know what you are going to say to others? I am a man of the church, I have nothing to hide. But when you ask me about the (socio-political) situation here, I don't know what to say. I am not interested in that stuff. I am only here in the church. Once you get involved in other things, you look for trouble. So I don't know what to say to you.'

Here Zionists insist that they are pure Christians and not at all concerned with secular matters. The scepticism stretches out to both the community and the city, where most Zionists spend their working day. The urban environment, as a whole, is commonly perceived as unreliable and threatening.

To begin with, Zionists are perpetually exposed to circumstances which are completely contrary to their principles. Shebeens, drinking parties, betting offices and even local soccer

matches put the moral steadfastness of a Zionist to the test. Therefore, a possible temptation needs to be suppressed by calling upon exclusiveness and abstinence. This, however, seems to be more of a burden for Zionist men than for Zionist women. Zionist leaders like Rev. Shabangu concede that occasional infringements of Zionist rules are predominantly

'committed by men and our boys. My own son, for instance. I know that he goes out and drinks beer. I can only tell him not to do it. But he laughs at me and says you don't understand. Someday he will understand that when people see him drinking, he's not going to make a good impression.'

Also, to resist the invitation of working associates or non-Zionist friends to join social function or to become acquainted with women, means for a Zionist to suppress the very essence of African maleness, as Kiernan (1974:86) put it. Should a member succumb to such a temptation, the congregation reacts immediately.

'Sinners,' as Mr. Vezi of the Holy Sabbath Church in Zion remarked, 'are punished. As a sinner you have to wait quite a number of days, or quite a number of months. It depends on your faith, you see. You are not being allowed to do preaching, and to be able to sit in the church, without singing and nothing. Everybody sees you there, in the corner. That is the punishment. Even if you are involved in the church choir, you are not allowed to be one of the singers until we know that you repent your sin.'

Accordingly, I witnessed that it is a recurring feature of Zionist services that members are reminded to maintain their group exclusiveness, and stay away from such things as liquor, tobacco and pre-marital sex.

In contrast to Zionist men, Zionist women appear to be less prone to cross the line of Zionist rules¹. The latter allows Zionist women to casually mix with non-Zionists, offering help and consultation with other women and neighbours. It thereby also enables them to pursue the indispensable recruitment of new members, which is, as Kiernan reports, predominantly done by Zionist women (1974:86-87).

However, Zionist women and men alike, do draw a line with regard to non-Zionist contacts.

This happens whenever there is the suspicion of sorcery. The case of Thandi B., for instance, shows that the threat of sorcery is taken seriously and that the prosperity of her future social life depends on it. Being unemployed after having finished her matric, this young Zionist woman chooses to stay at home all day, instead of cultivating relations with fellow township dwellers.

'As I have no work and I have finished my school, I just stay at home. I read or I watch television, or I clean the house. There is nothing else to do. It's boring because, as it is, I have nobody to talk to. My parents are out all day working, and my brothers go to school. So it's not always nice to be in the house.'

However, making friends is out of the question, for Thandi considers her environment of the township to be a lurking hazard:

'I don't go out there, because there is sorcery in the streets! I must not mix with the others. And all they (other non-Zionist girls) talk about is men, boys, boys, boys. I don't like that. I like to do some serious talk. I don't like to talk about these things. I cannot always talk about boys, music and fashion. I don't have a boyfriend, because if I would have one I would be pregnant. I don't want a boyfriend and I don't want to be pregnant. I want to study and I want to work hard to get a good job. Even when I was in school I knew I have to work hard to get my matric. Now I want to study to become a social worker. So when I mix with others, I would only get involved in bad things.'

In Thandi's case sorcery is perceived as a socially damaging factor. The contact with acquaintances and neighbours is feared to evoke a negative influence which could hamper the progress to achieve her personal goals. Determined to become a social worker, Thandi insists that her endeavours can only be successful if she avoids the influence of counterproductive elements, i.e. the idleness of other unemployed persons, gossip, and, most of all, the prospect of falling pregnant before having a chance to pursue a career. Hence Thandi exercises her exclusiveness to bypass the pitfalls of social uncertainties and, emphatically, to ward off alleged sorcery.

. In general, the threat of sorcery is identified as an overall evil and threatening force that is

opposed to Zionists as a minority in the community. Sorcery itself has many faces and its harmfulness can be inflicted upon persons in different ways. Most common is the Zionist belief that sorcery is inextricably linked to the use of 'umuthi', traditional medicine procured by an 'isangoma' (diviner) or an 'inyanga' (herbalist). Since Zionists emphasise that prayers and healing alone are efficacious in the overcoming of illness (cf. Sundkler, 1948:231), 'umuthi' is regarded as harmful and abhorrent. Potential users of 'umuthi', namely non-Zionists, are thus under the suspicion of acting as sorcerer's by employing harmful medicine in a manner that is mystically damaging and the origin of illness (cf. also Williams, 1982:48f.; Kiernan, 1984:225). Kiernan stresses that consequently, almost every illness treated at a Zionist meeting is explained by attributing it to the hostility of a sorcerer (1984:226; cf. also Williams, 1982:48). Yet a sorcerers action is not only believed to cause physical suffering. Sorcery, as Williams points out, can also be the cause of social and psychological illness, such as the loss of one's job or emotional depression (49). I suggest that this aspect of social illness is especially tied to the conditions of the political climate and social instability in the townships today.

In other words, the deterioration of the political climate has added another harmful and fearful factor within the Zionist suspicion of sorcery, namely political violence and intimidation. In contrast to physical illness, social or psychological distress, the infliction of political violence and intimidation is inseparably linked to destruction and death. Also, unlike sorcery, which has a somewhat mystical character, the threat of violence and unrest appears as a frightful actuality where the means of counteraction are limited. To suggest a connection between the damaging effects of the political climate and the ubiquity of sorcery would be misleading, although both are feared to the same extent and both are inflicted upon Zionists by outsiders who are almost never identified as a specific individual (cf. also Williams, 1982:48; Kiernan, 1984:229). The form of reaction against both forms of affliction, however, differs slightly.

To begin with, Zionists do not respond aggressively or by way of retaliation, but rather restrict themselves to defensive and protective actions, namely healing and the practice of exclusiveness. The process of healing is a group effort which depends entirely on the

interaction between ministers, prophets and the congregation. In this way, communal prayers give rise to the healing power of the Holy Spirit, which is subsequently communicated to the distressed person by church members who are, by ordination, furnished with a healing capacity. The mode of transmission is prescribed by the Zionist prophet who, by inspiration, not only determines the source of illness, i.e. sorcery, but also the appropriate antidote to it. In Zionist services I witnessed, the healing power was transmitted through communal prayers and the laying on of hands. At a Zionist service at Durban's beachfront I also observed the use of saltwater as a curing instrument. In this particular case the person to be healed was given a two litre plastic bottle filled with sea water, which he was then to drink. After about three gulps the patient began to retch and eventually vomited in a nearby bush. An onlooker, who was also a Zionist minister then told me that

'the bad spirit has come out now. He is clean, because he has spit everything out.'

The use of saltwater is but one of a variety of curing instruments which also include ashes and garments. These items, however, are ineffective unless they have been formally blessed by the minister. Only then can water, sometimes mixed with salt and ashes, function as a purification and cleansing device, and only then can additional items of clothing protect the wearer from sorcery and the evil spirits deriving from it (Daneel, 1970:36ff.; West, 1975:92f.; Kiernan, 1978:27-32; 1984:232; cf. also Williams, 1982:128f.; Oosthuizen, 1985:24-29). At this stage, the question emerges, whether healing can equally serve as an antidote to political violence and intimidation. After all, the political climate exacerbates widespread mutual suspicion and recrimination and thus promotes the very conditions from which accusations of sorcery arise.

Schoffeleers, for instance, argues that ritual healing can be seen as the root cause of Zionist political acquiescence, for healing would individualise and thereby depoliticise the cause of illness (1991:14). What Schoffeleers has in mind is that healing can act as a mediator between the personal and the 'politico-jural domain' by means of corrective action at a congregational level (ibid.). This is certainly applicable if one considers the political-jural

domain outside the Zionist community as the objective cause of social and economic distress. For example, such distress can lead to arguments with neighbours, gossip, mutual accusations and envious suspicion. This was the case of a woman who belonged to the Holy Sabbath Church of God in Zion, and whom I witnessed being healed during a Sunday afternoon service which took place in an old class room. After the opening prayers and singing of hymns, a middle aged woman stepped into the middle of the room and started to sing with the congregation joining her. She was then circled by three elder women and four male Zionist prophets. Over a period of about 15 minutes, the woman was slapped on the back, pushed and turned around, and even pushed to the ground by the prophets. At one stage the woman went back to stand with the rest of the congregation, while the prophets were running in circles, slapping each other and speaking in tongues. This was interrupted twice by the communal singing of hymns, both of which were initiated by the prophets. After the hymns finished, the woman came back into the circle where one of the preacher women put a white hood on her shoulders. Once that was done, everybody knelt down and the prophets started to speak in tongues again until one of them started to sing a hymn. Finally, the woman was kneeling down and began to tell the congregation what the reason for her healing was. She finished with a prayer, and the prophets again started to speak in tongues. Eventually the minister of the congregation approached the woman, stood in front of her and opened the Bible. He then gave the open Bible to the woman, who lifted the Holy Book to her forehead, touched it and read the part which had been indicated by the minister. Again, the prophets circled her and started to sing. After that the woman left the circle and stepped back to her place in the congregation.

Since I did not understand everything that had been said in Zulu during the healing process, I asked one of the church's elders about the reason for the healing. He responded:

'This woman had domestic problems. She accused a neighbour of stealing some of her chickens. But the neighbour denied it. The chickens never turned up, and nobody knew who had stolen them. But that woman continued to fight her neighbour. They were shouting nasty things at each other. They had lots of arguments in the past. So this actually made this woman vulnerable, you see. And when somebody is vulnerable, then our whole church is vulnerable. So she has to be cured. The prophets told her to turn to the Bible, this is what the minister has given to her. She was reading two of the Ten Commandments. The one that says "You shall not bear false

witness against your neighbour", and the one that says "You shall not covet your neighbour's house or anything that is in it, or is his". That's what happened here.'

Thus, after the person concerned is singled out in order to witness his or her problems in front of the congregation, the community can respond with the appropriate healing method, thereby arming once again both the individual and the church group against harmful influences from the outside.

However, although Schoffeleers is right in saying that most Zionists remain politically acquiescent, I do not agree that healing alone provides an adequate response to the impact of the present political climate in South Africa. Moreover, the author does not consider healing in connection with the actual threat of political violence and intimidation. In fact, I could not find any evidence, neither in the literature available to me nor during my own fieldwork, that healing deals with victims of political antagonism. This would indicate that healing, though capable of dealing with the suspicion of sorcery and its effects on personal and communal well-being, cannot help to dispense a Zionist from the inevitability of political unrest and the threat to physical survival. The harm inflicted here is usually immediate and irrevocable, i.e. healing is unlikely to avert damage already done. Hence, in view of a hostile political environment the options for a Zionist depend on the taking of sides or not, rather than relying on the power of healing. But instead of adopting any political preference, Zionists commonly choose their own way of dealing with the problem. They disengage themselves from the obligation of taking sides and exercise political neutrality.

This attitude is firmly corroborated during Zionist services where political issues are not brought up. Even Zionists who have taken a political stance insist that politics are to be kept out of the church, and concentrate solely on religious matters, as we shall see below. So far, Zionist exclusiveness in that regard appears to have been sufficient to ward off the pressure and even intimidation from the outside. However, political neutrality can not always be exercised without difficulty and perhaps some compromise. Many Zionists, as I will demonstrate below, are in a predicament over how best to adapt to the socio-political environment. Nevertheless, as in cases of suspected sorcery, illness and subsequent healing,

Zionists can rely on communal solidarity and effort, which upholds exclusiveness and presents a cohesive front to the outside. Together, both healing and exclusiveness represent the essence of a peaceful force. This combined power is accumulated through communal interaction, which not only strengthens the entirety of a Zionist community, but also safeguards the congregation and the individual against external threats and malignant forces of different natures.

Everything discussed so far applies equally to Zionist elders and youngsters. There is no difference in the progress of healing, nor in the demand to remain distant towards secular matters and exercise political neutrality. Yet in terms of exclusiveness, it appears by far much harder for the youth to maintain the relevant church standards. Though I will discuss this aspect in more detail in a following chapter, it can be said here that this can be largely attributed to the comparatively wider social circle of Zionist youth association. Firstly, in comparison with the older generation, almost every youngster goes or has been going to school. Particularly here, the school environment serves as a generator of political argumentation and, sometimes, conflict. Accordingly, young Zionists are frequently urged to participate in political activities during school, such as strikes, stay-aways or demonstrations. This situation leaves them with the alternatives of giving in, i.e. to act against church principles, or of stoically bearing the ridicule and derision of fellow school mates.

Secondly, there is the constant influence of peers and friends inviting them to join leisure activities which are initially prohibited by Zionist rules of conduct - namely drinking parties, visiting discotheques, premarital sexual relationships or sporting activities. The social and convivial environment nowadays has much more to offer young Zionists than it did their parents. The mass media (e.g. TV, radio, newspapers and youth magazines), too, through invariably advertising an increasing and exciting amount of leisure activities, may induce Zionist youth to question the conservative ethics of their community. Finally, youth organisations, representing the whole Black political spectrum, put a growing pressure on Zionist youngsters. They commonly despise the professed neutrality of their Zionist peers and seek to involve them in their political activities. The means of persuasion range from

subtle exhortation to harsh intimidation.

Considering the above mentioned circumstances, it is surprising that so many young Zionists of my acquaintance do not lack the will-power and steadfastness their church expects of them. Yet it must be conceded that they have also experienced a slight shift towards leniency, as far as the church rules are concerned. That is, that Zionist elders tend to meet some of the demands of their youngsters and allow their participation in soccer games or parties, for instance. In other words, there is a perceptible drift which has the effect of somewhat extending the church boundaries outwards. These concessions are intended to work in two ways: to keep the youth affiliated to the church, and to serve as a reminder to live up to the church standards otherwise. These expectations apart, youth, like the rest of the community, are repeatedly admonished to exercise exclusiveness in their dealings with others.

Another external contest Zionists continuously face is the competition of the main-line churches. Zionists are aware that they cannot match the financial endowment and educational advantage that Lutheran and Methodist Churches have, for instance. Hence Zionists tend to rely on their strongest features, healing and mutual support, to make up for their reputation of being poor, uneducated and religiously unsound. Described by Kiernan as a welfare society which, through religious means, mitigates suffering (1985:98), the Zionist group functions to deflate such misdirected criticism. Though not advertising themselves in public, Zionists are evidently recognized in the community for offering what other churches cannot. Healing, for example, can be seen as the most attractive feature which draws potential newcomers to a Zionist community (cf. also West, 1975:105; Makhubu, 1988:77). It offers a remedy for sorcery and physical illness to people who do not respond to the treatment of traditional specialists, or who are too poor to afford the services of such specialists or of western medicine (cf. also Kiernan, 1985:98). Furthermore, Zionists offer care and mutual support to their members. In view of this, Zionist leaders do not hesitate to point to the difference between them and the 'Amasonto abelungu', the 'White man's or mission churches'. On the one side is a minister one can only consult or see for two hours on a Sunday, whereas on the other are the Zionist ministers and elders who are approachable

every day during the week (cf. Rev. Vilakazi's case in chapter three.). Altogether, my impression was that Zionists perceive themselves as a community where the members come first, i.e. the church can and does only function with the support of all, and not through mere leadership.

In financial terms, Zionists successfully employ their puritan ethic to get members to refrain from the costly excesses of drinking and gambling. Through this action, Zionists create an economic niche, where individual austerity is demanded in order to secure financial benefits. Thus, money otherwise spent on alcohol or gambling, guarantees more financial security for the member and the community. It contributes to the renting of halls for services, or the hiring of buses to attend meetings or funerals in other townships. Altogether, Zionist churches not only offer spiritual and social refuge, but also display a harmony the effect of which radiates beyond their boundaries and at the same time evokes attentiveness and respect among non-Zionists.

5.3. Internal Control and Organisation.

The discipline and tenacity which directs Zionist external watchfulness is closely linked by interdependence to the internal control and organisation. The structures of religious authority determine, control and modify Zionist behaviour in religious and secular matters. At this stage an attempt is made to discuss in how far internal control affects the Zionist community. Besides, in view of the subsequent discussion on how young Zionists adapt to church identity and boundary, it is relevant to examine the constitution of Zionist hierarchy and its interrelation with Zionist youth.

The unity of a Zionist congregation is held together by a recognized hierarchy which is responsible for communal social and spiritual wellbeing. Both build upon the effective conduct of preaching and healing, the mainstay of Zionist work. Preaching and healing are distinctly interdependent, that is, one cannot function without the other. The first concludes in healing, whereas the latter is considered defective in the absence of preaching (Kiernan, 1976b:357). Preaching and healing are also contingent on the cooperative and leading roles

of specialists who guide and dominate its proceedings (ibid. p. 358; West, 1975:51f.). The leading roles of each proceeding are clearly defined.

During all the Zionist services and meetings I attended the preaching was predominantly done by the congregation's minister. On occasion, a minister was supported by church members with a position of a lower rank. In this regard Rev. Xulu, of the Ethiopian Holy Apostolic Church in Zion, told me that

'as the minister of my branch, it is me who does all the preaching. Before the service, I prepare myself and read parts of the Bible I want to preach about. Now when you see the others preaching, they must be in the position to do so. They must be evangelists or preachers. Sometimes I allow young people to preach, but only sometimes, when I can see that they are serious about the church.' (cf. also Sundkler, 1961:137f.; Kiernan, 1976b:358).

Thus, though congregation members of a lower rank are permitted to join the preaching proceedings, it is the minister who determines the appropriate time for doing so. A minister's leadership in the church is furthermore marked by his experience and skills. Out of the 12 Zionist leaders I met in Kwa Mashu, for instance, six were ministers who had been leading their congregations between 14 and more than 20 years. A minister can then successfully employ such experience, in order to maintain his authority and to spiritually guide his congregation to realise the aims of his sermon.

The healing procedure is the domain of the Zionist prophet who is commonly assisted by church members who have been endowed with a healing capacity. During the process of healing, the minister reserves his actions, unless he is simultaneously a prophet, and gives the prophet a free hand to predict the cause of affliction and subsequently prescribe a suitable remedy. The means of healing, however, have to be sanctioned by the minister (cf. also Daneel, 1970:36ff.; Kiernan, 1976a:354). What emerges is a cooperation, or rather a partnership between minister and prophet. Together they form, as Kiernan (1976b:358) put it, the 'core of Zionist social organisation', whereby their different roles not only uphold the structures of the entire congregation, but are equally decisive for the gain or loss of status of individual members.

The way the last mentioned functions is described by Kiernan (1976b). By thoroughly scrutinizing the interacting partnership of minister and prophet, the author found out that individual status is defined or redefined in two phases. Firstly, in case of personal illness, the individual concerned also runs the risk of temporarily losing his or her status or rank, as long as the cause and the effect of the affliction has not been determined. At this stage it is the prophet's responsibility to single out the individual, scrutinize his or her personality and illness, and finally to interpret the person's behaviour either as blameworthy or worthy of reward. Secondly, a prophet's conclusion has to be sanctioned by the minister who, ex officio as preacher and group coordinator, decides whether or not the person's status quo will be elevated or abated (359). Kiernan thus concludes that, on the one hand, a prophet 'allocates' responsibility and rewards to the individual, whereas the minister, on the other hand, 'constitutes' allocations on individual and group levels (ibid.).

By recognizing the authority of the church leadership, Zionist members have the opportunity to gain individual status or rank, i.e. to act as evangelist or preacher; or even to become a minister. However, the access to positions of leadership within the church is predominantly restricted to Zionist men (cf. also Kiernan, 1985:98). Yet that does not mean that women are entirely excluded from leadership positions or the right of co-determination within the congregation. Rev. Vilakazi, for example, relies a great deal on the organisational skills of his wife:

'Sometimes she helps me to do the paper work for my church, and I am always glad to hear her opinion. She is also in the women group we have here. Especially now, they want to go out and get more members. My wife, for instance, tells everybody at school (where she works). She tells them about the church and what it is like to be here.'

Another example is Mrs. Zungu of the Christian New Salem Church in Zion (cf. chapter three) who not only holds the important position of a 'gate-keeper', but is also involved in support-groups who look after the sick and bereaved. West also maintains that women have their own hierarchy in many churches. In a particular example of a Zionist church in Soweto, women gain their status and hold office by virtue of the positions of their husbands, that is

being a wife of a minister, evangelist or preacher (1975:24). Here, the women organise and perform their own exclusive mid-week afternoon services, which are considered to be the backbone of the church (ibid.). This aspect is also discussed by Kiernan (1977a:36), who characterises the weekly all-women meetings in Kwa Mashu as the source and generator of communal support, help and comfort - even in connection with cooperation between different church groups (cf. also Sundkler, 1961:140f.; 1976:77f.).

Although Zionist women are known to take up local leadership (cf. Sundkler, 1961:139ff) or work as successful prophets (cf. West, 1975:24; 99ff.), it appears that leadership roles for Zionist women, particularly in Kwa Mashu, remain rather sparse. Though the Zionist elder Mr. Xumalo told me that women in his church could even become prophets, he emphasized that the position of a prophet is not considered as a rank:

'women are allowed to become prophets, because it is something given to them by God. They can't run away from it. Whoever feels like having a glory of God, can have that.' (cf. also Williams, 1982:192ff.).

Albeit, I could not witness a female prophet in Xumalo's congregation. Sundkler, whilst interpreting the life and eminent work of Grace Tshabalala, a now deceased influential and energetic Zionist personality in Cato Manor (later in Kwa Mashu), also found that leading male Zionists still hesitated in praising a woman's contribution: '....they (women) can pray all right, but of course man's prayer is stronger, for he is the head and leads in everything' (1976:79).

Why is it, then, that women, while usually constituting almost two thirds of the total membership, are often excluded from high-ranking leadership positions? With regard to Kwa Mashu Zionists, Kiernan puts forward a quite plausible explanation. The author refers to the vulnerability of Zionist women, who, through their extended contacts outside the church group, are more prone than men to become victims of mystical attacks (sorcery) or contamination (1974:84). Since any individual affliction is feared to spread to the entire community, women represent a somewhat weak point in the boundaries of a Zionist congregation. Accordingly, healing procedures are generally received by women, a fact,

which I could also observe during my fieldwork period. Through their intensive disengagement Zionist men, on the other hand, are more secluded and protected within their community. Thus they are more able to retain their purity. Furthermore, as Kiernan explains, Zionist men are more strongly the 'receptacles of mystical power', which they can subsequently apply to the afflictions sustained by women (85). The overall impression Kiernan got, was that Zionist men predominantly represented the core and the leadership of the community, whereas women chiefly represent the followership (ibid.).

I found Kiernan's statements largely confirmed within the Zionist congregations I visited. Without exception, ministers and prophets have always been men, though some women were allowed to preach or ranked among those members who pray for the sick ('abathandazi'). When asked, Zionist leaders, usually after a short period of consideration, conceded that women can 'go as far as preachers'. Yet again, it would be a misjudgment to assume that Zionist women are without significant influence in the Zionist hierarchy. In fact, Zionist men largely depend on the help and determination of their spouses. Being the less exclusive part of their congregation women utilize their position to the effect that they are the dynamic body in recruiting converts. Successful women thereby enhance the status of their spouses, who need to attach converts in order to take another step on the leadership ladder (cf. Kiernan, 1985:98).

The reciprocity of Zionist women and men therefore promises influence and recognition for women, as well as advancement and rank within the church hierarchy for men. It furthermore implies that the mutual correlation can only be exercised effectively when men and women are married. Consequently, and in accordance with the statements put forward by my informants in chapter three, it is also a prerequisite for every Zionist to be married before he or she can move onward to higher status or rank in his or her congregation.

It thus emerges from the outset that Zionist youth are somewhat marginalised. Being young and unmarried excludes Zionist teenagers and most of those who are in their twenties, from participation in the church hierarchy. Also, more than other church members, young Zionists are subject to the church's authority and discipline. The religious future and social status of

a committed Zionist youth depends on orderly conduct and self-discipline, i.e. the correct interrelation with the church elders and authorities. From an early age, young Zionists are exposed to discipline and, if necessary, to sanctions from their elders. Naturally, the execution of discipline and of sanctions vary, the older a Zionist becomes.

Examples in how far the latter is exercised, presented themselves to me during Zionist services I witnessed, especially as far as children were concerned. During a Sunday afternoon service of the Ethiopian Holy Apostolic Church in Zion it became immediately apparent that, apart from the community being divided in a women's and a men's section (see sketch in Appendix C), youngsters were also divided from each other by age. Whereas babies and toddlers under the age of three remained with their parents, children of both sexes under the age of 13 formed their own little group in front of the rest of the congregation. Possibly like in any other church or denomination the children of this age group were occasionally bored with the sermon, lost their attention, teased each other or simply tried to tell their neighbours the 'latest news'. Yet by being singled out from the rest of the group, these children could be much more easily addressed and disciplined. In case of too much restlessness and commotion amongst them, these children were almost immediately reprimanded. In the course of this particular service, the minister himself sometimes disciplined the children. He interrupted his service and quieted them in a verbal and soft-spoken, yet determined, manner. Most of the time, however, older church members themselves took action to cease occasional 'disturbances' of the service. Depending where they were situated, some elders gave the little 'culprits' a soft push, patted them with their staves or simply embraced them and held them for a while. Teenagers and young adults, by comparison, were fully integrated in the circle of adults and elders: young women and girls sat or stood with the older women, and boys and young men mixed with the elder men of the congregation. This integration achieves certain purposes.

Firstly, being segregated from the children, young Zionists cannot continue to rely on relative leniency, as far as misbehaviour during a church service is concerned. Secondly, the inclusion also implies that youngsters are expected to commit themselves more seriously to Zionism and show more responsibility. Thirdly, elders are able to guide and lead their

youngsters through their own exemplary behaviour. In that case adolescents are being taught; for instance, to dress properly, how to maintain their neatness, and how to behave as a Zionist in church and in public and how to comport themselves as religious men or religious women. And, finally, young Zionists have now reached a stage where their individual conduct and dedication is subject to adult measures of discipline and sanctions. These measures can range from verbal admonition to physical punishment. Most Zionist elders are aware that harsh sanctions could cause disaffection among youngsters. In one, rather drastic, case, Mr. Mkhabela, leader of the General Baptist Christian Church in Zion, confided to me that he occasionally flogs his youth.

'Basically, the youth lacks control of their parents. They decided not to listen to their parents, they rather listen to their friends. But when you are here in the church it's about discipline. The youngsters, they are no more disciplined. If they would listen, there would be no problems. Usually, I talk to them very strongly, and I ask them if they want to become like the others (youth) outside the church. I bring them all here and I beat them. I have got a sjambok (a heavy whip, made out of dry leather) that I use to beat them. That is the way I use for them. Then they respect me, because they must listen to their elders.'

When I asked Mkhabela whether he thought that this was an appropriate punishment he conceded that it would deter rather than bind youngsters to his church. Accordingly, the most common sanctions inflicted upon youth are aimed at appealing to their self-respect rather than of breaking down their personal dignity. Thus, in case of a severe infringement of Zionist rules of conduct ministers,

'we elders and parents consult each other so as to guarantee the discipline of our youngsters.'

as Mr. Hlongwane told me. Usually, teenagers and young adults are subject to the same mode of punishment as are their fellow adult church members: They are sentenced to refrain from wearing their Zionist uniform, to witness to their infringements in front of the congregation and to remain separate from the group during a service or meeting. A repentant youth will do whatever he can to be re-integrated into the community as a respected member

and, most of all, to regain his or her pride in being a Zionist. In the worst case, a youth might give up and withdraw from Zionism. That would, however, indicate a lack of will-power and determination, i.e. a lack of true commitment to Zionism.

The conduct of Zionist youth, as well as every other member, is constantly watched and scrutinised by the church leadership. Yet submission to church discipline should also open the way to personal advancement in status and rank. But this is where young Zionists usually stagnate.

With few exceptions teenagers and young adults do not have any responsibilities, much less hold any office. The reward of responsibility is inextricably linked to self-discipline, age and marital status. Self-discipline and good conduct can be exercised successfully, and is, at times, rewarded with the permission to preach or pray in front of the congregation, or to teach children in Sunday school. The more a young person exerts himself in doing so, the more he or she is likely to be considered for greater responsibilities in future. Age and marital status, on the other hand, are natural encumbrances, and a youngster can do nothing but to wait for his turn. It appeared to me that the young females were more content with that fact than their male counterparts. Also, most female respondents I interviewed had little or no aspiration to gain a leadership role in their church. This might imply that they are inclined to accept the traditional role of Zionist women. In contrast, young Zionist men, once they decided to stay with the church, commonly expressed their desire to join the ranks of Zionist leadership (cf. also the cases of youngsters in chapter three).

Altogether, aspiring youth finds itself in a twilight situation. To begin with, they have to resist participation in activities which while proscribed by Zionists are indulged in by their non-Zionist peers and friends. Next, they can foresee no immediate betterment of their individual status, as long as they have not reached the appropriate age or marital status. But what is the appropriate age? The majority of Zionist leaders and elders I spoke to maintained that age does play a role when it comes to taking over responsibilities. Yet, nobody could determine a certain age, whether it be 18, 21, or 25 years old. It rather turned out to be a combination of age *and* marriage. Thus a 21 year old Zionist would be an adult by age, but

could not be recognized as an influential elder - unless he or she has led a praiseworthy life and is married. Additionally, Zionist ethics demand unconditional chastity and sexual abstinence before one gets married. In short, status and subsequent leadership requires marriage preceded by a celibate lifestyle. An ambitious youngster has therefore no option but to get married. Though marriage itself is not obligatory, it offers the reward of achieving promotion within the ranks and statuses of the congregation. Celibacy, on the other hand, is expected *and* is obligatory; but it does not offer any immediate rewards. It nevertheless enhances an adolescent's reputation and shows that he or she is prepared to conform to Zionist ethics. Considering these two options it transpires that, though a youth can choose either way, there is nothing in between. This state may thus evoke displeasure and resignation.

In order to prevent such disaffection Rev. Dube, leader of the Holy Sabbath Church of God in Zion, contemplated allocating more leadership responsibilities to his aspiring youth. When I inquired further, he carefully put the record straight and maintained that

'yes, youngsters can become lay preachers or choir leaders, but they still have to be supervised by us so that whatever they do, does not clash with the main interest of the church, which is Christianity.'

Here, Rev. Dube particularly referred to the fact that his younger church members could well become involved in promiscuity, hence it was highly desirable that they be closely watched. Any further advancement in his church's hierarchy would demand that a person be married, which leads us back to the conclusions we have drawn above. Moreover, Rev. Dube's statements appeared rather contradictory when he, after our interview, mentioned that his eldest son, who is 22 years old and unmarried, had just been appointed to commence the position of general secretary in Dube's church (which is not an ordained office, but really only a function). Though Rev. Dube assured me that 'my church is anxious to see him getting married', I assume that his son's appointment was an act to secure the succession of family leadership, rather than a commitment to offer youth a place in Zionist hierarchy.

Looking at the structures of internal organisation among Kwa Mashu Zionists, we find a

consistent pattern of dialogue between leaders and followers, old and young. The leadership is predominantly represented by married men, who can build upon their experience and their record of praiseworthy conduct. Their spouses, on the other hand, are able to gain status and responsibility through cooperation, as well as through the organisation of communal support and the recruitment of potential converts. Status and rank can only be achieved by means of self-discipline and the acknowledgement of authority and the acceptance of sanctions, exercised by the church leadership. By submitting themselves to Zionist ethics and rules of conduct, church members can thus attain a status recognition which is usually withheld from them in their social and political environment. Individual acknowledgement and appreciation within the church also works as a vital generator of perseverance that is necessary to endure the hardships of a life outside the church community. Altogether, shared responsibilities add up to the effectiveness of communal efforts and the closing of ranks; all of which is aimed at contributing to a successful maintenance of Zionist boundaries.

However, in view of the subsequent discussions, one must ask whether Zionist boundaries also extend to the exclusion of matters political. Considering the survey of the relevant literature concluded in chapter two, this question could be answered in the affirmative. Hitherto there is no clear evidence of Zionists being conscious of or taking active part in politics. Now, against the background of the present political climate in South Africa and Natal, the question re-emerges whether Kwa Mashu Zionists can remain the way they have been described, or whether they are about to re-define their identity and boundaries. Much of this naturally depends on the wholesale politicisation of township life which has become increasingly extreme since the mid 1980's. Social and economic instability, educational inadequacies and political rivalry released by the unbanning of major political movements in February 1990 have caused widespread protest, violence and unrest. The overall situation has deteriorated to such an extent that political statements are expected, and that 'taking sides' rules the future and security of almost every township dweller (cf. also Zulu, 1986; Hindson and Morris, 1990; Stavrou, 1990).

Before I started my fieldwork among Zulu Zionists in Kwa Mashu I consequently expected to find that their religious ethics and social values would face an unprecedented threat. Or,

in other words, that Zionist boundaries cannot hold against the overpowering politicisation. Particularly so, because the throes of the birth of democracy in South Africa carry with them the spread of physical violence. To Zionists, who so far have been able to deal with the threat of spiritual violence, namely sorcery, the threat of physical violence suggests the adoption of a different approach to deal with it. Unlike in cases of alleged sorcery, the effects of political instability and violence are far from being mystical, and strike with brutal and irrevocable vigour. The effectiveness of Zionist healing and communal care is likely to be diminished when it comes to counteracting physical harm and destruction, and I have already pointed out that I could not witness a healing service addressing that kind of threat. This would seem to imply that Zionists, too, will have to shake off their apolitical convictions, restructure their boundaries, and jump on the political bandwagon in order to secure their social and religious future.

The main question of the remaining chapters is, therefore, what kind of threat is there, and how do Zionists respond to it? *Outside* the bounds of their community is an environment that harbours political instability and violence, in which youth takes a prominent part. This problem is further aggravated by widespread educational inadequacies and the growing generational antagonism. *Within* the bounds of a Zionist community the possibility of threat clearly points into the direction of its youth. This is due to the following. Zionist youngsters find themselves in a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, i.e. they are now being held responsible for their actions, but they cannot yet gain any rewards in an environment dominated by elders. Being thus marginalised they are either left to persevere in their good conduct and submit themselves to adult discipline, or else to withdraw from Zionism altogether. The discrepancies of age and authority hence represent the framework in which Zionist elders and youngsters negotiate an uneasy co-existence.

Though Zionist strictness can protect the community, a marginalised youth might be more vulnerable to the pull of social and political influences, which increasingly test the church boundaries and question the benefits of Zionist identity. Consequently, the question arises as to how far generational discrepancies actually affect the dialogue between young and old and pose a challenge to Zionist leadership in particular. Moreover, what is the subsequent range

of choices that presents itself to Zionist youngsters? The purpose of the following chapter is therefore to attempt to answer these questions against the background of the external threat a Zionist community encounters.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. Kiernan (1974:87) points out that, as part of the definition of her female role in Zulu society, a Zionist woman usually refrains from indulgences such as drinking beer or smoking. Zionist moral rules, which include the prohibition of alcohol and tobacco, are therefore designed to be predominantly male restrictions.

CHAPTER SIX

Zionist Boundaries under Threat.

Generally speaking, 20 -30 years ago Zionist boundaries were clear cut. On the one side was the church and its close-knit community, and on the other was the secular and ritually unclean environment in which dwelt the additional threat of sorcery and its effects of mystical violence. Politically related shortcomings, events and activities were widely ignored or rejected. To some extent this was probably due to the rigorous policies of Apartheid, which not only prohibited Black South Africans from partaking in the political process, but often also entailed possible police and security-force persecution in cases of anti-governmental opinions openly expressed.

Above all, however, politics and its detrimental side-effects for Africans merely supported the Zionist perception of an outside world in which disorder and disadvantage prevailed. But since Sundkler (1961) and Kiernan (1974) reported the dominant apolitical attitude of Zulu Zionists the external situation has changed dramatically.

Like other township-dwellers in South Africa today, Zulu Zionists in Kwa Mashu find themselves living in a world of accumulating conflicts. These conflicts are created by a political climate that seems to permeate all aspects of a person's private and public life. The main factors which can be seen as being inextricably linked to the political climate in a Black township are political violence and rivalry, educational problems and inter- generational discord. By being a part of the township community, Kwa Mashu Zionists too experience the hazards of such intense politicisation. Their self-imposed marginalization comes under threat of invasion by malignant influences, all of which are part of the overall volatile political developments in South Africa.

The first part of this chapter sets out to indicate and emphasise the multifariousness of politically related challenges which now confront a Zionist community and to which it must

react one way or another. The main emphasis here will be on Natal and Kwa Mashu, though nationwide events and data will be taken into consideration, too.

6.1. Outside Aspects: Political Transformation in South Africa and Natal.

6.1.1. Political Rivalry and Violence.

To many foreigners, newspaper-readers and television viewers overseas, political violence is synonymous with South Africa. Yet, the term has different connotations for different people. A remote phenomenon to some, violence has become a distressing reality to others. Hitherto most white South Africans have successfully refused to acknowledge, or rather, have turned a blind eye to the tragic impact political violence has had on the Black communities. Not that people are not concerned, but a good portion of ignorance, one of the legacies of a divided society, still exists. More than 40 years of apartheid has succeeded in alienating Black and White in South Africa. This 'not knowing each other', although so many things are actually shared, has created a chain reaction of wrong conceptions and mistrust. Thus, reading about violence and knowing roughly the number of its victims does not enable the average White person to comprehend how their affected Black counterparts really feel.

Since the mid-1980's Natal has been in the grip of political violence. Accordingly, an increasing number of journalists and social scientists have tried to pinpoint and analyze the causes and effects of political violence. Their work, and the increasing number of refugees from violence-torn areas, revealed the predicament of the Black population in Natal. However, due to the sheer complexity of the problem it has escaped attention in the ongoing discussion that Zionists, too, are trapped in this quandary. Some assessment of the political violence in its general context will help us to establish the kind of impact it has had on Zionists.

Before we discuss the effects of political violence, it must be pointed out, however, that the violence and unrest in Black urban areas is not solely politically motivated. Thuggery and

criminal violence, predominantly committed by youngsters, have become an additional source of fear and concern. In fact, as De Haas and Zulu, among others, confirm, there are certain youth gangs in Durban's townships which conveniently commit their crimes under the cover of the 'political struggle' (1989: 8).

But where does one draw the line? A distinction between the two different violent phenomena is therefore necessary. Honderich (1976), for instance, concentrates in a number of essays on the phenomenon of 'political violence'. He analyses it as a considerable or destructive use of force against persons or things, which is directed to a change in the policies, personnel or system of a government. According to Honderich, the main character of this force, whilst being prohibited by law, is its aim to change the existence of individuals in a society (9). Considering Honderich's definition, it becomes apparent that, as opposed to political violence, thuggery and criminal violence might indeed change the existence of an individual - by rewarding the criminal act with stolen goods and by scarifying the victim with long-term injury, for example. Yet, criminal violence and thuggery is certainly not directed to change the status quo of a society, but mostly to satisfy the materialistic and perhaps 'ideological' needs of a criminal minority.

In addition to Honderich's definition, Thornton (1990: 38f.) shows that the actual outburst of violence, although occurring in a sudden eruption, comes into being and acquires its meaning as a result of a process, or the flow of social time.

By comparing these two short definitions, we see that certain features are applicable to the South African context. The process of apartheid has finally led to the use of (physical or verbal) force, in order to change the system, and to change or rather improve the existence of individuals disadvantaged on racial grounds. Thus, both definitions, in a way, also reflect the situation of political violence and unrest in Natal.

Here, the recent political violence began in August 1985, when a human rights lawyer, whilst defending members of the United Democratic Front (UDF), was murdered at her home in Umlazi township, south of Durban (Zulu, 1986:14; Hughes, 1987:331; Beyerly, 1989:80f.;

Stavrou, 1990:3). Prior to that incident the political climate in Natal had already deteriorated through tensions between the traditional Inkatha and the more progressive groupings, such as the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO), UDF and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The above mentioned murder, however, finally entailed a week of unrest in Durban's townships. Initiated by AZAPO's Student's organisation and the Congress of South African Students (COSAS), a planned stay-away from school was called to mark the observance of the mourning period for the murdered lawyer, for whose death Inkatha was blamed. As soon as Inkatha moved into the townships to bring the troubled areas under control, the situation got out of hand, and was dominated by looting and burning of commercial vehicles, the burning of KwaZulu administration buildings and post offices, and ransacking of property belonging to 'informers' of the KwaZulu administration (Zulu, 1986:15; Beyerly, 1989:83f.).

The fire of conflict was ignited, and within the following eight months more than 140 people lost their lives and more than 110 families lost their homes through arson (26). As a result, Natal found itself placed under a state of emergency, which was to last more than four years (1986 -1990). At the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990, the Province experienced the tragic peak of the escalated violence. The worst months were December 1989 for the Durban area and March 1990 for the Natal midlands. In both months more than 180 deaths were reported for each area (Stavrou, 1990:4).

Political rivalry was one of the main contributors to the conflict in Natal. It has increased ever since the late 1970's, when Inkatha decided to distance itself from ANC policies and to build up its own political organisation to rival that of the ANC and the UDF (Hughes, 1987:343f.; Hindson and Morris, 1990: 3). Moreover, unlike the ANC, officially banned until February 1990, Inkatha played a leading role in township and homeland administration through its other manifestation, the KwaZulu Government. As a result much of the opposition to Inkatha, which became an official political party in 1990 (Inkatha Freedom Party, IFP), was focused on its involvement in a discredited administration and on its alleged connivance with the South African government and the security forces (Hindson and Morris, 1990:5; Stavrou, 1990: 4).

Representatives of the ANC/UDF alliance on the one hand , and of Inkatha on the other, both kindled an ideological conflict. However, it soon became apparent that, apart from the political rivalry, the real causes of the violence were much more complex. Within the framework of the ideological antagonism, the collapse of the school system, poverty, escalating 'tit for tat' killings, scarce resources, unemployment and the virtual collapse of the legal system in some townships were contributory causes (Sunday Times, 18.02.1990). This last feature in particular, namely the weakening of state control in the aftermath of the township unrest of the mid-1980's, evoked the formation of competing local centres of power. Youth groups, allied mostly to the UDF/ANC opposed the so-called warlords, mainly allied to Inkatha (Zulu, 1986:17f.; Booth, 1987:165; Beyerly, 1989:93f.; Hindson and Morris, 1990:5).

Zulu describes in detail how the political antagonism began. He states that during the initial week-long unrest in Durban's townships, many shops butcheries or other business structures, belonging predominantly to Inkatha members or sympathizers, were either looted or burned down. Moreover, as many township councillors were Inkatha members and many offices destroyed by the youth belonged to the KwaZulu administration, confrontation was unavoidable (1986:17). Apparently, the protesting youth were unable to communicate with the 'silent majority', and the list of 'hit' targets increased dramatically - from so-called 'informers' to policemen and their properties. Also, since all forms of protest were condemned at this time, protesters were soon redefined as criminals, especially by the mass-media. Accordingly, the KwaZulu Police was called in to restore 'law and order'. In addition to the police action, Inkatha-led vigilantes, recruited from hostel and shanty-town dwellers, also moved into the townships, in order to deal with the 'criminals' (18). At this point the author stresses, rightfully, that both opposing groupings did not necessarily reflect the ambitions or official policies of Inkatha or the UDF/ANC, respectively. To blame were local leaders who exploited their organisations as their power base (ibid.; cf. also Booth, 1987:168).

The events that followed are described by Hindson and Morris (1990:5) as 'antagonisms between power structures'. The Inkatha Movement found it increasingly difficult to find new

members or sympathizers amongst township dwellers, thus directing its propaganda campaign towards the residents of the informal settlements. Inkatha's formal link with the KwaZulu Government gave the newly recruited members the opportunity to trade obedience and levies for residential security. The obedience was accorded to so-called 'warlords', who usually had total control of the power structures in an informal settlement and were predominantly Inkatha members. In opposition were ANC-aligned youths, who had formed their own civic defence organisations, firstly in the formal townships and later on also in the squatter-camps. These defence groups would then act as armed units, should conflicts with the neighbouring squatter-camps arise (ibid.).

Just like their counterparts, the warlords in the squatter-camps, the youth organisations demanded loyalty from residents, in exchange for trying to secure and maintain urban development, such as more housing for their community (ibid.). Naturally the division and distrust between the two opposing sides grew and very often led to senseless violence. In December 1989 the township of Ntuzuma (to the north of Durban; see map Appendix B), for example, turned into a battle-ground between ANC/UDF aligned youth and the 'private army' of a particular warlord from the adjoining informal settlement of Lindelani. During one night, more than 80 houses were gutted or damaged on both sides, and many innocent people were injured or killed (Sole, Sunday Times, 18.02.90).

Hindson and Morris describe such incidents as class conflicts between the poor (township-dwellers) and the impoverished (squatters) (1990:5). They pointed out that, in a time of liberalisation and de-racialisation, some families from rural areas or shack settlements just cannot afford to join in strikes or stay-aways, which would ultimately mean financial disaster to them. In return, this behaviour has caused anger among politically active township youth, many of whom are not forced to leave the cities if they lose their jobs (ibid.). Thus, another aspect of conflict arises.

What remains, above all, are the victims who are less concerned about the causes than about the tragic effects of political violence, rivalry and thuggery, and the main sufferers are woman and children: 'Out there, there is no right. No wrong. There is no truth. There is

only violence.' Desperate words from a woman who, just like most of her fellow residents in a shack settlement near KwaMashu, had lost her house and all her personal goods and chattels in a senseless eruption of violence in February 1990. Many victims barely managed to save the clothes they wore; other than that nothing remained. The identity of the attackers, as nearly always the case, was left to sheer speculation (Sunday Times, 18.02.90). With nothing left, this woman had no choice but to join the rest of approximately 1500 affected shack-dwellers who sought refuge in the nearby 'Coloured' area of Newlands East. There, and even in white suburbs near Durban, the refugees from the violence-torn area were accommodated in church backyards, gymnasiums or soccer fields, with little hope and expectation for the future.

Similar scenes occurred repeatedly in townships and informal settlements all over Natal, especially around the cities of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Women and children have to survive the worst part of the violence: its aftermath. Husbands and fathers might be killed, and sons are lost. Thus, with no financial means of support left, families are likely to be torn apart. Moreover, apart from the pitiful plight refugees are exposed to, their dignity is also at stake by having to rely on the help of others. If help is eventually provided, many refugees fear that their helpers might be attacked as well - just for helping them out of their predicament.

Kockott (1990) investigated the destiny and the future of the children affected by the violence. From the outset the author stresses that all there is left for many children who have lost home and family, is the simple rule of 'identify or die' (5) Children are already forced to take sides in the conflict. The concept of neutrality, as the author found out, is foreign to them. It has become a matter of survival for these youngsters to 'support' either Inkatha or the ANC - there is no middle-ground. In a drastic example Kockott reveals the different upbringing of township children caught in the unrest, and of their counterparts living in the safety of Durban's White suburbs. While children in White schools, for example, learn how to make lamp-stands in woodwork classes, their peers in the townships or shack-settlements learn to manufacture 'washas', home-made guns made from coat hangers, plumbing pipes, bolts and rubber. Whilst White schoolchildren learn the basics of mathematics, many

township children learn to calculate how much money can be extracted from neighbouring households in order to buy ammunition. What is then to become of a young generation whose parents were gunned down, who had no schooling and whose tools are stones and bricks, pipes and pangas, matches and petrol (6f.)? Even newborns are affected by the violence. As Kockott reports, hospitals, too, have become a disputed territory between the opposing parties. A clinic in Mpumalanga (a township halfway between Durban and Pietermaritzburg), for instance, had become increasingly inaccessible to certain Inkatha members. Accordingly they tried to make sure that nobody, if not themselves, could use the hospital. Thus, in a climate of war the 'natural' response was to hit the enemy where it hurt most. As a result the threatened and scared hospital staff stayed away, and the clinic's well-equipped maternity-unit was empty; unfortunately for expectant mothers and their newborn infants (5).

Though I never observed a violent outburst in Kwa Mashu myself, I could, however, witness the remains of senseless fighting. On one occasion, after I had been visiting Kwa Mashu for approximately one month, I was driving home one of my informants. It was already late at night and just before we came to an intersection, we saw a crowd of people running up the street towards us.

'We better turn around,' my informant said, 'I don't know what they are up to.'

So we did, and the next time I passed the intersection at day-time I saw the remains of a burned-down house. Apart from a couple of chickens walking about in the rubble, nobody was to be seen. Whatever building material might have been spared by the fire had been removed from the scene. Nobody could tell me what really happened, only that it had to do with 'faction-fighting', and that the owner of the house was an alleged police informer.

Far more detailed and cruel, however, was Tom Hadebe's account of his experience of the violence in Kwa Mashu. The 29 year old student, who lives in the township's notorious M-section, told me about the close encounter he had with death in March 1990.

'I was sitting in a minibus and we were driving towards the main-station in Kwa

Mashu. All of a sudden a car came down the road from the other direction and passed us with high speed. The guys in the car were hooting and flashing their headlights. I turned and saw that they stopped and turned around. Oh shit, I thought. Now they are coming at us. We were all scared in the bus and most of the people began to scream. They saw the car coming, they knew what was going to happen. Then it stopped right in front of us and three guys got out. One of them pulled out a gun and held his hand up to stop the bus. By then we all ducked, because we thought he would shoot at us. I couldn't see anything but I heard the footsteps. Then somebody was ripping the door open. Everybody was hysteric. I mean, there were women and children in the bus. They all screamed their heads off. The guy with the gun, I remember he was wearing one of these reflecting sun-glasses, he was pointing his gun at one of the passengers, and told him to step outside. What could that man do? We couldn't help him, we would have been shot. So that man steps out and the guy with the gun shoots him, right there, next to the bus. That's what I heard. I raised my head a little and saw that this guy was calm and he was re-loading his gun. This was unreal. He just re-loaded it and shot that man again. Six times, the full load! Then he and the other guys got back in the car and off they went. We didn't ask any questions, we just ran away afterwards. When I got home I was sick for half an hour. It was unbelievable. I've never seen anything like this.'

Altogether, the violence in Natal has become a vicious circle for innocent bystanders and affected families. Mothers are losing their children and husbands, and children are losing their parents. Especially the increasing number of uprooted orphans (cf. King, 1990:7), many of whom are likely to be forced to survive in the streets, may fan the flames of more conflict in the future.

6.1.2. The Role of Youth in Violence

From our consideration of the unfolding violence in Natal it has emerged that youths play a leading role in the tragedy. Apart from the young children who, as innocent bystanders are mostly at the 'receiving end' of the unrest, politically motivated youngsters, thugs, and youth gangs have become the pivot of violent action. It must be stressed, however, that the involvement of youth in turmoil is not restricted to Natal but is a nationwide phenomenon.

Ever since the Soweto disaster in June 1976, where thousands of children took to the streets in protest against the 'Bantu Education' provided for African pupils, a new era of resistance against apartheid had begun to spread to all parts of South Africa (Brooks and Brickhill,

1980:33ff.; Chikane, 1987:333). In other words, Soweto, as Reynolds put it, caused a symbolic divide: It cut the umbilical cord separating the young people from childhood and it marked their entry into the maelstrom of adult politics (1992:6). Within the first three days of the uprising, from June 16 to June 20 1976, many youngsters perished in the clashes with the police. It was a matter of stones and bricks against guns, armed vehicles and helicopters. Official government reports stated that 128 black pupils died and that more than 1100 were injured. Yet, these figures have been strongly disputed. A Soweto SRC (Students Representative Council) official insisted that he and his organisation counted more than 350 youngsters in the mortuaries (Brooks and Brickhill, 1980:250ff).

The long-term effects of Soweto on youngsters were extensive prison sentences or voluntary exile and the loss of valuable years of schooling. Consequently, many of them had the choice of becoming unskilled and low paid labourers or joining the masses of unemployed peers (Chikane, 1987:333). Soweto also evoked a new generation of militant youth who became increasingly politically aware, learning about the activities of the ANC and the SWAPO (South West African Peoples Organisation), and joining banned Student and Youth organisations, often with the slogan: 'struggle now, education later' (Brooks and Brickhill, 1980:69).

Chikane describes how the aftermath of Soweto has turned the world of township youth throughout the country into a world of teargas, bullets, whipping, detention and death on the streets (1987:343f.). One would always have to be wary of military operations, night raids and body searches. It would therefore come as no surprise that children and youngsters continuously invent new methods of outwitting the security forces and of taking defensive action. Even two-year old toddlers will look for stones, should a police vehicle pass (ibid.). Youths have taken up arms to fight the system. Some even joined the armed wing of the ANC, Umkonto weSizwe ('The spear of the nation'), to achieve the same. Yet, Chikane insists that while not all township youngsters and children turned into politically conscious 'beings', the pervasive atmosphere of violence will inevitably make its impact by plunging many more into active participation (344).

As far as Natal is concerned, Woods (1989) summarises what he calls the 'environmental causes of violence-related youth psychology'. In general, he considers Natal's township youth to be a product of a growing uncomfortable and unstable environment which is influenced by the following factors: Poverty, ambition and job opportunities, political rights, overcrowded and loosely structured communities and the loss of traditional values (242-244). In brief, the author argues that the increasing poverty in Natal's townships, where the average monthly per capita income in 1987 was R17, has bred anger and aggression. This would be particularly so among youths with aspirations and expectations for a better life, who furthermore had to live in third world-type communities adjacent to a wealthy and thriving community such as Durban (242). Also, many school-leavers are faced with a congested job-market, thus being left without a starting point for a future life as an individual or as a family supporter. Moreover, overcrowded living conditions and the lack of proper community development in the townships cannot but increase the anger of the youth, especially since the denial of basic political rights has left no means to contest and change these disadvantages (243). Finally, Woods remarks that, because of the adoption of Western values and a greater political awareness, a growing number of youths had lost their traditional parental respect, causing antagonisms and disputes between the two generations (244).

De Haas and Zulu who intensively monitored the ongoing violence in Natal over the last decade, state that Woods' explanations are too simplistic and peripheral. First of all, poverty and unemployment exist throughout the Republic, yet they did not result in unrest on the scale of the Natal violence. Secondly, Woods' data was based on statistical generalisations, therefore being somewhat unreliable (1989:7). The authors thus intend to bridge that gap by providing detailed data, based on their own research.

As an example, De Haas and Zulu draw attention to Kwa Mashu where, in the early 1980's, tensions between the youth and the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture (DEC) caused a wave of violent action. What irked the youth most and motivated them to protest against it, was a syllabus introduced by Inkatha. It was called 'Ubuntu botho' ('peoples education') and was made compulsory for all KwaZulu schools by the DEC. Through this

syllabus, the Inkatha-led DEC had the space and power to control the education curriculum and, furthermore, to prescribe books which reflected the movement's ideology (Mdluli, 1987:61f.). According to Mdluli, 'Ubuntu botho's' prior intention was the installation of an educational establishment which would provide ideological and mental discipline - the lack of which was lamented by the Inkatha leadership (61-64).

The smouldering conflict between the youth of Kwa Mashu and the DEC erupted during 1987. Pupils were kept waiting for the promised books and stationary, which was to be supplied free of charge. Furthermore, the DEC insisted on retaining the school committee and prefect system. The students' reaction was to protest against the non-arrival of learning material, and soon they started to establish their own alternative school structures with elected SRC's (De Haas and Zulu, 1989:7). As a response, Inkatha-affiliated vigilantes reacted by patrolling schools, harassing pupils and detaining SRC members at random. Brutal fighting between the two opposed factions took place in which the homes of SRC members were attacked, leaving some members and their families killed. Subsequently, the situation deteriorated, leading to more fighting, detentions and more murder - for reasons other than the initial antagonism.

The authors stress that, on the whole, the youth have certainly become deeply involved in what amounted to a civil war in Natal, and hatched its own 'culture of violence' (ibid.). Battles between Inkatha members and UDF/ANC-affiliated youth groups were now predominantly fought to regain territorial authority.

More and more township officials went public to express their concerns and fears about the progression of violent actions. The mayor of Mpumalanga, for instance, complained that the youth had taken control in his township: 'They are ruling the township (and) they are very violent. When they say they are going to burn you down, they burn you down; when they say they'll kill you, they kill you.' (Sunday Times, 202. 1990). He states that even the parents were scared into submitting themselves to 'youth committees'. Mpumalanga's mayor held the ANC-affiliated youth responsible for the unrest and argued that, unless the recently unbanned ANC pulled its weight to stop the youth and unless there was more effective

education and development in the community, there was not going to be peace (ibid.)

The apparent lack of effective law and order maintenance, which left many perpetrators of violence without prosecution, alarmed the hitherto uninvolved communities who now tried to protect themselves against attacks. One of these 'protective' measures, if official justice had not been done, is the so-called 'people's court'. Here perpetrators are indicted with a variety of alleged offenses, ranging from stealing radios to being an 'impimpi', (a police informer). The punishments are tailored accordingly, and include community service (like cleaning up litter in a particular road) for less serious offenses, the beating with a sjambok or 'modelling' for more serious offenses. 'Modelling', for example, means that an offender has to parade naked through the township, usually accompanied by a jeering and spitting crowd (Campbell, 1992:102f.). Sometimes the sentence, especially if an offender was accused of being a police informer, could be death. Thus many innocent people became victims of 'witch-hunts' and were brought to 'court' for the most threadbare reasons (De Haas and Zulu, 1989:8). Political officials swiftly rejected these 'people's courts' in public, mostly blaming their opponents of being responsible (Zondi, Sunday Tribune, October 9, 1990).

Altogether, the antagonism between rival youth groups and political organisations caused a lot of helplessness and confusion. As already mentioned above, youth gangs with sheer criminal intentions have taken advantage of the situation and gave their actions a 'political varnish'; i.e. committing crimes under the cover of the political struggle.

De Haas and Zulu demonstrate the tensions between politically active and criminal youth. On the one hand, for instance, are the mostly better-educated ANC-affiliated 'comrades', trying to make their political ideologies heard. They are opposed by so-called 'com-tsotsis' or 'working-class comrades', who act solely for criminal purposes and are said to be jealous of their economically and educationally better off counterparts (1989:8). Both sides were continuously fighting each other, resulting in tit-for-tat retaliations which were beyond the control of any authority or social order. Again, innocent bystanders were caught in the middle. The criminally active 'com-tsotsis', especially, caused a lot of distress by terrorising

township residents, demanding 'protection' money, for example for not looting or burning their houses (ibid.: S. Stavrou, 1990:4).

Sometimes bystanders even become victims of mere suspicion and jealousy. On one of my first field-trips to Kwa Mashu, for instance, Mr. Khuzwayo, a Zionist elder, told me that the Zionist service I was about to witness later on would be 'under-represented'. When I inquired the reason for this, he answered that

'most of our members are out at a funeral for a young man in the neighbourhood. What happened is that this chap couldn't find any work when he left school. But he was wearing all these fancy clothes, and he had all this money to spend. He even had a new stereo. So those who killed him probably thought "where does this money come from? He *must* be a police spy." They thought that he was giving away information. What they did not know was that he got the money from his sisters. So they killed him.'

According to Mr. Khuzwayo the young man never had a chance to prove his innocence. Alleged 'wealth' put him on the death-roll. As in so many other similar incidents, the real identity of the perpetrators could never be determined.

The confusion as to whether an unrest or violent situation had been caused by a political or criminal motivation, has led to the somewhat common assumption that '*the* youth' is responsible, be it for supporting stay-aways, for example, or for violently opposing them (De Haas and Zulu, 1989:9). In conclusion de Haas and Zulu therefore caution that a generalisation about the youth and violence would conceal the real differences, in motives as well as in strategy and commitment to political goals (ibid.).

Yet, the fact remains that the political climate in South Africa is still predominantly linked to violence and unrest, which affects the everyday-life of young *and* old among Black South Africans in Natal and the rest of the Republic. In order to avoid another generalisation, we will now proceed to shed light on two further, though no less important, factors, which contribute to the circumstances discussed above, namely, educational problems and the generation gap.

6.1.3. Educational Problems.

The foregoing section has already indicated that the lack of proper education within the Black communities has led to dispute and violent upheaval. It is therefore necessary to discuss the causes and the present day situation in more detail, for inadequate facilities, unqualified teachers, and the lack of educational material are still disrupting the learning process in most of the Black schools. The displeasure of and discouragement among pupils and parents is continuously swelling, especially since a proper education is one of the most desired personal achievements among township dwellers (cf. Moeller, et al, 1978: 46ff.).

Historically the manifold drawbacks of the education system have affected Black South Africans for decades. A major setback was the introduction of the Bantu Education Act in 1953, whereby the South African Government assumed control of Black education. Before that time much of the African schooling was run by mission schools, which also enjoyed financial assistance from provincial and central governments (Horrell, 1973:482f; Lodge, 1987:114). The financial assistance required the mission schools to register with the provincial education departments and to conform with their syllabuses. The day-to-day administration, however, was usually run by a white missionary (Dickie-Clark, 1971:216; Lodge, 1987:114). Schools which could not obtain these subsidies mostly determined their own syllabuses and tried to train their own teachers. Thus, apart from well-equipped mission schools, African education remained, as Dickie-Clark puts it, a kind of charitable good work (1971:216). In the Transvaal, for instance, more than 600 community schools had been built from funds supplied by the local community and matching government grants (Lodge. 1987:115). From 1925 until 1945 those schools received a mere tenth of the expenditure which was granted to White schools during that period (Horrel, 1973:483). As for the curricula, they varied between provinces but were all particularly written for African primary school-children. For the secondary pupils, however, the same syllabus as for their White peers was adopted (Lodge, 1987:115f.).

Both, community and mission schools had a number of serious shortcomings. Whereas community schools were notoriously under-subsidised, therefore often failing to attract more

highly qualified teachers, mission schools were repeatedly accused of paternalistic and heavy-handed control (116). In addition, the community schools had to overcome the problem of permanently overcrowded classrooms.

In her study of 'Urban Bantu Youth', Hellmann already drew attention to the desperate situation of Black schooling. She stresses that a pre-eminent problem in Black schools around Johannesburg is the average teacher:pupil ratio of 1:50, especially in the sub- and primary standards, where efficient education is most important (1940:36). An additional problem arose with the lack of well-qualified and experienced teachers. Hellmann found that, in contrast to White schools, many of those under-qualified teachers were allotted to sub-standard and primary classes, based on the belief that the lower the standard the easier the teaching task. Moreover, in small schools, where the number of children in higher standards was relatively few, pupils of different standards had to be taught together. That, of course, hampered the learning process for both school beginners and advanced pupils (37).

Apart from overcrowded conditions, the provision of classrooms was also limited and insufficient. Sometimes as many as five different classes had to share the school hall, whereby the lack of appropriate furniture forced many pupils to sit on the floor instead of on proper school-benches and desks. By taking the 'appalling' shortage of school equipment, e.g. desks, blackboards, diagrams and maps, into account, Hellmann concludes that, in comparison to their White peers, Black pupils took above average time to pass their standards. In some cases children spent up to three years in the sub-standards before they proceeded to standard one (39). Hellmann concludes that, particularly in those first years of schooling, where a child requires educational guidance and attention most, Black schools languish lamentably. The discussed defects in the schooling system hinder a large proportion of pupils from advancing even to the higher standards. It is thus the rule, rather than the exception, that many pupils leave school prematurely to enter a world where their educational attainment receives very little recognition in the first place (41) ¹.

The South African Government initially accepted the need for intervention in schooling issues. Yet its first concern was not to reform in terms of African educational needs, but

rather to control and restructure the educational system as a creation of Apartheid policy. Thus in 1949 the government appointed the 'Eiselen Commission' to produce a plan for the 'Education for Natives as a separate race', with principles such as adaptation to modern requirements of 'Bantu culture' and centralisation of control (Horrell, 1973:485f.; van Zyl, 1973:500f.). The passing of the Bantu Education Act, which followed in 1953, reflected the principle that 'education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life' ². With the installation of the Bantu Education Bill the Nationalist government legally clinched provincial control over all school education and teacher-training for Africans. Mission schools were also affected: their teacher-training institutions had to be handed over, and by 1957, all governmental subsidies were finally cancelled. The Act turned the education system upside down and caused antagonism, unrest and protest for decades thereafter (Horrell, 1973:486, van Zyl, 1973:500; Lodge, 1987:117f.; Molobi, 1988:155).

The resistance to apartheid and to Bantu Education continued throughout the 1960's but reached its tragic climax in the Soweto uprising of 1976. The elements which created the climate of student revolt were still the same as those described by Hellmann for the 1940's. Yet, the final link in the chain of events which led to the uprising in June 1976 was the government's entrenchment of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction (Molobi, 1988:155). The Government later rejected the claim that Bantu Education was the sole cause of the Soweto uprising, but nevertheless withdrew Afrikaans as a compulsory language in Black schools (156). Pupil and student organisations, as well as unions, political organisations and parental bodies joined forces to confront the National Department of Education and Training (DET) and continuously demanded the scrapping of the Bantu Education Act. Further demands have been for the recognition of SRC's and the recognition of popularly drafted student constitutions (ibid.; Gwala, 1988:174f.). Whilst official bodies struggled to achieve some sort of concession from the government, the day to day life of school children steadily deteriorated.

The inadequacy of Black schooling has always been accompanied by high drop-out rates among pupils. Even at schools where particular local school committees had instituted compulsory education, almost a quarter of the pupils left school before they reached the age

of 16 (Nasson, 1986:110). A recent 'Race Relations Survey' by the South African Institute of Race Relations confirms this trend. Taking all areas, including the 'independent homelands', into account, the survey shows significant changes from standard to standard in African pupil enrolment in 1988. Out of a total of approximately seven million pupils, the enrolment proportion in standard one was 11,4%, that is more than 800 000 pupils. In standard six, the number of pupils attending school already dwindled to 500 000, i.e. an enrolment proportion of 7,1% . In standard ten, finally, the enrolment proportion has declined to a mere 2,7%, leaving 190 000 African pupils countrywide to study for their matriculation examination (Race Relation Survey, 1990:825f.).

Returning to Natal, we find that the schooling dilemma is the same as elsewhere in the Republic. Whereas many White schools in Natal were forced to close their doors during the last ten years, due to a decreasing number of pupils, it is reported that until the end of this decade more than 2 800 additional class-rooms are desperately required by KwaZulu schools (Bennett, 1990:12). For Kwa Mashu that means that, today, the average primary and secondary pupils have to share their class-rooms with 45 other pupils. Yet their counterparts in White schools enjoy the average teacher-pupil ratio of 1:18 (KwaZulu Development Information, 1988; Bennett, 1990:12). In addition to the already mentioned problems, the relationship between teachers and pupils is also at stake, especially since the introduction of Inkatha's 'Ubuntu botho' syllabus caused waves of student protest and unrest. Frustrated teachers, for example, seem to register their annoyance by resorting to corruption, e.g. the misuse of school-funds for personal financial gain. Furthermore, pupils in Natal complained more and more about teachers being notoriously late for class - if arriving at all, being drunk and occasionally passing on examination-marking to non-qualified people. Examination marks and papers seem to disappear without explanation i.e. some students have no official qualifications. Sometimes, even, teachers were accused of sexually harassing their pupils (De Haas and Zulu, 1989:4). Teachers, on the other hand, often fear for their personal safety, claiming that militant pupils would vent their anger at the educational system and its inadequacies upon them. Consequently, many teachers stay at home or make little effort to reach some sort of consensus with the students (ibid.).

A major aspect of disturbance in public education has been and still is the political antagonism, which brought violence and rivalry right into the school-yards. Gultig (1990:12) thus stresses that Natal schools have become strange places: controlled by the state or Kwa Zulu Government, but occupied mainly by teachers and pupils who support the ANC/UDF. That this 'mixture' is a recipe for constant conflict was confirmed in 1989, when more than 60% of the black schools in the greater Pietermaritzburg area had experienced violent incidents. These incidents, typical also of the rest of the Province, included invasions by Inkatha vigilantes, or attacks by ANC-aligned youth, who had been excluded from the schools. The schools were considered to be symbols of Bantu Education and of apartheid. The perpetrators were not frightened off by threats, harassment and even murder (ibid.). Gultig reports that in 1988 and 1989 almost 2000 youths, many of whom were ANC/UDF-aligned, had been detained as a result of protest and violent clashes. Furthermore, in cases of convicted perpetrators being pupils, the Kwa Zulu Department of Education usually withheld the right of readmission to school (13).

Whatever the cause of the riots and unrest in Natal's schools, the effects of its aftermath has been discouraging for all persons concerned. Pupils tend to stay away from school, because they are scared of being caught up in fights between opposing factions. And frightened teachers, who refuse to give classes in violence-torn schools, are running the risk of being dismissed by the Department of Education for not doing their duties. Even in more 'peaceful' areas, some schools can only offer a minimum of teaching due to stay-aways by teachers. The possibility of ambitious pupils to pass matric in time or at all, is therefore very low (ibid.). In 1989 only 951 Kwa Zulu matriculants were allowed to advance to university education (Race Relations Survey, 1990:829f.)³. This causes great grief among parents who, as Moeller found out in a KwaMashu survey, prize their children's educational achievements, on the assumption that it would open the door to better jobs, higher salaries and financial security (1977:48f.). Looking at the present day situation, however, there is very little hope for youngsters to survive in a region where the unemployment rate for Africans is close to 50% (Gultig, 1990:13).

6.1.4. Generational Antagonism

Having discussed various aspects of political violence and of educational inadequacy in the previous sections, it emerges that a climate of tension exists between young and old in South Africa's Black townships and communities. The roots of dissonance between the generations are not just a matter of political discord, but are equally linked to a history of social change and of European influence and education.

The migration from rural to urban areas, for instance, was one of the major contributing factors to inter-generational discrepancies in the past. Since the 1920's the percentage of the African population in urban areas has increased rapidly and the new environmental conditions have evoked a different form of family relationship (Hellmann, 1940:6). Traditional rural family structures began to crumble. As Hellmann reports for the 1940's the economic situation often demanded both parents to be engaged in long-term periods of wage earning. That left very little time to raise children, who, in many cases, had to be brought up by their parental relatives or grandparents instead. Hellmann states that children commonly resented the interference of elders other than their parents, and accordingly behaved in unruly and insubordinate ways (7). Parents, as they felt the grip on their children loosening, reacted with growing strictness and punitive discipline. Especially so, since their offspring was now also subject to influences such as European education and industrialisation. Thus, parents were in no position to compete against their children's newly acquired scholastic and worldly knowledge, which only widened the gap between them (9ff.). Over the years the situation worsened and parental authority lost much of its impact. Urban family relationships experienced a shift from the traditional emphasis on mutual support within the extended family to an independent nuclear family living on its own as a unit (cf. Colson, 1970:158; Hellmann, 1971:162f.). Township life has turned out to be a battlefield of individual competition rather than family co-operation (Dubb, 1973:458). That meant that township parents, in order to make money and to secure and retain a job, were, in fact, forced to neglect the education of their children. This predicament can then have the following negative side-effects: Should a parent fail to maintain a certain income, he might be in the humiliating position of being unable to meet the basic needs of his children. On the other hand, a full-

time job means that parents are often away from home and thus estranges the parent-child relationship and undermines parental authority (Hellmann, 1971:166f.; Dubb, 1973:459). A further aspect that led to a loss of parental control was the growing educational imbalance between youngsters and their parents or elders. Though many parents strove to afford a proper school education for their youngsters, they in many cases struggled to give the child adequate emotional and intellectual support. Confronted with the new values and different norms of behaviour of their children, many parents were reduced to the role of a stranger (Hellmann, 1971:166).

In addition, Vilakazi stresses that the children's newly acquired knowledge and the different use of their own language left many parents insecure and helpless. By learning all about the virtues of European life, e.g. cleverness, knowledge of world affairs, literacy, physics and medical science, the traditional 'Weltanschauung' of children, as the author put it, had been turned upside down (1965:135). The contradiction of traditional and modern education turned out to be in favour of the new values and in rejection of the old ones. Vilakazi emphasized that parents generally supported their children's education to ensure their enlightenment. This, however, was not always appreciated by the children, who often felt ashamed of their parents' nescience. Sometimes the youngsters would even turn hostile should parents and elders refer to their past Zulu life (130f.).

When we now look at the present day situation we have to consider whether the reasons for generational estrangement have remained the same. First of all, the times have changed and there is certainly a new generation of parents. Since the literature discussed above was published, many parents were able to fully adapt to the urban life and have also acquired a higher standard of education and knowledge themselves - through school or radio and television. But the youth, too, has changed. Its active involvement in political issues and struggles over the last 15-20 years has caused a different kind of awareness as far as authorities and elders are concerned. The dramatic student revolt in Soweto 1976, for example, shifted from the initial protest against Afrikaans as an official language in school to a rejection of the whole system of education for Africans and of apartheid (Chikane, 1986:340). It is remarkable that active support for the student's demands was not

forthcoming from their parents. Instead, apart from isolated instances of support, the youngsters organized their own struggle and their own leadership. The parents' apparent passivity was seen by their offspring as a result of subjection to constant oppression by the apartheid government; especially during the 1960's, when the banning of the African National Congress and Pan African Congress, detentions and political prosecution 'handcuffed' the political expression of Black South Africans. Chikane is convinced that the failure of parents to struggle with their children, and to provide leadership, widened the generation gap (340f.). This was particularly the case when it came to the numerous and widespread school-boycotts, which continue to hamper the education of Black South African pupils and students. Reynolds reports that such boycotts led the youth into direct confrontation with their parents. Here many youngsters were torn between the desire to obey their parents and their conviction that the disruption of education was a necessary tactic (1992:13). Not many politically active pupils and students were able to continue their school or tertiary education, which also meant that they were likely not to secure or keep employment. As a result they were seldom able to meet the expectations of their families to support them financially, which then led to more dispute between young and old (ibid.).

Woods also confirms that a much greater political awareness of the youth created a division between them, their parents and the rest of the community. The author emphasises, however, that one of the main causes for this divide is the transition from traditional to more western values (1989:244). Yet as a result of my own fieldwork experience, I tend to agree with De Haas and Zulu, who maintain that the loss of traditional values among youth tends to be an unwarranted generalisation. Instead, while young people generally acknowledge parental support, they are at the same time aware of their powerlessness and reluctance to deal with the problems of their children (1989:9f.). Both authors maintain that much of the disrespect was directed against elders who may not have behaved in such a way as to earn respect, e.g. drunken teachers and aggressive vigilantes. Moreover, rather than rebelling against tradition, youth commonly rebel against abuses in tribal or local authority structures, such as using the control of infrastructure to repress political opposition (10). According to De Haas and Zulu, both generations find themselves in a state of continuity and change: That the youth are more involved in the transformation of their society than their parents and at the same time adopt

the new values of materialism and consumerism, does not mean that they reject their traditional values in social or religious life. Being more educated and articulate than their parents, many youth took the opportunity to contribute to the liberation and change of their own and their family's predicaments (ibid.).

It can therefore be concluded that the generational antagonism in many cases is not a simple young or 'new' versus old and 'traditional'. Certainly, the transformation through urbanisation and education left its mark on family structures and authority measures. Yet youngsters nowadays rather seem to utilize their educational advantages to achieve a betterment of their society as a whole, rather than to instigate a mere rebellion against their elders. A better education also encourages criticism and furthers individual flexibility. Not surprisingly many youngsters are not only aware of their disadvantages in society, but they are also able to find new means to air their grievances. Unfortunately, South African policies, in provinces and homelands alike, have hitherto hampered the development of integration and equality. And since the youth is the main source of demand for a social and political change, its protest is naturally directed against authorities and elders who fail to acknowledge that the call for change does not necessarily mean the rejection of tradition.

Coming to the end of the first part of this chapter it must be stressed that the examples given and discussed are not to be generalized. They reflect, however, the political and social predicament of most of the Black people in South Africa - Zionists included. Their problems are the same as the ones of the protesting youth or the propagating political organisations. Evidently the exclusiveness of a Zionist community is at stake by being exposed to violence and social and educational problems. Having thus outlined the dimensions of the external threat to a Zionist community, the discussion will now focus on what I have identified as a potential internal threat, namely the marginalisation of the Zionist youth. The second part of this chapter will therefore investigate to what extent Zionist youngsters are marginalised within their religious communities and what their options are.

6.2. Inside Aspects: The Dilemma of Zionist Youth.

The dynamic and future of a Zionist congregation may, though not entirely, depend on a balanced interrelation between its leadership and youth. As much as a Zionist group, as well as its leaders and elders profess to need the loyalty of its rising generation, so does Zionist youth build upon social and religious guidance and education. The circumstances would be ideal if their interrelationship could remain frictionless. The relationship largely rests upon the complementary opposition between authority exercised by the leadership and its acceptance by the youth, but in between there is a spectrum of inter-generational dialogue, which determines the standards of discipline and the choices of alternatives. Both opposition and dialogue will now be discussed to further illustrate the interaction between leadership and younger followers among Zulu Zionists in Kwa Mashu. Arguably, a harmonious cooperation between young and old will increase the potential to sustain the coherence and strength of group identity and boundaries.

6.2.1. The Imposition of Authority and Discipline.

So far, our discussion has indicated that the emphasis of Zionist authority rests on discipline and its maintenance. The orderly performance of a Zionist service or meeting, the interaction between minister, prophet and the community, as well as the instructions for individual conduct are all linked to a steadfast and effective implementation of discipline. The skilful application of discipline distinguishes a leader and enhances his authority (cf. also Kiernan, 1976b:359).

Yet, the ideal status of a Zionist leader is at risk if his disciplinary measures become difficult to impose. Clearly the successful implementation of discipline and its effectiveness presupposes a certain conformity on the part of followers, whether elders or youngsters - especially in the observance of Zionist ethical rules. Over all, this very conformity seems to have dwindled among Kwa Mashu Zionists. Ministers and elders admit that an increasing number of youngsters frequently question and cast doubt on established Zionist rules (cf. chapter three; cf. also Dlamini, 1986:210). One of the stumbling blocks, for example, is the

common Zionist rule to take off one's shoes before entering the place where a meeting or service is held. A person's shoes might have been inadvertently contaminated by walking through the streets of the township, i.e. through places which could have been the source of sorcery and evil spirits. With regard to this issue a Zionist elder mentioned to me that 'some of our youngsters don't see a point in doing that. They say "why do we have to take our shoes off?" They don't like to be without shoes, since the floors are sometimes too cold, especially in winter. So they feel uncomfortable. They don't want to worry about the rules, they want to be warm and comfortable.' This dispute might appear trivial, but one must realize that the faintest doubts can cause an increasing friction regarding the implementation and acceptance of discipline.

Many Zionist leaders and elders react to youthful reservations with oppressive sternness, and refuse to consider a modification of authority. Some of them insisted that adolescents simply 'must' go to church to learn discipline and stay away from trouble, Otherwise, as one elder put it,

'they start to drink, they get in fights and they will (finally) land in prison.'

Others refuse to even recognise that their practice of discipline might be too severe. Discussing the annual conference of ministers of the 'Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion', in October 1990, Rev. Shabangu was concerned about the 'aloofness' exhibited by some of his church's leaders. Although he tried, Rev. Shabangu could not prevail upon his fellow leaders to discuss the problems of discipline and of youth. Instead,

'they said, if you want to talk about children, you might as well go to the children.'

Thus, the problems of discipline were dismissed as 'childish' and not worthy of consideration, and that by implication, Rev. Shabangu was being 'childish' by raising the issue. On this attitude rests the dormant risk of losing the grip on ideal leadership performance, that is, the authority of a Zionist leader can backfire if he exercises unconditional or too heavy a discipline. He might lose his young followership (as in the case

of the Zionist minister who occasionally 'sjamboked' his offenders [see chapter five]). Kiernan (1974:86) furthermore revealed that young Zionists, once they finished school and became independent of their parents, tend to lose interest in their religion. For the leadership both tendencies would result in a personal diminution of status, as far as the holding-together of the congregation is concerned, and would ultimately defeat the aim of discipline exercised by the leadership. What emerges then is a test of influence. Where, for example, can Zionist authority have its greatest impact, and where can leaders exercise their discipline most successfully?

Taking these issues into consideration it emerges that they predominantly hinge upon the social standing of the youth itself. In this case it is essential to draw a line between, firstly, youngsters who still fully depend on their parents and, secondly, those who, through age, higher education and jobs, have more or less disengaged themselves from the supervision of their parents.

From what I could observe in the field, Zionist leaders found a much 'easier target' in exercising discipline among those youngsters who belonged to the first category. One of the reasons for that is certainly parental authority. The traditional Zulu requirements of respect, i.e. to honour and obey one's parents and elders (cf. Vilakazi, 1965:124f.; cf. Krige, 1981:23f.) suit the framework of Zionist discipline and are still upheld in most Zionist families. A firm parental control can subsequently work as a transition for a youth to equally adapt to and recognize church authority. It also creates the basis of communication and consultation with leaders and elders, as soon as the measures of discipline are at issue. This dialogue proves to be the more fruitful if adolescents submit themselves unconditionally to parental guidance. Besides, it must be noted that Zionist parents strive to raise and educate their children according to the church's ethics, for their own reputation and standing in the community will be measured by the development and behaviour of their off-spring and, eventually, by how they fit into the church guidelines of inclusion and exclusion.

The youth's commitment to the church and recognition of leadership discipline was put to a test during an all-night service which I witnessed. On a cold mid-winter night in 1990,

more than 200 Zionists from various congregations throughout Natal gathered in an old and run-down school-hall in Kwa Mashu. The main purpose of this meeting, organised by the 'Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion', was to raise funds for the church youth. The money, collected at the end of the meeting, was to be deposited in a saving account in order to fund instruments for the youth choir or to organize transport for church-meetings outside Natal. However, to prove themselves worthy of the financial donations, numerous youngsters took part in a competition wherein they could exhibit their true dedication to Zionism.

At about half past one in the morning, a mixed youth choir officially opened the contest. Every youngster competing received a personal number and their names were put on lists which were handed to the individual branch leaders and judges. Subsequently, the young Zionists were divided into three different types of groups according to age and sex. The first two groups by sex consisted of young men and women over the age of 21, the second two groups were represented by boys and girls over the age of 16, and in the last two groups were boys and girls from age 10 to 16. The contest started with the three female groups followed by the male groups. The procedures of the competition were the same for every group. Every single contestant was called to advance to the space in front of the meeting. The contestant then rose from his/her seat, held up a number and walked slowly through the crowd. While doing so, every competitor began to sing his or her favourite Zionist hymn and was forthwith joined by the community (cf. also Kiernan, 1990:198). As soon as the youngster met the rest of his fellow-competitors already gathered in the front, the singing ceased. Under the eyes of the church leaders, two judges, one man for the male and a woman for the female contestants, scored every participant for their performance. Marks were given to each individual's posture, the proper and tidy wearing of the Zionist uniform, personal neatness, the command of Zionist hymns and, finally, the overall personal aura and attitude.

It was apparent that some of those young contestants were affected by a certain degree of 'stage-fright'. Some of the girls in the age group over 16 years were particularly nervous and occasionally fell into shy giggles. Altogether the proceeding of the competition was

disciplined and taken very seriously by the participants. Nevertheless, I could not sense any tension, but rather a relaxed atmosphere which was enjoyed by both participants and audience. As soon as the judges completed their scoring, they submitted their results to the church leaders for confirmation. In the meantime the competitors went back to their seats and joined the congregation in singing hymns. Finally, at three o'clock in the morning, the winners were announced. The subsequent prize-giving, a Bible for the respective first three of each age and sex category, was accompanied by a cheering community, dancing and more hymns.

To me, this competition demonstrated a perfect harmony of discipline, individual commitment and responsibility. It not only showed that youngsters publicly acknowledged leadership authority, but they furthermore exhibited a self-discipline to be openly scrutinized. Thus, they gave proof of being devoted Zionists and of being responsible in the exercise of good conduct. It also indicated that leadership discipline gets through and is continues on the parental level, because it is the parents who primarily prepare, advise and guide their children when it comes to taking part in such a competition.

Still, it would be misleading to suggest that every youth who welcomes leadership discipline in such circumstances is unequivocally dependent on the authority of his or her parents. When I later talked to numerous youngsters who had participated in the described contest, I noted that some of the older ones were quite 'independent' from their parents and insisted that they would make their own decisions. Thus, the 23 year old Zandile told me:

'It is not that I don't respect my parents or that I don't love them. But I want to make up my own mind. I don't want to be pressurized to it. I am old enough to make my own decisions.'

The practise of authority faces far greater obstacles when the leadership addresses those particular youngsters who have outgrown their childhood dependency and have gathered a certain degree of life experience, e.g. a higher school-education or job experience. The increasing educational differences between young and old has become an especially difficult

hurdle for Zionist elders to take in their stride. For example, of the 12 leaders I met during my field studies, only Mr. Hlongwane had completed Standard eight at school. Of the remaining leaders five had no school education at all or had completed Standard four at the most. Other Zionist elders, e.g. prophets or preachers, had an average educational standard of about five years at school (cf. also West, 1975:77). The educational discrepancies between young and old Kwa Mashu Zionists become dramatically obvious when one takes into consideration that out of the 52 young Zionists I met, only four did not go further than Standard six at school. Of the remaining 48 youth 30 had a minimum of Standard eight education and 18 reached Standard 10 in school. Of these 18 youth 11 had successfully passed their matric exams. What Sundkler described as the 'Achilles' heel' of Zionism (1961:121f.), has later been confirmed by Kiernan and Dlamini. Both Kiernan (1976a:347) and Dlamini (1986:210) pointed out that Zionist ministers and elders are often barely literate and thus battle to bridge the gap between what they can offer in terms of theological education and, on the other hand, what might be expected from the more educated youth (1986:210; cf. also Makhubu, 1988:93).

The 'danger' for Zionist leaders and elders rests therefore in a somewhat reversed situation: by being comparatively uneducated, they are likely to be critically scrutinised by their more lettered youth. Zionist leaders in Kwa Mashu are aware of this problem. But, like Rev. Madonsela, a 73 year old pensioner, for example, they are not ashamed to admit their low educational standard.

'I only went to school for one year. In these days, we kids had other things to do. We were helping our parents. Sixty years ago, we still lived in the country (i.e. rural area). So what we kids did was to look after the cattle and the goats. We didn't really go to school. I am not ashamed of this. But I know, as it is today, there is still a high rate of illiteracy among us elders and leaders. And I can tell you that this is putting a lot of pressure on us, I mean, to uphold our authority. Some of these youngsters they think we are not as smart as they are.'

That is to say that the better educated youth is liable to exploit other alternatives and to provide themselves with the freedom to do so. It is unlikely that they would be prepared to

accept discipline from leaders they regard as less educated or intellectually inferior to themselves, and they will consequently question the statements of Zionist identity, which are passed on and exhibited by their elders.

One of the alternatives would be to join a mainline church where ministers are generally better educated, and where they can find a more profound theological teaching. Envisaging this development, Zionist leaders are looking out for options to further guarantee their authority and their practice of discipline. Among Kwa Mashu Zionists my impression was that leaders are wavering between the concession of greater leniency and the maintenance of strict discipline. They are trying to find alternatives which would suit both their authority and the growing discontent of their youth. Yet, sometimes elders are unable to react or remained ignorant, because the problems have not been brought to their attention. The leader of the 'Osindisweni' ('the place of healing') church, Themba Ngcobo pointed the following.

'Generally, youngsters do not come forward with their problems, because there is always that level of respect. They (youth) cannot tell him (minister) the truth, because he is the leader of the church and he is older than they are. The youth cannot talk back. They cannot say: No! I can't do this, or I don't like that. This is why I support the idea that we Zionist leaders and elders should defer to, rather than neglect the feelings of the youth.'

Mr. Hlongwane, general secretary of the 'Ethiopian Holy Apostolic Church in Zion', shares Ndlovu's viewpoint.

'In my mind, discipline can only be exercised successfully if our youngsters have more opportunities to participate in the church and to express their opinions.'

It seems that the first steps in this direction have already been taken. Until about four to five years ago Zionist youth, as Rev. Shabangu mentioned, 'were usually not allowed the opportunity to come together and have a meeting just among themselves.'. Today, some Zionist churches have their own youth clubs, youth choirs or even a youth theatre group. Since 1988, for example, Shabangu's church, the 'Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion' (CCAHSiZ), operates its own 'Christian Youth Club' (CYC). One of the

church's leaders, namely Rev. Vilakazi, initiated the CYC together with his wife, who, as a teacher, could spread the word also in schools and to other Zionist women. He thus said:

'The main purpose of the CYC is to offer our youngsters an alternative to the activities their township peers usually have. So far, the club has initiated a youth-choir and various Bible-contests, where our youngsters can challenge each other's religious knowledge. So, given that we have enough money in our church, it would be nice if the youth club could create a permanent exchange programme for the youth. The idea here is to send our local youths to our branches in Johannesburg, for instance, so that they can establish a youth-to-youth dialogue, if you like. It would also bring our different branches more closer together'.

Other Zionist churches, too, maintain special youth groups and, predominantly, youth choirs. The 'Jerusalem Christian Church in Zion', however, is the only church I studied who had its own youth theatre group. One of its members, Bongani, explained its history and purpose to me.

'The theatre group was initiated and founded by us, the church youth, in 1983. And I can say that we do have the support of our leaders and elders. Usually we have our plays on special occasions. Like on Christmas or at farewell parties for those church members who have to move to another place. When we do our performances we want to portray the general social life, the way it is in a Black community. Sometimes we also have religious topics, such as the loyalty to God. Once we even had a play where we wanted to deal with political issues. But this particular play made our elders suspicious. They believed that we young actors were portraying our real selves and would thus go out to "real" political rallies, or drink in the township shebeens.'

In other words, there was a fear that these youngsters had crossed the church boundaries, and now encouraged their peers to do the same.

'However', as Bongani continued, 'our group is generally encouraged to go on by our elders. Because, you see, we believe that if we can continue this then we can attract other youth in the township. They can come and participate here, and maybe they will stay.'

Still, both the CYC and the theatre group appear to be subject to constant supervision. In that

way, Zionist leaders are able to kill two birds with one stone. They offer the youth enjoyable participation - though on a rather superficial level - and they can, if necessary, practise discipline at the same time. What that means is that the relative responsibility and creativity of youngsters has its price. There are certain aspects where Zionist leaders will not deviate from their viewpoints. Their obstinacy is predominantly noticeable when it comes to acknowledging the youth's aspiration to status and rank in the church. The prerequisites for youngsters in this regard are good conduct, sober habits and marriage. At the same time all the rules involved have to be obeyed unconditionally, and both female and male adolescents are subject to the same criteria of discipline. My impression was, however, that young men and boys, rather than their female counterparts, were the main target of discipline. This may be so, because they are more likely to be in the running for a position in the church's hierarchy. And more likely to 'kick against the goad'.

In terms of good conduct I have already pointed out that a great deal of leadership concern revolves around the observance of sexual abstinence (cf. chapter three). Cause for particular anxiety regarding the rules of celibacy stems from the frequency of illegitimacy and, latterly, the threat of AIDS. Consequently, I now attend to each of these aspects.

Historically, though it was considered a disgrace in Zulu society for an unmarried girl to have a child at her father's homestead, mother and child could be redeemed by the genitor with the payment of cattle, or through subsequent marriage (Gluckman, 1964:170; Krige, 1981:106; Preston-Whyte and Zondi, 1992:229). In modern times, however, the problem of illegitimacy, especially among youngsters, seems to have escalated. Though illegitimacy figures in South Africa are not readily available, Burman (1992:21f.) reports that the overall trend could be compared with the figures she established during research in the Western Cape region. Here, within the period from 1989 to 1990, the total illegitimate live births as a percentage of total live births were reported to be 45,7 %. Nearly three quarters of these illegitimate births occurred in the Black community (ibid.). While conducting a survey about teenage pregnancies among young women and girls in KwaZulu and the greater Durban area, Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1992:227) also established a high rate of illegitimacy. The authors found out that, in many cases, the fathers of these children would still feel obliged to

contribute to the costs of raising the child, thus upholding a recognized way of dealing with the domestic crisis precipitated by the pregnancy (230). Tragically, however, genitors often leave the expectant mothers without financial help or even without trace (cf. also Zille, 1986:143f.; cf. Moeller, 1990:9).

This trend seems to have established itself among Kwa Mashu Zionists, too, where illegitimacy is considered to be one of the most serious infringements of the church's ethics.

'Our definition of illegitimacy is plain and simple' said one elder. 'Children are only legitimate if they are born to a married couple. But should a man have more than one spouse, then we usually do not tolerate this. Only the children of his first wife they are legitimate.'

Should a case of illegitimacy occur Zionist leaders commonly respond with different modes of discipline. One incident Mr. Sithole brought to my attention, for example, involved a reputed Zionist minister.

'This man was a minister in one of our branches. What he did was that he made a girl of his *own* congregation pregnant. In such a position the people must trust you, but then he has done that. So what the church did was to throw him out. They had a meeting where all the elders came together and they told him "You have brought shame on us and yourself. You are no longer a minister in our church. So they threw him out'.

Thus, because of his married status and rank the disciplinary measures imposed on him were strict and irrevocable.

The discipline varies and becomes more lenient, however, if unmarried youngsters are at fault. Offenders are generally not thrown out of the church; but the leadership makes sure that the person concerned temporarily loses his status as an esteemed church member. For instance, one will not be allowed to wear the Zionist uniform, and one has to sit next to the door of the meeting place. Thus everybody can identify the person as a sinner. Occasionally, especially when young Zionist men are involved, the person will be asked to seriously

consider his future in the church, as Rev. Xulu pointed out.

'The boys should know better than to do this. I mean, if they want to take over responsibilities here in the church, how can they be irresponsible when it comes to girls? So if somebody does this, I will have to tell him to leave. This person is not responsible.'

That would indicate that it is male youngsters, should they have been identified as genitors, who are being singled out as culprits. Girls who gave birth to an illegitimate child, on the other hand, are rather considered as victims, which is also substantiated by Preston-Whyte and Zondi. Both stated that young girls are normally not thrown out of the parental home, should they expect a child which is going to be illegitimate (1992:229). This notion (i.e. of girls being the victims) has been confirmed during the course on many interviews where I raised the question of illegitimacy. As one Zionist mother put it:

'If my daughter has a boyfriend, he will make her pregnant, take her away from me and then leave her alone. I don't want to lose my baby, so I tell her to stay away from boys.'

Thus, Zionist girls are constantly reminded not to get involved with boyfriends, for the fear of unwanted pregnancy and being left alone afterwards. In fact, Mr. Hlongwane told me that married Zionist women in his church made it one of their tasks to caution girls of pregnancy when they summon them before every service.

'In our church we have, what you call, a lady tutor. She usually supervises the girls and tells them how to dress properly and how to behave in church. So when the girls come to age, that is when they are old enough to have boyfriends, this lady tutor tells them it is important not to get pregnant. They tell them to wait until they meet the man they can marry. After they are married it's alright. They tell them not to have sex before they get married.'

One minister even told me that his church leader's wife once demanded that all 16-17 year old girls should be clinically examined for virginity in order to deter them from getting sexually involved. The issue was dropped, however, since many parents felt too embarrassed

to let their daughters go through that kind of examination. In that regard Preston-Whyte and Zondi reported that most parents, mothers in particular, may warn their daughters not to get involved with boys. However, the authors found that little more advice on how to actually prevent pre-marital sexual intercourse was not forthcoming. Instead, most parents would adopt the Christian stance of chastity before marriage for the benefit of their children, or would simply pretend to believe their own daughter to be 'good' (1992:23).

I learned that some of the young mothers with illegitimate children decided to leave the church of their own accord. This was usually because they could not bear the dishonour they brought upon themselves and their families, nor would they contemplate being with their boyfriends. Otherwise they are allowed to stay on in the church.

Zionist leaders admitted that the church is somewhat unable to control the problem of illegitimate children. On the one hand they insist on being strict in that regard, and on the other hand they don't want to lose church members. Youngsters with illegitimate children are therefore constantly asked to get married and to thus legalize their parental relationship. Whereas the parents are the recipients of discipline, their illegitimate offspring, it appears, is immediately integrated into the church community. Here Rev. Vilakazi put forward that

'illegitimate children are not to blame for the sins of their parents. It's actually quite the opposite. We are concerned about the future of these children and we must give them the opportunity to become themselves a recognized member here in our church. The way I see it, the future of illegitimate children is usually very uncertain. They are always in a conflict situation. Either they become bright and intelligent, or they become the worst, criminals. They don't go for the middle, they go for the worst or the best.'

Because of this, a Zionist congregation will strive to integrate illegitimate children as best it can.

Related to the discipline concerning the problems of premarital sexual relationships and illegitimacy is the ever increasing spread of AIDS. Its formidable threat is about to force Zionist leaders to recognise the disease and make it an issue in their teachings. To my

knowledge so far, no Kwa Mashu Zionist has been infected by the deadly illness. This might explain the fact that the majority of churches I studied refuse to raise the subject during their meetings in order to caution their congregation to be aware of the threat. Though there might be a degree of ignorance involved, I suggest that the tendency to be oblivious to the effects of AIDS has other reasons.

The inevitable malignity of the illness, for instance, bestows it with a character of the unexplainable. For numerous Zionists that could mean that AIDS, too, is subject to a mystical causation. That is to say that, like most other afflictions, AIDS might have been caused by sorcery. Mr. Mbhele, a member of the Isililo Sohlange Congregational Church, expressed the feelings of many elders when he remarked the following.

'I believe that if the youth sticks to the rules they will have no trouble. Especially with this AIDS thing. I can read about it in the newspaper. They say it comes when you have sex. But everybody is doing it anyway. So they must stay away from that, just stick to the rules. You cannot run around and have a girlfriend here and a girlfriend there. Just do what the church says, and you are safe.'

Apparently, the rule of premarital chastity and monogamy is expected to be self-sufficient. It is assumed that Zionist exclusiveness can prevent a church member from being affected by the immoral demeanour that non-Zionist township residents are alleged to exhibit. The latter would naturally include promiscuity, which is seen as one of the mainsprings of AIDS. Finally, respondents confided to me that, with regard to the youth, many Zionist elders are simply too embarrassed to get involved in sex-education that would teach the necessary precautions. Instead, leaders would prefer to leave these matters to the school authorities.

'We usually don't talk about that.', said Rev. Xulu. 'We don't talk about contraception or condoms. We tell them: just don't do it! Well, yes, AIDS is very serious. But the thing is, when you are advised to use condoms, that implies that you run around and do it and carry on to have sex. You think it can protect you. But the best thing is not to do it, don't even think about it. AIDS is the worst thing that can happen to a person. So one can only say: don't even attempt to try it, not even with condoms! They only make you going.'

There is thus a fear among the Zionist leadership that the blessing of condoms, for example, would merely encourage the youth to have an extended sex-life, with the help of contraception.

The calamitous reality of AIDS ⁴ nevertheless suggests that it is only a matter of time until the first Zionist has been infected by the virus, be it through sexual intercourse or accidental transmission of contaminated blood. Already there is an HIV/AIDS care programme, sponsored by the KwaZulu Government Department of Health (cf. Report of the Medical Research Council Durban, 1993), which aims to address the public and both AIDS victims and his or her relatives, in order to achieve a greater awareness about the lethal threat. In it various researchers inform explicitly about necessary precautions, the history of AIDS, the number of victims in Natal, and the medical costs for HIV infected patients. Karim (et al.) reports that although the danger of AIDS was widely recognized among Black patients, they would still represent the population group with the highest risk rate of acquiring the deadly virus. This was mainly because only a small number of respondents the authors interviewed were concerned with or knew only very little of the different modes to prevent AIDS (1991:340).

Nonetheless, some Zionist leaders and parents have decided to confront the problem. Mr. Ngcobo, leader of the 'Osindisweni' church conceded that parents in his congregation, though being initially against it, encourage their children to use contraceptives (condoms). Thus, for the sake of precaution and the well-being of their children, these parents more or less sacrifice their Zionist convictions, as far as celibacy is concerned.

The 'Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion' (CCAHSCiZ), too, has become increasingly aware of the AIDS threat. The church has even started to preach about it in front of youngsters. Ministers and elders thereby accentuate the necessity of sticking to one partner, of avoiding promiscuity or, better still, of avoiding pre-marital sex altogether. Just like in Rev. Xulu's case, the use of condoms is also not being supported, for that would imply that the leadership would sanction unlawful sexual activities. Moreover, the youth is reminded that the mere use of condoms cannot protect them from AIDS. It is rather implied

that those who can resist the temptation of gambling and drinking should also be able to withstand the enticement of sex. The CCAHSCiZ leadership is very conscious that AIDS is sexually transmitted and is not caused by mystical circumstances. Consequently the church authorities know that there can be no cure from inside the church, i.e. the work of a prophet and the subsequent healing process would be ineffective. Thus, in case of unmarried youngsters the only antidote is sexual abstinence, and for married couples to keep clear of promiscuity.

It was significant for me to note that, in contrast to other infringements of Zionist ethics, hypothetical AIDS victims would not be subject to disciplinary measures.

'In my branch,' as Rev. Vilakazi pointed out, 'there is nobody who suffers from that. But if there is gossip or hearsay, you don't just go and ask the person: "Hey, do you have it?". If somebody *would* have AIDS, we would put him in medical hands. And if he is with us, we would treat him or her like any other sick person. What I mean is, we cannot change it that he has it. But we can pray for him, to be strong. And when the person dies he will be given a funeral. That's how we would do it.'

Here Rev. Vilakazi gives evidence that even in the case of having an AIDS-sufferer in its midst - which implies that the afflicted person was promiscuous and has thus infringed Zionist rules - Zionism once again demonstrates its internal strength and unity.

The examples just described provides evidence that AIDS has become an accidental 'ally' of leadership discipline. The fatal nature of the disease acts upon youngsters as a powerful sanction for heeding the rules of sexual abstinence before they get married. It also shows that AIDS and illegitimacy are clearly singled out as intrusive threats from a morally unstable outside world, and that the only answer is enclosure. Until a Zionist youngster gets married, Zionist leaders experience one of the most demanding periods when it comes to exercising their authority. Although it is progressively percipient of the burdens youngsters have to bear, the leadership will have to insist that their offspring lives up to the church ethics. Otherwise the structures of authority will be undermined, thus making the modes of discipline increasingly ineffective.

This problem might become even more serious, if one considers the background of the overall trend among township youth to reject traditional customs and thereby widen the gap between young and old (cf. De Haas and Zulu, 1989:9f; cf. also Vilakazi, 1965:130ff.). Hence church ministers and elders have to decide carefully where to make concessions and where to remain strict. But, besides offering alternatives the leadership must also offer rewards, something a youth considers worth striving for, e.g. a future in the church. The prerequisite for a rewarding future in the church is marriage. By encouraging the very same, Zionist leaders not only intend to subdue promiscuity and illegitimacy, but also hope to promote a partnership that is likely to pull more weight in the church than an unmarried person. For youngsters, on the other hand, marriage represents the gateway to further status and responsibilities. However, marriage is not a stage where discipline ends. A young and married Zionist has to continue to live up to Zionist ethics and show good conduct, before he or she is eligible for an advancement in the church hierarchy. It requires even more determination should church leaders decide to keep the number of positions in their churches low. This notion rests on the fear of potential inter-church leadership competition and subsequent split-ups. One leader expressed his concern in that regard by stressing that, having gained a position, some church officials would start being selfish and trying to have more influence than others (cf. chapter two; cf. also West, 1975:74f.). Consequently the leadership discipline will remain strict and aspiring youngsters have little choice but to go along with it and await their chances.

Without anticipating forthcoming discussion, it is necessary at this stage to briefly consider the political convictions of Zionist leaders and elders, and their possible reflection on leadership roles towards the youth. The question arises whether a church leader could strengthen his leadership by being politically active. That is to say, could he possibly employ political power and influence to underpin his church authority? One might assume that such a politically active leader would dispose of two kinds of organisational power, namely ecclesiastical and secular. Considering the predominant apolitical nature of Zionists the realisation of these assumptions would appear to be quite exceptional. The only two cases of politically active Zionist leaders, which I encountered, confirmed that their political position had little or no 'positive' impact upon their church leadership. In fact, quite the

opposite occurred. One of the two leaders, for instance, was strongly affiliated to the Inkatha Freedom Party. His decision to openly admit and practice his political persuasion outside the church has earned him displeasure and disrespect among the majority of his church youth, the reason being the sympathy for the ANC harboured predominantly among his younger church members.

Precisely because of this political antagonism this church leader intends to keep politics and church affairs strictly separate. His attitude represents the overall mindfulness Zionist leaders employ in that regard. Church and politics, no matter what persuasion, just don't go together. Not only does it offend Zionist ethics, but, as soon as a leader's political identity is out in the open, it might also offend church members with none or with different political opinions. Here, young and adult Zionists are equally concerned. A Zionist leader can therefore only rely on his ecclesiastical authority. The moment he allows his political allegiance to infiltrate church matters, he is likely to forfeit his reputation and his discipline altogether.

6.2.2. The Choices Open to Youth in Zionist Churches.

However reluctantly, Zionist youngsters find themselves boxed-into a one-sided arrangement in which they are mere recipients of leadership discipline. Their assistance in church affairs is seldom required and their main responsibility is to recognize and respect the authority of the church. Consequently, Zionist youth is offered a very limited radius of action that depends a great deal on the dialogue between themselves and the leadership. The consequences of such a dialogue will determine the range of options - options that a youth will have to either adopt or refuse. Against this background I shall now move on to illustrate the different ways in which youth responds to leadership authority and the range of alternatives they can exercise.

The safest, yet undoubtedly most demanding, way in which a youth can choose to secure himself responsibilities and status, is the option to acknowledge the Zionist rules of conduct without conditions. Until such time as one is eligible to take over a position in the church,

one must be prepared to be exceptionally patient. In fact, patience seems to be the pivot of a young Zionist's life. This becomes particularly evident in cases where a youth might have reached marriageable age, or is already married but at the same time remains a minor in the eyes of the church leadership. In most instances I found that leaders defined their followers as 'young' - and therefore belonging to the church youth - until the age of 35 (cf. also membership figures in Appendix A). Even young married couples would be included in that category where they would still be under the supervision of their elders.

Recalling the desirability expressed by some Zionist leaders of keeping the number of positions low, it becomes clear that the leadership ultimately benefits from the requirements of marriage and a considerably advanced age for advancement to office. Thus they can avoid too much internal 'competition' and are able to secure their practice of discipline towards youngsters for an extended period. Confronting these circumstances, the only alternative for an aspiring youngster is to utilize the determination he or she needs to be patient and to make it part of his or her commitment to the church. Before young Zionists can fulfil the requirement to get married they have to make a constant effort to live up to Zionist morals and ethics.

Against my own initial expectations a great number of youngsters had little trouble in doing so. They welcomed the strict rules of the church and left no doubt that these rules had to be maintained. Even when I approached these youngsters without the presence of their parents or elders, which might have stifled freedom of expression, they professed to be comfortable with the way the church leaders exercise their authority and were adamant that the modes of discipline must not change. One of my young respondents expressed this conviction quite firmly. When asked what he thought of Zionist rules with regard to the rejection of alcohol, gambling and premarital sex, he referred to the Bible where the modes of good conduct were already written down. Thus he confirmed his arguments by quoting Galatians, 5,19 which reads as follows:

What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions; in worship of idols and witchcraft. People become enemies and they fight; they become jealous, angry, and ambitious. They separate into parties and groups; they are envious get drunk, have orgies, and do other things like these. I warn you now as I have before: those

who do these things will not possess the Kingdom of God.

By citing this particular part of the New Testament the young Zionist outlined the very essence of Zionist ethics. It furthermore proves that he has assimilated Zionist teachings, understood and acknowledged them. He is but one example of those youngsters I met, who decided to invest in their religious community, rather than either remaining passive or opposing the discipline of their elders.

But what must or should a youngster do if he or she chooses to invest in the church community? Naturally, the acceptance of leadership discipline and authority is top priority. A youngster may then strive to create an impression of being a person with good conduct and praiseworthy behaviour. Opportunities to exhibit such an attitude are provided during services or competitions, such as that described above. Further and rather striking evidence of their commitment is the ambition to convert peers and friends to Zionism and to convince fellow youngsters in doubt to reconsider their positions.

Themba, the 19 year old matriculant I have introduced in chapter three, conceded that

'it was not easy to take the courage to approach my fellow pupils in school and talk about my church. Usually, when I said that I was a Zionist, pupils and other youngsters would make fun of me.'

His efforts, however, were rewarded when he succeeded in converting one school-mate to Zionism who subsequently became a member of Themba's congregation.

Others show their ambition by getting actively involved in the church's youth clubs or choirs. There they find the first opportunity to take over some responsibility and to prove themselves to the leadership as reliable and concerned church members. Their future advancement will initially depend on the performance they give in such groups. Since those youngsters who are active in a choir or theatre group are supervised by elders, they will also be judged as to how well they can tolerate criticism and guidance as a bearer of a position (e.g. choir

leader or leader of a youth group).

'We have to see whether this young person is worthy to take over a position once he is old enough. Because you cannot be selfish. You always have to remember what is good for everybody',

Mr. Mbambo, an elder of the 'Christian New Salem Church in Zion', stressed. It appears important, therefore, for the leadership to know how a youth, once he has entered the bottom level of the church hierarchy, might cope with the responsibility of a position and its scrutiny by the church authorities. Another form of investment is to participate in the church's Sunday school. Mainly high school pupils, like the 17 year old Bernice X., for example, help out in teaching the children of church members.

'Every Sunday between 8.00 and 10.30 we have our Sunday school, before the main service starts. And I teach there. I teach the Bible to the youngsters and I also teach them to have loyalty to God. And loyalty to their elders and the community at large. There are approximately 18 children attending the Sunday school on average, and the age group is from six years to 11 years. There are also sometimes younger children coming to these services, but we emphasise mainly the children from six to 11 years old.'

Once again, a young Zionist can attest that she is capable both of taking over responsibility and of promoting the principles of Zionist ethics.

Samuel, a 25 year old factory worker, opted for a different way to show his commitment.

'I spend my spare time attending a Bible-study group. This group is run by an organisation that has many other churches as members. It is here in Kwa Mashu. So during most evenings and on the weekend I can further my knowledge of the Bible. After I go there I can go out and share what I know with my friends and other youngsters. Maybe this group will prepare me for a position in my church.'

Young Zionists like Themba and Samuel are regarded as somewhat exceptional. This is not due to the commitment and determination they show, but rather to the fact that they are

males. Zionist elders maintain that boys and young men commonly do not respond to their discipline as willingly as girls and young women do. To a certain degree this might be due to the relative 'liberty of action' male adolescents reserve to themselves. They engage themselves comparatively more in activities which are commonly frowned upon by the church. A great number of young male Zionists is involved in sports (e.g. soccer or even karate) or hanging around with non-Zionist friends. In that regard one Zionist parent remarked:

'I can see that , sometimes, boys do not take our rules too serious. On some things we can turn a blind eye, like soccer for instance. But as it is, they sometimes go out and involve themselves into a lot of drinking liquor. Especially on a Friday night, after work or school. Now this is not good, because one thing leads to another. The next thing you know is that they make a girl pregnant, or something else. I've seen it happen. Some boys do this.'

In other words some young male Zionists seem to feel rather inclined to stray over the church boundaries, in order to seek more recreational fulfilment.

In comparison, I found that young Zionist women and girls appear to be more tied to the supervision of their parents and older women of the congregation. One of the reasons might be the higher degree of dependency girls have on their parents. Rev. Shabangu put it this way:

'You see, the girls, they "chain" the girls more than the boys. So it's the parents and the one who looks after the girls who 'chain' them. What I mean is that they are more looked after, in a way. The woman who overlooks them is usually a married woman. She meets the girls some hours before the church starts. She teaches them how to dress and behave in church. She also teaches them how to manage their lives and how to be always neat. And I must say that, among themselves, they discourage each other from wearing jeans, for example. Because we would not allow girls to wear jeans or trousers. But they are good here in my church, they discourage themselves. They don't even wear make-up. With males you don't find that. They will say "why should we do that?" or "why should I put a tie on? I don't need to learn how to dress." So it's easier with girls. They usually tend to stay with their mother's church. But with the boys, when they are between 16 and 18 years old it changes. They think they can choose their own ways and that they don't need to listen to their fathers any more. They always ask a lot of questions. Girls don't do that.'

This would indicate that young women and girls who submit themselves eagerly to more discipline are eligible to become good Christian women, i.e. a valuable asset for their families and future husband. At the same time, many of the female respondents who had already left school were unemployed or were recipients of a very small salary, and none of the girls who still attended school had any perquisites, such as holiday jobs for example. Parents will therefore feel more obliged to look after their daughters rather than their sons, who commonly find it easier to get a job or to take up temporary employment while still at school. These circumstances may also be appreciated by the Zionist leadership, since it makes girls much easier to control. Altogether Zionist girls learn to adapt the Zionist practice of exclusiveness much earlier and perhaps a little easier than Zionist boys. Also, I had the impression that girls felt more comfortable about leadership discipline.

Consequently, male adolescents, rather than their female counterparts, are the 'major force' behind demands for more freedom and concessions from their elders (cf. Themba's case in chapter three). Yet again, their demands will be measured by their efforts. Sometimes the mere fact that male youngsters visit the services regularly seems effort enough to grant them participation in soccer games or even karate; though leaders will certainly draw a line as far as the drinking of alcohol and gambling is concerned. However, there are also young male church members, like the 21 year old Bethuel, who are staunch supporters of Zionist ethics and exclusiveness. In his eyes

'those who demand concessions are showing signs of weakness. Instead of playing soccer or going out with girls, they should devote their spare time exclusively to our church. I say that they must concentrate on activities in the church and study the Bible.'

Yet not every youth who conforms to Zionist ethics and decides to invest in his church withholds criticism. Mr. Mahlangu, a 32 year old youth leader in his church, summarised some of the reservations the church youth expresses in that regard. He pointed out that

'one of the biggest obstacles between the youth and our elders is the lack of

concentration on the youth itself. Many of the elders and leaders are still very aloof towards the youngsters. They are only above us and not with us. Traditionally, church youngsters have nothing to gain in our churches. So far the leadership never really cared about the "grass-roots" level of their followership, which is the youth. The youth is totally left out, there are no responsibilities or encouragement - only discipline. So this is why many youngsters resign from the church.'

He added however, that changes are in sight.

'A period of renaissance has come about where our elders increasingly realize that the church rests upon three pillars, namely leadership, elders and youth. You see, our church is like a traditional pot. This pot has three legs and if one of these legs breaks, the pot is going to fall over. The three legs of the pot are symbolic for our leadership, elders and parents and youth. If the first two legs choose not to cooperate with the youth, then we have a lot of problems. Those problems will finally make the youth not to participate in the church properly.'

Mahlangu insisted that something had to be done immediately in order to tie the youth to their churches. A stepping stone would be the supply of instruments and more religious reading materials to enhance their talents and to give them a chance to participate adequately in the emerging youth clubs and choirs. And although the youth was aware of the drastic financial situation most churches find themselves in, they would be prepared to get engaged in fund-raising activities once they had been given the go-ahead from their leadership. Mahlangu emphasised that

'according to what I know, 60% of the church membership consists of youth and young adults under the age of 40. So if the church leadership gives more power to the youth, I believe that the churches would prosper and continue to expand.'

Mahlangu's statements clarify the position of many young Zionists who are committed to live up to the church's standards, but are, at times, discouraged by a conservative leadership which gives no indication of modifying its authority. It would be misleading, however, to assume that youngsters only commit themselves to Zionism in order to gain rewards. If that were so, then faced by utter disappointment, there would be no other option than to leave and join one of the established churches. I learned that those youngsters who stick with the

church have exceptional self-confidence in being a Zionist. Even among their peers they do not hide but step forward to exhibit their religious persuasion or, more appropriately, their identity (cf. also chapter three). A youth who wears a Zionist uniform in public, for example, is likely to 'run the gauntlet' and suffer the ridicule of other township youngsters. Yet they point out that the uniform is all the more important and essential for them. Says Bella F., a 17 year old pupil:

'The uniform shows us that wherever you are, you are as bright as light. It is a picture of what we are, and it makes us proud of being a Zionist.'

In contrast to the apprehension of many Zionist leaders and elders, these youngsters do not at all intend to be rebellious or to advocate a complete change or constitute threat to the church structures. They rather seek more recognition and constructive participation within the church. Moreover, they would like their concerns to be considered and appreciated in order to encourage young church members to devote themselves to Zionism and to arrest the alarming rate of young 'drop-outs'. That Zionist leadership can no longer evade criticism voiced by their youthful followers becomes clear when we look at the complaints of those who decided to leave the church.

6.2.3. Opting Out; Crossing the Boundary.

All the 'drop-outs' I had the opportunity to meet were young men in their twenties and early thirties. When I inquired about girls or young women, I heard of only one case where a young woman left her church because of her illegitimate child. Unfortunately I was not able to get in contact with her, since she had since moved to another township. The three young men whom I interviewed not only belonged to the same age group, but had also the same educational background. All of them had successfully completed matric and were either employed or were studying further.

One of the three young men, introduced earlier, was Harry Dumisane, a 21 year old student at Natal University. Harry was the only respondent who showed a great deal of concern

about the degree of education among Zionist leaders and elders. Partly responsible for this is the theological education he received at the Catholic Mission School he attended ⁵. It certainly influenced and changed his understanding of religion.

'My respect for the ministers and elders in my church stopped really when I realized that they did not interpret the Bible in the way I learned at school. In fact, I think they were not able to do it. In the beginning I was quite comfortable to apply my knowledge and I wanted to share it with my congregation. I even went out to speak to other church members. And I told them to study harder and read the Bible more carefully. But, just because I was still a teenager, they rejected what I said. Some of the members became increasingly annoyed by my comments.'

As a result, Harry's commitment to Zionism began to wane. At the same time, possibly due to a certain degree of disappointment, he discovered more and more shortcomings in his church, which finally gave him the motivation to leave.

His main reservation, however, was not directed against the ideas and theology of Zionism at large, but rather against its form of execution.

'For me a great problem was the contradiction between what our ministers and elders taught and practised. There was, for instance, a minister I knew. He always preached that one should stay away from alcohol. He also said that we youngsters should never get involved in sex before we get married. But this minister abused the rules he preached himself. All of a sudden, he was seen in shebeens and being together with other ladies who were not married or related to him. I even heard that he was the father of many (illegitimate) children.'

Harry's accusations are not uncommon among young Zionists and youth from other Independent Churches. A recent survey, conducted in townships around Durban, indicated a high percentage of youth (among them many Zionists) who maintained that the actions of many elders do not match their words and the teachings of the church (P. Zulu, 1991:22f.).

Even Zionist prophets became the target of Harry's suspicions.

'It came to my attention that our prophets and those from other Zionist churches go

out and consult these traditional healers. They did that to get these mixtures of herbs, "umuthi", in order to get the visions they need to prophesy. I know that some prophets also smoke dagga to have visions.'

These accusations are extremely damaging, for 'umuthi' and drugs are to be shunned by Zionists. Moreover, prophets, as I observed myself during Zionist services, use other means to get visions and the power of the Holy Spirit to exercise their prophecies, e.g. fasting, prayers, dancing, and communal prayers (cf. also Sundkler, 1961:248f. cf. Daneel, 1970:47; cf. Kiernan, 1985:308f.). Also, when I subsequently approached leaders and prophets they unanimously denied these allegations and stressed that any prophet who is involved in 'umuthi' or drugs would violate Zionist rules of exclusion in that regard and therefore be expelled from the church.

Altogether, Harry concluded that Zionists could only solve the problems he saw, if they maintained their strict rules of conduct. Simultaneously, they should allow their members, especially the youth, to expand their theological knowledge and employ it to the advantage of the church. Harry Dumisane's situation provides an example in which the initial ambition of a youth is suppressed by a rigid and conservative leadership. In Harry's case unfulfilled aspirations turned into bitter disappointment. This drew him closer to the teachings of an established church and subsequently increased his criticism of Zionism.

The case of Edward Mtshali, a 26 year old radiographer, varies from Harry's in that he did not part from his church in bitterness. Although Edward had joined the Lutheran Church he is still affected by his Zionist upbringing.

'I do, actually, appreciate the way Zion has influence my life. You know, the teachings of the Bible and the way we all care for each other, that is what has stuck with me. But I did not want to end up spending my entire spare time and weekends with the church. I became tired of having to find excuses for the services and meetings I missed. Or even for all the sports I did. Especially my mother kept on nagging me about that. It was just too time consuming. My private life was too restricted.

The other thing was that, just after I finished matric, I started to train as a radiographer. So then I realized that the elders expected me to settle down and get

married. They thought, now the boy is old enough and earns money, and he can get married. Some of the chaps in the church were already engaged and made plans to get married. But I thought that getting engaged as a 20 year old would just mess up my career. Especially when you have to look after a family. No, I didn't want to get involved in that.'

At this stage Edward's interests and contacts outside the church had increased rapidly. It also led him to doubt some of the Zionist restrictions, particularly after he started going out with a girl who did not belong to his church:

'In those days (the mid 1980's) our church was really strict and stern. If you went out of your ways and you did something you were not supposed to, you used to be sort of suspended. Like, if they (leaders and elders) would find out that you would have a girlfriend, you would not be allowed to wear your gown for six months. You see, you have got to come to church, but you can't wear these things. So, now you feel awkward with those people (church-members). They are all wearing their uniforms and you sit in the corner there with your arms folded, just like this.'

Edward could keep his amorous relationship secret, but the pressure of being accused and penalized for infringing the rules of celibacy was at times unbearable for him. Gradually, Edward became aware that his individual freedom of decision and the pursuit of his interests were limited by the restrictions and ethics of his church.

'Then I thought, no, that's it. If I go on like this I will get in trouble with the church, and I will have no time to myself. So I got out.'

Yet in order to keep up his Christian values, Edward subsequently joined the Lutheran Church in Kwa Mashu. Nevertheless, his bonds to Zionism remained strong.

'Yes, I still go there every now and then. I meet friends or ask them for advice. Sometimes we even pray together.'

On the whole, Edward's ambitions for a secular career were higher than any advancement in the church hierarchy. In that regard Edward was recently able to fulfil his aspirations

when he was awarded a scholarship to the United States of America. There he will be studying Electrical Engineering - something he felt he could not have done if he had been too involved in the church.

A great deal of emotional conflict was involved when Siphon Gumede, a 31 year old high-school teacher, withdrew from Zionism.

'It was very hard for me to leave, because my parents are both members in our church. My father is the minister of this church. So when I decided to leave my father's branch in 1986, my parents were actually quite bitter and disappointed. They could not understand my decision, especially because I had spent my whole life in the church. Until then my parents were very happy about the way I was dedicated to the church. They felt that I had done nothing against what the church says. Things like misconduct or having a girlfriend. My mother, for instance, used to ask: "Why do you go? You don't smoke, you don't drink liquor and you do not have friends who might tempt you to do these things?"

Well, I did have a girlfriend once. They did not know and I know it was against the rules, but this is not why I left. I mean, still today, I think it's not right to get into things like alcohol, drugs or gambling. But at the same time I would like to see the church leaders and elders becoming more lenient towards the youngsters. I think it is crucial to allow the youth more private use of their spare time. This is the very reason why I quit the church. You see, many elders just put too much pressure on their youth. They push them to attend each and every service. They tell you that you defect the church, and that you are going to hell if you don't go to the services.'

Siphon believes this to be an unjust requirement on part of the leadership. Specifically the youth needs

'more time for themselves in order to make up their minds and to think about the church. They should be guided towards Zionism instead of being pressurized. Otherwise, too many youngsters will be tired of it, and they end up being in the same situation like me. That is, you stay in the church only to please your parents. Today, I say that knowing and reading the Bible by myself is just as good as going to the church.'

There can be no doubt that Siphon's position as a young and ambitious teacher - which gives him the opportunity to exercise leadership and make his own decisions - gave him the strength and intellectual ability to go his own way. Nevertheless Siphon conceded that he still appreciates the way Zionists perform and interpret Christianity. Unlike Edward, Siphon has

not chosen to become a member of an established church, but keeps a loose relation with his father's congregation and occasionally visits the services.

The cases of these three young men support my earlier assumption that young Zionists with a considerably higher education than their leaders and elders, tend to question various aspects of conduct and organisation in their churches (cf. also chapter three). Their educational standard gives them the chance to evaluate their opportunities in the church against those in the secular world. If they should decide to pursue the prospect of an academic or professional career, like these young men did, their commitment to Zionism is likely to diminish. Several factors may influence such an outcome. Firstly, the broadening of their intellectual abilities, can lead to a continuous confrontation with the decisions and reasoning of the Zionist leadership. Secondly, an extended circle of acquaintances, friends and workmates, may well influence a youngster's religious persuasion and, very likely, challenge the church insistence upon exclusiveness. Thirdly, the amount of time a young Zionist wants to devote to academic or professional progress threatens the requirements of his or her presence and commitment in the church. And, finally, students and young employees in responsible positions enjoy a relatively greater freedom of choice and decision. Their ambitions are challenged, recognized and encouraged, whereas they are arrested and deferred in their church communities.

Those youngsters who stay on in the church usually do not accept the arguments of those who left. They believe that a youth with the abilities of Siphon, Edward and Harry, should rather stay and employ his intellectual talents in the church. This claimed, furthermore, that many 'drop-outs' probably hide their true reasons for leaving. In the eyes of some respondents, such defections simply could not resist the temptation of alcohol, gambling, girl- and boyfriends - in short, shaking off the shell of exclusiveness just to be 'in style' with their township peers. As one youth told me:

'I know, it is a very difficult church. You are always put to a test.'

Thus, a youngster who left the church in search for a 'better life and amusement', is considered to have failed on his way to become a proper Zionist and respected church

member.

However, even those who decided to commit themselves to Zionism, will have to face obstacles on their way to communal acknowledgement. One of the hurdles an aspiring youth, especially a young man, has to take is getting married. Whereas Zionist girls are being prepared and educated to be a dutiful Zionist wife, Zionist boys face the additional confrontation of having to be an economical supplier. To be able to get married and later on support a family, a young Zionist needs to find employment. And since marriage is of such importance to his advancement of status and rank in the church, a young man must decide whether to take the risk of getting married before he finds a job, which would expose him to further dependence on his family. Alternatively, he seeks employment first in order to secure a source of income that will guarantee the affordability of marriage (e.g. the expense of raising a bridewealth payment). Unfortunately, as I have already pointed out, the high rate of unemployment in KwaZulu and Natal makes it almost impossible for a young African to find a job these days, especially so in the case of those who are unskilled or have little education. To increase his already slim chances a young Zionist might therefore have to seek employment elsewhere. That, of course, would have the side-effect that he would be separated from his congregation for long periods.

Are young Zionists thus caught in a vicious circle, i.e. no money, no marriage and, consequently, no position in waiting? The reality among youngsters in Kwa Mashu, however, indicates that these aspects are a matter of personal priorities. Many male youngsters I met had indeed aspirations to take up a leadership position - but none of them, like the 25 year old Abel, talked about getting married.

'Why should I worry now about getting married? At the moment I am living off my parents. I wouldn't even have the money to afford a wedding. Do you know how much a wedding costs? I don't want to end up having debts before I even start working. It's not nice to just sit around here'.

The 21 year old Thabo confirmed this standpoint.

'Now that I have finished school I must go out and make a living. There is too much poverty here. I can see friends who have wives, even kids. They have no work, they have nothing. They live with their parents. When you are married, you should be able to live on your own after a while, I think. But how can you afford that if you have no money?'

Thus the economic predicament in Natal and KwaZulu leaves them no choice but to put the search for employment on top of their list. In general I found that, among my young Zionist informants in Kwa Mashu, they can be divided into two categories. In the smaller category, are those youths who have found employment, but who are either not able to support themselves fully or are required to ease the financial difficulties of their families. In the other are those still at school or university and unemployed youngsters. They depend entirely on the financial backing of their families and parents. For these two categories of young Zionists, the prospect of getting married is rather remote. Yet the unemployed youth carries the heavier burden. In contrast to many other township peers, with whom they share this unfortunate situation, young and unemployed Zionists run the risk of failing to distinguish themselves as a worthy church member. That is to say that being unemployed and thereby forced to stay at home most of the time, might lead to a mixture of frustration and indolence. In that case a youngster might be tempted to join in the lifestyle which many other unemployed township youth are leading, e.g. loitering, drinking and perhaps getting involved in political or even criminal activities. This would be the ultimate contradiction to what a church demands from a good Zionist i.e. being productive, of sober habits and avoiding a too close contact with the outside world (cf. also Kiernan, 1977:34f.). However, these trends appear to have been resisted by the unemployed Zionist youngsters I met in Kwa Mashu.

In conclusion, with regard to the inter-generational relationship, it can be said that, in contrast to their township peers, young Zionists in Kwa Mashu appear to resist the current trend of alienation from elders and parents (cf. also Vilakazi, 1965:130ff.; De Haas and Zulu, 1989:9f.; Hindson and Morris, 1990:5; Campbell, 1992:133)). Despite the social and political transformations in recent years - which provided advanced educational programmes, greater accessibility to entertainment facilities and an increase of media directed information - and notwithstanding the fact that Zionists youngsters have a comparatively wider circle of

non-Zionist acquaintances than their elders - the bonds between Zionist youth and elders remain strong. Still, the reactions and opinions of youngsters indicate that Zionist churches and their leadership are on the brink of transformation. In future Zionist leaders and elders will have to reform their modes of authority and discipline in order to accommodate the aspirations of their youngsters. Otherwise they may jeopardize the enthusiasm and commitment of those who are anxious to stay in the church. Among Kwa Mashu Zionists various leaders have already indicated their willingness to accept and promote cooperation, although they would, naturally, exclude the easing of access to leadership positions.

While it is clear that a certain tension exists between the senior and junior generations of Zionism and that this tension has sharply focused on a number of contentious issues, given the growing confidence and articulateness of young people in the wake of the Soweto uprising, it has become equally clear that Zionism has so far been able to contain that tension within acceptable bounds, with the result that both juniors and elders manage to maintain a strong degree of solidarity of interest across their differences. This outcome is crucial to an understanding of how Zionists have succeeded in retaining their social boundaries in the face of mounting political battering. Zionist efforts to keep the suffusion of political conflict at bay, and to keep its own neutrality and exclusiveness intact, would be significantly weakened by an escalation of internal dissension and by an increase in the politicisation of its marginalised youth. Conversely, the volatile political climate seems to have had the effect of stiffening the loyalty of Zionist youth and of producing a closing of ranks within Zionism to confront the challenges emanating from the political arena. However, Zionism has not emerged entirely unscathed. The following chapters will investigate the degree of responses to and involvement in political affairs by Zionist youth and their elders, and the impact it has had on Zionist structures.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. As a political institution the ANC, in 1943, called for a free and compulsory system of education. Black communities and parents, too, made themselves heard and were increasingly prepared to raise funds on their own to provide money for extra teachers' salaries, classrooms and equipments. As a result of these efforts, which mainly took place in the greater Johannesburg area, the first independent primary school was founded in Alexandra in 1950 (Lodge, 1987:115f.).
2. These remarks were made by Dr. H.F. Verwoerd (then Minister of Native Affairs) in the course of a speech made in 1953. His speech was strongly criticised by many Black South Africans, and subsequently caused unrest among many Black teachers and students (Horrell, 1973:485).
3. In 1989, out of 2691 African matriculants in Natal only 715 (26%) passed with a school-leaving certificate. KwaZulu's figures from the same year show similar alarming trends. Here 9236 (32,7%) out of 28 245 matriculants passed their final exams, 951 of which passed with exemption (Race Relations Survey, 1990:829f.)
4. A recent survey has revealed that Natal has a total of 11 183 HIV positive people. This horrific figure comprises more than 10 100 cases of HIV infected Africans (Natal Mercury, 06.07.92).
5. Initially, the fact that Harry went to a Catholic Mission School was secondary. His parents merely opted for this school because of its good reputation and syllabus.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Responses of Zionist Elders to Political Pressure.

Since Sundkler (1961) and Kiernan (1974) found out that Zionists had no interest in politics, abhorred violence and turned away from most secular activities, the political climate in South Africa has changed drastically. Even if Zionists wished to make their voices heard in this more open and forceful political situation, they lack the unity and coordination of a political party or an established church (e.g. the Anglican Church with the charismatic Archbishop Tutu at its head). In fact, Zionists still choose to remain politically aloof behind firmly held boundaries, but in order to do so they have to enter into some dialogue, negotiation or form of opposition with the outside forces that threaten their neutrality. This is a process of mutual learning, and of acquiring informed opinions of one another. Much depends on how political organisations perceive Zionism, and with what kind of demands they approach it.

The ever increasing number of Zionists in South Africa compels political organisations to take note of them, for in terms of sheer numbers they constitute a considerable proportion of the potential electorate. Leaders of the major Black political parties frequently adorn themselves with the presence of main-line church leaders at public rallies and party-meetings. But how are they to court the adherents of churches that have had, so far, the reputation of shunning politics altogether? As the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) are the major contenders for Black political support in the region of Natal-KwaZulu, their perspectives on Zionism will be set out in the following pages. The viewpoint of each organisation was obtained from an official spokesperson in each case.

7.1. How Inkatha Freedom Party Views Zionism: Cultural Asset or Educational Challenge?

According to Mr. B. Zungu, a well-known member of Inkatha's top leadership, Zionists would

'love to join our organisation. The main reason for this is the traditional stance of the IFP. Because apart from being a political movement we aim to promote the traditional values of the Black people in general, and of the Zulus in particular. What we emphasise is mutual caring, respect and the honouring of our elders and our leaders. Also, we are not only political. Inkatha also encourages culture, education and religion. In that way we can provide a home for these churches. Because, they are still fighting that image that they are a low image church. You see, most of their ministers and leaders do not have any formal (theological) training. Many of them can't even read or write. So how can these churches prosper and get prestige when there is an uneducated leadership?

So when they (Zionists) join us they can gain many things. Firstly, my opinion is that they gain recognition. I think as a church group they have never been really acknowledged. They have been treated with suspicion and being looked down upon. By joining Inkatha they get a sense of equality. That is because Inkatha couldn't only support one. It couldn't, because our president is an Anglican, but we say that we cannot only support Anglicans. We have to accept *all* Christian religions, of course. And the Black community does not encourage the Islam, it is a very strange thing for it. But I think it (Islam) is something we are not talking about. We are talking about the Christian faith of the Inkatha people. So the Zionists, of course, felt this (Inkatha) was the only place they were recognized.

Secondly, we want to enhance the reputation of the Zionists. That is we want to make them a part of the spiritual agenda of our organisation. What I mean is that Zionist ministers will find themselves being called upon to discussion groups with ministers from other churches in our organisation. In this way they can improve their religious leadership and education. They can learn from them. So they get the recognition, and can get rid of their status of an underdeveloped church. We are a mass-movement and people know that we promote not only politics, but also culture and tradition. A lot of people who are socially disadvantaged want to hold on to these values. And as you know, Zionists belong to that group of people. They are poor, but they are for culture and tradition.'

Also, there would be no need for Zionists to act against their non-violent conviction; since Inkatha is mainly a cultural liberation movement,

'Zionists will find liberation within Inkatha, for it is a forum where they will be recognized as ordinary people and not as political activists.'

Consequently, Zionist members of Inkatha would usually contribute to religious matters only, i.e. participating in opening prayers of a party meeting or helping other members in times

of illness or mourning.

But what does the Inkatha have to gain from Zionist membership?

'Well, I think the most thing that is gained, is the insurance that the Inkatha message appeals to the "grass-roots" of our society. You know, as I said to you before, Zionists usually are at the lowest level of our society. Inkatha was designed specifically to address that level of ordinary poor low-level people. To uplift them, so that they can get pride, the ones who claim to be poor and don't achieve anything themselves. Their status, and so on. In the early days of Inkatha, and still today, it was our aim to treat everybody equally. So we find a greater acknowledgement when the Zionists join us. People see that our message is still the same.'

To Zungu's knowledge, no Zionist who joined had left Inkatha later; not even because of the organisation's involvement in violence.

'I can't think of any Zionist (Inkatha) member who did that. They know that we are for peace. That's the main thing, and this is what Zionists are for, too. So I think there are no clashes. We don't tell our people to go out and fight, and do something that is against their faith.'

The Inkatha viewpoint is that Zionists have a future in South Africa.

'Yes, I think they have a future. They are a growing movement. They are already a force to be reckoned with. In South Africa the main-line churches and ecumenical bodies have respect now for the Independent Churches. There was a tendency to look down upon them, but not any more. We (Inkatha) have an obligation to make theological education accessible to Zionists and other Independent Churches. Colleges are established in cooperation with the established churches who train the leaders of the Independent Churches in theology. They can make their diplomas, and you find that their churches improve. What I am saying is that Zionists can then broom away lots of unworthy kinds of believe.'

Thus, by further suggesting that a proper theological education would save Zionists from theological errors, Zungu more or less implied that Inkatha is more interested in 're-educating' Zionists according to Lutheran or Anglican interpretations of religion, rather than

allowing them to maintain their own values and form of religious conduct. These implications are clearly at odds with what Zungu initially suggested, namely that Inkatha would promote Zionist traditional values. It would appear, therefore, that, despite a genuine concern for and recognition of Zionist ethics, the prospect of an extended electorate induces the IFP to lure Zionists with promises of social and economic elevation.

7.1.1. How the ANC Views Zionism: Out of the Political Closet but no Active Support.

In contrast to Mr. B. Zungu, Mr. S. Hadebe, an ANC Public Relations Officer (PRO) in Durban, was more reluctant to discuss the issue of Zionists and their involvement with his organisation. Being an Anglican himself, Zungu rather shared the common assumption that Zionists were a somewhat 'underdeveloped crowd'. The extent of his response was therefore considerably brief.

Nevertheless, he emphasized that the 'ANC has, in fact, no religious standpoint.

'Just look at our president, Nelson Mandela. He always said that church membership and religion is a private issue for every individual. So as a mass-movement the ANC cannot afford to select our membership according to religious persuasion. This is, for instance, why we have no opening prayers at our meetings. What we do instead is to sing "Nkosi Sikelele" to start the meetings. That suits all our members, no matter if they are Muslims, Hindus or Christians.'

However, Hadebe was convinced that Zionists could not remain impartial and should shake off their apolitical attitude.

'In times of political change nobody can afford to stand aside and refuse to contribute to the process of achieving democracy. But I'm also telling you that we do not force anybody to join the struggle. So we kind of have to accept that Zionists are a bit reluctant to get involved in these things. What we can do is attract them through meetings and rallies, where we also have gospel group music. We have realised that this is gaining among Zionists. So we were discussing one day that we must try to take the initiative and try to organise these gospel festivals as ANC. In that way we will attract them, all ages. It should not only be a gospel festival. Okay, we

are not coming here only as a festival, but maybe there would be a speech on our side. Like, making the point about the ANC, asking the people to join the ANC, and why the people must join the ANC. And then we can expand this issue of religion. You see, there are many gospel group meetings, and people are interested. Some of the people are members of the PAC, some are members of the ANC and, you see, if we are meeting on Sundays, they cannot attend these (political) meetings. This is because they prefer to go to church. The way is to make those people, including the Zionists, see themselves as a part of the ANC. It is to organise some events in which you make them to participate, in which you make them feel more at home with the ANC.'

As we will see, there are already enlisted ANC members who belong to some of the Zionist churches. In this connection, Hadebe stressed that those members were usually not elders but Zionist youngsters who tried to elude the strict code of conduct of Zionism. Zionist elders, it was conceded, would probably seek their political fulfilment predominantly within Inkatha, for it was a more traditional organisation. Yet it appears that, instead of cutting off their 'roots', Zionist members of the ANC commonly remain loyal to their church and try to make space for both church and ANC meetings. Hadebe conceded that politics was a 'new turf for Zionists. They are still very shy and they are yet not prepared to take over responsible positions in our organisation. The Zionists prefer to remain in the background. They are just happy with a silent membership.' Summing up, Hadebe asserted that the ANC does not discriminate people who belong to any religious denomination. Because of this the organisation is eager to give Zionists a respectful recognition and welcome them as participating members.

Considering the reactions of two major Black political organisations the following emerges. The IFP, by advertising its strong emphasis on Zulu culture and history, is more or less convinced that Zulu Zionists are ready to join their party. Apparently, it is only a matter of time until more Zulu Zionists realize the shortcomings of their churches, and consequently seek to repair these shortcomings with the help and support of Inkatha. The ANC, on the other hand, is perhaps not fully aware of the dimensions of what it means for Zionists to abandon their reputed apolitical attitude. The organisation appears to be only interested in *active* agents and has, so far, tolerated Zionists as 'not being quite against us' or at most

being passive members (youth in particular). However, there is a strong implication that the ANC expects Zionists to change and commit themselves more fully to the political agenda of the organisation. Altogether, both political organisations try to evoke a political spirit within a mass of people they cannot but be aware of, especially at the dawn of a new South African constitution. In return they promise cultural, economic and religious prosperity.

With this background I will now move on to discuss the response and reaction of Zionist leaders and elders. Are they able to maintain their apolitical stance and peaceful persuasion, or do they have to give in and throw their ethics overboard? Is the suggestion (made by Hadebe) that older and younger Zionists are divided according to political leanings, i.e. towards Inkatha or the ANC, a valid one?

7.2. Church vs Politics: The Response of Zionist Elders.

The majority of Zionist elders in Kwa Mashu felt rather uneasy about answering questions which concerned their personal political opinion. Especially at present when intimidation is rife and where political standpoints can invite harassment when openly professed. Consequently many Zionists kept their sentiments and persuasions to themselves. The mere fact that I was a European inquiring into political matters only increased the initial suspicion I encountered with every respondent. Therefore a great number of Zionist leaders and elders, women in particular, responded with brief answers, maintaining that they had no interest in politics whatsoever. The general opinion was that Zionists should continue to avoid active involvement, and continue their exclusiveness in that regard.

As a result it would be relatively convenient to assume that, altogether, Zionists hold on to their reputation. With many elders this might be the case and, as far as they are concerned, there is perhaps no need for an elaborate explanation as to why Zionists do or do not get politically involved. But there are those elders and leaders who opened up and shared their different opinions with me. Thus, to examine the extent of political involvement in more detail, I will subsequently introduce church leaders and elders with different backgrounds and viewpoints. Although their cases might not be representative of every Zionist adult in Natal

or even in Kwa Mashu, they will nevertheless shed more light on individual responses, persuasions and anxieties.

7.2.1. The Burden of Neutrality: The Case of Rev. Vilakazi.

Since 1965 the 62 year old Rev. Vilakazi has been the leader of a Zionist congregation in Kwa Mashu (cf. also chapter three). Because of his lifelong involvement in the church - both his parents had been leaders, too - Vilakazi's attitudes and viewpoints have remained very much traditional. While he was always eager to explore and discuss innovations and modifications in terms of leadership authority, theological education and the design of Zionist services, Vilakazi would not change his apolitical stance.

The ongoing violence in Natal was one of Vilakazi's major concerns. Rev. Vilakazi himself has experienced a situation in which his life and that of other Zionists was at stake.

'One day some of my members and I were travelling on one of these minibuses to the South Coast. It was on a Saturday evening and we were going to an all-night meeting of another branch there. Then, all of a sudden, our bus was stopped. They were five men and they had guns with them. So we had to stop. They were all wearing these balaclavas (i.e. knitted hats that can be pulled down over the face). They yanked the door open and asked us to identify ourselves. Just like that. I don't think they were common robbers, because they didn't ask us for money. They just wanted to know who we were. This was political. So, whichever way you put it, you say I am Inkatha they shoot you, or you say you are ANC, they shoot you. You never know. Because I was the eldest in the bus, I talked to them. I said: We are coming in peace. We only want to go to church. We are not interested in politics. I think they understood. They also saw that we were wearing our uniforms. So I think they believed me. They let us go, but you are not safe any more.'

Unfortunately, the Zionist uniform and the reputation of being a peace-loving and impartial church does not always help church members to escape from dangerous situations. Rev. Vilakazi told me about a fellow Zionist leader who had to abandon his home for fear it would be looted and burned down. Apparently this man had incited the envy of some thugs, for he had a steady job as a furniture sales representative. His income made him therefore considerably wealthy in an environment where poverty is predominant. Vilakazi added that

thugs do not distinguish between Zionists and non-Zionists. 'They don't care what you are. They only want your possessions.'. Until he was safe, this particular church leader was forced to spend the nights in his car or on the premises of his company.

Rev. Vilakazi furthermore explained that, unlike thugs, politically motivated perpetrators don't go for personal belongings.

'They go for the men, in order to recruit them for the political struggle or to take revenge at alleged traitors. They don't want the goods you have in your house.'

In that regard Zionists were equally affected. Vilakazi could recall instances where male church members in another area were under the suspicion of having passed information to the local police.

'What happened then was that they just ran away. They didn't do anything and they didn't want to put the risk on their families. So what they did, every day after work when it was dark, they went away from their homes and stayed in the trees. They just stayed there for the night. When it was dark their wives or kids brought them some food and water. Only when they knew they were safe, they came back.'

Though Vilakazi would not be more specific about this particular incident, it demonstrates that the circumstances of political threat and intimidation have evoked a situation that clearly reversed the perception of order and disorder. In other words, these Zionist men have, for the sake of their own and their families safety, chosen to temporarily exchange their township environment with all its relative comfort and security (i.e. houses, electricity and telephones to call for help) against the unguarded and incommensurable wilderness.

Even the traditional all-night meetings, where Zionists from Vilakazi's church come together from various branches throughout Natal, are being eyed with scepticism by political activists in the township.

'We are being watched. They think we are up to something. They feel threatened and don't believe that we are going to church, but that we are holding a political meeting instead. Our members are really frightened!' ¹.

Consequently, Rev. Vilakazi sees his church members under a lot of pressure and communication between the different branches is at times very difficult. Meetings have to be called off, because members are too scared to travel by bus during nighttime, even though they wear their distinctive Zionist uniforms. Vilakazi conceded that, despite the tragic circumstances, fellow leaders in his church would not discuss political issues.

'Many of them just refuse to address this issue. They say: "We must stay the way we are, that is the only way that is safe. God will help us." They would never go out and say anything, never. That would only cause trouble.'

Being employed as a delivery driver in Durban, Vilakazi has regular contacts with his workmates who, unlike himself, are mostly members of a Trade Union or political party. He assured me, however, that although attempts had been made to convert him to a political cause, nobody had forced him to join the Union or a political organisation.

'What I usually do when they come and talk to me about these things, is that I tell them I am with the church. I tell them we do not fight and that we are for peace. So they leave me alone. They even ask me. They ask me and say: "Hey, Vilakazi, what do you think? Should I get involved?". Then I tell them that they should know what's good for them, and that they should better not get mixed up in politics or unions. It's not wise. That's all I can do.'

Also, Vilakazi was less concerned about political intimidation than with racial harassment by some workers. He recalled incidents where Indian and White colleagues and superiors considered him inferior and referred to him as a 'baboon'.

After a couple of months of fieldwork I got more and more acquainted with Rev. Vilakazi and his family. One evening he finally revealed that one of his sons was a member of the ANC and had left South Africa to live as an exile in Tanzania. The unjust education system and the outlook of an uncertain future were the main reasons for Vilakazi's son to leave home and family.

'He wanted to become a lawyer, but there was no chance for him. We miss him very much and we hope he can come home soon.'

Rev. Vilakazi refused to talk about his son in public. Not that he had been ashamed of his son who, as the offspring of a renowned Zionist minister, chose a political instead of a Zionist solution to his personal difficulty. But, as he said:

'It's all this talk. I mean, what do you tell the neighbours or even the church? I could tell them that he joined a football club, for instance. But I wouldn't make it public. If he would have gone away with a woman, I would have told only the nearest families. But in this case. There is a lot of gossip going on. Some of the gossipers would turn it (i.e. whatever he would say about his son) the other way, instead of straight. It would not be wise to tell anything which is political. You never know. There are always spies around. One day, the police might just knock at my door and say, "Hey, what about your son? We heard he's done this and that." No, I keep my mouth shut. We only talk about him here at home.'

Evidently, even after the official unbanning of the ANC in February 1990, any evidence that a family member belonged to its ranks could cause police investigations or retaliations from opposing political movements.

Vilakazi's family was heartbroken about their predicament, but nevertheless appreciated that the ANC had helped their son to do what he wanted to do, namely to exercise political freedom and study law in Tanzania. Accordingly, I asked Vilakazi if he, given the case that there would be a general election, would vote for the ANC.

'No, I would not! I wouldn't vote for anybody! I don't even know what that is, to vote. How do you do it? If the ANC wins the elections I pray for them, and if President de Klerk wins the elections I will pray for him. I don't want to know about politics.'

A response that clearly reflected his political position.

Vilakazi insisted that, as a Zionist, one had to remain neutral, because taking sides would

only lead to trouble.

'You see, their (i.e. political organisations) is that if you are not with us, you are against us. For me that means even more just to keep away from it, don't touch it!.'

However, Vilakazi himself had to experience that political neutrality is not always possible.

'My wife here, for example, she is a member of Inkatha, because she works at that (KwaZulu) school. In order that you can be a teacher, you must be Inkatha. But my wife is not partaking in any activities. I am an exceptional case (i.e. in not having to join Inkatha or the ANC), because the people know me. They know that I am a Zionist. But as far as my wife is concerned, let me give you an example. If you are good at karate and you want to practice it, and the only chance to do it is within the police force, you might join the police for just that reason. You don't have to be convinced about the police. It is the same with teachers. If you look for a job, you have to be Inkatha - it comes that way in the end. You might find that situation in all schools and you find that people are actually not *willing* to join Inkatha. But you have to survive. It worries me, because one should not join a party for that reason. Not Inkatha or the ANC. Because both are involved in the violence. That's what I tell them in my branch. Just stay away from it. Keep out!'

Alas, to secure the economic survival of his family, Vilakazi has apparently no option but to grant his wife a form of associate membership of a political organisation.

In the meantime Vilakazi's son, after more than eight years in exile, has returned home and taken up studies at a local university². He is still a member of the ANC, but his political persuasion and his personal gratitude to the organisation had little impact on his family. Nonetheless Rev. Vilakazi appreciated the financial help and assistance the ANC had given to his son and he admitted that because of this his 'heart is with the ANC.'. Yet as he maintained

'it is essential to remain politically neutral in public and here in the church. In my opinion everybody should have the freedom to favour whoever they like, but politics should not infiltrate the church and the minds of our members.'

Hence it had become his mission to remind his congregation that getting involved in politics is like using drugs:

'Once you start, you are hooked to it. There is no escape, but only grief and agony. So I preach to my members to stay away from politics and to just concentrate on the church.'

Politics, it seems, has brought too much pain, injustice and violence to be acknowledged by a church that preaches and practices the opposite.

7.2.2. Rev. Zondi: Church Leader and ANC-member.

Stigmatized by a lifelong sufferance of apartheid laws and politics, Rev. Zondi's opinion of politics is clear-cut and unequivocal:

'Politics is not a good game. It regulates the lives of the people in a very bad and unjust manner.'

The 72 year old pensioner added that he would therefore generally not be interested in political issues.

Although having been a Zionist all his life and the leader of his own church for more than 30 years, Zondi made a point that, as a member of the South African society, one would naturally be affected by the political changes in this country.

'I welcome the political changes, like the unbanning of the ANC and the PAC. I believe strongly that there should be negotiations among the various populations and parties in South Africa. But I do not have a definite answer about how the changes should be done. I can feel the destruction that can be caused by politics. It depends mostly on how people are going to handle the whole situation. As far as the present government is concerned, I would not vote for it, because it has not done anything so far to improve the lives of the Black people in South Africa. It is different with the ANC. They have always been in the struggle against the apartheid rules. This is why I joined them when they were still banned. So this being banned caused a political vacuum. And when Inkatha was formed, many people thought that now our political problems will be solved. Because, you see, there was in the beginning no

difference between the ANC and Inkatha. In the political strategy, I mean. But then Inkatha began to be more and more with the government. I believe this is when our struggle just stopped. This was the difference. On the one side was the ANC and it was banned. But it continued with the struggle against the apartheid structures. On the other side, Inkatha just went to work together with the government. They (Inkatha) have never really been in a struggle. I believe that only the ANC can help to improve our problems. They can help to get a better economy and education for the Black community in this country.

So when you ask me who I would vote for, I must say that I would vote for the ANC. Because they will create equal opportunities and democracy for all of us.'

In terms of his capacity as a Zionist and church leader Rev. Zondi is torn between rapprochement and exclusiveness.

'For one thing, I believe that the Zionists should actually add their voice on what is happening in South Africa. They should do what the Anglican church does. Just say what is wrong and what has to be done. Maybe we could do this through an association, many of us churches together. If we can do this we can raise our voice and say: "No, the government should not do this and that.". But at the same time the leadership in the Zionist church is mostly illiterate, and as such they always have that inferior complex. They feel that if they express themselves, what are the people going to say about them. Will they listen to us? Because, all along, we Zionists are the people who have always been looked down upon, as a very low church, and so on. But I think that we should also actually talk about what is happening, because it affects everybody.

What has to happen is a better education for Zionists. Education will bring about the change in people. Then they will be more open about what is happening. As I said, there is always that inferior complex about the whole thing. It's because of the image the community has about us Zionists. If you, as a Zionist, suddenly talk politics, they will say "but what does *he* think he is?'. I think education will eliminate the inferior complex.'

Evidently, Zondi is convinced that an advanced education would eventually change the inferiority complex of Zionists and help them to deal with political issues in a more adequate way, rather than withdrawing themselves from it altogether.

On the other hand, however, he regarded it as advisable that church members keep their political preferences or involvements secret.

'What happens if you go out and tell everybody, is that the church can suffer irreparable harm. Because then the members start talking about politics in the church. They start to argue. But as it is, my members should only come to the church to pay their loyalties to God, and not to argue about politics. It is already difficult to stay out of it as an individual member, because of the political violence. Very often, members are drawn into the fracas when their children are attacked or even killed. Under such circumstances, the members might be forced to take sides. But still, for the sake of our church, we must not get involved in this. We are only here to support and help our people spiritually.'

With grief and bitterness, he told me of incidents where Zionists were directly affected by the hideousness and absurdity of the present political climate.

In one case a minister, who belonged to one of Zondi's branches in rural KwaZulu, decided to change his political loyalties from the Inkatha to the ANC, after the organisation had been unbanned. Within a couple of months this minister had been a victim of several instances of intimidation whereby Inkatha members allegedly tried to convince him to re-join their party. Yet the minister refused to give in and dismissed the warnings he received. One day, however, he came home to find that his four year old son had been kidnapped. After an extensive search the child was found dead on the bank of a nearby river. According to Rev. Zondi the boy had been drowned by Inkatha members as an act of political revenge and to give a final warning to the minister. To save himself and his family from further lethal attacks the man finally rejoined Inkatha.

Rev. Zondi conceded that political intimidation against Zionists is not done entirely by Inkatha affiliates.

'What I am referring to here is the situation where a person may have to declare his political sympathies. This happens in certain "No Go Areas". It happens always in areas where one or the other group is strong. So there is a strong possibility that a Zionist can become forced to throw his weight behind one of the groups in order to safeguard himself. Something like this happened to me as well.

Two years ago I wanted to buy a plot for my branch. We wanted to build a church here. When we discussed the financial aspects in our church, I went to the township authorities and asked them about a credit. They told me that I had to make a down-payment, a deposit, first. They told me to bring the money to this bank. But this bank is controlled by the KwaZulu Investment Corporation. And then they told me that if

I joined the organisation (i.e. Inkatha) it would be to my advantage. What they were saying was that if I join, I would get the plot much quicker and that I would even get more money for a loan. But I said: no, I will not do this. I rather wait. You see, if I depend on them (i.e. KwaZulu authorities), I will depend on Inkatha, and this is impossible. They have collaborated with the White government. They are responsible that the things don't go ahead for us Blacks. I just have to save some more money and wait.'

Reflecting on the ANC-Inkatha conflict, Zondi argued that this was not based on a mere Xhosa (ANC) against Zulu (Inkatha) rivalry.

'Recently, there was much talk about Xhosa and Zulu violence and later this was interpreted as meaning ANC and Inkatha conflict, implying that the ANC was Xhosa dominated and Inkatha had Zulu political support. This is nonsense. Everybody knows that this violence was caused by the unknown forces. They are out there to create a division, so that Black unity is not achieved. It is important for people to realise that the main thing is for a political organisation to serve the interests of the people. Who the leadership is, is meaningless. They must not make it an issue, like: "We are Inkatha and Zulus, you are ANC and a Xhosa, therefore we tell you what you have to do.". The point I am making is that there must be political liberation for all Blacks in South Africa.

What is important is that for the leadership of political organisations, they must be people who are in contact with the poor people. Very often people who are not poor tend to exploit the poor instead of delivering the goods. The leaders should be people who understand what being poor means. Leaders should also not be chosen by status in the community. They should be judged by their input they make to the community. I mean, by their efforts in relieving the burden of the poor, be it social, political or educational. That's what a leader should do.'

What is apparent through Rev. Zondi's statement is that political leaders are measured on Zionist principles. Not only do they have to have empathy for the plight of socially disadvantaged, but they must also show that the community comes first. By being prepared to actively care and help, a politician may thus achieve more recognition among Zionists than by merely resorting to verbal political propaganda.

Against the background of all the difficulties and burdensome effects of political involvement, Rev. Zondi maintained, however, that Zionists should continue to adhere to their apolitical

attitude and neutrality.

'Everybody should do what I do, if you are favouring a political party. I keep what I believe in out of the church. Some members know that I am for the ANC. But I don't go out and talk about it. When I am in church, I only talk about God. My members must come here to prove their loyalties to God. They cannot do that when we talk about politics. So what I tell them is "Leave your politics on the door-step!". I don't try to convince them to join the ANC. And that goes for all of them, young and old. I only talk about God, and that's that. We as Christians should not be involved very much in politics. We must concentrate on the church and on our members. If you are aware of politics, that's okay. Because you must know what is going on. But don't bring it inside!'

Interesting to note here is that Zondi is apparently making a comparison between 'shoes' and 'politics'. In other words, shoes, as I have already pointed out, are symbolic of sorcery and its traces, and politics is considered to be equally harmful and symbolic of division and conflict. Hence both must be kept outside. Evidently, politics paired with sorcery can be seen as the twin evils of Zionism.

Altogether, Rev. Zondi has made it quite clear that the priority in his life was his church and its community and that the standards of Zionist ethics should be upheld. Hence in view of the present political climate the church should rather provide social and spiritual support for those affected by it, instead of getting actively involved in political affairs. By saying that one should be politically aware, he does not imply being politically active. Rather, an awareness could help Zionists to discern and thus to avoid the tensions emerging from political instability.

7.2.3. Bishop Khumalo: The Effects of a Dual-leadership.

Since I was referred to Bishop Khumalo by a local Inkatha representative, I knew from the beginning of our meetings about the nature of his political persuasion. Besides being the bishop of his church, the 59 year old Khumalo holds two further influential positions. Not only does he head an American sponsored Bible School in Durban, but he is also the leader of an Inkatha branch in the greater Durban area. From the outset Bishop Khumalo was not

at all secretive about his active political involvement. On the contrary: He stressed that, as we will see below, the only political choice for Zulu Zionists is affiliation to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

The 15th of May 1979 marked the starting point of Bishop Khumalo's political participation. At this time, three years after the Soweto disaster had triggered-off waves of anti-government mass-action, Khumalo had no intention of committing himself on political issues. But during that very day he had a dream which, according to him, predicted the violence that would dominate Natal in years to come:

'It (the dream) happened before the violence started. I dreamt that I entered my house, where some of my church officials sat and waited for me. Suddenly, I saw a long snake winding its body around the chairs. Nobody knew where the snake came from and nobody could see its head or its tail. It was a very long snake. We then all started to pray to make it go away. When it didn't move I was backing out of the house to do something about it. Finally, I started to scream, because I was afraid. And then a voice came through the roof of the house and talked to me. It said: "You need to pray for this world!". So the Lord talked to me. I went back into the house and told the others about my vision. We prayed again and the snake disappeared. After I had this dream I went and told everybody about it. That was a long time before the violence started here in Natal. I even told the ministers of the KwaZulu government. I could not keep quiet. I and others wrote letters to Ulundi (capital of KwaZulu) and told the authorities about the dream.' Khumalo subsequently interpreted the appearance of the snake as a symbol of violence and agony for Black people. 'This is why there can be only prayers and peaceful actions against all the rivalry and fighting. It must disappear.'

He even showed me a copy of his letter to the KwaZulu government, but he avoided an answer to whether or not he received a response to it. After considering his options of finding a way of contributing to peace and stability in Natal, Khumalo decided to join the Inkatha movement in 1982.

'I had no doubt that this was the right move for me, because as a Christian it was the only thing to do. We (Christians) don't kill, nor does the Inkatha. It is a peaceful movement. This is why I joined.'

In relation to his dream I asked Bishop Khumalo whether he was also a Zionist prophet and,

if so, whether being a prophet gave him any guidance about joining Inkatha.

'Yes, I am also a prophet. But my visions and dreams had nothing to do with joining Inkatha. As it is, believing in the Lord is usually enough to prevent the violence. You just had to pray and the Lord would help you. Even my members, I could tell them: "Pray and the Lord will bring peace and protect you". But when you look around these days, you can see that praying alone does not help any more. How can you pray for peace, if people have pistols and guns? Prayers cannot stop the bullets. So I decided to pray *and* join Inkatha. Because they are for peace and they help us to protect us all from the violence.'

Initially, Khumalo had favoured the ANC but, as he emphasised, at a time when Chief Albert Luthuli (winner of the Nobel Peace Prize 1961), was still alive.

'At this time, I think in the late 1950's and early 1960's, the ANC was still against killing. Even after they were banned. But today? Today there is a different ANC. Ever since Chief Luthuli died (in 1967) the ANC is kaput and finished. They have left the path of peace. But then Chief Buthelezi came. He came and he built the powerful structures of Inkatha. He did something for his people. And I say to you that he was the only man to follow Luthuli's footsteps. Buthelezi was for peace, and he still is for peace. The ANC has changed, they are for fighting. This is why I never even considered joining the ANC. They just lost it. So I joined Inkatha. I was ready to follow Chief Buthelezi, because he was following Chief Luthuli.

As a Zulu it was a natural thing for me to do. Because, what Inkatha is, it's the representative of our (Zulu) nation. Even all our Inkatha leaders are Zulus. Our leaders in Inkatha, they are chiefs, they are ministers, they are everything. I am quite satisfied when I am under that umbrella. I don't see anything else that I could have joined. They are our tradition.'

Yet it should be added that the place where Khumalo grew up, New Hanover in the Natal Midlands, is a notorious Inkatha stronghold. All in all, it seems almost automatic for somebody from that area to register with Inkatha. Accordingly, I asked Khumalo whether Inkatha would push or intimidate people to join the movement, notwithstanding its stronghold in the Natal Midlands or other parts of the province. He hastened to reply:

'No, no, no! We don't do that! Inkatha does not get involved in such things. We don't push anybody to join us. When people join it's because we like Inkatha. It's

the sort of thing that suits the Zulus. I mean, let's say you are an Afrikaner. When an Afrikaner (politician) comes and preaches: this is the way of living, and tells you all the history of Afrikaners and everything, wouldn't you follow him? Because they've got your history, they've got the Afrikaner history in them. It is the same with the Inkatha. Inkatha has got all our Zulu history. It has got all our roots.'

In the meantime, Bishop Khumalo has worked his way up the party ranks and has become the chairman of an Inkatha branch. Politically he went through hard times. The tensions between the ANC/UDF aligned youth and Inkatha, backing elders and township authorities, have caused him a great deal of grief.

'It was really bad in 1989. You couldn't trust anybody, you couldn't turn your back on anything. One day it was very bad, I had to come here in my office and just lock the door. I was hiding. All the youngsters in the township, they are all comrades (ANC affiliated youth). They knew who I was. They were after me, just because I am Inkatha. I didn't do anything, I was just being the chairman. But if I had stayed there, they would have burned my house. I thank the Lord that my family was at home (i.e. New Hanover) at this time. I sent them away. But I had to stay here. So when they came at me I had to leave until things calmed down. Sometimes you have to hide, otherwise they harass you or kill you. They don't care that you are for peace. They just go for you, because you belong to this organisation.'

As far as his position in his church is concerned, Khumalo initially denied that his IFP membership had caused any conflict or tensions among the church members. In fact, he maintained that there could be no disagreement or conflict of interests, for other church members, too, had joined Inkatha. However, Khumalo later conceded that

'some of my church members they know what I am doing here. They know that I am the chairman. But some of them are not happy about it. They are not comfortable with my decision. But usually they do not come out in the open and say: "What you are doing there is not good." They just remain silent and pull a face when you talk about politics. So I better keep it that way and say nothing about this.'

Subsequently, I inquired whether it was not a contradiction for him as a Zionist, especially as a religious leader, to join a political organisation? Thereupon Khumalo affirmed that it was indeed a contradiction, and because of this he and other Zionist Inkatha members usually

refrain from attending the party's meetings. He added that people do not

'look nicely at Zionists who join such an organisation. You have to keep away from meetings, but that doesn't mean that you don't have to support the IFP. Nevertheless, you have to keep a clear name!'

Hence Khumalo draws a clear line when it comes to Inkatha's inevitable involvement in political rivalry and violence. When the violence began to spread, he refused to go out and actively back his movement in the fight against the political opposition.

'What happened is that we have been disturbed through these violences, and these youngsters who burn the houses. But I just decided to sit down and don't do anything further. I couldn't go out and fight like the others. I didn't believe in that. Because, when I look at the people, old people, old grannies, I see that violence is wrong. And when you start fighting now, they can't run away. And then they burn down the houses, you know. All these innocent people, they have nowhere to go. So there must be no violence. Both sides! In the church we are non-violence. This is why I don't like it when Inkatha gets involved in that. It's senseless, all that killing.'

Bishop Khumalo remained confident, nonetheless, that the Inkatha was essentially a peaceful organisation overall, and not once during our interviews did he consider his party to be the occasional aggressor in violent outbursts.

'This is because we (Zionists) are non-violent and Inkatha, they are not for violence. So why can't Inkatha be my relation. I don't think being with Inkatha is against what we do in church. In fact, everybody, most everybody who are Zulus they will love to join Inkatha if the disturbance of intimidation would not be here. Even more Zionists would join it. But just because of the intimidation, people are trying to back away for their lives. As it is at the moment, people, mostly the youngsters, they fight like cats and dogs. I know that many of my (church) people are actually Inkatha with their hearts. But they do not join, they are afraid'.

If not entirely because of his religious persuasion and traditional background, Khumalo's motivation to go along with the IFP became somewhat clearer when he mentioned the gains and advantages of Inkatha membership. Relating to his home community in New Hanover, he pointed out that the membership and the fees for the organisation would always pay off. His home-community, which consists predominantly of Inkatha members, could thus enjoy a continuous supply of water, electricity and other amenities such as housing subsidies. The

latter all depended on loyalty to the KwaZulu government authorities.

But apart from initial socio-economic advantages Khumalo's home congregation had also experienced frictions, particularly with its younger church members.

'I think a lot of my youngsters in the church, they favour the ANC. It's just something that appeals to them. When they meet their friends, all they do, their friends, is talk about the ANC. And when you come to the old people, to our fathers, like people in my age, they mostly like Inkatha. What happens then is that the older people usually keep a low profile. They don't talk about that they like Inkatha. So when it comes to my church, I cannot allow that people fight about politics and who they like. As a minister it is my duty to keep us all together. What I mean is that I don't go out and ask everybody "what are you?". I cannot do this. I am not allowed to ask anybody to join the organisation. At the same time I cannot ask the youth to join the (Inkatha) youth brigade. I am not saying anything about politics, because it is not my duty to do that in church. The most important thing for me as a Zionist leader is to get the youth to stay in the church. I am only entitled to call my people to God, to the Lord. That is my strong duty. But I am not entitled to preach them politics.'

When I asked Khumalo whether he would be disgruntled should one of his church youth decide to join the ANC, he appeared a little unsettled and hesitant at first. Finally he conceded that he would prefer not to know about the possible political affiliations of his youngsters.

'Actually, I don't want to know anything about it. It's better that way. What my youngsters join is not my business. I am just not interested, because, as I said, my members can belong to many organisations. Any of them. What I do is I just concentrate on the church matters, because if you ask people about their politics, I will have a crash in my parish. If I start saying *one* word about politics, I have had my chips, and my job (as a church leader) is gone and finished. I mean, if I say anything, they will think that I am not loyal to the church. As a leader I cannot afford this, because then my people will leave the church, if they think that I am only after politics.'

Bishop Khumalo had realized that, as soon as political topics infiltrate the conduct of his church, the unity of the congregation could be at stake. In Khumalo's case it seems that individual political affiliation of church members is tolerated, but on the condition that they

keep it quiet and continue to adhere to the peaceful attitude preached by Zionism.

However, Bishop Khumalo's credibility was dented in that regard after I learned (in the course of a telephone conversation) that he had been questioned by the police for illegally possessing a handgun. A good friend had allegedly reported him to the police. When asked as to why he owned a handgun in the first place, Khumalo defended the need for it, because of the ongoing violence and his position as an IFP chairman. He claimed that

'only a gun can protect me and my family from harassment and all this violence and attacks.'

Because of this he had initially applied for a licence in Pretoria in order to obtain the gun legally. However, his request had been denied and Khumalo got hold of the weapon through private contacts. When I pressed him on this matter, Khumalo made contradictory statements. On the one hand he admitted that owning a firearm would clearly violate Christian and Zionist standards. On the other hand, he insisted that the deadly weapon was an absolute necessity for him in order to look after himself in times of unrest. He declined to make a statement as to whether or not he would actually use the gun in a life-threatening situation.

After this phone call, Khumalo (whom I had then known for more than seven months) did not find the time to talk to me again. I tried numerous times to arrange another meeting, but he always refused kindly, and told me that he was too busy. I can only speculate that he must have felt most uncomfortable about confiding the gun-incident to me. Sadly, it was the loss of an enjoyable and very outspoken informant. Altogether, my impression was that Khumalo's intensive involvement in political affairs has taken precedence over his Zionist background and religious ethics. Here the Zionist withdrawal from non-violent action, and the attitude of peaceful negotiation is evidently paying its toll to the fear of political persecution and harassment.

7.3. The General Tendency among Zionist Elders in Kwa Mashu.

We have seen that some Zionist elders did in fact deviate from their traditional religious convictions, and crossed the set boundaries. In Rev. Zondi's case, the political affiliation to the ANC had been inspired by his personal identification with the aims of the movement, i.e. a democratic constitution for all South Africans, and educational and social progress for the Black majority. Bishop Khumalo's alignment with the IFP came about as a result of personal conformity with the traditional and ethnic emphasis of the organisation and partly the social and economic advantages Inkatha members can enjoy in KwaZulu. Both leaders stressed, however, that their individual political persuasion is entirely personal and should not affect the structures and conduct of their congregations. Otherwise their credibility and authority as church leaders would be very much in doubt, and would distort the religious identity of their churches. Altogether their active involvement in politics appears to be an exception among Zionist leaders and elders in Kwa Mashu and in any case is highly qualified. In that regard nothing much has changed since Sundkler's (1961) and Kiernan's (1974) publications. But the circumstances of the present socio-political reality has sharpened the consciousness of political realities among many Zionists. That is to say that, since the political alteration in South Africa ultimately affects their own future, Zionists, too, have become more politically aware. Rev. Vilakazi's somewhat hesitant preference for the performances and aims of one political organisation is not uncommon.

Mr. Jacob Njapha, an elder of the Ndedelelu Church of Zion, for example, had a similar attitude towards politics.

'I am not politically involved. In fact, not at all. But it is just that I am, sort of, sympathising with those people who are really doing something. Not with the so-called people who are struggling for liberation or whatever. But I really sympathises with the people who are doing something. As I said, I am a Zionist by denomination, but it does not mean that I should not be aware of what is happening. So, I even let my family be aware of what is happening around ourselves. I tell them: "This person is not right, this thing is not right.". I just let them realise, this and that is going on. But I also tell them not to actually take part on the active side. If I am aware I am able to say this political organisation at least is trying, and this one, I would not vote for that.

Now you ask me which political organisation I like? That is too personal. I don't like to answer that. I mean, you can't trust anyone. But as I said, if I were to take part and could vote today, I would go for this political organisation and not for the other

one. Not because there is something for me, but because they have ideas. I mean, there is a movement, there is a progress over there.'

Like Mr. Njapha, a great number of elders admitted to favour a certain movement, yet they, too, emphasised that they remain passive and insisted on their privacy in that regard - something I had to respect and honour.

In my opinion, the growing political awareness among Zionists can be attributed to the following reasons. Firstly, with the beginning of reform of apartheid laws and politics, South Africa has experienced an increasing freedom and accessibility to press and other mass-media. Accordingly, Zionists are better informed and have a chance to evaluate and analyze the advantages and disadvantages that arise from the political climate. They are thus less constrained to simply cope with their predicament, for the mass-media points out the political and economic short-comings and encourages them to recognize and critically consider their situation. Secondly, Zionists are victims of the contemporary social upheaval. Though the majority of Zionists has always belonged to the poorer mass of the Black population and has learned to cope with it with the help of their puritan ethics (cf. also Kiernan, 1977a), the poverty around them has grown dramatically and the political instability has become life-threatening. What choice do Zionists have but to discern the development of violence and the extension of social inadequacies. It would thus seem almost natural to pin one's hopes on the promises and actions of public and political authorities.

Yet one must not underestimate the pressure towards political identification which Zionists too experience. In some cases Zionists elders, like Mrs. Doris Sibusi, reported that they had been victims of intimidation -predominantly verbal, admittedly, and been urged to adhere to one or the other of the political organisations.

'One day,' she told me, 'I was coming home from work in town, and as I was leaving the bus-station these youngsters came and bothered me. They asked me if I was politically okay (though she did not specify the affiliation of these youngsters). I told them that I didn't know what they mean. I just said "leave me alone, I have nothing to do with you!". They laughed at me, and all the people around were already staring at us. But everybody kept quiet, just quiet. Then they (youngsters) said that

they would find out where I live. Then they would come and see which side I was on. I said that I was on nobody's side. But you never know with these youth. They are very angry. So you just have to be quiet and say no, I am not with anybody.'

Apart from intimidation, another kind of danger can arise when Zionists fall under the suspicion of belonging to the fighting wing of a political organisation. In this regard the Zionist Mr. Elijah Khanyase and his two sons had the following experience.

'It comes in this way: When there has been violence, say violence erupts, and people are all frightened. Now here are people (i.e. Zionists) coming from a different place, say there are for instance five or six people coming to attend a meeting. But many people will not believe that there are Zionists coming to church. They will think that they are up to something, especially when there is fighting around.

I went to Dweshula on the South Coast one time, close to Port Shepstone. I took my two sons there. We were the three of us. And this time the road was very slippery, with mud on the side. So when I got down to Dweshula, I decided that I should park the car here, leave it there, and then walk the rest of the way to the meeting. I was quite unaware that there was some fighting going on in that area. So after we parked the car, we all got dressed up, because we wanted to leave everything else in the car. We dressed into the church dress.

We didn't have a torch this time to walk up to get to the house where the meeting would be. Half way through, when we came across some other place, we wanted to knock at the door and ask them to let us go through their yard. But then, they just switched off their lights, and they opened their doors. So I thought no, that's not a good sign. If I know that you switch off your lights and open your doors, no, I wouldn't go in. Why do you switch off your lights? They must have something to hide. So we went around there. Then, on the other side of the yard, we found a group of about eight men. All lying down on the side of the track. Because it was so dark we couldn't actually see the people. Sometimes you think it is cows lying there, or something else, you know. So we just went quickly away from there. It's only when we passed them that they said: "Hey, you, where are you going? Who are you?".

We thought, um, usually the people come with their guns, when there is violence. They come and sell their guns. So these men must have seen the car and they saw the lights, and then they thought we are coming out to sell guns to some Inkatha faction. So that was why they were chasing us, to see where we are going. Meanwhile, they would see that there are two young boys, and I was the old. And the way we talked to each other, I mean a father speaking to his two sons. You can tell that we are just ordinary people. And they could see that we didn't have anything. No bags, no nothing. We were only carrying our ordinary church clothing. So until we got to the house where our meeting was they were following us. There were lights on and then

they realised that we are no gun dealers, but that we are Zionists going to a meeting. They could see us leaving the next day at 12 o'clock. Now, you see that place on the South Coast, it is sort of violence-torn. Now anything that comes over there is suspicious.

These people, they follow you as long as they know that you are okay. They want to see that you are really going to church. Because, there are some, what can I say, they pretend to go to church. They pretend to be Zionists. They even wear uniforms. But only if the meeting goes on, then these people believe you. Like, for instance now, it's exactly the same thing. If I go to a meeting they watch me until I get to that half. Whether it is during daylight or at night. Sunday, broad daylight, at nine o'clock, they watch you. But they don't really harass you in that sense. But they follow you until you get somewhere to check out if there is not a bad lot.'

On the whole, in order to escape the weight of having to make a decision, Zionists tend to preserve a low political profile. Though a Zionist may be politically aware, I found that he or she will always put his church first, for politics in South Africa has always been a synonym for oppression, injustice and, lately, violence and unrest. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the majority of my elder respondents in Kwa Mashu chose the sanctuary of their churches, rather than opt for the political alternatives. Zionist churches tend to remain islands of security, providing stability in a climate of social and political disorder (cf. also Kiernan, 1991:7). The church becomes a refuge where group support and mutual care provide spiritual strength and where members can find individual recognition and sympathy.

Considering the Zionists' persistence in maintaining their exclusiveness, one might assume that their churches would fail to attract new members. Perhaps also, because their attitude appears too 'unrealistic' to survive in a situation where a political alliance is deemed necessary to achieve social and economic improvements. Yet the opposite seems to be the case. According to my informants there is a constant influx of new members. Hence the question emerges whether or not a new member joins a Zionist church because of its apolitical stance in order to emphasise his neutrality?

'No, I don't think so.', Mr. Jabulani Quembisa of the General Baptist Church in Zion, said. 'I think it is because the people want to be healed. Mostly, we take care of those who are poor, like pensioners. They do not have to pay the church contributions and all that. So these people, they come to be with us and pray with us.'

But not because of politics. I don't think so.'

Rev. Shabangu, on the other had, conceded that

'maybe it could be one of the reasons. But I will not say that it is the only one. When you ask me, I say that healing plays a big role. You see, they join because they have come to us and they have been healed. That means that they will be the next to go and heal and pray for the sick. They will stay because they know what they are doing.'

When I approached other Zionist leaders and elders about this aspect they, too, almost unanimously excluded the possibility that members would join to claim political neutrality, with a few considering it as merely imaginable. Apparently, the main reason for joining remains the attraction of healing and mutual care offered by the churches³. But I believe that, to some extent, the reasons for becoming a church member are indeed influenced by politics. The social and political developments during the 1980's with all its negative side-effects, has inevitably increased the pool from which Zionists recruit their members. Violence and social uncertainty has intensified people's need for harmony, stability, and mutual support, and Zionists can provide just that. Within the boundaries of a Zionist church new members are able to become part of a controlled and harmonic society where they are recognized as individuals and are spiritually protected from the disorder 'outside'. And, as far as healing is concerned, I have already pointed out that it deals not only with physical but also emotional and psychological distress. One can expect that large numbers of township dwellers have experienced considerable shock and trauma in the course of the lethal violence. These aspects swell the ranks of those who are susceptible to the appeal of Zionist healing.

Coming to the end of this chapter we have to ask again if Zionists, particularly elders, have developed a political perspective? In order to answer this we have to consider the following facts: As for the majority of Zionist leaders and elders I met, they appear frightened and

insecure. The increasing pressure, evoked by a climate of violence and political insinuation, leaves them somehow at a loss. Furthermore, being looked down upon as 'primitive' and 'uncivilized' doesn't make things much easier. It is not as if Zionists do not care about their social and political disadvantages, but their common remark was: 'Why should I care about politics?'

Since many Zionists I spoke to still belonged to the poorest section of our society, their dominant worry was about having a solid roof over their heads and sufficient food to fill the stomachs of their families. There is, therefore, a lack of political motivation among them and solutions to the circumstances of life continue to be sought predominantly within the boundaries of the church community. The survival, expansion and prosperity of the church is what appears to motivate most Zionist elders - not politics. It has been shown that certain political ideologies and the promise of social and cultural prosperity outside the church can appeal to some Zionists. However, church members who finally do get politically involved don't seem to cut off their traditional Zionist values completely. Partaking in violent actions, for instance, is out of the question, and issues of politics and religion remain strictly separate.

Finally, when we ask whether Zionist leaders and elders have developed a political consciousness, we can answer yes. A genuine political *ambition* would ultimately lead to active participation, but this is commonly rejected. A political *consciousness*, however, adds security in as far as it enables Zionists to comprehend and deal in their own way with the consequences of political change. One could even go so far as to suggest that a political consciousness, in a way, appears to be a sustaining factor in the upkeep of Zionist boundaries. It seems that increased upheaval and uncertainty throw Zionists more heavily back upon their own resources, and instead of being weakened by the influence of political instability, Zionists in Kwa Mashu are strengthened in their resolve to represent a peaceful 'counterforce' of social harmony and religious stability.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. Vilakazi's example does not seem to be far-fetched. At one stage during my fieldwork I became aware of a rumour that political activists, disguised as Zionists, had shown up at a funeral in Umlazi (a township south of Durban) and subsequently shot at the mourners who were alleged ANC sympathizers. Although I investigated this claim, respondents in Umlazi could not verify this incident.
2. The case of Vilakazi's son will be discussed at length in chapter eight.
3. It is significant that the drawing power of healing does not apply to the same extent to Zionist youngsters. This rests largely on the fact that almost every youth has been a Zionist since birth. Furthermore, a youngster is usually less prone to physical illness.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Religion or Politics: The Choice of Zionist Youngsters.

Bearing in mind our conclusion that the majority of Zionist elders in Kwa Mashu tends to insist that the traditional apolitical and non-violent values of the church are maintained, we shall now investigate to what extent the church youth has been affected by the present political climate. I have already established that the progression of youngsters is mainly based on their acceptance of religious authority and the effectiveness of Zionist moral education. But today, a Zionist youngster's ambition and determination to continue the work and the religious ethics of his elders is also influenced by the current circumstances of political violence and social instability. Just like their township peers, Zionist youngsters experience the harsh reality of unemployment and perpetual unrest. Yet whilst a great number of township youth opts for political affiliation to air their displeasure about social and economic inadequacy, young Zionists run the risk of violating the church ethics and boundaries by doing the same. I have already shown that young people generally are actively involved in the turmoil of political rivalry, unrest, mass-actions and school boycotts (cf. also Zulu, 1986; Hindson and Morris, 1990; S. Stavrou, 1990; Campbell, 1992) . Furthermore, it became evident that, for a youngster, taking political sides has become somewhat essential to survive in a conflict situation which is loaded with suspicion and antagonism. One can therefore assume that the political pressure on young Zionists is correspondingly higher than on Zionist elders. In fact, the situation is such that Zionist youngsters experience the demands of religious authority and the call to political participation at the same time.

Considering the relatively strong bond between young and older Zionists, the question arises what effect political influence has on the inter-generational dialogue in a Zionist community. Are Zionist youngsters going through a process of estrangement, i.e. adopting political ideology out of frustration with their religious ethics? The following discussion and case studies will further elucidate to what extent young Kwa Mashu Zionists are exposed to, and in what ways they respond to, the increasing political activities in their township and peer environment.

8.1. Experiencing the Political Alternatives.

As I will demonstrate below, young Zionists do indeed become actively involved in politics. The following case studies will be used to describe the circumstances and motives of Zionist youngsters, who crossed the barrier of the church's apolitical ethics. This will shed light on individual experiences and anxieties, and the hope of leading Zionism from political apathy towards political awareness, if not participation.

8.1.1. The case of Joseph Vilakazi.

In January 1983, after having joined the ANC a short while before, the 32 year old Joseph Vilakazi left his home and church to live as a political exile abroad. Little did he know at this time that he would return to South Africa and his Kwa Mashu home nearly nine years later.

Before he left Joseph had been actively involved in his father's Zionist church and attended the services regularly. Since he had planned to study law through the University of South Africa he worked as a part-time teacher at a night-school, teaching English and History to Standard 8 pupils, in order to earn money to pay for his study fees. His life changed dramatically, however, when he was introduced to the political aims of the ANC in 1980.

'It all started when I got hold of these pamphlets, you know, these leaflets they were publishing underground. This is because the ANC was then still banned, a banned political organisation. I liked some of the information I read on those pamphlets. It just appealed to me. After reading this I became very interested in the real identity of the ANC, because I did not know very much about them before. Just what people talked. So when I became interested in this I kept my thoughts to myself. I didn't share them with anybody, not even my family.'

After attending a soccer game in Durban, he was approached by a man, Mr. A., who had apparently been aware of Joseph's new interest.

'I have met this chap before, I knew him. Then, we only talked about casual things, like soccer or music. One day, after a match at Kings Park Soccer Stadium, I saw him in a car and, well, he approached me. He said: "I understand you are this type of person, you are interested in the ANC.". I said yes. And he said: "Okay, now, take it from me, I won't send you to the police, nothing will take place as soon as we finish talking. If you are concerned about our meeting, you don't need to be afraid. What we can do is you can phone me and we can talk about that. Because I am with them (ANC), too. If you like, you can come to our meeting in Manzini (Swaziland). You just tell me the time and the point where I will find you in Swaziland.". So, two weeks later I went up there, and he collected me next to the police station in Manzini.'

Having attended his first ANC meeting with ANC exiles in Swaziland, Joseph was convinced that he, too, should make a contribution to the struggle for democratisation in South Africa.

'This first meeting really changed me. From then on I knew that I had to do something. What I did in the beginning was to distribute literature about the ANC among my friends and other youth here in the township and in other locations. This was my first task. That's what they asked me to do, and I was happy to do it. It did that until about 1982, when I was travelling from Kwa Mashu to Swaziland at least once a month. In fact, what I did between 1980 and 1982, I just used to slip to Swaziland, come back here, teach at night-school, and after some time go back to Swaziland.

At this time it was quite hard for me not to tell my folks what I was actually doing. I mean, I didn't actually tell them that I was a member of the ANC now. But this was necessary. I couldn't tell them. I used to tell them something far from that. I used to say that I have got a girlfriend in Pietermaritzburg. So every time I slipped into Swaziland, they thought that I was with her in Pietermaritzburg. The church as well, they didn't know that I was not obedient. I just kept a low profile there.'

As time went by, Joseph's church visits grew more infrequent, and were concentrated more and more on his political tasks. At no point did he try to get other church members involved.

'I was a little shy at this time, so I did not talk to them about that stuff. In fact, nobody knew what I was doing. Nobody in the church knew that I was not obedient to the church rules. We just greeted one another and then meet during the services. Then from there I would just slip into my room (i.e. went home)'

After he had regularly attended ANC meetings in Swaziland, Joseph began to realise to what extent the National Party and the White South African government had distorted the history of Black people and covered up incidents in which Africans had suffered a great deal. For him it was time to speak up and criticise the attitude and wrong policies of the South African government.

'But there was a down-side to it. I felt more and more that the security police had got wind of it, you know. That was a threat, a serious threat. Not only to me, but also on my family. So before they could arrest me, I mean, you never know when they strike, I decided to leave for external mission. I decided to join the ANC there. And to study through Unisa (University of South Africa). In 1982 I was about to get enrolled with Unisa anyway. I wanted to study towards a Diploma in Law. So I have always had hope that I will continue outside. Because Unisa had centres outside, for instance Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Botswana.'

Having made his decision, Joseph could no longer avoid a confrontation with his parents. He admitted that his parents had been heartbroken when they learned about his plans, not only because he had joined a political organisation, but also because he would have to leave his home for an indefinite period of time. Joseph described his parents reaction as follows:

'Well, they were not very happy. But I am their child and they had no alternative but to let me go. They couldn't just punish me. Basically, it wasn't only the question of joining the ANC, it was the question of me being away from home.'

He agreed with his parents that it would be for their own safety to keep his real reason for leaving home a secret.

'I told them that if anybody should ask where I was, they should just say "our boy has found work somewhere else. He has moved to another town.". When I was away, during the first years, I didn't even write to them. Not a single letter. Because, you know, the secret police would have picked that letter up. And then my family would have been in big trouble. So I choose not to write at all, I didn't want to jeopardize them.

Well, my folks they were not very happy. It wasn't really the question of joining the political movement, it was the question of my being absent from home. They didn't know what was happening to me, because I could not write. They thought "again, he

hasn't written, what is he doing? We understand a lot of people die in the struggle. Is he still alive? If he is still alive, why is he not writing to us?". That was until I wrote to them. Then they were relieved. I wrote long before our (ANC) unbanning. There were means of communicating. For instance, you see, they can read my handwriting. They can tell it's Joseph who writes here. So I emphasised on the question of their being observant and they could see that it's our son. I couldn't sign with my name, I had to keep that a secret. I wanted to be safe. But they could read my handwriting.'

After he had left his home in January 1983, Joseph spent a couple of months in Swaziland. Thereafter he spent five years in Mozambique, before finally living in Mazimbu, Tanzania, until November 1991. Here Joseph and a couple of hundred fellow ANC-exiles from South Africa were accommodated in a camp which comprised dormitories, a school and a handful of small factories engaged in general maintenance, catering and logistics.

'When I talk about a camp, I don't mean a prison camp. There was no fence or anything. It was just a huge compound with all these buildings on it. Initially, it was only the school which was there. The other buildings came later.

But for reasons of security we had the premises guarded by Tanzanians. They were all employed by the ANC. So when we wanted to get out of the camp we had to get a permit, a leave permit. It's not that we weren't allowed to get out. In fact, we were permitted to leave the camp in our spare time. The guards were just there to make sure that nobody unauthorised entered the camp. I went out quite often with others. We mixed with the local population, there was no trouble. We even had friends in Mazimba. After a while of being there I even learnt Swahili to talk to the people who lived there. I can still speak it.

Our daily routine in the camp was divided in various things. First, we had political schooling and lectures in other subjects. They told us how the history of South Africa had been distorted. They gave us a true reflection of what actually took place in South Africa. How the Black people had been robbed of their land and their rights. So we have been politically educated, to read the true history of our country. We also learnt about the aims of the ANC. It's objectives and methods of achieving our goals, like political economy, that is about which is Marxist inclined and that which is Capitalist inclined.

When the lectures finished we all had to do little chores for a couple of hours, like working in one of the little factories. In that way everybody earned a small amount of pocket money, just to keep us going. That's what we did during the day, we had lectures and we worked to keep us all going.'

Because of his educational background and his desire to teach, Joseph was appointed to work in the political department of the camp.

'They knew that I was already teaching at home, so they asked me if I would like to work in the political department. That suited me, because I like teaching. What I did there was to educate people who were coming from South Africa, the new exiles. They were those who arrived recently, and they needed to be educated politically, that is, the teachings of the ANC. So I taught them the structures and the history and the ideology of the ANC. I also talked about our economic and political methods. I had to teach them all the methods we needed to achieve a democratic distribution of wealth and power in a new South Africa. That has been my work after my first training. From then on I was always attached to the political department.

Before I took on the position as political teacher, they actually asked me to make a choice. The choice was between political and military training. If I had opted for the military training, I would have to join Umkonto wesizwe ('The Spear of the Nation', i.e. the armed wing of the ANC). But in that case I would have been obliged to join the armed struggle, and following these underground military operations. But I said no, I can't do that, rather give me the teaching position. I did not want to fight. I told them that this was against my religion (i.e. his belief in the Zionist attitude of non-violence). They were happy with that. They respected my decision. In fact, they (ANC) are very much aware, some of them have the same background as mine. So they understood these things. Some, take for instance Joe Slovo. He has been the General Secretary of the South African Communist Party, and he was in the ANC. I think the way he relates to African people is quite exceptional. He has no problems with Black people. He just takes us as people like himself. And that is what the ANC aims to do. Just take everybody the way they are. This is why they respected my decision not to fight.'

After some time Joseph distinguished himself as a political teacher, and was appointed as a Political Commissar. His new position furnished him with a considerably higher rank within the power structures of the exile camp. As Joseph explained it, he had been given responsibility for 'the solution of problems and explanation of matters which merit the masses of (ANC-) soldiers in the military situation.'. That is, Joseph had been appointed to mediate between the leadership in exile and the members who underwent military or political training. It was his job to explain and confirm the political aims of the ANC, and why they had to be executed in a certain way.

'But this was not the only thing I had to do. Many of the residents also came to see

me in order to get advice or counselling with regard to their personal problems. There were disagreements with other exiles, for example. So they came to me. So in the case of a personal dispute, I had to report the matter to the camp administration. They would then propose a change, like alternative ways of dealing with a problem. But it wasn't my job to punish them, say for instance, if they had been reported to me as having violated the camp rules, like being drunk or leaving without the permit. My job was rather to be that person the people can come to when they experience problems of any kind. If it was a social problem, I would tackle it. Say, if they felt homesick or if they were worried about things, or if they needed to know more about our ideology. As a Political Commissar these were the things I had to look after. But I was not the only one. There were many of us. In fact, each unit had a Commissar. You could be a Commissar of over 40 people or 10, it just depended on the number of people there.'

Taking Joseph's religious background into consideration, his choice to live in political exile and his active involvement within the ANC appear as a profound contradiction to the teachings of Zionist ethics. One might thus question Joseph's ability to cope with the inevitable clash of religious conviction and political participation. In other words, did his Zionist upbringing influence or temper the development of his political consciousness and career?

To begin with, Joseph had never ceased to be a Zionist.

'That was never a problem for me. As I told you, my religious persuasion had always been respected by the ANC. There was not trouble from that side. But when I came to Tanzania, there were not Zionists there. However, I wanted to go to church at least once a week. So I looked around for options, and I joined the local branch of the 7th Day Adventist Church there. But I did not become a member, although they would have liked me there. They didn't dare to convince me. There was not much time to go to church anyway. I thought if I go once a week and read the Bible by myself, that was good enough for me.'

Joseph did not, however, see a contradiction in his decision to join the struggle of the ANC, although this was during a time when the organisation relied a lot on its armed groups to achieve a political change in South Africa.

'I didn't see any contradiction in what I did. If there had to be contradictions, I could

argue and defend my cause of leaving home and joining the ANC. Because, you see, the church says no to violence and no to terrorism. But violence as perceived by the ANC is violence which is necessary. For a long time the ANC spoke to the White government and tried to achieve matters. The ANC requested the government to sit down and speak to our people, but the government did not respond. It is not true that the government responded to that request. What they did is they responded militarily. So it was a policy of the ANC to make violence a part of the struggle against apartheid. The ANC has never been a terrorist organisation. This is what we have been accused to be. But the term "terrorism" did and does not feature in our vocabulary.'

When I confronted him about the fact that many innocent people had died through ANC military underground actions, Joseph admitted these tragedies with regret, yet defended them.

'It was bad, but was in the cause of action. It is bad to see innocent people dying. We all have the right to live, it's just that the (political) events had forced some people (i.e. ANC) to fight. So others inevitably died.'

The killings which accompanied the political struggle of the ANC nevertheless affected Joseph. He made a point that lethal weapons should not be the vehicle for achieving democracy and political change in South Africa. His conviction in that regard has been one of the decisive reasons for his *not* joining the military training of the ANC. According to Joseph nobody ever forced him to actively join the armed struggle.

As far as the political ideology of the ANC was concerned, Joseph has had no reservations about accepting it. At no stage of his time in exile did he feel he was being politically 'brainwashed'. Having a strong historical interest himself Joseph rather appreciated the alternative interpretation of events before and after the introduction of apartheid by the ruling White minority. However, in terms of the Marxist and socialist approach the ANC entertained for so many years, especially with regard to economic issues, Joseph has altered his point of view.

'Well, on the part of Marxism, for a long time, it's about 70 years now, the Soviet Union has been disintegrating. Not because Marxism is wrong as such, but they used

the wrong methods to achieve their goals through the means of Marxism or the Marxist theory. So in a way it has failed and these politics have proved to be ineffective. The ANC must be aware of this. I don't think Marxism is applicable to our society today. I don't think it is proper any more. I favour a mixed economy, like the free-market economy. But we must be careful, because there are still too many imbalances between Black and White. The differences between poor and rich are still too great. The state controls us now, and if we have a state-controlled socialism like in the Soviet Union, we cannot alter the imbalances. I rather prefer a mixed economy. If we do it right we can solve our problems and imbalances.'

During his nearly nine years in exile Joseph had to make many personal sacrifices. To keep up with his duties as a Political Commissar and teacher, he had to give up the hope of studying for a law degree. Furthermore, being away from home and family had caused him a lot of anxiety about their safety and wellbeing. But to him, his options were clear and could not be changed. To dismiss his political duties and to go home was out of the question. Not even his strong affection for his father's church could vanquish his desire to devote himself to the aims and politics of the ANC.

'I had to follow the rules of my organisation, because I joined it solely for its political standpoints. I knew that one day, I will come back (to Kwa Mashu). I couldn't just change the reality of history and put it the other way around -just because I felt I should go home. Truly, I didn't grieve that much over my being in exile and not being at home. For me, it was just a question of accepting the situation as it was.'

Looking back at his time in exile Joseph reckoned that it had an impact on his personality and that it contributed to his maturity. The spectrum of his political and social awareness had widened and given him the tenacity to systematically pursue his personal goals. In November 1991 Joseph and other fellow ANC-exiles in Tanzania had been granted indemnity by the South African government and, supervised by United Nations officials, were repatriated.

'To me, coming home was an opportunity for a new start in my life. I wanted to move on and utilize my life-experience. I wanted to go on and do my studies. I was hungry for that. That was my mission when I came back to South Africa.

So when I came home, it was a superb experience for me. After almost 10 years. I could have gone to Switzerland, I could have studied there. Some of the other exiles did that, they went to Switzerland, but I decided to go home. I was very excited, and

all the members of the family were excited. They were all in good health, I was glad to see them like this after all these years. They made a big party for me on the 14th of December. It was a very good experience coming home.

But when I looked at the way the political reforms proceeded I was a bit sceptical. It is not that I am not a thankful person, but the changes are only on paper. De Klerk has just removed these apartheid laws in writing, but nothing has taken place, really. He must go back to the man in the street, he must educate his constituencies and say: "This is wrong (apartheid), let's live *together!*"

During his first weeks back in Kwa Mashu Joseph also remained very cautious about contacting other people. He wanted to make sure that his political past would not hamper his new future at home.

'I had to take it easy. I had to learn and see what is going on around here. When I came in November, I couldn't visit many people because of security reasons. I could only go to people whom I knew would not do harm to me. To people, for instance, who knew that I was the son of Siphon (Vilakazi). My parents felt that it was not wise at the moment, and secondly, I had to wait for people to come and prove themselves whether they welcome me or not. It is only now, after three, four months, that I begin to feel free.

One of the first things I did was going back to my father's church. I must say they welcomed me very positively. They did not ask me about my past. In fact, they donated an amount of about R 137. They collected all that money for me to make it easier to start new here. Unfortunately, we could not talk that first time. They asked me to talk to them, but matters were pressing, they had to go to their home, because it was already three o'clock in the morning. One day I will have to talk to them, and explain why I went away and why I stayed with the ANC.

I think they accepted me back. They know that I can't forsake my religious traditions. I grew up in the church, and they appreciated this.'

Joseph did not even rule out the possibility of taking up a leadership position in his church. Though he was not his father's eldest son, he would be prepared to become a church-leader should his father choose him as his successor. Yet, at present, Joseph is convinced that,

'in order to make a contribution to my church and my country and the process of democratisation, I have to finish my University first. I am still in the process of analysing things, but I started this February (1992) to study History, English, Social Anthropology and Zulu. I would like to become a teacher or even lecturer when I

finish. So when I have this training I hope that I can help my church as well. I could help them to be more aware of the things around them, the changes and the politics.'

Reflecting on the last ten years, Joseph does not regret the steps he had taken. He feels it had been necessary for him to get actively involved in the process of democratisation in South Africa, even at the cost of living in exile and putting his Zionist ethics at risk. With regard to the latter, he is convinced that political quiescence is not enough to dismantle the apartheid structures.

'The only thing that helps is more education and more political awareness. With that we Black South Africans and also the Zionists can improve the imbalances and disadvantages. This is where I see my biggest contribution in the church. I like to help them with the education, because the Zionists are also very much against the detrimental effects of apartheid politics.'

Joseph Vilakazi's life history turns out to be a case of extreme contrasts. On the one hand, his Zionist upbringing and religious persuasion was not strong enough to prevent him from getting actively engaged in political activities. His personal disappointment and frustration about social and political inadequacies were too overpowering to be tamed within his Zionist community. At times his desire for political liberation even justified the military and violent actions of his organisation. On the other hand, Joseph held on to this Zionist identity, and his religious conviction gave him the strength to resist being involved in violent operations himself. In fact, his ties to Zionism remained so intense that he had no problem in adjusting himself again to the congregation he left over nine years ago. As a result, his outlook on the future of South Africa appears to be an amalgam of his political experience - which furnished him with the ability to look at the present political situation from a wider perspective - and traditional Zionist values. The emphasis here was on mutual respect and peaceful democratisation.

'Right now, I can't be pessimistic. I am optimistic. Things will change for the better. Although, De Klerk has a lot of work to do. He must convince his people that apartheid has expired, and there must be truth to it. There is no turning back! We must all live together. Right at this moment there is fear and uncertainty. Many Blacks have not learnt to stay or communicate with White people. Because, apartheid

is not just a political thing. It is what you, as a black person, see and feel. Therefore, I believe it is right to prove to White people what types of persons we are.

Education is the first thing to be changed, because it affects each and every person in South Africa. Then we will have to move to values. For example, some people may feel that they can't stay with a White person, because he will look down upon them. For me that doesn't need to be. We must struggle until it vanishes. Thus, if it was for me, equality would be protected by the law, since it was oppression that prevented people to respond positively when they met persons of an other race. Then we need to change the economy of this country, that is altering the imbalances. People have got to *live* and not just to survive. Some people wake up in the morning and go to work, because they want to survive. This is not the case. They must *live* and not merely survive with almost nothing in their hands. These are the things I believe in.'

8.1.2. The Case of Claytus Mbonambi.

Of all the young Zionists I met, Claytus had perhaps been the most disillusioned of anti-government characters. The 22 year old matriculant, who worked as a bricklayer to bridge the time until he could go to college, was an ardent member of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). When I first visited his home, only a few items indicated that this was the house of a Zionist family. Instead of Zionist insignia, e.g. staves and flags, or religious pictures, which I had seen in most Zionist households, Claytus' home was decorated with various political and anti-apartheid posters. This came even more as a surprise to me, for his father was a respected Zionist leader.

Until he reached his late teens Claytus has been a young and conservative church member with leadership aspirations. At the height of the political violence in Natal during the late 1980's, however, Claytus had been introduced to the policies of the BCM by fellow high-school pupils.

'In the beginning I asked them to leave me alone. I didn't want to have anything to do with it. I also didn't really know who the BCM was. I mean, you hear stories, and people talk. But you never really know what they are all about. Then I got hold of some of their literature. Some guys at school were handing them out. I took the literature home, and had a good look at it. Then I realised that it explained the whole

philosophy of this organisation. It became clear to me that, as a member of the Black community, which is disadvantaged, I could only benefit from the unity of an anti-apartheid movement such as the BCM. What I read appealed to me. I felt that I have to join them.'

At this stage he saw nothing wrong about being a Zionist and simultaneously a member of a banned political movement. Claytus reasoned that, as an individual,

'one would have the right to experience and pursue political aspirations. I just could no longer stand back and see all these injustices happen. Even my father, he approved of that. It took him a while, though. In the beginning he did not like it, he was reluctant to allow me to join the BCM. But then he said that if I keep the politics out of the church, it was okay for me to join. As long as I did not come to church with it.'

Claytus' father, as I was to learn from one of my interpreters, was an ANC sympathizer, and therefore acknowledged his son's aspirations. However, he did not approve of the BCM policies which suggested the use of violent operations to bring about democracy in South Africa. Yet, Claytus' father also felt he had to make this concession in order not to lose his son entirely to the political cause.

Claytus, on the other hand, was determined to keep both his political and religious commitment apart.

'What I can say is that I do not try to recruit other Zionists to join in. I try and keep the church away from this. But occasionally I do have discussions about the political structures in South Africa with other youngsters in our church. This cannot be avoided, because it is true that the political events in this country affect everybody in the Black community. So it also affects the members of our church. I can talk to my peers, but I do not try to convince them to join the BCM. If they want to join they must do it of their own free will. I do not press them to do it. I try, by all means, to keep the politics out of the church.'

His statement was certainly due to the fact that his father had already considered him as his successor to be one of the church leaders. He accordingly admitted that he was keen to take

over this responsibility in the future. However, in the light of his strong political ambition there can be little doubt that Claytus will inevitably encounter a tremendous conflict of priorities and interests.

That this is a likely outcome, becomes apparent when we take Claytus' political motivation and bitterness into account. The main target of his criticism was the South African government. Claytus had no doubt that the ruling White minority has been the cause of all injustices and inadequacies that Black South Africans have had to face. Even the recent promises and actions of the National Party had been to no avail.

'I am definitively convinced that the De Klerk government has merely hoodwinked the Black people by providing political changes, whereas all they have provided turns out to be just a cosmetic change. The ordinary people want to see improvement of their standard of living. Mr. De Klerk and his government, on the other hand, seems to be more interested in retaining political control in the hands of the White people. Who should be satisfied if the pockets are still empty? The removal of such laws as the Group Areas Act cannot be called a political milestone, since very few Black people can take advantage of this, because of their low economic strength. Mr. De Klerk and his cabinet want to be referees *and* players at the same time. This is impossible when it comes to talking about dismantling apartheid laws.'

Because of these factors, Claytus stressed that he was adamantly opposed to further negotiations. A mutual basis could only be created if, above all, the land is returned to its rightful owners.

Claytus remained rather reluctant and somewhat ambiguous when he was confronted with the question of how to achieve his and the BMC's demands. After a time of consideration he implied the use of continuous military struggle.

'Something has to be done. Nothing changes for us. So we have to continue the armed struggle. Even if it means that we Blacks have to use stones as an African bullet in the absence of arms.'

In times where the struggle against apartheid and rival political factions is commonly fought with submachine guns, pistols, bombs and hand-grenades, Claytus' referral to the use of

stones as an 'African bullet' instead of firearms may seem a little odd. Though he did not elaborate further on this subject, to me, his statement indicates the following. To begin with, the use of stones may satisfy the need of retaliating against oppressive forces with force, without however the probability of killing somebody. That is to say that the use of stones is more likely to cause damage to public institutions (e.g. houses or police stations) and vehicles, rather than individual lives. This would, at least to some extent, mitigate the infringement of Zionist ethics with regard to the use of physical violence. In my opinion it is more likely, however, that the use of stones is a deliberate, though at times desperate, attempt to humiliate and embarrass the oppressing forces who, with all their high-quality machinery and weapons, do not succeed in subduing the young and virtually unarmed protesters for political freedom.

Claytus hastened to justify his implications of the armed struggle by comparing the State President with a person who had forcibly taken away another person's jacket.

'So when he has done that, should the person he has taken the jacket from therefore meekly ask for its return? Should a person when this happened to him not resort to violence in order to recover his property? I think you must fight for what is rightfully yours, if somebody has taken it away. To me the jacket represents the land which rightfully belongs to us Black South Africans. And when you consider the situation today, as it is, we still have to fight to get it back.'

Altogether, the White government had not done enough to deserve any credit, for Blacks would still struggle for their education and economic betterment. The inequality in South Africa, and the inadequacies of the social environment remained too great for an African to just sit there in apathy. Consequently, unless there were some recognizable and dramatic changes in the government's policies, Claytus would continue to support the BCM's ideology of physical confrontation, instead of peaceful negotiations. He refused, however, to state whether or not he would take an active part in violent operations.

As far as his church was concerned, Claytus maintained that Zionists would find themselves in a difficult situation because of their low-class image.

'It is difficult, because the Zionists, by their image, feel inferior. Also the leadership of the Zionists, they are illiterate and conservative and old, and normally distance themselves from open politics. This does not necessarily mean that we Zionists are unaware of what is going on in the community. Especially since politics nowadays involves the loss of life, as you know. But because of the conservatism and the control the leadership exercises in the congregation (i.e. the strict maintenance of Zionist boundaries), there is no possibility of open politics.

However, the worst mistake that people make is to take the Zionists for granted. This is wrong because the moment a Zionist discusses a work situation and says "Foreman X. is a racist", shows that politics is a part of the game. The sheer presence of such racism is due to apartheid and Zionists understand politics. So, yes, some of our members may be members of a political group or maybe even a trade union. But this is never allowed to affect the running of the church. They must keep it for themselves when they come here.'

With regard to the younger members of his congregation, Claytus maintained that the conservatism of the leadership made it particularly difficult for a youngster to participate in politics openly.

'But the leadership believes that it is still in control, because even when the youth gathers for some discussion, politics is always taboo. So the youth does not raise these issues in church, and the leaders think they are in control. However, the youth *does* get involved in politics outside the church. What I mean is that the involvement can be two ways. I can be direct or indirect. What I mean by direct is that a youth volunteers for a membership in any political party. With indirect I mean that, because a youngster stays in an area that is politically demarcated (i.e. a stronghold of either the ANC or Inkatha). In that case a youngster can hardly declare neutrality. They simply need to take sides, they have no choice.

When the violence was at its worst here in Natal, we did not have stories of our young people being involved in political activities. But that does not mean that our youth is not involved in their individual capacities. I think they were rather hiding their involvement and sympathies from the church. However, I cannot remember any of the youngster who left our church just because he or she wanted to join a political movement. Some, as they grow up and start working, they just stop coming to church. And when you ask them why, they say they have little time for the church, because of work commitments. Others feel that now they have money, and they can start socialising. Some also fall under the peer influence, and they feel that the Zionists are under their dignity. Of course, it cannot be denied that they may be involved in political or union activities.

However, when we have youth-meetings in our church, politics is never discussed.

In these meetings we are mainly concerned with church matters and how the youth should provide their own input to the church activities. I think that this is alright the way it is. I believe that the youth must be encouraged to fulfil their ambitions in the church, they must go along with our rules and leave the politics out of it. No political propaganda in our church. But apart from that I see no reason why our members should not take a side. Because, you see, we are part of the South African society, and we are all responsible to make a contribution to the process of democratisation.'

Alas, when I asked him as to how he would respond if a Zionist youth or elder should decide to join the political opposition instead (i.e. other than the BCM, the PAC or the ANC), and what effect it might have on the church community, Claytus withheld any comments.

Altogether it appears to me that Claytus' political ambition by far outweighs his religious determination. Moreover, his comments bring to light that he would like Zionists to make a clear political statement, which, at the time being, is not possible because of their conservative and undereducated leadership. The fact that he nevertheless acknowledged the Zionists' apolitical attitude possibly indicates that the prospect of his own leadership role appeals to him. Therefore, Claytus is, I believe, heading towards a dual-leadership position, where he might employ his religious authority to awaken a new political consciousness among Zionists. In what ways and to what extent this may happen remains speculative, for his sole emphasis, at the time of our interviews, was on his political ideals.

8.1.3. The Case of Edward Mtshali.

The 26 year old Edward Mtshali, at present an Electrical Engineering Student in Iowa, USA, has already been introduced in previous chapters. I have also mentioned that Edward no longer belongs to a Zionist church, for he felt that his personal potential and ambitions had been very restricted within the church he grew up. Nevertheless, I would like to discuss briefly Edward's political standpoints, not only because he had subsequently joined the ANC, but also because his ties with Zionism remained strong after he left the church. When I first met Edward, I did not even know that he was once a Zionist. It was a lucky coincidence, at the time of my fieldwork, that the same person who practised Karate with me night after

night, was formerly a committed Zionist. During a casual conversation I told Edward about my research and he was surprised that anybody should be interested in Zionists. We had been friends for some time before that, and after a while Edward agreed to join me on field-trips and act as interpreter when necessary. Many contacts I made during that time I owe to him. But, most of all, it was Edward's insight into Zionism that helped me to comprehend Zionist behaviour, rituals and, with regard to the present political climate, their individual anxieties. Yet, despite the fact that we had become close, Edward kept his political affiliation to himself for most of the time we spent together. Only when I interviewed him personally did he admit to being an active member of the ANC.

'During my youth, when I was still with the church, I was actually not interested in politics at all. It was just that these things were not at all discussed in my church. If you like, I have been protected from such reality, I mean politics. In fact, it didn't even cross my mind to pay any attention to what was going on around me. Sure, I read the newspapers and I watched television. But somehow I was just not interested.

I became more aware of politics once I finished my matric. At that time I left my church, because I couldn't cope with the way the whole thing fenced me in. There was no privacy. But I didn't leave the church because of politics, no. What happened to me was that I did my apprenticeship at the Wentworth (near Durban) hospital. I was learning to become a radiographer. While I was at the hospital, I became aware of the South African Health Workers Congress (SAHWCO), because they had representatives in our hospital. They had meetings in our hospital and all the other hospitals in Durban. I went to one of the meetings and I saw that they were engaged in improving the working situation of health-workers, such as myself. They talked about better social security and payment, and so on. So that appealed to me, and after a while I joined the SAHWCO.

Then one thing came to another. As you probably know, SAHWCO is working closely together with the ANC, I mean today. So when the ANC was unbanned in February 1990, they could openly have their relationship. I was glad that the ANC had been unbanned, and I felt that this was the organisation I would want to join. And that's what I did. And that's how I came to politics.'

Here Edward sensed an opportunity to contribute his abilities and acquired skills as a trained health-worker. Still, a mere membership would not do for Edward, and he subsequently chose to work within the health secretariat of the ANC.

'It was a chance for me, clearly. By joining the health secretariat I felt I could do more than just handing these leaflets around and going to rallies. I could do something hands-on, I could give an input, because I knew the situation. I have worked in a hospital, and I knew what was going on and what the people needed. That gave me a lot of satisfaction, and I was dedicated to work with the ANC for better health plans for our people.'

According to Edward, his Zionist background did not have a hampering influence on his decision. On the contrary: he rather felt that Zionists should free themselves from their reluctance to acknowledge political reality. Thus, as far as he was concerned, Zionists could no longer afford to shun politics completely.

'What I feel is, they should be aware of what is going on outside the church. But, at the same time, they should not get involved in violent acts which are happening around the townships. However, the politics as such, you can't run away from it. We are brought up in a political situation, i.e. we are living in a political situation. How can you run away from it? So, the Zionist stance towards politics is not right at all. They just got to know what is happening!'

Edward explained that everybody,

'including the Zionists has to take a side. You need to take a side, because you need somebody to lean on and rely upon. Nobody can remain in the middle of things. Especially not in times like this where there is all that fighting and killing. One must at least be able to say: "I don't like this, but I would prefer that".

I have seen it all happening, all around me. All this senseless violence in the townships. So when you know that this is going on, you must take a side in order to protect yourself. Because, when the violence erupts, when the killing begins, there is always a danger that you become a victim, too. Nobody cares what you are, what church you go to or what political party you belong to. The violence makes no difference. So everybody has to get together and protect each other, whether you are a Zionist or not.

Through all these years the Zionists have been left alone and avoided, because people always thought of them as a low-class church. But now is the time for political organisations, such as the ANC, to start talking again to the Zionists. They must gain their confidence. On the other side, the Zionists also must be more open. They should be willing to cooperate more and take notice of what is going on around them.'

Edward admitted that the ANC, too, had looked down upon Zionist churches and its members, mostly, as he assumed, because Zionists distanced themselves from political organisations altogether, or because many elders favoured the more traditional ideology of Inkatha. According to Edward, Inkatha had always tried to bring Zulus together, instead of working towards a consensus with Xhosas or Sothos, for example.

'This is why I think that most of the older Zionist people are more affiliated to the Inkatha. But I am not so sure about the Zionist youngsters. The only thing I can say for certain is that none of the two, the ANC or Inkatha, has a big support among the youngsters. But it also depends on where the youngsters live. Like Inkatha, for example. As soon as they establish an area as their stronghold, they go out and try to convince the youth to join them. They want them to support their policies. Whereas the ANC never does that. They don't go out and intimidate the youth. I have never heard of a Zionist youngster who was intimidated by the ANC. However, I cannot say how many youngster of the Zionist churches are really involved in politics.'

Given the opportunity, Edward would have liked to utilize his political affiliation and medical background, in order to help the Zionist community.

'What I have in mind is to bring about a much better sex- and family planning education, especially for the younger church members. As it is, I am aware for a long time now that AIDS is spreading around. Nobody is safe if you don't take good care. It's the same with all these illegitimate children in our community. I could see that in the hospital, the AIDS patients and the young mothers with nowhere to go. They come there, and they even deliver their babies in the corridor. There are too many of them. Zionists must be prepared for these kinds of problems. They need to be informed and prepared. So I think we, the ANC, we have an obligation to share our knowledge with Zionists and the wider community. But I don't know about the Zionist elders. They are usually very conservative and too ashamed to address these issues. It's not so much because the ANC would tell them, it's rather that they are embarrassed. They would never talk about family planning. So we must be very sensitive about these issues.'

Above all, Edward thus implies that, rather than spread political propaganda among Zionists and force them into active participation, the ANC could achieve more recognition by helping and supporting them in fields where they lacked experience and know-how, e.g. education, family planning and legal rights.

The material described above indicates that there are cases of young Zionists who no longer rely on the sanctuary and help of their churches. Particularly the examples of Joseph and Claytus have shown that the political climate in South Africa has more or less forced them to take their own initiatives. Both apparently sensed a kind of helplessness within their church communities, which would only be increased through political neutrality. Frustration and bitterness had become feelings much too strong to be comforted by the unity and support of a Zionist church. Also, their behaviour implies a clear repudiation of the guidance of Zionist leadership. To some extent religious authority has been substituted by political ideology. Moreover, political affiliation provided an opportunity to let off steam¹, both verbally and in the form of active participation. On the other hand, it appears that traditional Zionist ethics remain a strong influence in the way of reasoning and argumentation by these youngsters. What emerged overall, however, is the unanimous verdict that Zionists should become more aware of their political environment; yet not to the extent of actively participating in violent operations, though the latter can be doubted in Claytus' case. His bitterness and readiness to support military operations are bound to challenge his Zionist community, and put its traditional political acquiescence to the test.

What distinguishes these three young men from the majority of Zionists youngsters I met is that they have crossed the boundaries of their church community, each in his own distinctive way. Consequently, the question arises whether there is a noticeable trend among Zionist youngsters to chose politics before Zionism, and in what ways have their religious affiliation and identity been affected by the impact of the present political climate.

8.2. Perceptions of Political Change and Influence.

For South Africa's Black youth, especially since the Soweto disaster in 1976 has become the pivot of political struggle and opposition, young Zionists may be drawn into the centre of political events and their effects. They experience and have to cope with the energy and determination of their township peers. In other words, it is more than likely that Zionist youngsters find themselves at the receiving end of the political circumstances, which have been largely created by their contemporaries. School-boycotts, mass-actions, strikes and

political intimidation have increasingly infiltrated the lives of young Kwa Mashu Zionists. In fact, political issues have become such a part of their day to day routine that they can no longer be politically unaware in a way some of their elders still are.

Encounters of a political character begin virtually each time a young Zionist leaves his home, whether he or she is going to school, to work or to meet friends. That this is often to their disadvantage is shown by the example of Cedric Mkhize. Until the middle of 1990 Cedric, then 18 years old, attended a high school in Clermont, a township approximately 30 minutes by bus from Kwa Mashu (cf. appendix B). In 1989, however, things changed.

'During that year we had a lot of trouble at school. There was a lot of fighting between the pupils and the teachers, because for one thing we didn't have enough books. They just did not arrive. Then some of the pupils were not happy with the way some of the teachers were teaching us. So the pupils decided to demonstrate against this, and many of them stayed away from school. They (pupils) even threatened the teachers, they went after them, and some of them were beaten up. Just like that.

But then the teachers decided: "No, we don't take that any more from you.". Then the teachers organised their own stay-aways. They didn't come to give their classes. We sat there in the class-rooms with no teachers at all. What happened then was that every time the teachers came back, the pupils went on strike. The whole thing came to a stand-still. It was actually a strike. Every day. Sometimes this went on for weeks. When they had a strike I didn't go to school. Because when you go they only harass you and ask you to join. I just stayed at home, I didn't want to get involved in this. I just wanted to go to school and learn.'

Coincidentally the political circumstances had also evoked a strike among the bus drivers at much the same time. Consequently, even had Cedric wanted to go to school, it was doubly impossible to do so.

'I could have taken one of the minibuses. They go from here (Kwa Mashu) to Clermont. But they are more expensive than the normal buses. With the minibus it costs R 12,50 a week, and the normal bus is only about R 8 a week. My parents could not afford that, they said this was too expensive. So when the buses were on strike as well, I just had to stay at home. No school.'

The accumulation of these events, all of them triggered by political frictions, had thus a negative repercussion on Cedric's secondary education.

'In that year (1989), if I remember right, I spent perhaps three months at school. That was all. And when I went for my matric the next year I just wasn't able to cope with it. I wasn't prepared enough to go through with it. But another year at school? And maybe these things started all over again, and my parents would have to pay for it again (school). Then I thought about this and decided that I had to leave school. I never did my matric. But maybe I can go back to it when things calm down.'

At present Cedric is unemployed and depends entirely on the financial support of his family. Unintentionally, he had to pay the price for circumstances he neither initiated nor approved of.

One of the major contributing factors to the tragic political situation in South Africa is definitely racism. A great deal of frustration among Black youth has been evoked by the superior behaviour and arrogance of White and Indian compatriots. With sadness the 20 year old Bella Ncala, for example, recounted her encounter with racism.

'When I finished my matric in 1990, I could not raise the money to go to University. At first I did not find a job either. But then I got one to keep me going. I am now working as a job assistant in a shoe shop in Umgeni Road (Durban). Everyday, I have to get up at 4.30 in the morning to catch the bus which leaves at 5.30 here in Kwa Mashu. My work only starts at 7.30, but there is no later bus. And I end work at five. So I usually come home by about 6.30. It's a long day and a lot of hard work. I am always there for more than nine hours, but we only get 15 minutes for lunch. That is not enough.

The work as such is not difficult, but I am not getting payed well. Can you imagine, I only get R 65 per month! That is all I get, nothing more. And I have to work all that time, and I only have 15 minutes break. So when I take away the R 10 for what the bus costs for the month, I only end up with R 55 for myself. At least it keeps me going, because I cannot ask my parents all the time. They don't have much money for themselves. So I am glad that I can make a little bit.'

However, it was not the poor salary that annoyed Bella most, but the racist attitude of her Indian employers.

'That is actually the worst. They treat all us Blacks with a lot of disrespect. When you look at our working time. This goes only to us Africans. We have to work all the time and have little breaks. All the others who work there, they have tea-breaks in the morning, lunch and a break in the afternoon. We just keep working. And then they treat us like third class citizens. As if we were worth nothing. These Indians stand right in front of me and gossip about me. They think I can't understand. They presume that I am stupid, and that I don't speak English. Well, I just pretend to be stupid. What else can I do? And if I ask them why do you talk about me, they tell me: "No, we didn't talk or scandal about you.". They also call us Kaffirs, and other nasty things! Even in front of customers. This is why many people I know don't go and buy there any more.'

More than once Bella had witnessed that Indian employees had stolen shoes from the shelves. But rather than reporting such incidents, Bella and her fellow African workmates opted to stay out of it.

'We just pretended to see nothing, and kept quiet. If we had said something, they wouldn't believe us. They would have just thrown us out. This is why we kept quiet. I tell you, nobody would have believed us. But I saw with my own eyes that they stole the shoes. In my opinion this is not a good behaviour. These Indians they showed that they don't have any manners. You can be stupid or arrogant, but you have to have manners. If the people don't have manners and don't respect each other, how can they stop all the racism in South Africa?'

Bella's case gives an example of what Black youth have to endure in order to make ends meet. Of course, not every work situation necessarily has the same distressing features as Bella's. But clearly such unrelieved and gratuitous humiliation may understandably lead youngsters to seek a way of redress by means of actions, such as strikes and mass-actions. The other option would be the alternative Bella had chosen: to be acquiescent and to accept discrimination based on racial grounds. However, she can still count on the spiritual support of her Zionist congregation, which, as she stressed, 'really helps me to deal with the problems I have every day.'. Yet, on the other hand, if the situation of continuous racial discrimination does not improve, it might only be a matter of time before more young Zionists look for a more radical way out of their predicaments.

During the period of my fieldwork I learned that, most of the time, young Zionists were not

even given the individual choice as to whether or not they would like to become politically active. I have already discussed how Black youth, Zionists included, are often forced to take sides - depending on the geographical strongholds of any political organisation. Accordingly, intimidation is rife, and young Zionists battle to stand their ground and to defend their religious ethic. At times Zionist parents are approached by representatives of political movements, demanding the participation of their children, particularly that of male youngsters. One Zionist elder remembered such an incident:

'One of our ministers in Kwa Mashu was approached by these people. They belonged to Inkatha, and told him that he must change his political attitude and that it was time he was taking sides. The minister worked in a factory where a lot of these people were employed. They said to him: "Yes, you are a Zionist, but you are living in *our* area. So, if *you* don't want to join us, you have to give us your son!". Only when this minister conducted a funeral service for a deceased Inkatha member did these people leave him and his son alone.'

Another respondent confirmed that, when violence erupted, political factions usually wanted young male Zionists to join them in the fighting.

'It is not that if you are a Zionist, the men who cause this violence leave you alone. They want you to come over to their side. And if you don't, they will fight you. Not that they go particularly for Zionists, but if a warlord says: Every man must be in the field, that includes our young men as well. This is why many of our young men hide and stay away from that particular area.'

Zionist elders and leaders in Kwa Mashu confirmed that they were commonly able to convince the rival political factions of their peaceful intentions. At times they even offered the spiritual help of their churches to emphasise their religious priority, thus 'paying off their duties' to the organisation in a form other than active participation in violence. However, the appeasing control of elders and parents may have no impact when Zionist youngsters experience political intimidation in their peer environment, i.e. at school, youth meetings or social gatherings. Here many young Zionists are immediately drawn into circles of accusations and verbal abuse, as soon as they insist on maintaining political neutrality.

The 16 year old Sibongile Shabalala, for instance, experienced the following when she was approached by other schoolmates.

'One day they came to me and told me to join the COSAS (i.e. the ANC-affiliated Congress of South African Students). But I didn't want to, and I told them that I would not do it. And then they just said that I was with Inkatha, because I would not join them. They actually accused me to be with Inkatha. That is a bad thing, because when people think you belong to somebody else, they come after you. That is what happened to some other girl in our church. They threatened her to beat her up, and that they would come in the night and burn the house of her father down, just because they thought that she was Inkatha. I told these COSAS guys that I was a Zionist, and that I was only taking sides for my church and not them. After that they left me alone.'

A group of Zionist youngsters whom I met after a church meeting described their experiences in the world of political tension. They stated that representatives of both Inkatha and the ANC would resent their devotion to the church.

'They (political organisations) would like us to leave the church and join them instead. They just want to force us to go for them. If you don't go along they first come and call you names. What they usually do is they call us "uKlova". That's a very bad name.'

'uKlova is actually not a Zulu word in that sense.', one non-Zionist informant told me afterwards. 'It is part of the so-called "tsotsi-taal", the language of the thugs. They (thugs) have their own language which is a composition of Zulu, Afrikaans, English and sometimes Xhosa. When they use this secret language, they are able to call other people nasty things, without them knowing what it actually means. Now, "uKlova" commonly stands for "warlord" or "vigilante", and it is a term the ANC comrades have adopted to refer to Inkatha members.'

Interesting to note here is that ANC affiliates are obviously putting Zionists in the same category as Inkatha members, that is, people who conform to government rules, and thus do not participate in stay-aways or other anti-government activities. If verbal intimidation does not work, continued these youngsters,

'they come with eight or more boys and try to force you to join them. Sometimes it comes to the worst. We know that at least once they have beaten up one of our youth, because he refused to go to one of their meetings.'

One girl, who belonged to that group of youngsters, even recalled being warned that she would be punished with the 'necklace' should she continue to refrain from participation ².

'So, if you are not with them when they do something, you are *out*.'

Though nobody put their finger on the real identity of those who harass them in this manner, my respondents' reactions intimated that the perpetrators were predominantly so-called ANC affiliates.

In that regard, the 19 year old Sibusiso Dladla recalled an incident where ANC comrades tried to recruit him.

'They approached me and said that I was living in their area, and because of that I had to join the "street commandoes" (These are street-defence units, organised by ANC youth in the townships in order to defend their strongholds, and to retaliate against political opposition). I told them that I was unable to do it, because I did not want to get involved in the fighting. They run around with pistols and knives, and that means that they are up to no good. It's not good to be with these guys, you only end up in jail or even dead. When I told them that I was a Christian and that Christians did not fight, they laughed at me. But they stopped bothering me then. Maybe they thought that I would change my mind some day. I am glad that I did not join them.'

Not every Zionist youngster I met in the field had been a victim of intimidation and harassment. Nonetheless, as the 28 year old Vusi Xaba confirmed, there is always the peer-pressure to attend meetings of a political kind.

'Whenever there is a meeting or a rally on around here, they come to you and ask you to join them. "You must do this, you owe it to your people", they say. But when you say you don't want to get involved, they get angry. They say: "How can you not go? Why don't you go?". I mean, so far nobody really forced me in that sense, but I can smell the threat in their voices. They are not happy that I don't go there.'

Accordingly, a great number of my young informants pointed out that the 'protection-shield' of Zionist exclusiveness is wearing thin. So far, membership in the church has always had a convincing impact on political recruiters. But the weight of coercion, as I was told, is on the increase.

It becomes obvious that Zionist youngsters are caught in the swirl of political events. The variety of negative consequences i.e. temporary loss of decent education through stay-aways, the encounter of racism outside the township, and, most of all, the pressure of politically active peers - infiltrates the secular life of a young Zionist with a growing force. We must therefore ask, whether young Zionists, in general, can afford to continue being politically neutral, or if they are engaged in a process of ideological transformation.

When I approached them in that regard, perhaps the most striking revelation was that the case studies of Joseph, Claytus and Edward, appear to be an exception, rather than the rule. Free from the presence and influence of their parents, elders and leaders (the conditions under which I could speak to most of them), Zionist youngsters overwhelmingly stressed that their church comes before politics. Moreover, not only did they defend their religious conviction, but they also indicated a clear dislike of those who would question the church and found option the of political commitment attractive. To most of them, the question of whether to participate in or withdraw from political activities was simply rhetorical. Despite the peer-group pressure and the detrimental disadvantages of their socio-economic environment, young Kwa Mashu Zionists commonly displayed a conservatism that matched that of their elders.

Miss Lindiwe Gumede, for example, a young woman in her mid-twenties, considered herself to be a devoted church member. At the time of our interviews she was unemployed with no prospect of work, and had to rely on the financial support of her parents. Under ordinary circumstances her predicament could have caused tremendous frustration and, perhaps, the aspiration to seek a betterment of the situation through political affiliation. But Lindiwe told me otherwise.

'Just because I am unemployed doesn't mean that I have to leave my church and join the politics. What will change? The violence doesn't give me work. I don't go for politics and violence at all. That is why I don't think that our church should change, because we have all the rules, and if you stick to it you will be out of trouble. The others are involved in politics, but us, we are not involve in politics. I can only say to all those youngsters who are involved that they must change. I tell them that they must believe that there is a God. But if you go there in the politics, they are just marching, they will do everything, they don't believe that there is a God. They just believe that there is a Mandela. Mandela is their God for them. But I can tell them that there are no politics in heaven.

Sometimes you have it that some of our youngsters go and join the politics. Maybe you would say that it depends on the person. I feel, however, that a person must leave the politics alone and stick to the church. So, I try to tell them that they must come back to church one day. They mustn't go to the meetings. Maybe you can go to the meetings on one day, but on the other day you must go to church. When they threaten you, you must just go to one meeting and tell them that on one day you must go and pray.'

There were times, however, when Lindiwe herself was threatened with physical punishment, when she refused to attend the meetings of a certain political organisation. For the sake of not being harassed she pursued the following strategy.

'Sometimes, when they come and try to get you out of the church to join them, you have to show them where you belong to. They usually understand if you show them that you are going to the church. They will understand, they leave you. Because if they see that you always go to church they will tell their leaders. Then there is no trouble, because when the leader understands they will leave you alone.'

Thus Lindiwe could avoid any personal harm beyond the occasional verbal intimidation.

Altogether, Lindiwe emphasised that she did not want to 'waste my spare time on politics.

'I am not even interested in taking any sides. I am just taking my Bible. I just read my Bible in my spare time. On Saturday night we always go to the church. You see, as a Zionist, if there is someone making something like a party or like these all-night meetings, all the Zionists come together. We are then there for the whole night. And in the morning we go back home. We just sleep for a few minutes, and a 12 o'clock we are going back to church again until four o'clock. In the afternoon we come back and just sleep. That's what I do in my spare time.'

Political meetings it seems, apart from being a bothersome necessity every now and then, are regarded as unimportant. The principal concern of this young Zionist woman is rather to live up to the standards of her church.

Lindiwe's attitude was shared by other Zionist peers. Some, like the 29 year old Nicholas Hlongwa, even went so far as to suggest harsh measures, should a Zionist youngsters seriously consider a political alternative. From the outset of our meeting Nicholas fervently rejected the idea of his contemporaries or elders being engaged in politics.

'It is the wrong thing to do, and Zionists who do it should be punished by the church! When I am talking about punishment here I mean that they should be expelled from the church right away. Because as a Zionist you cannot be on both sides. You have to make up your mind. Either you go to church or you go with politics. And if there are leaders who support politics and allow their members to join, then they must be punished as well.'

Thereupon I asked him what he would do if any of his family members or best friends joined a political organisation. His reaction was thus:

'I believe that you have to do what the church tells you. If you are with the church you must go along with our rules. That is what I do, I stick to the rules. If somebody from my family would get involved or one of my friends, I would have to turn my back on them. I would try not to listen to them, because what they have in mind is totally wrong. I would tell them that I would never change my mind about that.'

And as far as friendships were concerned, Nicholas believed that, in such a case, they would be at stake - even to the extent that he would cut off a friendship altogether.

'As soon as they would start talking about political issues, I would go away and refuse to talk to them. However, if they want to talk as friends or about the church, then I would talk to them.'

These views are basically confirmed by Michael and Moses, two Zionist youngsters from

Kwa Mashu I met at a countrywide church gathering in Newcastle, northern Natal. Both believed that the church as a whole should not participate in politics. Yet it would often happen that one finds himself in a situation of unrest in the townships. In that case, as Michael and Moses pointed out,

'a lot of neighbours want to find out what political organisation you belong to. If that happens you must avoid the confrontation, and sometimes you are forced to just say that you like this organisation or that organisation. According to our church principles, we may not belong to any party or organisation. But for the sake of your life you just say: Yes, I belong to the Inkatha or the ANC. But deep down you know, I don't belong to this. All our members must therefore always be guided by the word of God, and not the propaganda of politics. Because whatever has to do with politics these days only leads to violence and killings. Many people are dying just because of politics. We Zionists must act properly and stay away from politics, and do what the church preaches.'

Michael and Moses underlined their statements by quoting a part of the Old Testament, where the Israelites had been in conflict with the Philistines.

'They (the Israelites) could only succeed, because God said that he would help those who would help themselves. Therefore, those people who get involved in politics, merely try to run away from God. And this is why they do not get any help from Him. On the other hand, if you stay with the church, it shows that you want to stay with God. Then God can help you with all your problems, because you are there for Him. Those who leave and turn their backs on the church, they must realise that Zionism is *with* the people. We are doing just what Jesus Christ did. We go out and help people and we care for them, no matter where they come from. That is what Jesus did, and we follow him in that way. The political groups don't do that. They are not with the people.'

The evident emphasis on Christian history and ethics was also prominent among those who completely rejected any form of rapprochement to politics. Hence argued the 21 year old Kevin Dladla:

'No I don't think Zionists should take any sides in politics. The church is only there to praise God and spread His word, nothing else. The church should therefore not get involved. This is why I do not participate in politics, and never sympathize for anyone. Because the only person that gives peace in the world is God. If we want

peace we have to follow His words, and not that of political parties.’.

The 30 year old Absalom Ndlovu, who worked as a baker in Pinetown, near Durban, stressed the aspect that Zionists should always remember their Christian heritage.

’As far as I am concerned, our church members must not become politically active. They should not even think about taking sides. They have to be totally out ! In my point of view, when you take part in politics you have moved from light to darkness. If you have chosen Christianity as your religion, then you are supposed to follow that way. The only thing you have to do is to concentrate on your God. Otherwise you are in the dark.

I am actually very concerned, because I know that there are Zionist elders and even ministers, who joined a party. That is a bad thing. It is completely against our rules, and it gives a very bad example to the youth in our churches. How can these elders expect that their youngsters stay out of politics, when they go out and do it themselves?’

Nevertheless, there are those youngsters who, although initially opposed to active participation in politics, maintain that being politically conscious is necessary for a Zionist in the present situation. This was particularly evident among those with a considerably higher education, e.g. scholars or students. Rather than their unemployed or lesser educated peers who work on construction sites or as drivers, Zionist high-school pupils and students are in the centre of an environment where so many political ideas and activities are designed and executed, namely at schools and universities. This has undoubtedly led to a wider, if somewhat unintentional, political awareness.

Thus, the pupil Wesley Gwala, aged 19, stressed that

’initially, politics and church just don’t go together. But if you look at it from this side, you see that the ongoing violence is far too threatening for Zionists not to realise the political dimension of it. So I believe that it is important that Zionists should at least be aware of what exactly is going on in the struggle. They must know how politics and the struggle can affect them.’.

Wesley subsequently confided to me that he was sympathetic towards the ANC.

'I would definitely go for them. They really appeal to me, because I know that they are for equal opportunities and democracy. That is what I like about them. But I would not join the ANC. Once you are an active member, you are in danger of getting involved in all the unrest. It is actually not so important to join the ANC, but I must be able to make my own choice. If I like the ANC I want to have the freedom to say so. And if I don't like Inkatha, I must be able to express my mind in that regard.'

His opinion was largely supported by the matriculants Sibongile and Nkululeko Msomi. Both maintained that Zionists ought to start to talk out against the injustices in South African society. If at all possible Zionist leaders should address the White government and point out the desperate economic situation of their churches. The two sisters expressed their hope that the churches could thus count on financial assistance which is needed to support the community and to erect church buildings. They drew a line, however, when it came to active political participation.

'If there are Zionists who want to join a demonstration, for instance, then they must do so as a private person. They should not go there as a Zionist. They should not go there wearing their uniforms. But the best is that the Zionists just concentrate on the church and our religion. We must leave the execution of political commands to others.'

Daniel Madlala, a 25 year old high-school teacher, summarized his viewpoint as follows:

'I don't know how other Zionists feel, but I personally feel that we don't need to be actively involved in politics. But we have to be aware of what is happening. I mean, you can't tell me, we are pulling out of everything, just because we are going to a church service. So, why are people not ready to realize what is happening around them? Not that they have to take part, but must know what is taking place in today's political situation!'

Daniel was certain that it would help him to recognize the political circumstances. Thus he would be able to determine which political organisation was at least *trying* to improve the

social and economical environment of Black South Africans. And although he had no intention of joining either Inkatha or the ANC, Daniel pointed out that

'I would give my vote to the party that can offer me the best and most adequate solution to all our problems.'

Young Zionists in Kwa Mashu commonly stated that they felt inclined to exercise their right to vote when it came to a general election. But, just like the majority of their elders, those who would go and vote generally refused to declare the party of their choice. The information I usually got in that regard were answers such as 'I don't know', 'I think this is my business', 'I don't feel happy to tell you' and 'I really wouldn't know who to vote for'. It thus was rare for a youth to admit openly that he or she was in favour of the ANC, for example. While there can be no certainty as to how Zionist youngsters will eventually vote, nevertheless on the basis of the close links that I established with so many of them, it can be reasonably safely assumed that there is among them a strong affection for the politics of the ANC. I intend to take this point up later towards the end of this chapter, but in the meantime it will pay to take a look at the perceptions of young Zionist leaders, not least because, being placed between young and old in years, they are drawn into the role of intermediary between them, and the youth in particular come to rely on them as trusted advisors.

One of my respondents was the 40 year old Bongani Mthemba. Bongani has been a youth leader in the past, but is currently involved in the process of establishing his own Zionist congregation. So far, more than half of his 30 church members are youngsters between the age of 16 and 30. For the last 20 years Bongani has been employed as a clerical assistant in one of the departments of the University of Natal, Durban.

'Before (i.e. before he pursued his leadership ambitions) I was somehow active in politics, especially on campus we used to come together with students. I used to get involved the guys from NUSAS (National Union of South African Students) and so on. And also in the township as well, but at that time it was a problem because of the Security Police and their activities. On campus, however, I got involved in discussions with the students. And I was writing a lot of protest poetry, which was

then published by NUSAS. But gradually I lost the feeling for it. I am now involved only to the extent of sympathy. I know which organisation I have to sympathise with. But I am also aware that our youngsters, too, can develop these sympathies and political consciousness. The same I had for so many years.'

Stemming from this early experience, his attitude was therefore considerably liberal.

'When it eventually comes to the point that the youngsters want to talk about politics, I will allow them to talk about whatever they like. But when you look at the church as a group, that is a different matter. Because, I mean, lets say my church for example. If I can make my church prominent in the political struggle, people will say: "Oh, that church is involved in politics.". That's not good, that would only harm our status as a church. So this is why I advise all my members, especially the youth, that they keep their political preferences out of the church and to themselves. Otherwise, what will happen is that the members will not feel free to come to the meetings. People will not feel free to come to the church, because that means now their feelings are exposed. Then there will be a division.

However, it is alright when they are aware of what is going on in politics. Because when they are aware, they are able to recognize the complexity and cross-currents of national politics. So when there is an election I would certainly encourage my youngsters to go and give their vote.'

In Bongani's opinion Zionists, rather than striving for political power and influence, should concentrate on achieving economic progress for all, through personal efforts in school and at working places. Because, as he said

'You can give me the vote, but I cannot *eat* the vote. This is why we have to see the economy developing first. However, if there is a chance to achieve a better situation through the vote, I believe that Zionists should not hesitate to make their contribution to the democratic process.'

Above all, it was Bongani's aim to encourage his church youth to get as much education as they could, and to recognize the advantages and disadvantages of their political environment. Thus they would be able to obliterate the negative stigma of Zionism and, at the same time, help and support their conservative elders to overcome the problems they had refused to realise in the past.

Another youth leader, the 38 year old Walter Modiba, basically agreed with Bongani's statements. However, his responsibilities were much greater since he represents the youth of a much larger congregation. Accordingly, his efforts to approach and advise his youngsters in that regard, requires much more energy and determination in order to get through to each and every youngster of his church.

Walter's point of view was that politics is something that concerns everybody.

'This is because we are living together with our brothers and sisters, Zionists and non-Zionists alike.'

Yet, though it is relatively easy to talk about politics, it is that much harder and more dangerous to participate in it.

'We do not want our members and youngsters to stick to politics. Instead, we want them to see that they will not gain anything from it. Because, once they follow politics they will definitely forget about the Bible and the church laws. They will be out of it. Furthermore, there is always the risk that the youngsters develop different political standpoints. They might just favour different political organisations. That is also dangerous, because then we have all these political discussions going on, and people will argue with each other.'

This, as he continued, would certainly be a threat to the unity of the church, which was already doing everything in its power to heal the growing generation gap. In order to forestall such potentially divisive developments, Walter had called on his senior leaders to encourage youngsters to participate more in the church. In this way their minds could be diverted from the temptation of political activism.

'I myself have already proposed to organise some sort of discussion group, where the youngsters can talk about their views of the church. Or maybe even talk about the criticisms about the way we do things here. The main thing is, that our elders give the youth more freedom. They must be able to participate more in sports or any other activities which are promoted in their schools. I am talking about things like theatre groups, art classes or even debating societies. All these things. Because if the elders are more lenient, they will benefit from it. What it means to the youngsters is that

they will then stay off the streets. I also believe that the youth must have more responsibilities within the structures of the church. That means that the church has to create a platform of communication and negotiation between our young and our old members.'

The latter was exactly what Walter expected from all political parties as well:

'Only through peaceful negotiations will the people be able to live together in equality. Zionists can support that process by praying for peace, and giving their votes to establish a constitution which has been elected by everyone.'

While both Bongani Mthemba and Walter Modiba unanimously urge a political awareness, that is knowing what is happening in the political arena, they do not wish this to jeopardise the integrity of a purely religious programme. In other words, they do not want it to amount to a political consciousness, in which political considerations are paramount over all others. Instead, a political awareness should help to realize the full extent of current political circumstances; and thereby contribute to the economic upliftment of the poor, in which Zionists already have a stake. There is thus a merging of interests. Anything beyond political awareness, e.g. active participation, is condemned. A political awareness is also understood by the two youth leaders as a means of keeping the youth under their control, i.e. it is seen as a defensive stratagem which will keep the boundaries intact or at most control and minimise the damaging traffic across it. Altogether, politics is not regarded as a weapon to confront the injustices of the world, but as knowledge which can help youngsters to become more efficient Zionists.

The attitude of many Kwa Mashu Zionist youngsters provides evidence that they are indeed determined to stay out of politics, and to invest more time in education and their religious community. Accordingly, the majority of those who stood on the brink of their professional life, decided to seek employment in areas which would be in accordance with their church ethics. Occupations such as social worker, nurse, teacher or even lawyer, stood on top of the list of desirable jobs. These youngsters unanimously stated that their intention was to help and care for other people (cf. also chapter three).

Here the matriculant Themba may represent the attitude of many of his Zionist peers when he summarizes his decision to study law.

'My aim is to help citizens. In fact, I just want to work hand in hand with our church members. I like to communicate with them in order to save them from the injustices of the law. Because I have realized that there are problems in the township, which cause our church members to leave their homes. They escape to all over the country, just because of the problems we encounter in the townships. As a lawyer I would like to support and advise my church community. Somebody *has* to speak to the magistrates and help Zionists in legal matters.'

Themba's responsible attitude was not unusual among those who decided to stay away from political participation. Instead they elected to serve and invest in their religious community in a way that has proved to be the backbone of a Zionist congregation: with mutual help and care. That young Kwa Mashu Zionists, apart from the cases discussed above, still continue to welcome and appreciate the church's refusal to become actively involved in the South African political process, is further cemented by the fact that I could trace only a few youngsters who had left the church *because* of politics. As I have already shown, the main reasons for Zionist youngsters to leave their church are not of a political nature, but reflect individual conflicts with the strict church rules and the doubt arising with regard to leadership abilities.

8.3. Change or Continuation: A Brief Reflection.

Approaching the end of this chapter we have to ask again, whether a Zionist youngster's religious affiliation outweighs his/her political consciousness or vice versa. At first sight one could maintain that both occurs. However, we have seen that there is more to it than just swapping sides from church to politics, or blindly insisting on retaining the Zionist apolitical attitude. The Church and its youth are fighting their own battle against inadequacies and grievance evoked by a highly explosive political climate. This has created a unique situation for Zionist youngsters regarding the effectiveness of Zionist ethics and exclusiveness upon the extent of their resistance to political participation.

In some cases the church lost out to the individual frustration and bitterness of youngsters, like Joseph Vilakazi and Claytus Mbonambi, for instance. Both conceded that the sanctuary of their religious community could no longer act as an antidote to their political anxieties and, subsequently, political ambitions. But apart from the desire to achieve personal and communal betterment through political means, their active political affiliation certainly provides a dimension which they could not find in their churches. What a Zionist church, as a close-knit society, only appreciates to some extent (seen from a youthful point of view) is promoted in political organisations such as the ANC and BCM (i.e. Black Consciousness Movement). Here individual efforts and commitments are immediately encouraged and recognized, with the prospect of further and greater responsibilities. In other words, political organisations give the opportunity for a new, more individual, identity and leadership opportunities, denied to them in the church. Critical and analytical thinking, as well as translating it into action, is the force that keeps such movements going; whereas, within a Zionist community, a youngster, as I have demonstrated, has to contain his ambitions until such time as he is eligible - by age or marital status - to make a real impact.

To some extent these assumptions also explain the reason why no Zionist youngster I met in Kwa Mashu (and that includes those who are not actively involved) sympathised with or opted for membership of the Inkatha Freedom Party. Inkatha, like many Zionist elders and leaders, sticks very much to tradition, especially when it comes to education and the upbringing of youngsters. Here the term 'respect your elders and leaders' is of critical importance (cf. also Mdluli, 1987:64ff.). Thus, Inkatha was often regarded as an 'old people's' party, whereas the ANC was considered to be an organisation where the driving force is represented by its youthful membership, and not entirely by its older leadership.

However, it must be noted that the politically active youngsters did not cut their religious ties completely and, with one exception, dismissed the idea of forceful change in South Africa. They were anxious to dissuade Zionists from following their example by becoming actively involved in political operations. This can be considered as a clear indication that Zionist political acquiescence is still honoured and that youngsters respect their Zionist religious upbringing. On the other hand, the majority of young Kwa Mashu Zionists refrained from

any active engagement in politics. Though there was an increasing political awareness among them, it falls short of political ambition.

In a climate where a youth is constantly asked to identify himself, whether as ANC/Inkatha affiliate or Zionist, the Zionist youngsters I interviewed and spent time with, have given evidence that they are secure in their religious identity. Their firm religious persuasion and emphasis on Christian values has apparently given them the strength and determination to navigate themselves around the pitfalls of political unrest and intimidation. Moreover, some of them underlined their Zionist identity by trying to convince those in doubt to continue to take refuge in the church, rather than letting themselves be drawn into the abyss of political antagonism. It would be too easy to dismiss their reluctance to join politics as blind obedience of Zionist rules. My impression was that the majority of young Kwa Mashu Zionist informants consciously comprehended and fully supported the religious ethics of their church. Consequently, the social and economic grievances of individuals can be solved only by the communal strength and religious dedication of a Zionist congregation. Despite the restrictive and pinching demands of religious authority, the youngsters have given evidence that their religious affiliation can curb the call to political participation.

To their elders and leaders, as well as to their socio-political environment, this may manifest the future of a church which is renowned for its spiritual support and communal harmony, a quality that is noticeably absent in times of economic helplessness and political turmoil.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. Ironically, this is how Sundkler (1976:308), perhaps too dismissively, characterised Zionism, i.e. as an emotional safety-valve
2. 'Necklaces', commonly used by thugs who operate under the cover of political activists, are old car-tires which have been soaked with petrol. A 'necklace' is then put over the victims head and shoulder, and subsequently set alight. The result is the slow and agonizing death of the victim.

CONCLUSION

It has been established (Williams, 1982:48f; Kiernan, 1984:225ff.) that Zionists situate themselves in a world-view in which they are surrounded by sorcery and by mystical and social disorder. Within their threatened enclave, married men occupy the centre and assume leadership roles, while women operate as recruiters at the margins and as such are more vulnerable to outside infection. Thus the key elements of the dominant operational model are men at the centre, women at the margins and, beyond, the threat of mystical affliction. But a secondary model could be superimposed on this, in which the normative control exercised by male elders at the centre pushes young Zionists towards the margins where they are induced to cross the boundary by the lure of employment, independence and the self-indulgence of the secular world outside.

What has happened since the 1980's is that this secondary model has assumed greater significance for Zionists, without diminishing their emphasis on the first, and this is due to a new situation which has developed on the outside; so that not only must they guard themselves against mystical violence, but they must deal with physical intimidation, violence and death, the lot of every township resident in a highly charged political situation. The political strains exercised from outside upon Zionism take a greater toll upon youngsters at the margins (just as sorcery appears to have greatest effect upon marginalised women). Not only are they subject to strict discipline and deprived of responsibility and status within their congregations, but they come under severe peer pressure to kick over the Zionist traces and become political activists. In the past, Zionists have been able to cope with social disadvantages and with mystical danger by exclusiveness, mutual care and therapeutic ritual, and they have been able to maintain an apolitical stance with relative ease by simply ignoring political matters. But in a climate in which everything is overtly political and in which political violence recognises no boundaries, Zionist political isolation becomes more and more difficult to sustain. In this period of uncertainty, while Zionists try to balance an apolitical conviction against the overwhelming claims of real politics, it is the Zionist youngsters who are at greatest risk and who have become the weakest link in their community.

This situation has evoked a confrontation between elders and youngsters, especially because many Zionist leaders still insist on strict discipline and are at pains to deny their younger followers active participation in their congregations; an activity which, in turn, bears the danger of more youngsters drifting away into the world of politics. Consequently, young and old have been engaged in a negotiation process in order to sort out the growing dissent between them. The result of this process is an unspoken mutual agreement on politics. Both sides have worked out a tacit deal, in which they have reached a compromise (for the time being) regarding what form politics might assume in order to be acceptable to Zionists as a whole. Thus politics was reduced to political awareness, the need to keep in touch with political events and developments. Any other level of engagement in the political field, by common consent continues to be ruled off limits for Zionists. In this way, Zionists in the course of internal negotiations, have reprocessed politics and refashioned it to their own design, by unravelling it and breaking it up into different strands. By separating the different connotations of politics, Zionists gradually weaken the sense of it and make it acceptable to both youngsters and elders.

The first strand which they address is that of politics as a *violent and aggressive competition*. In that sense politics implicates the escalation of destruction and the killings which prevail in Black townships. It is therefore a lethal threat to Zionist individuals and communities. Kwa Mashu Zionists eliminate that strand of politics by putting it aside as being a contradiction of their shared values and an extreme violation of their peace-loving attitude.

There are indeed cases of politically active Zionists who have come very close to participating in aggressive actions in order to defend their political ambitions. It became evident, however, that ultimately they insist on pacifism instead of using force. Bishop Khumalo, for instance, the Inkatha official who purchased a handgun, did so only to protect himself and his family from life-threatening attacks, and not to get involved in political rivalry. Joseph Vilakazi, too, refused to participate in the military side of the armed struggle when he joined the ANC. Both Khumalo and Vilakazi have demonstrated that, even under pressurized circumstances, Zionists do not accept, and in fact condemn, politics as violent competition.

The second strand Zionists separate is that of politics as *party partisanship*. A party allegiance or membership, even if only extending to joining in non-violent activities, naturally induces the taking of sides. Such a condition is also unacceptable to Zionists, because it would introduce division in the church and thereby jeopardize the close-knit character of a Zionist congregation. Additionally, a politically affiliated Zionist is very likely to be displaced from his congregation. This rests on the inevitability of having to spend too much time on political issues, instead of concentrating solely on religious activities. This will subsequently diminish and weaken the required religious commitment.

The third strand excludes partisanship, but identifies politics as an *expression of support*. However, even expressing sympathy for a political party without joining it is considered to be divisive, for it would pit one faction of supporters against another and put the cohesiveness of a congregation at risk. Yet group unity not only generates sharing and mutual support, but is absolutely essential to building up the power for healing and to counteract the threat of sorcery. A split group would merely achieve the opposite and fail to heal and to protect their members from physical and spiritual ailments. Such political sympathies should neither be openly admitted or expressed but should remain tacit and hidden 'in pectore'.

Eventually, Zionists unravel politics into a strand which is acceptable and does not challenge their political quiescence. Having set aside all its negative side-effects, politics is at last acknowledged as *consciousness of current events*. In other words, Zionists deliberately transform politics into knowledge and thereby neutralize it to a very harmless, non-threatening and non-divisive dimension. Cut down to such a weak strand, politics can now be absorbed and consequently used to keep Zionist boundaries intact. At the same time politics as knowledge is the only concession Zionist elders can make to their youth, because it excludes active participation and the taking of sides, and therefore poses no threat to the way Zionists are. It also carries the meaning of dispassionate knowledge - almost scientific and objective, but certainly transcendent of political rivalry.

Furthermore, in absorbing politics in this reduced and muted form, Zionists make a clear statement that politics is subordinate to their rules and values. Having agreed on their social

and religious convictions being dominant, they are now in the position to employ political awareness to their advantage. That this is true is demonstrated by the majority of my respondents who welcome this feature of politics as a means to become even better Zionists. Being aware of current political events will enable them to identify social and economic inadequacies more appropriately, and subsequently assist them in the upliftment of the poor and disadvantaged. Thus, politics is tamed into a neutered form which helps Zionists to boost their goals.

Summing up, it appears that Kwa Mashu Zionists are able to maintain their social boundaries by approaching the intrusion of politics through a broad principle: When something is threatening, one way of extinguishing it is to absorb it. It may have to be domesticated or altered, but the threat can be extinguished by redefining an external problem into an internal resource and consequently absorbing it in that form. It should be added that Zionists are known to have used the same principle in overcoming problems of a different nature. Kiernan (1988) reports that Zulu Zionists successfully eliminated money as an external and damaging agent - which may evoke greed, corruption and dissension among the poor and the financially better off in their congregation - by redistributing and diverting surplus earnings to support and provide for those in need, and, ultimately, to strengthen the structures of their community (457f.; 464).

Finally, looking into the future we must consider the recently announced date of free and open elections for all South Africans, the 27th of April 1994. One can assume that this might change the way Zionists in Kwa Mashu regard and assimilate politics, since they will then have the opportunity to vote. The question is therefore, on what basis will they make their choice or, rather, which side of their identity will they emphasise? Being Zulu and predominantly working-class people, Kwa Mashu Zionists are facing two options, the first being to emphasise their ethnic identity and side with the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Inkatha is reputed to recruit its members and sympathizers on the basis of being Zulu. One of Inkatha's main goals is to uphold and promote Zulu culture and history. Although the party advocates democracy and change, the appeal of Inkatha is in the past, i.e. preserving the status quo and keeping things the way they are. Altogether the IFP lures an electorate

with a rather conservative outlook.

The second option is to vote for the ANC, which is the recognised representative of working-class people. They accentuate equality, deliverance from oppression and educational and social upliftment. By strongly advertising equal opportunity and democracy, the ANC emerges as the more forward looking and progressive organisation. To bring about a better future for all Black South Africans, the ANC is particularly concerned with elevating the grievances of the economic poor.

Since there is evidently a greater coincidence of interest between most Zionists and the ANC, my suggestion is that the majority of Kwa Mashu Zionists will vote for this organisation in South Africa's first general election. Until then, this proposition remains, of course, speculative. I have no doubt, however that, despite the prospect of political change, Zionism will prosper and that Zionist congregations in Kwa Mashu will continue to offer social harmony and spiritual support to cater for the needs and problems of poor urban Africans.

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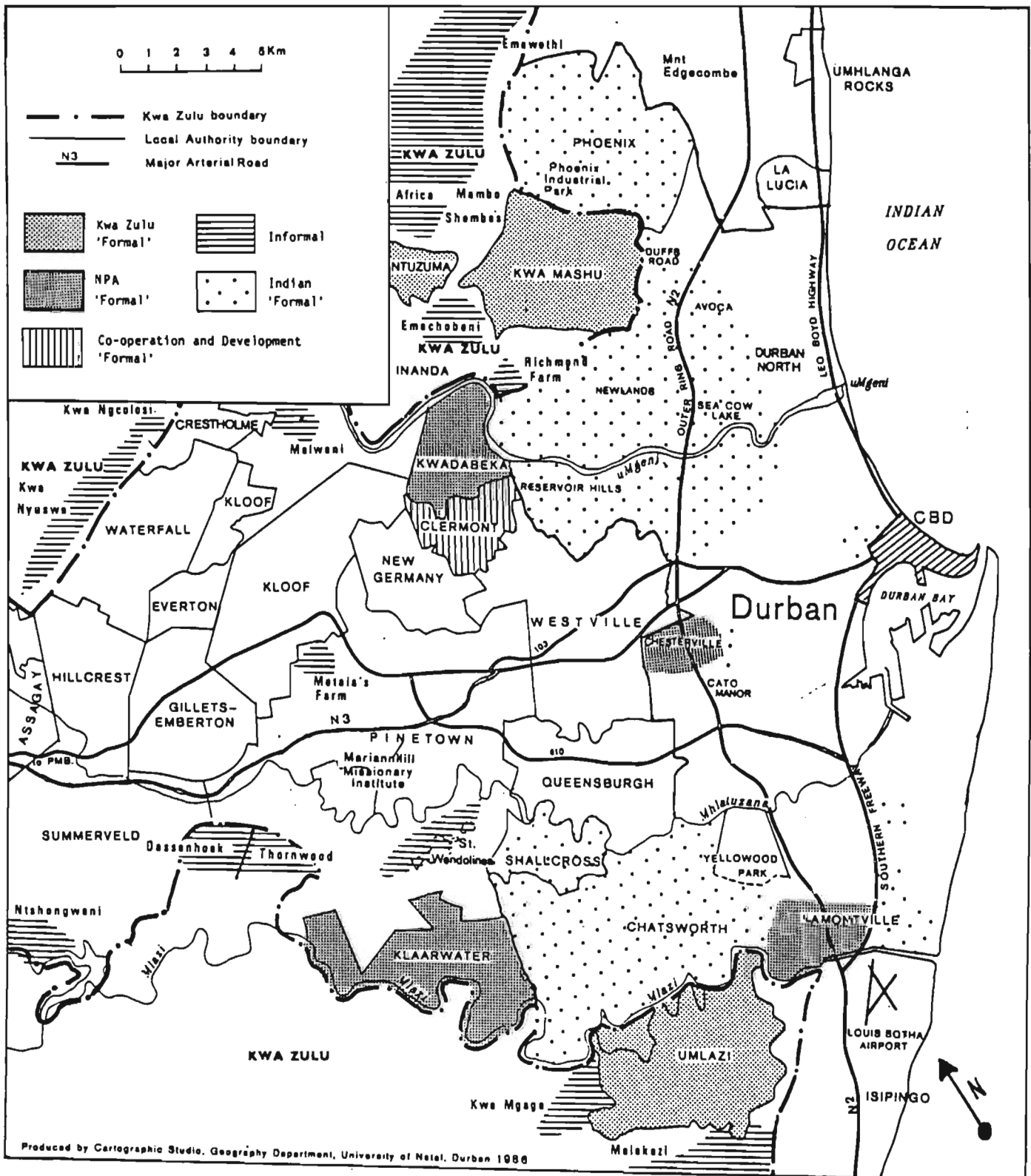
APPENDIX A

CHURCH NAMES AND MEMBERSHIP FIGURES

Below are listed the names and membership figures of the Zionist churches and congregations I visited in Kwa Mashu. The figures do, however, not represent the exact amount of the respective membership, for most Zionist ministers or elders could only provide me with an estimate.

CHURCH NAMES	MALES AND FEMALES OVER 35	MALES AND FEMALES UNDER 35	TOTAL MEMBERSHIP
1. Believers in Christ	70	40	110
2. Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion	77	43	120
3. Christian New Salem Church in Zion	105	25	130
4. Ekuphileni Zion Church	70	25	95
5. Ethiopian Holy Apostolic Church in Zion	35	66	101
6. General Baptist Christian Church in Zion	70	20	90
7. Holy Sabbath Church of God in Zion	75	25	100
8. Isililo Sohlange Congregational Church	40	10	50
9. Jerusalem Christian Church in Zion	50	23	73
10. Ndedelelu Church in Zion	50	15	65
11. Osindisweni Church	16	30	46
12. Sanmaria Church in Zion	45	30	75
13. South African Holy Apostolic Church	95	55	150
14. The Apostolic Jersuaem Church in Zion	27	25	52
15. Umoyamuhle Church in Zion	30	20	50
16. United Congre- gational Church	55	30	85

APPENDIX B



Produced by Cartographic Studio, Geography Department, University of Natal, Durban 1986

APPENDIX C

SUNDAY SERVICE OF ETHIOPIAN HOLY APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN ZION

28-07-1991

(ROOM IN OLD SCHOOL KWAMASHU; D-SECTION)

