

MKHUMBANE OUR HOME

AFRICAN SHANTYTOWN SOCIETY

IN CATO MANOR FARM, 1946-1960

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Preface

Research commenced in 1980 as a Master of Arts thesis. Against my initial intention to research aspects of African rural life in the Natal midlands, the area of research rapidly changed. The stimulus for the present research thesis came from the work of the Killie Campbell oral history projects, which, from the late 1970s through to the early 1980s, were engaged in collecting oral testimony from African residents of Durban and the immediate surrounds.

The research was initially focussed around analysing central and local state attitudes towards African housing in Kwa Mashu. Alongside the increasing academic interest in social history, the value of much of the oral information then being collected served to alter the focus of research. It became clear that it was impossible to study housing in Kwa Mashu without dealing with the African shacklands of Cato Manor Farm; it was indeed necessary to undertake a social history of these shantytowns.

These important changes were mainly due to the encouragement of two researchers involved in the Killie Campbell oral history projects. Ms Deanna Collins first suggested the research topic and compiled a bibliography of key texts on urban history for an as yet unconvinced researcher. Although probably not aware of the implications, during the course of very many tea-time conversations, Mr Colin Shum's often very personal recollections of life in the shacklands served as an immense stimulus and a reminder that the complexities of social relations can make the task of oral historians almost endless.

In 1984 the thesis was re-registered as a Ph.D. under the broad title 'A social history of African life in Cato Manor Farm and Kwa Mashu township, 1946-1972'. The presented thesis is concerned specifically with analysing the history of Mkhumbane shantytown society.

During the course of this research financial assistance was provided both by the Human Sciences Research Council and the University of Natal. In addition, a most generous award from the Urbanization Committee of the University of Natal was of considerable assistance during the later stages of writing. For their technical skills and patient diligence, the support of Mrs Charmaine Trzcinski and the staff of the Trade Union Research Project was of the utmost value.

During the early stages of the research not only was it necessary to begin the task of collecting additional oral information, but to locate and gain access to the relevant municipal files. No matter how liberated particular areas within a city are, no matter how much information can be gleaned from newspapers and available documentation from, say, trade unions and political organizations, the key files are those which reveal the policies of state and capital. In this respect, the only substantial documentation on the central issue of state planning available at the beginning of research were the file sequences on the building of Kwa Mashu which had been photocopied during the course of the Oral History project.

Apart from the municipal files lodged in the Natal Archives Depot and those few files which a somewhat reluctant municipality eventually made available from the municipal Records Room, the main set of official and documentary sources used in this project is derived from the municipal documents held by the

now defunct Port Natal Administration Board. This whole collection is now available on microfilm at the Killie Campbell Africana Library. I am grateful to Mr 'S B' Bourquin, Ms E Law, Mr D McCullouch, Ms Jenni Duggan and Professors Andrew Duminy and Jeffrey Horton for their assistance in making this collection available for wider research.

For their continual willingness to assist in both locating sources and suggesting additional material, by far the greatest thanks must be extended to Ms Anna Cunningham, in charge of the Church of the Province of South Africa collection at the University of the Witwatersrand, and Ms Anita van Gylswyk of the University of South Africa. Their assistance not only broadened the nature of my documentary sources but indirectly added new dimensions to oral interviewing.

For assistance in locating further information thanks must be accorded to the staff of the following libraries and institutions: the E G Malherbe and Killie Campbell libraries of the University of Natal, the municipal Don Africana Library, the municipal Records Room, the Johannesburg and, then existing, Natal branches of the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Natal Archives Depot, Natal Estates, the Institute for Commonwealth Studies, University of London and the British Museum.

In any context, itinerant researchers with clip-boards and tape recorders are neither a familiar nor particularly well-appreciated sight. Difficulties inherent to any such project are immeasurably increased by the nature of township life, my desire to explore often off-beat issues, politics, and always the certainly less public features of shantytown life. For their eagerness to assist thanks are due to those staff members of Kwa Muhle who, despite considerable public curiosity and humour, combed the queues at the labour bureaux in search of informants.

Nevertheless, the greatest assistance came from within Kwa Mashu and the neighbouring residential surrounds. Recalling memories of their lives in the city from a township later excised from Durban, many were to contribute enormously to this research. In this regard, very considerable thanks must be extended to Mr Charles Mbutso, the late Mr Stanford Mtolo and late Mr Ashmon Nene, Mr Thembinkosi Phewa and the late Mrs Phewa and Mr Thomas Shabalala.

However my greatest appreciation of all must certainly go to the very sadly now late 'e-Brush': Mr Charles Khumalo, who from our first rather merry meeting at Mr John Mzame's house, gave to my research his complete enthusiasm with the days of Mkhumbane. Not only eager to talk and to chivy or otherwise encourage an ever broadening circle of informants, Mr Khumalo treated a researcher with that measure of respect which for so long has been denied to those whose lives I sought to study. Through such bonds, informants became friends, interviews became conversations and academic study came to be enhanced by and very much influenced by a more deeper empathy and understanding. It was through such friendships that I came to understand more fully the importance of social history: the 'bottom up' or 'grassroots' approach so long appreciated in academic circles, and the very constraints which daily life places on the lives of those people whom informants were so readily willing to discuss.

In our very conversations lay the roots of a frustration: a concern over the relationship between particular forms of housing and its effect on social structure, notions of class, community, ethnicity and politics

and an eagerness to learn from memory and discussion. Apart from the very correctly growing academic historiography of these very issues, the major issues within this research project have been highly influenced by such questions which the ex-shantytown residents have posed for themselves.

I thus hope not to have romanticized the days in the shacklands. This would be a disservice. Nor, I trust, have I found in various structural analyses the means to either harshly comment upon or depersonalize those stories which were told to me in the belief that there was a history which lay beyond the scope of the existing written texts on South African history.

Hopefully this research must be viewed as an encouragement. There is surely a greater need for considerable reflection on the history made and struggled for by the residents of the shacklands. As was often pointed out during the course of talking to Kwa Mashu residents, the 'children of Kwa Mashu', the generation born in the township, know little about that past so essential to the history of Kwa Mashu. However as many will recall, during the 1980 Kwa Mashu schools boycott many youths blamed their parents for past political failures. Yet during interviews many of these 'children of Kwa Mashu' were listening, often for the first time, to their parents' stories and reflections on life in Mkhumbane. The people of Mkhumbane were constantly endeavouring to comprehend, take advantage of and struggle against established power within the city. For such people, and the generation born in Kwa Mashu, this is a battle that is still very far from over.

Academic studies seem always to have an uneasy relationship with current issues. For young researchers the 1976 Soweto revolt, the growing power of non-racial trade union structures, and events such as the 1980 Kwa Mashu schools boycott, were of profound influence. Yet this was also an intellectually challenging period. Those legitimating strands in post-independence African historiography seeking the roots of modern nationalism and state formation, the desire to assert an 'African voice' and a quest for relevance appeared narrow and inappropriate if not contradictory. Contemporaneously came critical comment on earlier radical structural analyses of South African society. Such work had focussed too greatly on questions of the state and power and on class relations as embodied in the changing nature of the South African state. Along with some substantial analyses of the capitalist labour process came an interest in a social history heavily influenced by developments within marxist socialist history in Britain.

Such concerns produced varying results. Valuable texts on 'peoples' history' dealt less with the exploited and the oppressed than state and capital. However for others, questions of relevance, politics, class and gender became focussed around the very important need to explain and analyse those aspects of life in South Africa which had for so long been ignored. Within such studies lay a very genuine belief in social history and the need to direct intellectual energy towards analysing or explaining the daily lives and struggles of the oppressed and exploited.

And yet in the South Africa of the mid-1980s, such a social history could not escape critical comment. From nascent contemporary political debate and intellectual concern came a desire to reflect more on the problems of class, struggle, resistance, the problems of a structuralized society and socialist transformation. For many the methodology of social historians' had not, in spite of their use of valuable and new sources of evidence, produced those advances in knowledge which come from seeking out the tensions between social

theory, macro-analysis and empirical evidence. For others, social history lacked any notion of political economy. The search for relevance and an 'African voice' has indeed changed.

Over the years of research and writing I have received much intellectual support and friendship. As both research assistant and interpreter and for his careful, reticent but nevertheless firm guidance and wisdom in the ways of township life, Charles Ndlovu has been a loyal companion and masterful researcher. Special thanks must also go to Rowley Arenstein, 'Nattoo' Babenia, 'S B' Bourquin, Andrew Duminy, Doug Hindson, John Morison, Paul la Hausse, Irna Senekal, Ari Sitas and Harold Strachan.

Over the last decade numerous research projects have focussed on important aspects of the history of African life in Durban. For encouraging this work considerable thanks are due to Paul Maylam, who, as my supervisor provided insights into the practicalities of research, an ability to isolate analytic and empirical weaknesses and a very considerable patience and optimism when faced by an unbridled enthusiasm and scorn for deadlines.

During the later periods of this research and through the period of writing I have also been privileged to have benefited from the personal friendship and intellectual incisiveness of Bill Freund, Baruch Hirson, Tom Lodge and Mike Morris. In their various ways, both personal and academic, all have given more to this research than any researcher could have either expected or warranted.

In any research project such as this, there are so many who give both of their time and encouragement and thereby assist in making a lonely and thus socially dislocating task rather more tolerable and meaningful. To those numerous persons who helped in such ways, my profound gratefulness.

Through the period of research and writing I have gained from and tested the seemingly limitless support and encouragement from my parents, Eleanor and Ian Edwards, and Deanna Collins, whom, having suggested the topic, became ever more centrally and unselfishly committed to the personal and academic implications of this research project.

Abbreviations

ANC African National Congress
ANCWL African National Congress Womens' League
ANCYL African National Congress Youth League
CKM Carter and Karis microfilm collection
CMWDB Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board
CPSA Communist Party of South Africa
KCAV Killie Campbell Audio Visual
MNAD Municipal Native Administration Department
NIC Natal Indian Congress
PNAD Port Natal Administration Board
SACTU South African Congress of Trade Unions
SATLC South African Trades and Labour Council
TCF Town Clerk's Files
TUCSA Trade Union Council of South Africa

Glossary

'Cato Manor Farm'

The official title for all the land bordered by the White suburbs of Bellair and Seaview, White residential areas along the Berea Ridge, the Indian residential areas of Sydenham and the African township of Chesterville and the African freehold areas of Chateau and Good Hope Estates.

'Mkhumbane'

The name given by African shantytown residents to the area of densest shack settlement. This was the area which lay each side of Booth Road from the intersection of Booth and Bellair roads up to Chesterville. The name Mkhumbane came from the Mkhumbane stream which flows through the area. The precise reason for and time when the stream became known as the Mkhumbane are not known. However it is of interest to note that the remnants of a pre-Shakan iron foundry and Shakan-period pottery have been located in the area. Furthermore, there is another Mkhumbane river : where the Zulu clan settled in northern Zululand.

With regard to the shantytowns, the term Mkhumbane is often used not only to describe a particular spatial location, but also the specific significance which Africans attach to shack settlements in this particular area. Mkhumbane was not just a place, but a word which evoked and came to symbolize Africans' desire to live permanently in this area unfettered by any unwanted external authority. The difference is probably rather pedantic, but this research uses the word in both ways.

'Cato Manor'

Again ambiguous. Simply an abbreviation of Cato Manor Farm, the term is most popularly used to refer to African shack settlements in the broader area of Cato Manor Farm. However, the shack settlement of Tintown was sometimes also referred to as Cato Manor. Many will also use Mkhumbane and Cato Manor interchangeably.

'Kwa Muhle'

A commonly used term amongst Africans in Durban referring to the municipal Native Administration Department. The term originated in the early years of the twentieth century during the tenure of J S Marwick, Durban's first manager of municipal Native Administration and attempted to express the benign nature of White paternalism and control. The term was soon rejected by A W G Champion who suggested a more appropriate sobriquet should be 'Kwa Mube', the evil place. Marwick successfully sued Champion; Kwa Muhle it remains despite considerable African feeling to the contrary.

Introduction

The study is concerned with the material structures of everyday life and the nature of power in the African shacklands of Cato Manor Farm. Originally owned by George Christopher Cato, the first mayor of Durban, the area of Cato Manor Farm comprised about 4 500 acres of land between the Berea Ridge, the White residential areas of Malvern, Bellair and Westville and the predominantly Indian area of Sydenham. Within this area came also the African freehold areas of Chateau and Good Hope Estates and the municipal African township of Chesterville. By the later 1930s when Cato Manor Farm was incorporated into the city of Durban, most of this land was owned by Indians. By the early 1940s the relative calm and secluded nature of this residential area in which Indian market-gardening activities flourished was somewhat disturbed by the increasing prevalence of African shantytowns. Many Indian landowners became shacklords.

During the war years, Cato Manor Farm was not however the major African shantytown area in the city. The rapidly increasing numbers of African men, women and children who moved into the city during the war years settled not in Cato Manor Farm, but in shack settlements closer to the expanding industrial and commercial areas within the city. Shack settlements appeared close to the city centre, along the Sea Cow Lake and Umgeni roads, and particularly to the south of the city in the Bluff area. However, by the late 1940s very large African shack settlements proliferated in the Cato Manor Farm area. The densest African shantytowns in this area were in what became known as Mkhumbane, the land stretching on either side of Booth Road from the intersection of Booth and Bellair roads up to Chesterville township. 'Not only were these shantytowns more populous than previous African settlements in this area. By the late 1940s, the very nature of shack society in the area had changed.

Amidst a period of steadily rising African proletarian militance throughout the city, the Mkhumbane shack residents became united in the desire to establish and maintain a powerful proletarian sense of communal unity in the shacklands. For the Mkhumbane shack residents of the later 1940s, the focus of struggle was based around gaining permanent legal land rights in Mkhumbane and in gaining improved access to the material and political fruits of the industrializing city in which they considered themselves to be permanently resident. During the later 1940s, the ever-growing shantytown population in Cato Manor Farm was indeed struggling to make their own city society, both materially and imaginatively.

However, during this same period, both capital and state were endeavouring to formulate policies aimed at transforming the nature of African employment and residence in Durban. In some ways, these policies, which aimed in essence to create a new African working class in the city, complemented the already emerging indications of growing class differentiation amongst Durban's African proletariat. Yet many of the principles which underlay state and capitals' attitudes towards Durban's African population, and the very means whereby these parties sought to restructure African life went totally against the desires of Mkhumbane shack residents. For the government, the municipality, local industry and commerce and the African residents of

Mkhumbane, the 1950s were to be a decade of continuous, bitter and violent struggle over the abilities of the various parties to succeed in transforming African shack life in particular ways.

The first substantial analysis of the African shantytowns of Cato Manor Farm appeared in 1952 with the publication of the Durban Housing Survey.¹ This work was part of a large series of detailed academic reports which aimed to provide useful information on various key changes which had occurred within city society. Reports dealt with the relationship between Durban and African reserve areas, the characteristics of Durban's African labour market, trade unionism in Durban, the nature of the local economy and the problems of providing housing for the city's growing population. In many ways the policy suggestions made in much of this work must be viewed as part of a general concern over the need to develop a viable and broad-ranging plan of future city growth. The social engineering policies of the newly elected National Party government were merely one, albeit highly influential, aspect of an increasing concern in White society with the questions of post-war reconstruction and the need for planned economic and social change.

The Durban Housing Survey is however of limited use. Although providing many statistics gleaned from mainly reliable sources and providing vital comparative information on all of Durban's African residential areas, the work lacks any real perspective on the character of the Mkhumbane shack community. Furthermore, being published before the main struggles over future African residence in Mkhumbane really occurred, the work has strictly limited use. For present purposes, the Durban Housing Survey can safely be treated as a primary source.

Amidst the events which saw the handing over of Kwa Mashu to the KwaZulu government in 1975, Maasdorp and Humphreys edited a collection of essays which dealt with the ways in which African shantytown society changed with the relocating of shack-dwellers to the newly built township of Kwa Mashu. Although clearly having access to important municipal files, the work provided little historical perspective on shack life in the area, and in certain cases is uncritical of municipal policy. Nevertheless the work is of immense importance. The work provides seminal statistical data and analysis on the nature of the shantytowns' internal economy, which the authors refer to as the "informal sector". Yet conceptually the work is of restricted use, through too narrow economic focus, an inability to understand shantytown society and an absence of analysis on what is a major theoretical issue: the relationship between state policy, racial segregation and economic growth.

Contemporaneously, Ladlau's research thesis presented an account of the destruction of the shantytowns of Mkhumbane, the 1959 Cato Manor beerhall riots and the 1960 killing of nine policemen in Mkhumbane.³ Making valuable use of much oral information and important municipal files, Ladlau's work is essentially aimed at providing a chronological sequence which is then placed in the context of the increasingly more militant African political activity of the period.

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1. Natal Regional Survey, Additional Report No 2, The Durban Housing Survey, (Pietermaritzburg, 1952).
 2. G Maasdorp and A S B Humphreys, (eds), From Shantytown to Township, (Cape Town, 1975).
 3. L K Ladlau, "The Cato Manor Riots, 1959-1960", (MA thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1975).

Immediately after the Kwa Mashu schools boycott of 1980, Manson published a brief article which attempted to provide a broad analysis of the historical origins of contemporary conflict in Kwa Mashu.⁴ From his own involvement with the Killie Campbell oral history project, Manson's work gained from access to certain key municipal files and much useful oral testimony. A main feature of this work was the stress on the changing nature of Kwa Mashu society and the growing influence of a Kwa Mashu trading class having its origins in the Mkhumbane shantytowns.

The main themes in this present research concern questions of political power and social transformation. This work is not intended to be merely a history of an as yet under-researched but important residential area of Durban. It is important for intellectual enquiry to understand the need to focus on areas and issues so patently lacking any suitable treatment in established historical work. But there is surely more at stake. Much local history does not challenge historiographical practice.⁵

However nor is this work concerned with presenting a social history of Mkhumbane shackland society severed from those broader structural forces and contradictory processes which in central ways have fashioned industrial capitalist growth in South Africa. The character of those sources of evidence so sought after by social historians can often be rather beguiling, with issues of broader political economy left untouched.⁶ All society is structured in ways which require analysis. In the same way as the intentions of state and capital are never far from the minds of the proletariat, so proletarian society is also structured in particular ways. For social history, what is surely the most pressing need is analysis of the inter-relationships between various structures, both material and political.⁷

Yet before these relationships can be analysed, researchers require a clearer idea of the nature of proletarian life. This present research is heavily based on the idea that tape recorders and interview notes are essential tools for historical enquiry. For uncovering the nature of African proletarian life, there can often be few other resources which have the potential to yield such valuable information as can be gained through talking to people. A simple reliance on the written word is insufficient.

Yet oral history is nothing more than another research technique. Within the very practice of oral history does not lie a radical academic outlook which allows 'people', particularly the subjected and oppressed, to speak the truth in ways which allow for enhanced democratic links between intellectuals and subjects.⁸ Interviews are nothing more than conversations between an interviewer influenced by particular views of the past and present and informants whose recollected memories are filtered through similar personal ideas of both

4. A Manson, "From Cato Manor to Kwa Mashu", Reality, March 1981.

5. G McLennan, Marxism and the Methodologies of History, (London, 1981), p 118.

6. For similar comments see W M Freund's book review of B Bozzoli, (ed) Class, Community and Conflict, (Johannesburg, 1987) in Journal of Natal and Zulu History, vol X (1987).

7. For similar analysis see W James, "Materialist history, materialist theory: A response to Charles van Onselen", Social Dynamics, vol 9, no 1 (June 1983).

8. P Thompson, The Voice of the Past, (Oxford, 1982).

past and present. In the same way as documentary sources have particular characteristics, advantages and limitations, so the peculiarities of oral evidence come from the nature of the evidence rather than its supposed political implications.⁹

However orally transmitted evidence does not just provide texture, nuance and empirical detail, with the heavy stuff coming solely from census returns, other documents and computed ratios between, say, fixed capital and machinery, plant and tools. Oral history can provide information on both structure and process as well. Recorded memory can easily discuss social structure. Jokes about male migrant workers from northern Zululand are not merely anecdotal. In the joke are observations about the relationship between city and countryside, characteristics of the city's labour process and perceptions of social distinctions within the proletariat. Similarly the word 'flatirt' is not only used to show how nuclear relationships could change fairly often but alludes to power relations between men and women in the shacklands. Detecting such significance and following up such issues is the task of the interviewer or researcher. Oral history has particular limitations, just as does any other source material, but correct dismissal of oral history's larger political and methodological pretensions must not lead to a derision of this vital source of evidence.

Proletarian life must not merely be understood as being the histories of those organizations, movements and groupings which were important aspects of proletarian life. There must be a larger canvas to proletarian history. Only through an analysis of daily life and work can a clearer perspective of class formation, class struggle, resistance and the often so evident constraints which proletarian life in industrializing environments imposes become apparent. Worlds made by slave owners or mining capitalists are in continual conflict with worlds made by slaves and miners. Similarly, at its most simple, despite a considerable disparity in relative access to power, during the later 1940s and 1950s, state, capital and shack residents were continually in conflict over their various views of how a city society, over which none ever had complete control, could be restructured. In the same way as this conflict produced contradictory forces in relationships between state and capital, racial policy and particular patterns of economic change, so structural features of everyday proletarian life provide the bases for conflicts which are very inter-twined with broader structural changes.¹⁰ It is these conflicts, both within the Mkhumbane shacklands and between the Mkhumbane residents, the state and capital which are the central concern of this research.

9. See McLennan, *Marxism*, p 116-119 and A Portelli, "The peculiarities of oral history", *History workshop*, vol 12 (1981).

10. A Callinicos, *The Making of History*, (Oxford, 1987).

PART ONE

**THE CITY CAN BE TAKEN: POPULISM, THE AFRICAN
PROLETARIAT AND MKHUMBANE SHACKLAND
SOCIETY DURING THE LATE 1940S¹**

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1. An earlier version of this section was presented as "Swing the assegai peacefully? 'New Africa', Mkhumbane, the co-operative movement and attempts to transform Durban society in the late 1940s" at the History Workshop conference, University of the Witwatersrand, February 1987. An edited version of the paper is to be published in P Bonner and T Lodge (eds), Holding Their Own Ground (Witwatersrand University Press, 1989).

Introduction

With the increasing acknowledgement that the 1940s constitute a politically crucial and yet under-researched period, greater attention is currently being devoted towards certain aspects of African city life during the period. Recent analysis has focussed on employment, the changing labour process within a rapidly expanding industrial sector, day-to-day struggles around household and residential issues, women in the city, regional and ethnic differences, class formation, and the nature of various proletarian organizations and movements.

Much of this work is aimed at analysing the character of African political culture in South African cities during the later 1940s, and with the specific reasons why an African working class failed to develop stronger, more effective forms of trade unionism and political organization. Living in a period when the economy was undergoing a period of uncertainty which "brought to a head the effects of structural changes generated at various levels of the economy during the war", the significantly enlarged African proletariat was seemingly incapable of taking advantage of an uncharacteristically indecisive state.¹ Others have maintained that various shantytown movements, millenarian sects and other groupings had succeeded in transforming only certain areas of the urban landscape.

It is generally accepted that the dominant theme in the political culture of such shack settlements was the question of land and housing. Lacking both effective forms of trade union organization and with shack settlements being based around notions of a community unity which could often disguise growing class distinctions, the site of struggle was very much over residence in the city. And yet such communities were unable to defend their territory or gain increased legal rights to city land. Such newly formed communities were "still too fluid, too diverse, too unformed to take advantage of the state's fumbling indecision."² By their very nature, the political culture of such a proletariat was introverted, sectional and transient.

Although probably undervaluing the aims and aspirations of proletarian movements such work has certainly cast doubt on the acceptability of many recognized analyses of African political experience during the later 1940s. It is no longer adequate to assert that during this period the African working classes had, under the influence of the Communist Party of South Africa,³ developed a militant nationalism which radicalized the ANC and consequently placed this latter organization "at the centre of the non-racial liberation movement that has lead the struggle since the early 1950s."⁴ Similarly, it is far too simplistic to ascribe the lack of apparent

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1. D Hindson, "The Pass System and Undifferentiated Labour", paper presented to an African Studies Institute seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, July 1982, p 3.
 2. P Bonner, "Siyawugogha, Siyawugebhola Umblaba ka Maspala: popular struggles in Benoni, 1944-1952", paper presented to an African Studies Institute seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, October 1985, p 1.
 3. J Simons and R Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850 - 1950*, (London, 1983), p 609.
 4. K Luckhardt and B Wall, *Organize or Starve*, (London, 1980), p 72.

political mettle in the proletariat merely to organizational weaknesses within independent African trade unions, divisions within SATLC or state repression. The apparent weaknesses in the political culture of an African proletariat are also not directly related to the dissolution and subsequent banning of the CPSA. It is also incorrect to believe that during the later 1940s, the rejuvenated ANC was able to step "into the gap left by the absence of a mass workers' party and [become] the focus for the nationwide movement of the Black working people."⁵ With regard to the African proletariat in Durban, it is also highly doubtful whether "the two most important developments in African politics during the 1940s were the manner in which both the Congress Youth League and the Communist Party were able to gain influence over the African National Congress."⁶

To study the lives of African proletarians through analysing some of the organizations which claimed influence amongst such persons is insufficient.⁷ The history of the political character of African proletarian consciousness during the later 1940s is concerned with populist movements rather than with highly structured organizations. The proletariat was never able to develop any organizational coherency within their politics, neither having any broadly based linkages between various mass movements and sects nor seeing the need for a political party. Furthermore, the various proletarian movements always lived out an ambivalent and often contradictory relationship with then established political organizations.⁸ During the later 1940s African political organizations in Durban were extremely weak, with such organizations being consistently unsuccessful in establishing any proletarian support basis.

During the later 1940s the ANC in Natal was an extremely weak organization. In 1947 the ANC had only two hundred and twenty-one members in Durban. By 1949 membership in the city had declined to one hundred and forty-seven people.⁹ Champion used the organization as his own "feudal empire".¹⁰ Contemptuous of the needs and views of the African proletariat, Champion sought entrepreneurial success among this very same population.

During the later 1940s, the small local branch of the CYL and the Communist Party, acting indirectly through the Youth League, were to attempt to influence the nature of ANC organization and policy in Durban. However, while there were people on the provincial executive who both realized the faults of Champion's leadership and the increased militancy of the African proletariat, the ANC would remain weakly supported until the later 1950s.¹¹

5. Inyaba ya Basebenzi, (March-May 1984), p 9.

6. T Lodge Black Politics in South Africa since 1945, (Johannesburg, 1983), p 20.

7. For a valuable perspective on this issue see Eric Hobsbawm's comments in the Radical Historian's Organization, Visions of History, (New York, 1983), p 31.

8. See D Mac Rae, "Populism as an Ideology" in G Ionescu and E Gellner (eds), Populism, (London, 1969), p 156 and E Laclau, Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory, (London, 1977), p 150- 151.

9. CKM; reel 3B; 2: DA 19: 30/2, ANC (Natal), annual report, 1947 and 2: DA 19/1:44, ANC (Natal), list of branches-1949.

10. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

11. CKM; reel 3B; 2: DA 19/1: 62/1; ANC (Natal) annual report 1949.

While the Congress Youth League was mainly comprised of teachers and other newly educated young city-dwellers, the organization had managed to sustain contact with and supported many issues important to the city's African proletariat. However this contact was often weak, contradictory, or out of step with proletarian struggles. And the communists had all but abandoned contacts with the ever-diminishing African trade unions.¹² The Party was able to develop often close contacts with various community groupings and became centrally involved in organizing many city-wide struggles. However as with the Youth Leaguers, the Party was never in any position to determine the pace and nature of proletarian struggles within the city.

During the later 1940s the political terrain of proletarian life in Durban lay beyond the reaches of established organizations claiming influence amongst the proletariat. At this time, forged in the day-to-day experiences of the African proletariat came a desire to sustain a political struggle which, while independent of established political organizations, aimed to transform the position of the Durban proletariat.

Although the weakness inherent in the proletarian populism of the later 1940s would soon be manifest, there was clearly both a militancy and an ambition within the politics of the period. Yet this militancy was not the anti-capitalist populism which has often developed amongst an urban poor, particularly those resident in shacklands. The proletarian populism of the later 1940s was based around a struggle to gain increased material wealth and power from the cycle of commercial capital in the city. Commerce and markets were the central features of this struggle. Amongst a proletariat both long resident in the city and newly arrived, fully employed, casually employed, unemployed or desiring to resist full proletarianization, came a desire to reflect on the nature of their experiences of city life. In this developing consciousness lay an acceptance of the process of industrialization but a rejection of the African proletariat's position in the city. Integral to this consciousness was an attempt to understand the dominant morality of the city: why the White citizenry castigated Africans for being unclean, socially reprobate and villainous.

Having a finely tuned ability to define the key characteristics within the dominant ideology, the proletariat became increasingly aware of certain structural features of African life in Durban. It rapidly became clear that certain constraints were deliberately imposed so as to deny Africans access to standards of workplace and residential amenities demanded by White citizens. Furthermore the African influence on civic affairs was restricted in ways which were designed to curb any attempt to transform city life in ways not conducive to the interests of the city's White population.

But these perceptions were not those of a broad African nationalism. Proletarian commentary on the position of Africans the city was imbued with a desire for proletarian struggle which saw the need to reject the excessive influence of an established African elite. Here was a populism based essentially in the commonality of day-to-day proletarian experiences. The proletarian culture of the period revealed a growing belief in notions of ethnic unity, chauvinism and indeed 'Zulu-ism'. These were ideas which related directly to proletarian populism. Although broadly based African nationalist organizations attempted to reflect such a new consciousness, success was very

The aspirations and goals set by the proletariat have been underestimated by current research. In some ways this is understandable. By the early 1950s the failure of attempts to gain increased residential security in the city on terms desired by the proletariat was clear. In other ways the struggles of the proletariat during the later 1940s have been somewhat unfairly judged against the possible political gains which may have ensued from greater industrial unionism. That the struggles were based on a consciousness which accepted the industrializing landscape but failed to develop any notion of trade unionism is clear. This does not nevertheless diminish the ambitious nature of proletarian demands. It was around such struggles that a new society in Mkhumbane developed.

Proletarianization involves a host of issues other than those which surround the creation and maintenance of controls to restrict African power within the process of proletarianization and the nature of employment and remuneration. Recognizing their weakness against established employers and being in many ways totally dependent upon both wages and industrialization in general, proletarian struggle became focussed around residential life and city power. With the various co-operative societies and redistributive networks in the shantytowns came a vision of control over commercial cycles of capital. From these images came an enthusiasm for the development of industrial enterprises for the training and employment of Africans on terms vastly more beneficial than those which prevailed in existing industry and commerce. All of these issues involved both an acceptance of industrialization and a refusal to be subjected to the detrimental forces created by this process. For the African proletariat these struggles had the potential to transform the nature of their lives.

Transforming the character of African proletarianization could also be achieved through gaining more secure residence in the city. From legal rights to property ownership, in the city could easily come a power to outflank the very administrative and legislative means whereby Africans were denied effective power over their employment and wages. From property ownership access to political power appeared that much easier.¹³ The struggle to gain legal ownership rights to land and improved housing was an issue which pervaded shack struggles of the later 1940s.

From these levels of struggle came a critique of existing civic power in the city. From conditional support for elections to the various Advisory Boards came those failures which produced the demands for full and equal representation on the City Council. Confident of their increasing power in the city, such struggles appeared not inappropriate to the city's African proletariat.

Within this new style of proletarian politics, the Mkhumbane shacklands figured large. In many ways Mkhumbane came to symbolize the goals of Durban's African proletariat. Despite not having legal tenure to the land, vast areas of Cato Manor Farm had been occupied by Africans who vociferously maintained both their right to permanent life in the city and a greater share of the material and political benefits produced in the city. Furthermore, the Mkhumbane shacklands lay outside of effective external authority. The Mkhumbane shacklands was a contested urban space in which the residents had moulded a new society. It was this very

13. Such a belief was certainly over optimistic. Constituency and civic politics within the city still remain segregated on racial lines with White control of the City Council.

contested nature of African residence in the area that was to provide the Mkhumbane residents with their greatest advantages. Conscious of the ambivalent attitudes of Indian landowners towards African shack settlement in the area and aware of municipal indecision and weakness, shantytown residents seized the initiative and fashioned a new society.

Dominated by a new proletarian consciousness, Mkhumbane society was based around complex networks of patron-client relationships. From African shacklords or rackrenters, minor entrepreneurs, messianic priests, squatter leaders and other "nobodies" emerged a new leadership stratum.¹⁴ Having either control over or decisive influence over access to material resources, such a new leadership element offered residents a form of protection and guidance in return for money, goods and the services of loyalty and obedience so essential to patronage relationships.¹⁵

Desiring to personally avoid the rigours of full waged employment, but being neither members of the established African urban elite or heirs to a chiefly heritage, such leaders both viewed themselves and were accepted by residents in different ways. Borrowing from the terminology of kinship, leaders were "fathers to their people". Others were the prophets of the Old Testament leading their flock to new land. Shacklords assumed the mantle of 'landlords'. At the apex of this new hierarchy were those known by the thoroughly urban term: these were the "mayors" of Mkhumbane. Claiming to neither kinship nor chiefly tradition, the "mayors" were the most powerful.

The growing power of such persons was often accompanied by some struggles within the shacklands over access to land, housing and other important residential facilities. It was through this very process that the new leaders emerged with the most successful leaders being those who could maintain the loyalty of residents and mobilize against external threats, whether they emanated from elsewhere in Mkhumbane or from outside.

Yet the new society provided a sense of belonging to the shacklands residents. Although the dominant form of social organization in Mkhumbane, the patron-client relationships thrived because of a new ethos: the belief in the need for proletarian unity and the establishment of grassroots structures which would allow residents to both live and struggle within the city there was far more to the structure of Mkhumbane. Indeed this new moral economy became fashioned not merely by the shacklords and other entrepreneurs, but also by others who, whilst of influence, had little control over material resources in the area. It was these persons, many of whom were Zionist priests, who shaped the ideas of a new Zulu-ism that, while employing the images of a past Zulu pride, integrated such traditions onto a sense of proletarian city power. Integral to the creation of a new consciousness came the defining of heresy. For the new Zulu-ism, the ultimate heresy was opposition to the wishes of the ordinary African.

For many African residents of Durban, Mkhumbane shackland society was central to proletarian politics during the later 1940s. Not only had the shack residents occupied land and built houses, but the shacklands sustained an internal redistributive economy and a social structure which allowed the proletarian

14. Interview with Mr H C Sibisi, 28 November 1985.

15. See E Gellner and J Waterbury, (eds), *Patrons and Clients*, (London, 1977).

gain a greater understanding of their own power within Durban. For many Mkhumbane was 'New Africa'. It was only after the January 1949 Riots that the essential weakness of proletarian power within the city, class divisions within the proletariat and the tenuous nature of a shantytown society based in a contested terrain would become clearly evident.

CHAPTER 1

MISS MOUSE GOES SHOPPING : THE SOCIAL ROOTS OF PROLETARIAN CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE CHALLENGE TO ESTABLISHED AUTHORITY

Proletarian Visions of City Life

During the time when Africans were moving into Cato Manor Farm, an invigorating ideology, the feeling of and desire for a 'New Africa', was gaining widespread popularity in Durban. Many of the notions encompassed in this belief found their initial expression in Durban during the 1920s with the growth of the I C U vase Natal. However by the late 1940s, with the growth of a larger militant proletariat, which felt a significant degree of distance from the already established educated elite and frustrations with the structures of the local economy, the feeling for 'New Africa' assumed a new and more vital dimension.

The term 'New Africa' is partly a rubric employed to refer to the proletarian consciousness of the later 1940's. Nevertheless various commentators of the time do refer to the newly proletarianized African as the "New African".¹ The term is also used in co-operative societies, and various informants do remember the militancy of the later 1940s by referring to the 'New Africa'. In 1945 H I E Dhlomo defined 'New African':

This class consists mostly of organized urban workers who are awakening to the issues at stake ... knows where he belongs and what belongs to him; where he is going and how; what he wants and the methods to obtain it... Put briefly and bluntly, he wants a social order in which race, colour or creed will be a badge neither of **privilege** nor of discrimination...²

Of course for Dhlomo and other Youth Leaguers, both aware of the increasing evidence of proletarian assertiveness and anguishing over their own place in the city, it was vital to believe that this 'New African' was "awakening ... to the power of organized intelligently led ... progressive thinking African intellectuals and leaders".³ While the relationship between the proletariat and such leaders was considerably more ambiguous than Dhlomo and others might have desired, it is clear that younger educated and militant Africans had both identified a new force in the proletariat and were referring to this consciousness in terms remarkably similar to those understood and used by the African proletariat.

For Durban's African proletariat the later 1940s was a period full of an optimism created through proletarian struggles to gain increased material and political power. Thomas Shabalala recalls that "That was

1. O Walker Kaffirs are Lively (London, 1949) pp.174-175.

2. T Couzens The New African : A Study of the Life and Work of H I E Dhlomo (Johannesburg, 1985) pp 32-34.

3. Ibid, p 33. Couzens' superb account of trends among young African intellectuals does recognize that their rather more sophisticated but literate perspectives occurred within a vortex of class change but never really analyses similar attitudes that developed in the proletariat.

when we woke up. The war was finished and gone and now we were fighting".⁴ Fighting for what? Charles Khumalo says the proletariat "wanted to tell Champion that we would live in the City Hall! That was what we wanted".⁵

The ideology of the 'New Africa' was created in the factories and the African residential areas.⁶ While it was unable to provide a real stimulus to greater organisation, it was to provide various people with a vitalising new consciousness. In the shantytowns of Cato Manor Farm aspects of the vision of 'New Africa' came to be the dominant legitimising force.⁷ Using language common to many city officials, the Assistant Manager of the Native Administrative Department remarked in 1952:

Two years ago, quite apart from the effects or after effects of the 1949 Riots, Cato Manor established a time bomb in which the mechanism had already started ticking. Officially Cato Manor was a virtual no-mans land. Socially it was a hotbed of prostitution, the sale of liquor and every imaginable vice or illicit undertaking, with only a small number of private welfare bodies to stem the tide.

Administratively it was a nightmare, and perhaps for that reason little, if any, attempt at administration had been made. Politically it was a melting pot for any number of agitators, self-appointed leaders, grafters, cliques and factions.⁸

For many Africans in Durban and elsewhere Mkhumbane was 'New Africa'.⁹

Born and moulded in the proletarian experience in Durban, 'New Africa' was to offer sustenance to people while never attaining the status of a well-developed, literate and coherent ideology. The vision thrived on verbal communication within the proletariat, the vast majority of whom were illiterate. While never solely related to or belonging exclusively to the lower classes, when aspects of the vision appeared in writing they were always incomplete and lacking in the vigour associated with the more verbal images. To many, these literate expressions appeared otiose, quaint or, more importantly, hesitant. The structures of writing both revealed the glaring contradictions in the ideology, and the permanence of the written work failed to express the correct tempo of the vision's attractiveness. Acting within a society undergoing rapid transitions, the African proletariat saw in the verbal essence of the ideology an enduring strength. The ideology thrived on change, and change and redefinition became self-justifying.¹⁰

4. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 28 July 1985.

5. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 26 July 1985.

6. For analysis of the relationship between class and ideology see Lud A "The historiography of everyday life : the personal and the political" in Samuel, R and Stedman Jones, G (eds), Culture, Ideology and Politics (London, 1982).

7. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 July 1983. Mtolo does not, however, use the words 'New Africa'.

8. MNAD; H2-CM, vol. 1, Manager, MNAD - Town Clerk, 31 January 1952.

9. Interview with Mr B Nxasana, 7 May 1986.

10. This aspect of 'New Africa' has been generally ignored. For example, Couzens' work tends to focus too much on the intellectual and literate perceptions and expressions.

Any attempt to encapsulate the vision of 'New Africa' which became such a material force in Africans' lives in the late 1940s should encompass the following points. Firstly, a celebration of the dignity, health and moral standing of the ordinary African family. Africans began to gain a confidence in the legitimacy of their social relations, which became coupled with an awareness of the reasons for their living in dirty and unsatisfactory situations and a polemical attack on the way in which the dominant ideology pervading the city vilified Africans for their general uncleanness. Secondly, the proletariat's drive both to educate itself and allow for the growth of a new proletarian leadership having a notion of political struggle which would be broader and more representative of the ideas of the African proletariat than were the attitudes and tactics of the then established African elite. Thirdly, while militancy continued at the factory floor level, the proletariat became attracted to the intrinsic competitiveness of the market and exchange relations. Africans saw that success in market ventures would allow them to gain increased influence over the city as a whole. Fourthly, the growth of widespread opposition to local and central state structures. Fifthly, a notion of ethnic unity. Finally, a belligerent, vibrant concept of revenge. Revenge was to play a vital role in an ideology that endeavoured to create new institutions and levels of consciousness that would enable Africans to transform their marginalised status in the city.¹¹

During the late 1940s, newspapers aimed at an African readership contained numerous articles which specifically dealt with the need for Africans to develop a feeling of dignity as an initial step towards establishing their own rightful position in Durban. One such story was an allegorical tale about an African woman whom the writer called "Miss Mouse".¹²

Of a quiet but assured disposition, "Miss Mouse" enters a departmental store in the centre of Durban. Desiring to purchase an article, she approaches the White female counter-assistant, smiling in anticipation. Conscious of the implications of such an approach the counter-assistant curtly remarks: "Yes Annie, what do you want?" Acting innocent "Miss Mouse" looks over her shoulder, but sees nobody. She turns again to the counter-assistant and "managed to look surprised". Sensing that the situation was now becoming even more complex, the counter-assistant attempts to regain the initiative: "You! I mean you, Annie!" This strategy backfires as a short "hot" exchange of words takes place. The counter-assistant backs down somewhat, explaining, no doubt in slow intonation, that she did not know the person's real name. Rather than accept this explanation, "Miss Mouse" replies firmly that she wishes only to be served and not to reveal her name or engage in friendly chatter. Furthermore, she continues, she had been christened soon after birth and her name was not "Annie".

This story reveals certain important details about the spirit of the 'New Africa'. The woman is stressing her right as a customer to enter that part of the city which was then the virtual sole domain of

11. S Jacoby, Wild Justice: the Evolution of Revenge, (London, 1983). While there have recently been numerous valuable attempts to revise the conceptual issues which surround the notions of race, class and politics, there have been so few attempts to see in apparently racist strategies a crucial element of revenge which the actors themselves believed to be a progressive force in the growth of nationalism.

12. Ilanga lase Natal, 29 November 1947.

Whites.¹³ The woman is objecting to the 'White city Black city' dichotomy so entrenched in South African urban space. It is important to stress that "Miss Mouse" was not shopping in those areas of the city where Indian-owned trading ventures proliferated, areas where Africans suffered regular abuse of various kinds.¹⁴ The woman's basic belief was in her own dignity. Her strategy, which is the really central focus of the article, is composed of three inter-related themes. Firstly, the militancy is expressed in a polite and assertive fashion with careful note being made of her Christian upbringing. Second, in the confrontation she requires both humour and an intimate empathy with the attitudes and strategies of her opponent, who is in this story a White racist counter-assistant. Third, in the developing situation she has to be both "hot" and decline any offer of apparent peace without having made her point. Here was a "Miss Mouse" who did not scurry into dirty holes at the first sign of danger.

The story alludes to certain themes central to 'New Africa'. The woman is confronting the White city, not that part of the city in which Africans would usually do business. Our hero is a woman, a representative of the city's African women who, as a group, were even more marginalised than were African men. It is also significant that the reader, whether deliberately or unconsciously, is never told anything about "Miss Mouse's" background and social standing. Finally, it is clear that the focus of the article is concerned with purchasing power. However, among the many omissions and silences in the story perhaps the most glaring is the fact that we are never told whether "Miss Mouse" ever succeeded in purchasing her sought after article.

The power of 'New Africa' developed out of the manner in which people in Durban raised and commented upon certain specific grievances in a broad context. In analysing this broad context it is significant that three particular issues were continually discussed. Firstly, Africans' realised that their enthusiastic support for the Allied cause in the Second World War, the so-called 'fight against fascism', had not resulted in any improvement in Africans' general position in South African society.¹⁵ During the war itself many people, including officials of the Communist Party of South Africa,¹⁶ had encouraged Africans to support the war effort, and held out the promise of a post-war South Africa into which Africans would be more completely accepted. By the late 1940s Africans countrywide realised that this expected liberalisation had failed to materialise. While there were many critics of intellectuals who propounded the belief in "the glimmerings of a new dawn for South Africa" as "liberals" clutching at straws,¹⁷ to Africans who supported the war effort the turn of events was a bitter blow.¹⁸

13. Up till that time and indeed even in the 1950s few Africans ever traded in the central city area.

14. Ilanga lase Natal, passim.

15. P Walshe, The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa, (Berkeley, 1970) p.279-281.

16. T Lodge, "Class Conflict, Communal Struggle and Patriotic Unity : the Communist Party of South Africa during the Second World War", University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute seminar, 7 October 1985.

17. E Roux, Time Longer than Rope, (Madison, 1978) p.306.

18. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 June 1985.

Secondly during the late 1940s Africans in Durban endeavoured to sustain the internationalist vision they had developed during the war itself. During the war African workers "could feel the pulse of a new spirit and an involvement in things broader than their own lives".¹⁹ Africans became involved in trade unions and flocked to public meetings thereby developing a "new found vibrance" in the local branch of the Communist Party of South Africa.²⁰ At such meetings the general tone was festive, strong and internationalised, with banners reading "Air Raid Shelters for All", "Death to Fascist Invaders", "Down with Colour Bar", "For a Hundred Percent Trade Unionism", and "Skilled Training for All".²¹

After the war the Communist Party endeavoured to sustain this internationalism, calling for the fight against fascism to continue in the country,²² and focussing on the issue of independence for India. For Africans in Durban the former call was not internationalism at all, but rather a restatement of their long-standing position in society.²³ While there were those who saw in the latter call a protest against colonialism in general,²⁴ the majority of Africans saw the problems of supporting Indian nationalism as only vaguely relevant to their own lives.²⁵

The focus of a new consciousness was centred on an official communication network within the factories, beerhalls, buses and residential areas. Groups either drinking beer, eating lunch or queuing for beer, buses or passes, would talk excitedly about their ideas on events and issues occurring outside the country.²⁶ Apart from local newspapers such information was gleaned from two immediate sources. Firstly, the many African volunteers who had served in the war. Many of these people were only demobilised some years after the war had formally ended, and they entered a local environment eager to listen to any recollections however brief or anecdotal.²⁷ One such story, which is still recounted to this day concerns the harshness of segregation in the Allied armies, and the manner in which Africans captured by the Italians and Germans were settled in the same prisoner-of-war camps as their White captured 'brethren'. One such prisoner-of-war recounts: "It was

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19. I L Edwards, "Recollections : the Communist Party and worker militancy in Durban, early 1940s", South African Labour Bulletin vol 11, (No 4, February-March 1986).
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. R Simons, and J Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa (London, 1984) p.584.
23. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983 and Ilanga lase Natal, 5 June 1948, where it was reported that the election victory of the Nationalists threw 'African issues in Durban' into 'the melting pot again'.
24. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.
25. Ilanga lase Natal, passim.
26. While the significance of such locales and issues within African City life have never been in doubt an analysis of them has been too highly focussed around the issue of space and the local political economy. Furthermore the 'shebeen culture' was only one aspect of social expression in this network. See I Edwards, "Shebeen Queens, Illicit Liquor and the Social Structure of Drinking Dens in Cato Manor", Agenda, 3 (1988) pp.95-6.
27. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

only in prison that we were together. We were now living with the Europeans who had the guns....The Germans treated us all the same - they were always shits."²⁸

The second source of information was the harbour itself. Workers in the vicinity of the harbour were constantly providing the community at large with gossip about which ships were in the harbour, where they came from and what the sailors were talking about. This information not only provided Africans who sought casual employment with firms specialising in maintaining and repairing ships with vital clues as to possible employment,²⁹ but also allowed others to sustain contact with international issues. One such story which is still fondly recalled probably epitomises the type of information that was available. The main elements of this story, which has over time been much embellished but which is almost certainly based on fact is recounted as follows:

This American ship was tied up at 'A' shed. That was where the nongoma dance was.³⁰ It was called the Liberty.³¹ That ship had Negroes - Black people but from America as sailors. Also others - the Europeans called them something funny but they were really Indians.³² Now you see when they went to Durban they would not go to town but come here to Cato Manor. They said that we were brothers. This pleased us and you would entertain these people like kings.³³

The third broad contextual issue which emerged in Durban during the late 1940s was an awareness of the power and force of ethnic and national mobilisation. This often ambiguous awareness was not only the result of the growth of anti-colonialist African nationalist movements elsewhere in Africa,³⁴ and the all too evident indications of Afrikaner nationalism,³⁵ but was also the result of the way in which Durban's White society had altered through the arrival of many post-war immigrants originating from Britain, Italy, Greece and Portugal.³⁶ Africans became struck by the manner in which these people declined to become integrated into White society³⁷ and yet added a vociferous new element to the general level of White racist consciousness.³⁸

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28. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 June 1985.
29. Interview with Mr C S Ndlovu, 2 February 1985.
30. By this time the City Council had set aside a fenced off portion of land adjoining 'A' shed where Nongoma dance teams would entertain travellers alighting from the ships.
31. While the ship was clearly one of those vessels given the generic name "Liberty ships" it is significant that Africans, while possibly mistaking this for the actual name of the vessel concerned, identified with the notion of freedom espoused through these war-time cargo vessels.
32. Lascars.
33. Interview with Mr J Shabalala, 21 June 1985.
34. See Walshe, *African Nationalism*, p 275.
35. *Ilanga lase Natal*, *passim*.
36. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 7 December 1946. In that week 700 families arrived and "Africans were being shuffled around".
37. Interview with Mr O Kunene, 20 October 1983.
38. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 12 May 1985.

Many of these new immigrants managed to exploit segregationist legislation to take over minor trading ventures operated by Indians, while at the same time conducting their business along the same extended family and co-operative lines as did the previous Indian entrepreneur.³⁹ The moral was clear. Here were people who had a concept of ethnic unity and lived out a somewhat ambivalent relationship to the established 'European' community while at the same time being able both to make the dominant racist ideology more vociferous and gain access to a significant degree of economic wealth.

Many of these immigrants settled in the newly opened suburb of Durban North. In the process of entrenching themselves in this area, they managed to convince the City Council to pass a bye-law which restricted African access to the suburb to those who were employed in the area as domestic servants.⁴⁰ This by-law was enforced by the South African Police and the 'cafe owner' at 'Robina Stores bus-stop'.⁴¹ This bus stop was the first bus stop across the Umgeni River in Durban North. All those Africans who did not have letters from employers indicating that they were employed in the area were turned back, often after been given a "hiding".⁴² The residents later altered this arrangement to one where wives, husbands, children and girlfriends of African employees were also given letters of permission.⁴³ The system allowed for a host of iniquitous practices and was regarded with outrage by Africans all over Durban:

It was no bloody good. The madam would give you a letter so you come to visit. If you had that letter then you could stay in the kia over the weekend. But if your girlfriend had not been good, then when you came on Friday afternoon the madam takes the letter from you. "O.K. yes you can stay this weekend, Mary has been good!" You would get some food that night and Saturday night. On Saturday afternoon you would cut the hedge and on Sunday morning you would wash the bosses car nicely. You could only have one boyfriend and the madam chose you. It was hated.⁴⁴

Africans had for long both resented and rejected the highly oppressive nature of urban segregation.⁴⁵ During the later 1940s these feelings developed within the far broader notion of 'New Africa'. Within the images lay the African proletariat's attempts to understand certain key characteristics of city life. This growing reflection on the dominant ideology of the city and a quest for proletarian power came the context of a growing proletarian militancy.

Struggles in the City

In this broad ideological context African workers began to raise a number of particular grievances

39. Interview with Mr R G Wilson, 14 February 1981.

40. Ilanga lase Natal, 27 July 1946.

41. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 14 July 1985.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ilanga lase Natal, 7 December 1946.

and problems : issues that they believed to be indicative of their lowly and impoverished condition. Many of these perceptions may appear to be merely references from a particular period of grievances that have pervaded African life throughout the period of industrialisation and proletarianisation. However, these grievances had a particularly important role in allowing a proletariat suffering increasing economic hardship to relate to issues on levels broader than the merely localised or parochial. Through their vigorous discussions of day-to-day crises, both material and ideological the African proletariat was able to ensure that the vision of a better future be interwoven in their everyday struggles. The process of defining and discussing concrete examples of the way in which the African proletariat lived in the city was to play a vital role in maintaining the level of widespread popular discontent and militancy and in attempting to breach the gap between parochial protest and a wider outlook.

During the war itself the prices of basic foodstuffs had risen dramatically and many Black families were unable to purchase sufficient food.⁴⁶ In 1942, the Smit Committee, which had been appointed to analyse "the social, health and economic conditions of urban natives" referred to a survey concluded amongst African schoolchildren in Durban. This revealed that over 40 per cent of the children were suffering from clinical malnutrition.⁴⁷ After the war the prices of basic foodstuffs rose even more rapidly, the situation being exacerbated by frequent food shortages,⁴⁸ often caused by manufacturers withholding supplies,⁴⁹ and the virtually uncontrolled growth of Black marketeering.⁵⁰ During 1946 there were shortages of tea and rice,⁵¹ while white maize, which was virtually unobtainable, had been supplanted by the inferior yellow maize which was advertised as being a better quality.⁵² The first shipment of white bread flour since 1940 arrived in Durban in 1948.⁵³ While African families had previously preferred to purchase topside cuts of red meat, during the late 1940s such meat was prohibitively expensive with the local abattoir often being unable to supply any to the general public.⁵⁴ Whale meat made an unpopular entrance into the market⁵⁵ with many Black workers preferring to purchase less meat, usually offal,⁵⁶ and increase their consumption of potatoes or putu.⁵⁷ For

46. C Walker, Women and Resistance in South Africa, (London, 1983), p 70.

47. Ibid, p 72.

48. The Guardian, 1 April 1946.

49. Ibid, 26 December 1946.

50. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

51. Ibid.

52. Ilanga lase Natal, 30 November 1946.

53. Ibid, 30 October 1948.

54. Ibid and KCAV; interview with Mr W S Manyathi, 16 September 1980.

55. Ilanga lase Natal, 5 January 1946.

56. KCAV; interview with Mrs A Afrika, 25 September 1980.

57. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1980.

those who were unable to obtain fowls from the various barter markets, fowls were consumed less and less as the price fluctuated around 10s each.⁵⁸

In the light of this evidence it is possible to state that during the late 1940s the dietary and culinary habits of the Black working class had developed to a position where all were purchasing similar food and preparing such food in identical ways.⁵⁹ Indeed there is evidence to suggest that elements of the Indian working class were more impoverished than many African workers. During this period Africans recall that Indian workers would often walk from shack to shack in Mkhumbane selling the "juicy inside leaves of cabbages". One informant recalls :

After work they would be around. Some would have gardens but not many. They were workers and they took the outside leaves for themselves - you know a soup - water and leaves and boil it up with curry. They would offer us the inside for some money or whatever.⁶⁰

With the declining quality and availability of red meat, workers would often purchase large stocks of meat which would then be heavily spiced, dried and stored.⁶¹ In Cato Manor the consumption of spices increased as a "curry factory", Bonzoi Agencies on the corner of Booth and Wiggins Roads, dramatically expanding its scale of operations.⁶²

In this situation many traders operated lucrative Black market enterprises often with the collusion of the manufacturers,⁶³ suppliers or municipal inspectors appointed to curtail such activities.⁶⁴ With bread either unavailable or too costly many workers would purchase bags of mealies from trading ventures such as Harry Thomas & Company, a company that quickly gained infamy for its outrageously high prices.⁶⁵ Many general dealers charged double or more for other basic food. In 1949 it was reported that general dealers often charged 6d for a pound of sugar having a regulated price of 3.5d. Similarly a pound of rice which should have sold for 8.5d would be offered for anything up to 2s.⁶⁶ The prices of soap, tea,⁶⁷ butter⁶⁸ and paraffin⁶⁹ were also extortionate : "we could only buy from these bastards - if you didn't then you could not get".⁷⁰

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58. Ilanga lase Natal, 31 August 1946.
59. CKM; reel 3B 2 : XC9 : 30/84; H S Msimang - Provincial Executive, ANC (Natal Branch), 25 January 1946; UG 19/49, Evidence of H Burrows; and interview with Mrs M B Lavoipierre, 30 January 1981.
60. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985.
61. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 21 April 1985.
62. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 23 June 1985.
63. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.
64. The Guardian, 26 December 1946.
65. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985.
66. UG 19/49 ; Evidence of Mr A Ngobesi.
67. Ilanga lase Natal, 15 February 1947.
68. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.
69. The Guardian, 16 May 1946.
70. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

For Black workers the situation was intolerable. Of the 27 000 African males who were formally employed in commerce and industry in Durban in 1946, 16 000 were employed in either the manufacture or distribution of foodstuffs.⁷¹ Stanford Mtolo, then organizing in the bakeries, offers his recollection: "We were there making food. We could never get it. We had to go elsewhere to find food. People went back to the bundu they were known to receive a thrashing if they were too weak. It was a terrible position".⁷²

Workers also became angered at the manner in which manufacturing concerns reacted to food shortage. A host of patent medicines attempted to attract an African market through the use of adverts like that for 'Feluna Pills', a blood-cleansing medication, which promised to make workers fitter and stronger and thus more acceptable and useful to wives and employers.⁷³ At the same time the two major bakeries were engaged in a publicity war, with Pyott (Natal) Ltd advertising their bread, virtually unobtainable by Africans, by depicting a fully grown lion facing a 'Zulu' warrior armed to the teeth. Their slogan ran "All courageous people eat Pyott's bread - Make sure you have courage".⁷⁴ The use of such ethnic concepts only infuriated.

The City Council acknowledged the grave situation and noted with alarm the way in which both White and Black were becoming increasingly intemperate with the persistent need to stand in long queues waiting for scarce commodities. It was here in these queues that Blacks gained additional first-hand knowledge of White racism and traders' duplicity. When they reached the head of the queue Africans would be ignored until they were willing to pay the Black market price. Charles Khumalo remembers, "They would always say that they had run out of a thing. Then when the madam comes they go to the back and give it to her. So you had to go back and offer double."⁷⁵

White women would often go to the Victoria Street Meat Market where African meat-sellers would eagerly swop "tender steaks" for the "best White bread" leaving Africans "only...the worst". To Black workers who had previously been accustomed to eating good quality meat such practices were iniquitous, particularly as African traders would greet "madam" with "huge smiles" and say "Yes madam!" obsequiously.⁷⁶

Having to sustain themselves in a context that was both degrading and exploitative, many Africans resorted to a form of banditry that turned the whole of the Warwick Avenue, Victoria Street locale into a 'no go' area. Thomas Shabalala recalls:

It was no trouble. There is the madam with her boy in the kitchen suit. Hey they were too scared! You see that was not their area it was ours. But if they caught you on the roads of their houses you were finished. They did not like being seen in the White and red uniforms

71. Ilanga lase Natal, 13 April 1946.

72. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

73. Ilanga lase Natal, 29 June 1946. Significantly, the adverts for the same product appearing in The Guardian were far less offensive.

74. Ibid., 29 June 1946.

75. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985 and Ilanga lase Natal, 5 January 1946.

76. Ibid., 23 August 1947.

amongst us. He would be carrying the meat and vegetables while the madam was pushing all over everybody else. And you would go up and grab from him!⁷⁷

There were however other ways of procuring food. Welfare societies operated food kitchens in the African residential areas and on the roadside in the industrial areas of the city. Such operations, particularly those run by the Toc 'H' society were greatly appreciated. At the Toc 'H' food kitchen in Jacobs Store in Booth Road, Cato Manor, people could enjoy a stew made from meat, potatoes, carrots, onions and cabbage for 6d a dish. Army biscuits were handed out free but an additional amount was charged for a portion of rice.⁷⁸

Many Indian traders appear to have been sympathetic to the plight of workers, with some requesting that the Communist Party assist them in distributing basic foodstuffs at regulated prices.⁷⁹ At many stores Africans recall how they could buy 'special food'. For around 5d workers could get a bowl of meat and vegetable soup and a large chunk of bread or putu.⁸⁰ shops were always full and a hive of activity where any notion of queuing was impossible and long since forgotten. During this period many of the shop-owners changed the names of their enterprises: names such as 'The place where Africans eat' or 'Help to Africans' became more common. Chaotic conditions in the shops could often lead to accusations of over-charging or short-changing. These conflicts were inevitable and cannot merely be ascribed to traders' deliberate duplicity. However these incidents did provide further anti-Indian images which permeated important aspects of Africans daily life.⁸¹

This unfortunate result of the food shortage was perhaps exacerbated by a growing general tendency among Indian store-owners to call their shops names like 'Thandabantu', meaning 'We like Africans', or even more injudiciously, considering the broader militancy then gaining momentum, after well-known Zulu regiments such as the Ngobomakhosi.⁸² Furthermore many of the names appear to have implied that the shops were either places of refuge or, as in some cases, homes' for Africans. When arguments occurred the discussion would often be ended by the store-owner shouting with an ominous air of finality "Fuck off, you think this is your father's place! I own it!". While such remarks and the inevitable "impi" of bouncers, who would pursue the disgruntled customer to the pavements and often beyond, would settle the immediate issue, such events were to provide rich detail for embellished discussion among an African population then asserting their right to live their lives in more acceptable institutional structures.⁸³

In 1946, when the basic food shortage assumed critical proportions, the City Council attempted to alleviate the crisis. While they turned down requests from welfare and political bodies for a City Council

77. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985.

78. Ilanga lase Natal, 25 May 1946.

79. The Guardian, 6 July 1946.

80. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985.

81. Interview with Mrs M B Lavoipierre, 31 January 1981.

82. Ilanga lase Natal, 5 January 1946.

83. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

subsidy on basic foods and refused to support the general working class call for rationing,⁸⁴ the municipality did operate food canteens along Dalton Road where a meat and vegetable soup and a large slice of bread cost only 3d. These proved extremely popular.⁸⁵ The municipality also operated mobile food vans, the first of which began operating in the Dalton Road area in May 1946.⁸⁶ These outlets would distribute basic goods at controlled prices and appear to have been in operation long before the Union Government's Director of Food Supplies and Distribution, appointed in 1946,⁸⁷ had sanctioned Union Government assistance in the distribution of food.⁸⁸

This municipal concern was based not only on the need to supply basic provisions to the city's labour force but also to compel those Africans who were unemployed and dependants of African male labourers to leave the city. The initial idea was to serve and sell products only at the workplace to registered African labourers.⁸⁹ After an outcry the food supply scheme was extended to residential areas,⁹⁰ and the control requiring the production of a labour registration ticket relaxed to the extent that any African male could queue for food.⁹¹ The attempts of African men to place their whole family in the queues, in order both to procure sufficient food and to save the valuable time of the registered employee, failed. Likewise attempts by African women to participate in the food queues failed.⁹²

Amidst the rising popular anger, which saw the non-racial local Durban Housewives' League becoming increasingly militant and assertive,⁹³ Africans began to raid stores and take any available food products.⁹⁴ Workers' concern over the issue of food both revitalised local community groups in the residential areas and led to an extremely well organised general campaign led by the Communist Party of South Africa and the Anti-Segregation Council.⁹⁵ The overall tone of both the community groups and the more general activity was emphatically non-racial, but overtly against the exploitation of the masses.⁹⁶ At the local level Africans became interested in the idea of establishing co-operative societies where food would be purchased in bulk and

34. The Guardian, 11 April 1946.

35. Ilanga lase Natal, 9 February 1946.

36. Ibid, 4 May 1946.

37. Walker, Women and Resistance, pp 71 - 72.

38. Ilanga lase Natal, 13 July 1946.

39. Ibid, 20 April 1946.

40. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

41. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 30 June 1985.

42. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 21 April 1985.

43. The Guardian, 16 May 1946.

44. Ibid, 17 April and 23 May 1946.

45. Interview with Mrs M B Lavoipierre, 31 January 1981 and Mrs H Sibisi, 12 July 1985 and Walker, Women and Resistance, pp 73 - 74.

46. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

then distributed to all members. In May 1946 the Communist Party started organising food raids; which involved entering shops searching for stockpiled products and then promptly redistributing them.⁹⁷ The notion of raiding as a legitimate and justifiable activity gained widespread acceptance.⁹⁸ Forged in the non-racial and egalitarian struggles over food, the tactic would later be the very vehicle through which Africans would express very different emotions.

In the food raids the sturdy small Coke bottle emerged as a potent weapon. With the bottle clutched in one hand, people would warn unsympathetic traders of the fragility of their shop windows.⁹⁹ By January 1949, the real power of the bottle was clearly revealed, with hundreds of shop windows being broken. Billy Nair offers his recollection:

In fact someone - after the riots - in the N.I.C. actually suggested that Coca Cola had distributed the bottles on purpose. When that idea spread, Coca Cola in America actually sent somebody to investigate and threatened to sue anybody who repeated the allegation.¹⁰⁰

During 1946 meetings were held under the auspices of the Anti-Segregation Council in Durban's Red Square. At one such meeting at the centre of the square was a large coffin inscribed with the words "Here lies the grave of the Black marketeer". After this meeting in 1946, which attracted thousands, both Black and White people marched to the traders and took over the stores. Billy Nair recalls the atmosphere:

It was a real peoples' revolt. From the meeting we marched to the Indian Black marketeers. We took their shops over and started food committee. In the shops we would sell at our prices - Party prices. I think that we had all learnt a lesson.¹⁰¹

Many in the Party attempted to develop the food committees into more enduring non-racial worker organisations.¹⁰² However the Party's contact with African communities was too weak; anyway such organisations would probably have been seen by Africans as being in competition with their own grassroots organisations.

With this political activity Africans developed a renewed confidence in their own dignity and power in the city. African women, who already controlled the household budget became centrally involved in many co-operative societies.¹⁰³ The African working class in general became more vociferous in the belief that African

97. Ilanga lase Natal, 18 February 1946.

98. The Guardian, 16 May 1946. This tactic was to spread rapidly to other urban centres, particularly Cape Town. The Guardian, 23 May 1946.

99. Interview with Mrs M B Lavoipierre, 31 January 1981.

100. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

101. Ibid and The Guardian, 20 June 1946.

102. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July, 1985.

103. Interviews with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1985 and Mrs H Sibisi, 12 July 1985.

women occupied a respected position in urban society.¹⁰⁴ The whole situation was to result in Africans becoming more able to attack that element of the dominant ideology which persisted in referring to Africans as dirty and diseased.

To African workers and their families, Whites' universal condemnation of their dirty and diseased state was manifestly cruel. The solution did not lie in 'Feluna Pills'. During this time malnutrition continued to be rife amongst Durban's African children: on average five Africans died of tuberculosis each day.¹⁰⁵ Food was scarce and the accommodation in municipal and employer locations and hostels unsanitary, ill-kept and always overcrowded.¹⁰⁶ Cases of dysentery, measles, bronchitis and sexually transmitted diseases were increasing at an alarming rate.¹⁰⁷ To the African proletariat such a situation required a serious analysis of the very structures under which Africans lived in the city. In Chesterville and Cato Manor people became infuriated at the way in which residents of Westville, the growing White middle class suburb adjacent to Chesterville, would use African residential areas as a refuse dumping ground.¹⁰⁸ The situation was regarded so seriously that African experts were asked by Africans to provide lectures and talks about personal health care.¹⁰⁹

While the municipality operated a free mobile immunisation clinic,¹¹⁰ and wards at King Edward VIII hospital were made available for the increasing cases of tuberculosis,¹¹¹ medical authorities admitted that all the immunisation schemes were merely transitory in their effects¹¹² and the new tuberculosis wards at King Edward VIII were soon congested and diseased.¹¹³

Africans became enraged by the refusal of the City Councillors to accept any responsibility for rectifying this unsatisfactory situation. Councillor K J Clarke gained significant support from other councillors and White citizens for a policy that had as its premise the basic diseased nature of Africans in the city.¹¹⁴ Clarke desired that all Africans seeking work in the city should first submit to a full medical examination which, if failed, would render the applicant liable to endorsement out of the urban area.¹¹⁵

104. KCAV; interview with Mr Z A Ngcobo, 13 September 1980.

105. Ilanga lase Natal, 16 February 1946.

106. Interview with Mrs M B Lavoipierre, 31 January 1981.

107. UG 36/47; Evidence of City Medical Officer of Health.

108. KCAV; interview with Mr Z A Ngcobo, 13 September 1980.

109. Ilanga lase Natal, 30 March 1946.

110. Ibid, 5 October 1946 and MNAD 19L; vol. 1; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 26 August 1943.

111. Ilanga lase Natal, 25 May 1946.

112. UG 36/47; Evidence of City Medical Officer of Health.

113. Ilanga lase Natal, 22 February 1947.

114. Ibid, 13 April 1946.

115. Ibid and MNAD; 19L, vol 1; Councillor C J Clarke - Town Clerk, 20 April 1944 and vol. 2; Legal Advisor - Councillor C J Clarke, 20 April 1945.

Medical examinations had long been a central aspect of urban African administration. During the early 1940s the system of medical screenings appears to have been laxly administered. Not only did the municipality lack the resources to control African entry to the city. The municipality was also unable to halt Africans gaining casual employment directly from employers and had neither the resources nor personnel to operate the required health services. Clarke's idea, while gaining massive support from Whites,¹¹⁶ was so vociferously condemned by various political bodies¹¹⁷ and by Africans at large¹¹⁸ that the proposal was dropped and replaced by a weaker measure that required all employers of domestic labour to enter details of their employees' health in the pass book.¹¹⁹ Resistance to health inspections was based on the humiliation suffered by those who were subjected to examination. Charles Khumalo recalls,

It was Kwa Muhle. We were told we had to all go down to Warwick Avenue and also they had a place in Sydney Road. Stand with no clothes on, young men, old men all together, they didn't care. A doctor would come along. "Open your legs!" "Cough". Then he would put a chalk cross on you if you were not good. People were cross and it stopped.¹²⁰

During this period White vigilante groups had been formed in an effort to prevent the ever-increasing incidence of petty theft along the city beachfront.¹²¹ In attacking these developments, which resulted in any African visiting the beach area being considered a potential criminal, Africans, while never condoning thieving, maintained that the problem was one of economic hardship and called for a redistribution of the city's wealth.¹²² Such calls gathered force after two decisions taken by the City Council. One decision allocated additional funds to beachfront improvements while "African women and children sleep on concrete".¹²³ Another decision, taken in 1947, halted the practice of allowing Africans to sit in the back three rows of seats on 'White' buses.¹²⁴ During this period there was also growing pressure on the City Council from White ratepayers for the curfew to be brought forward from 10 pm to 9 pm.¹²⁵ The spatial and political implications of such attitudes produced an angry reaction from Africans. Decrying the Native Revenue Account as "farcical - it actually kept us from the money we helped to make", an increasing number of Africans began to seek ways

116. Interview with Mrs M B Lavoipierre, 31 January 1981.

117. The Guardian, 31 July 1947.

118. Ilanga lase Natal, 3 April 1948 and interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

119. Ilanga lase Natal, 12 July 1948.

120. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 14 July 1985.

121. Ilanga lase Natal, 20 October 1948.

122. Ibid, 2 February 1946. My emphasis.

123. Ibid, 12 October 1946.

124. Walker, Kaffirs, p 208.

125. Ilanga lase Natal, 4 October 1947.

in which the local power structure could be transformed.¹²⁶ Here were ordinary Africans developing a confidence in their own perceptions of society and sustaining a level of opposition to specific municipal policies.

During this time African workers sustained a vigorous campaign against the extremely limited interpretation which the City Council adopted towards the advisory powers of the various Location Advisory Boards. African workers desired that elected African leaders sit with full powers on the City Council,¹²⁷ and consistently condemned as "sell-outs" those Africans who claimed to represent their interests on the Location Advisory Boards.

In attempting to extricate themselves from this invidious situation many of the sitting Advisory Board members, including A.W.G. Champion, launched a bitter attack on the City Council. At one point Champion and nine other councillors boycotted Board meetings.¹²⁸ The whole problem, they asserted, was created by the manner in which the City Council and various municipal officials acted as though they knew what was best for the "native".¹²⁹ Champion argued that Africans respected the members of the Advisory Boards, and the City Council should thus best respond by conferring additional power on the Advisory Boards.¹³⁰

African workers were not however to be mollified. Ever aware of the escalating public debate, they continued, on an even more vehement level, to attack those Africans who claimed to be their leaders. Champion and other sitting Board members became ever more reliant on the assistance of the City Council. Wisely the municipality responded by supporting the right and responsibility of educated Africans to engage in political activity.¹³¹

In January 1945 Champion, along with virtually all the sitting Board members Chesterville were defeated in an election that saw African workers choosing new leaders whom they believed would better represent their demands.¹³² Through municipal officials' use of dubious tactics, a similar situation was temporarily averted in the Somtseu Road Male Location election.¹³³ However through the efforts of Pious Mei, trade unionist and Congress Youth League supporter, the issue was taken to court where the election was declared null and void and stringent rules laid down for preventing municipal interference in future elections.¹³⁴ It was reported that through the success of the court case, hundreds of African inmates of Msizini became increasingly militant and began to view the Advisory Board less sceptically.¹³⁵

126. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

127. Ilanga lase Natal, 12 October 1946.

128. CKM; reel 3B 2:XC9:30/84; Minutes of the Native Locations (combined) Advisory Board, 24 April 1946.

129. For further details see M W Swanson (ed), The Views of Mahlati, (Pietermaritzburg, 1983).

130. Ilanga lase Natal, 9 March 1946.

131. Ibid, 30 August 1947.

132. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

133. Ilanga lase Natal, 4 January 1947. This hostel complex was known as Msizini.

134. Ibid, 18 January and 12 April 1947.

135. Ibid, 24 May 1947.

In spite of unsuccessful attempts by the City Council to declare meetings in the Somtseu Road location illegal,¹³⁶ Mei and his close associates and fellow trade unionists, Nkwanyana and Dubazana, held various meetings at which their possible nomination for the new Advisory Board was discussed. Eventually the three agreed to stand, facing opposition from "tame native" employees of the City Council. The election was again rigged in favour of the "tame natives". There followed a massive public outcry demanding the appointment of a judicial Commission of Enquiry.¹³⁷ While the City Council refused to accede to the demand that any investigation be started, new Advisory Board regulations were promulgated preventing any municipal interference in elections and debarring African employees of the municipality from standing for the Advisory Boards.¹³⁸ New elections were held in all the locations and hostels in September 1947.¹³⁹

These elections were fought amidst much "mud slinging and ill-feeling",¹⁴⁰ with both "parties" printing handbills and holding mass meetings.¹⁴¹ In an effort to gain popular support the sitting members of the Joint Locations Advisory Boards endeavoured to co-opt a crucial element of the ideology of 'New Africa': worker demands for a Technical School for Africans in Durban,¹⁴² and press for a reduction in the price of sorghum beer. Both requests were turned down by the City Council.¹⁴³

Significantly enough while the position of sitting African Board members remained as invidious as ever, the attitude of the City Council towards the Advisory Board's requests left many workers disenchanted with any official attempt to alter either the membership or structure of the Advisory Boards. African workers called on fellow workers to boycott the elections, but the boycott was only successful in the Baumannville Location.¹⁴⁴ The elections at Msizini¹⁴⁵ were again rigged with Mei being defeated by the "educated" Africans.¹⁴⁶ In Lamontville, where workers gained a court order to prevent irregularities,¹⁴⁷ a second election resulted in Champion regaining his seat through municipal assistance.¹⁴⁸ In Chesterville the Bantu United Zakhle, led by Champion, R.R.R. Dhlomo and Mwelase, was victorious over the Chesterville Tenants Association nominees, Pitness Simelane, Stanford Mtolo and Oscar Ngwenya.¹⁴⁹

136. Ibid, 31 May 1947.

137. Ibid 28 June 1947.

138. Ibid , 30 August 1947.

139. Ibid, 27 September 1947.

140. Ibid, 4 October 1947.

141. Ibid.

142. Ibid, 12 June 1948.

143. Ibid, 3 July 1948.

144. Ibid, 27 September 1947.

145. Ibid , 22 November 1947.

146. Ibid, 11 January 1948.

147. Ibid, 25 September 1948.

148. Ibid.

149. Ibid.

The Bantu United Zakhle was an established grouping that endeavoured to gain residents' support in condemning the way in which Africans conducted themselves in Mkhumbane, calling for better homes and facilities in Chesterville, and opposing small-scale entrepreneur activity that threatened the position of the established African traders in the area.¹⁵⁰ Led by Champion, who was then president of the African National Congress in Natal, an established trader and fierce opponent of the Congress Youth League, the movement cultivated a fierce parochialism which in part was due to Champion's own rather ruthless control of the area and the residents' extreme enmity to Africans who lived in Mkhumbane.¹⁵¹ Mtolo recalls,

We were faced by such a difficult situation. Even workers in Chesterville were scared and also, well the idea of the Advisory Boards was weak - if look back. Chesterville was always different because Champion had one of his houses there. Pitness, Oscar and myself were Youth Leaguers and stood no chance. And anyway Mkhumbane! - hell that gave us problems. How could you tell them about those - Cato Manor was made. That was their strength but people in Chesterville were too used to being timid and so they felt threatened.¹⁵²

Control of the Advisory Boards remained in the hands of Champion, his cronies and hangers-on. While African workers had at one point aimed at forming a political party and taking control of the Advisory Boards as the first stage in gaining full representation at City Council level, their very failure was to have important results. While remaining militant, workers began to see the futility of this tactic. Voting polls in later Advisory Board elections was dismally low.¹⁵³ With the power of the Advisory Boards as circumscribed as ever, Champion became increasingly dictatorial forward opponents in the Joint Locations Advisory Board sittings; and he was forced to privately collude with the Mayor of Durban in order to achieve his goals.¹⁵⁴

Among Congress Youth Leaguers, workers' lack of faith in the Advisory Boards was acknowledged. As Stanford Mtolo recalls,

There were some of us - Youth Leaguers there. Oscar finally managed to get on. He would always fight - also against S.B. Ngcobo - a real puppet of Champion's - it had started that in 1944. We just had to carry on because Champion was too dangerous. We were lucky because we had the young Dhlomo to write for us. But the workers, well we knew they would stay away - that was accepted.¹⁵⁵

For workers, their brief involvement in the issue of the Advisory Boards provided clear pointers to their need to operate on a completely different political terrain with a leadership drawn from other than the African educated elite, many of whom were shown up to be "sell-outs".

150. *Ibid.*, 4 December 1948 and Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p 285.

151. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

152. *Ibid.*

153. Interview with Mr R G Wilson, 14 February 1981.

154. CKM; reel 3B 2:XC9:30/83, Minutes of the Native Locations (combined) Advisory Board, 17 February 1949 and S B Ngcobo - A W G Champion, 25 February 1949.

155. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

During 1948 a fourth specific issue was raised by African workers. Africans had for long opposed the municipal monopoly over the manufacture, distribution and sale of sorghum beer.¹⁵⁶ During the late 1940s the City Council, despite a critical housing shortage, was engaged in allocating large sums of money from the Native Revenue Account to erect new beerhalls.¹⁵⁷ While the price of sorghum beer and other basic ingredients of the beer had declined drastically since the end of the war¹⁵⁸ the City Council both refused to accede to demands for a reduction in the beer price and in fact raised prices,¹⁵⁹ using some of the lucrative profits to provide new soccer fields for Africans.¹⁶⁰ The price of a large communal container of beer was now 1s 6d. In 1948 a bag of sorghum cost 1.10.0 as opposed to the war-time price of 4.0.0.¹⁶¹ When the Combined Locations Advisory Board raised the matter with the Native Administration Committee, Councillor Nicholson said that the Board had no authority to raise such matters and refused to discuss the issue.¹⁶²

Africans then proceeded to boycott the beerhalls,¹⁶³ and, it appears, during the boycott, Africans presented certain other demands. Prince Pika Zulu, the induna and chief spy¹⁶⁴ of the municipal Native Administration Department, was "threatened".¹⁶⁵ Africans demanded that the treatment of African policemen in the city force be improved, specifically asking that they be provided with boots, and that White beerhall attendants be replaced by Africans.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore Africans desired to relax in "clean pubs" and not sit in dirty overcrowded conditions after having waited in long queues to gain entry.¹⁶⁷

This demand on behalf of policemen is interesting. Africans had for long complained about the rising costs of clothing and footwear produced specifically, as one sympathetic Indian merchant remarked, "for the Native trade".¹⁶⁸ In a period when Africans were emphasising their own dignity and becoming aware of the fashionable attire then being sported by "Jo'burg swanks", their inability to maintain such standards produced a

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156. See P La Hausse "Drinking in a Cage: The Durban System and the 1929 Riots", *Africa Perspective*, no. 20 (1982).
157. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 21 September 1946 and *Mayors Minutes*, Report of the Manager of the Municipal Native Administration Department, 1947-1950.
158. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 26 June 1948.
159. *Mayors Minutes*, Report of the Manager, M N A D, 1948-1951.
160. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 26 June 1948.
161. *Ibid*, 26 June 1948.
162. *Minutes of the Native Administration Committee*, 3 July 1948 and *Ilanga lase Natal*, 26 July 1948.
163. *The Guardian*, 24 June 1948.
164. Interviews with Mr S Bourquin, 6 November 1980 and Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1980. For a brief description of Prince Pika Zulu see Walker, *Kaffirs*, p 30.
165. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 26 July 1948 and interview with Mr D Mc Cullough, 2 April 1982.
166. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 26 July 1948.
167. *Ibid*, 17 July 1948.
168. UG 19/49; Evidence of A. Moolla and Exhibit 9 : Stephen Fraser (Pty) Ltd - A. Moolla, 7 March 1949.

proud explanation best typified in the following response :

Ja those Jo'burgers were always so smart. But here things were different. You would go and buy a nice pair of shoes. The ones with toe caps. But you would soon be seen walking along the road with your shoes tied around your neck. Man its just too hot to be smart in Durban. Only the won't works - the tsotsis - can dress up. You know when Nu Zonic¹⁶⁹ came to play here some people stole their smart clothes and when they were caught it was a big joke!¹⁷⁰

Africans had for long attacked the role of Africans in helping to administer the various objectionable laws while at the same time being humiliated in the South African Police.¹⁷¹ This feeling was almost certainly exacerbated during the beerhall boycott as a result of police attempts to break the boycott through stepping up liquor raids into such place as Mkhumbane.¹⁷² Consequently their calls for African policemen to be given boots was probably more part of an unconscious desire to compel employers to bear a greater portion of the social wage than a move to provide the police with greater mobility.

African actions against their exploitation in beerhalls further typified the growing assertion of Africans that they should be accepted in the city. The African working class was stating clearly its desire for a political claim to an important power. No longer humiliated and passive under a dominant bourgeois ideology that saw Africans as dirty, lazy, insolent and salacious, African workers and their families gained an increasing power.

Conclusion

With the raising of specific issues and the articulation of grievances came indications of a new vision which was to be both an ongoing celebration of African victories and an image of future freedom. As one commentator remarked in 1949,

For those who remember the country as a place of prospectors, hunters...and naked, brown, respectful athletic heathen....New Africa is a mess. But it happens to be a reality - much more than the kind of African the country's law-makers wish to accept. The Black proletariat...have arrived. ...Cities put their locations out of sight. But they want their labourers to be punctual in the morning. The location may fester; but they want their labour to be clean.¹⁷³

The widespread popular unrest in Durban during the late 1940s was a clear indication of how the African proletariat was attempting to overcome their own material and ideological oppression. Africans had in fact

169. This revue band visited Durban in May 1946.

170. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 23 June 1985.

171. See, for example, *Ilanga lase Natal*, 2 March 1946.

172. *Ibid*, 3 July 1948.

173. Walker, *Kaffirs*, p 175.

transformed at least certain areas of the political terrain so successfully that even the municipality was, in spite of its fairly sophisticated network of impimpi in the beerhalls, hostels, and locations,¹⁷⁴ unable to clearly comprehend the precise nature or purpose of the "waves of discontent" that were "sweeping" through Durban.¹⁷⁵ When, in 1946, the City Council requested that a commission of enquiry be urgently appointed to investigate the position of Africans in the city, it was abjectly incapable of supplying any coherent reason for the enquiry. Likewise the Commissioner himself, Mr Justice F.N. Broome was also "unable to obtain a very clear picture of the events leading up to the appointment of the Commission".¹⁷⁶

It was however this sustained and widespread protest which escalated into an ever-increasing belligerency that was to create the conditions in which new movements would develop. 'New Africa' was acquiring an organizational base which was to transform the African political spectrum and provide the basis for a militant, even messianic populism.

174. Interview with Mr D McCullough, 2 April 1982.

175. Ilanga lase Natal, 7 July 1947 and CKM ; reel 3B 2:XC9:30/84; Minutes of meeting of the Executive Committee, ANC (Natal Branch), 1949.

176. UG 39/1947; Report of Commission. See also UG 13/1949; Evidence of A Webb.

CHAPTER 2

'SWING THE ASSEGA! PEACEFULLY? : THE AFRICAN PROLETARIAT
AND THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN DURBAN**Populist Organisation and the Quest for Power**

The growth of assertive shantytown communities and a growing confidence and militancy gave to the ordinary African, whether worker, lumpen or newly migrant, a vital control over the substance and pace of African political and organisational advance. Any organisation which succeeded in sustaining itself achieved proletarian support because it maintained a localised grass-roots support base. Such organisations were critical and often impatient of the principles of trade unionism, viewing trade unions as potentially divisive and narrowly focussed around the factory floor of established industry and commerce. These new organisations also operated outside established political groupings such as the African National Congress or the Congress Youth League. Furthermore all attempts to rejuvenate old organisations or start new city-wide groupings were to fail.

Throughout the late 1940s many, including Champion,¹ were to strive for the revival of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union.² Such attempts were aimed at providing the Natal branch of the African National Congress with a new popular support that would both marginalise the established trade unions³ and other bodies such as the Congress Youth League,⁴ and provide Champion with greater national legitimacy.⁵ Despite numerous public appeals for support these attempts failed. In 1947 the African National Congress attempted to organise an "African Week".⁶ While Champion appears to have promoted the idea in Durban, as part of his desire to "squash all who were against him" and gain the support of an increasingly militant populace. But the event never even took place.⁷

During the same period the Daughters of Africa split up because of the eagerness of some members to use the movement as a vehicle for starting a Natal branch of the African National Congress Women's League. The Daughters of Africa had started in 1939⁸ and by 1946 was well supported by women in the

1. CKM; reel 15A 2:XL9:30/80, the ICU and the Natal Native Congress, n.d.

2. Ilanga lase Natal, 8 November 1947.

3. Ibid and interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

4. Ibid.

5. CKM; reel 3B 2:XC:30/84; Minutes of the Conference of the Natal African Intelligentsia, October 1945 and the Verulam Press - A W G Champion, 25 November 1949.

6. Ibid, Minutes of the African National Congress (Natal Branch), 1946.

7. Interview with Mr G Bhengu, 2 February 1982.

8. KCAV; interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 21 July 1982.

Durban and Pinetown areas.⁹ The movement was concerned with developing African women's self-worth and dignity, the advancement of women's particular roles in a society, and with discussing the problems of maintaining a household in a city environment.¹⁰ Local branches of the Daughters of Africa started craft clubs making and selling "boys clothing", formed fruit and vegetable co-operatives, endeavoured to get Indian shop-owners to employ Africans and thereby reduce social animosity, and generally attempted to establish the woman's role in controlling a decent household, and to legitimise her influence in broader political issues.¹¹

While it appears that most of the members of the movement were "congress supporters",¹² distinct rifts appeared in the movement during and after its annual conference held in Durban in February 1946.¹³ At that meeting it appears that some members, including Mrs A. L. Luthuli and the widow of Dr J.L. Dube, who were active on the committee,¹⁴ attempted to direct the movement towards eventual incorporation into the A N C Women's League, which had been formed in 1943.¹⁵ Whilst this latter organisations' aims were in many substantive ways similar to the aims and activities of the Daughters of Africa, there were many who were reluctant to allow their organisation to be subsumed within a broader national body. As a result of these disagreements and, to a lesser extent, the intervention of White welfare bodies who attempted to influence them, the Daughters of Africa, as a movement, gradually faded away.¹⁶

While it has been claimed that such reluctance was due to the supporters of the Women's League being over eager, and that members of the Daughters of Africa were reluctant to become political in the face of police harassment, the issue is rather more complex.¹⁷ It is certain that many of the branches of the Daughters of Africa never experienced any police harassment.¹⁸ Furthermore, while there had been many attempts to start a Women's League branch in Durban with meetings being postponed and the proposed visit of Madie-Hall Xuma cancelled through lack of support,¹⁹ the failure to elicit the support of the Daughters of Africa was not the result of Women's Leaguers' tactical errors or a general lack of political consciousness amongst the Daughters of Africa. The real difference was one of political strategy. Many within the Daughters of Africa

9. Ilanga lase Natal, 16 February 1946.

10. KCAV; interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 21 July 1982. For different analysis see Walker, Women, p 91.

11. Interview with Mrs H Sibisi, 11 November 1985.

12. Mbutso Papers; C D S Mbutso, A History of Clermont, "Of Clermont I Sing of Thee", and Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 7 July 1985.

13. Ilanga lase Natal, 16 February 1946 and interview with Ms D Nyembe, 7 July 1985.

14. KCAV; interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 21 July 1982.

15. See Walker, Women, p 91.

16. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 7 July 1985.

17. Ibid.

18. Mbutso Papers; C D S Mbutso, A History of Clermont, "Of Clermont I Sing of Thee" and Ilanga lase Natal, 16 February 1946.

19. Ibid.

were more interested in initiating various independent women's groups in the various shantytowns and townships than in seeking to promote an all-embracing city-wide or national movement. One such independent group was the Health in the Home women's group in the freehold area of Good Hope.²⁰

Furthermore many of these groups were active in promoting non-racialism through discussions with Indian Women's groups, convincing Indian leaders and traders to assist in the development of African enterprise and through co-operation with Indian women in anti-Black marketeer activities.²¹ While it is true that African women who were 'ANC supporters' did play a central role in trying to protect Pelwane during the January 1949 Riots,²² others - such as Women's League supporter Bertha Mkhize - had formed the Bantu Women's Craft Society in premises on Booth Road near Chesterville and actively encouraged a narrow populism based on the idea of African women withdrawing from all contact with prospective employers in Indian and White residential areas.²³ The complexities of politics during this period mitigated against a focus that was not localised. The only movement with which the Daughters of Africa sustained closer contact was the Nabantukop co-operative society.²⁴

During the same period all attempts to start a provincial federation of African independent trade unions failed. In 1946 twenty-three African trade unions, with support in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, formed a Natal branch of the Council for Non-European Trade Unions, but the unity could not be sustained.²⁵ In reality it appears as if the move was led by trade union leaders with little grass-roots awareness. Stanford Mtolo remember the events:

That was in fact before my time in the Union. I was still at the dairies. I never really heard about it until just before. We all acted - workers' unity was good but it did not come easily then. All kinds of things...The whole CNETU started in Johannesburg and probably it was an attempt to build us up through bringing it down to Durban - but I really don't know.²⁶

By 1948 the federation, now comprising five unions and called the Natal Federation of Trade Unions, was badly run and so poor that it was unable to send a single delegate to the annual conference of CNETU in Bloemfontein.²⁷

A striking lack of support for any broader unity was also evident in rank-and-file attitudes to other new organisations. In August 1947 many of the leaders of these new movements started the New Africa

20. *Ibid.*

21. KCAV; interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 31 July 1982. Madie-Hall Xuma, while within the national organisation, also appears to have favoured a strategy which was more localised. Walker, *Women*, p 91.

22. Interview with Mrs J Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

23. KCAV; interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 31 July 1982.

24. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 22 February 1947.

25. *Ibid.*, 16 March 1946.

26. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

27. Ringrose, *Trade Unions*, p 55.

Progressive Alliance whose pamphlets espoused the ideas of 'New Africa' and called for unity between all African political organisations. The attempt failed to attract any support.²⁸

In 1948 H A van Rooyen contested Senator Edgar Brookes' re-election to Senate as one of the four representatives of Africans.²⁹ As part of his strategy van Rooyen formed an alliance with various leaders of the co-operative movement in Durban.³⁰ These leaders were given funds and would form the Bantu National Congress in the early 1950s. A pro-apartheid and anti-Indian body, this organization pictured itself as being the successor to the tradition of politics started by J.L. Dube.³¹ The movement failed, gaining support mainly only from herbalists,³² even though many popular co-operative leaders advanced the cause of the movement.³³

During the late 1940s it is clear that the Africans proletariat was both becoming more politically assertive, confident in the need for mass awareness, and effective in opposing initiatives not of its own choosing. There were few African leaders, whether part of the established educated elite or self-styled proletarian militants, who could afford to ignore the proletariat's new position in politics.

The only evident backlash from "the exempted" against the proletariat's perceptions of the position of the African elite appear to have come from a small group of Africans who self-consciously referred to themselves as "educated Africans". They attempted to form themselves into a literary and cultural club, based at the Bantu Social Centre, and declared that they wished to have nothing to do with either "politics" or "the ordinary native".³⁴ Interestingly enough the attempt failed, mainly the result of tsotsis invading their ballroom dance meetings,³⁵ and drunken jashaadjie minstrels barging into their musical recitals.³⁶ After attempting to regroup at Ma Phillips' nearby classy shebeen they eventually abandoned their efforts.³⁷

Indeed the pressure on many scheduled educated African who felt the desire to become politically expressive to be wary of African workers even caused many to stop attending or speaking at meetings held by the Joint Councils.³⁸ Mtolo recalls the general mood of the times:

Those were incredible days. All you hear about now is how bad it was. Dirt, wages and the Nationalist victory and the Riots of 1949. But...it was a time when normal people ruled the

28. Ilanga lase Natal, 2 August 1947 and interview with Mr G Bhengu, 2 February 1982.

29. CKM, 2:XC9:30/84; A W G Champion - H S Msimang, 5 April 1948 and Ilanga lase Natal.

30. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985, and Kuper, African Bourgeoisie, p 305.

31. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutho, 3 April 1983.

32. Kuper, African Bourgeoisie, p 305.

33. Interview with Mr H C Sibisi, 11 November 1985.

34. Ilanga lase Natal, 23 March 1946.

35. Ibid.

36. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985. Kunene, then a leading jashaadjie, claims to have been involved in some of the incidents.

37. Ilanga lase Natal, 6 April and 29 July 1946.

38. Ibid., and interview with Mrs M B Lavoipierre, 31 January 1982.

roost. I was a worker then and sent into the union. It was like that all round. Those of us, Africans, who were already exempted would ignore their brothers at their peril. Now they had to watch it.. Even us in Youth League had to be very careful.³⁹

In a period of rising militancy when many existing political organisations were becoming increasingly aware both of their lack of real support and ineffectual political strategy, Durban's African proletariat was determined to direct its support to certain types of new organisation.

The Moral Economy of Proletarian Power

There existed four inter-related but conflicting cycles of accumulation and redistribution in Durban.⁴⁰ First, the dominant process of capitalist accumulation and wage employment. Second, although being steadily more and more marginalized, the various barter markets which thrived within the city during the later 1940s revealed the city not to be completely capitalist.⁴¹ Third, the municipality's own profiteering networks upon which the Native Revenue Account was totally dependent.⁴² The municipality gained profits from both leasing and trading premises to Africans in municipal eating houses and beerhalls, and from its monopoly over the manufacture, distribution and sale of sorghum beer in Durban. Finally, within the African population of the city there had for long existed an illicit but extensive nexus of petty commodity production and exchange. These various economic structures were inter-related in ways which were often highly conflictual and even directly contradictory.

Throughout the later 1940s the municipality was attempting to gain increased profits from its own trading activities which centred entirely around the city's African population. Not only were beer prices raised, but the rentals charged for trading on municipal property increased steadily.⁴³ Central to increased municipal profits was the need to curb if not completely destroy the operations of those African entrepreneurs whom, according to city bye-laws, were illegal traders. There was thus continual conflict and competition between the municipality and illicit African commercial operations in the city.

The attitudes of local representatives of commerce and industry were probably more ambivalent than those of municipal officials. During the later 1940s, employers were concerned about the way in which Africans seemed to be able to avoid total subjection to wage labour by relying on the profits from various entrepreneurial ventures conducted mainly in shantytowns. Employers also complained that shebeens and illicit liquor consumption were directly responsible for low productivity, absenteeism and the inability of Africans to

39. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

40. For useful perspectives see M Santos, *The Shared Space*, (London, 1979).

41. See Cooper *Struggle*, p 34.

42. P Maylam, 'Municipal fraud: the operation of the Native Revenue Account in Durban', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, no XI (1988), (forthcoming).

43. Mayors' Minute, 1947-1948.

afford basic household food requirements.⁴⁴ Consequently many employers called for a crackdown on illicit trading, particularly in liquor. Some even supported the city's Medical Officer of Health in calling for wages to be paid on Wednesdays as opposed to Fridays in order to prevent excessive drunkenness and consequent impoverishment. However, employers also believed that increasing African purchase of commodities produced by capitalist industry was the key to increased capitalist profitability. Paydays should thus not be altered as every person had the right to dispose of earnings in the manner of their own choice.⁴⁵ Behind such gracious concern for individual rights lay a desire to increase the level of consumer spending. Similarly, although desiring to see the "African as the future customer" many employers recognized that many essential commodities required by Africans in the city could be more cheaply acquired in the shantytowns. Employers were indeed heartened when they could prove the opposite.⁴⁶

The contradiction between the structures of capital accumulation and wage labour and increased commodity consumption within the African population was clearly evident in employers' attitudes towards providing increased opportunities for licensed African traders. Although the West and Smith Street commercial area was to remain the almost total preserve of White custom, industry desired to increase African consumer spending. Nevertheless, many employers were to question the benefits of creating a larger African trading class. Willson, then a municipal influx control inspector recalls the issue:

All this bloody palaver about the traders and politics. If we had got the thing together then and made a better class of bloke in the township things would have been better. They all say that now in 1980. But when people said it then, who was saying 'No'? Employers, No, we want workers not traders.⁴⁷

Even after African licensed traders started operating in the Cato Manor Emergency Camp the vast majority of commercial wholesalers refused to consider delivering goods to such shops. Their reluctance was not merely due to the dangers of driving through the area.⁴⁸

Furthermore, even the standards of work which industrial employers desired of their African labour was resented by African workers. During the later 1940s, there were no artisan training opportunities for African workers, with skilled labourers being predominantly White and Indian. Furthermore the vast majority of Africans were employed in unskilled and casual capacities.

The predominantly Indian traders in the Warwick, Grey, Alice and Victoria streets locale, which both straddled the largest African bus terminus in the city and was the centre of most African commercial spending, expressed different concerns. However here again are indications of the complex and very contradictory ways in

44. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), annual report, 1949-1950.

45. Durban Chamber of Commerce, annual report, 1949-1950.

46. Natal Chamber of Industry, annual report, 1952-1953.

47. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 15 December 1980.

48. MNAD; Cope Trading Report, September 1953.

which particular structures of accumulation inter-related. In the Indian-owned shops in Cato Manor Farm various basic items would be sold at "cut price" while customers could also purchase "on the slate".⁴⁹ In the heart of the Indian-owned business district credit was commercial suicide and instead "of having sales, they gave you socks with our trousers, and handkerchiefs with our shirts."⁵⁰ With competition among traders being fierce, and African custom valued, such traders operated on stock turnover rather than lowered prices. Such enforced consumerism was often resented by African customers. Constance Matiwane remembers how

You could buy a jacket and the Battersby hat with the feather and all ... Look at my husband. He did this! And when he comes home, he shows these things to me. "Smart?" But then there are the shoes, and the shirt and the socks and ... No! All these things.⁵¹

Some would take socks and other unwanted items to the barter markets and swop for food.⁵²

For Africans, the force of ethnic consciousness in trade was clearly evident. Not only had highly ethnically conscious immigrants from Europe assumed control of various commercial ventures. Within the shopping areas frequented by the African proletariat the inter-connections between employment and various forms of ethnic consciousness was starkly apparent. Although Indian-owned shops had names which evoked images of inter-ethnic affiliation, African desires that Indian shop-owners employ Africans in the shops seemed to have gone unheard. In the Cato Manor Farm area, established Indian trading and transport businesses complained, not unreasonably, that the granting of sole trading rights to Africans in African residential areas would destroy their long existing businesses.

African proletarianization occurred in the context of these four differing structures which were all inter-related in often highly contradictory and conflicting ways. But for the African proletariat there were lessons to be learnt from the various economic structures which seemed to be the fundamental base to so much of city society. The central characteristics of particular African struggles within the city were in many important ways based on differing ways of perceiving the various economic structures within the city. During the later 1940s the African proletariat was asserting its right to remain permanently in an urban industrializing area. An acceptance of the power of industrialization did not however mean passive acceptance of the detrimental social consequences of industrialization which were so evident in proletarian daily life. However, an acceptance of the compelling force of industrialization did not necessarily mean that struggles around gaining increased material security within the city were always based around conflict within the production process.

In January 1946 Victor Maillie started the African Industrial Central Society. The aim of the society was to collect funds, through the purchase of shares in the society by wealthy Africans for the construction near Durban of a technical school and two hostels for male and female apprentices. The school, which would train

49. *Ibid.*

50. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

51. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1983.

52. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 21 April 1985.

Africans as clean, Christian, law-abiding, productive workers, would then be responsible for allocating such labour to the African business sector.⁵³

The principles behind the move were threefold. First, African men were exploited in the factories and commercial sector of the city while African women were unable to find any 'proper' employment except in degrading and badly paid work in Indian shops or in Indian or White residential areas.⁵⁴ Furthermore, there were no apprentice schemes for Africans in Durban;⁵⁵ thus Africans should commence such schemes in order to compel industry and commerce to accept the legitimate rights of African workers in the city.⁵⁶ Second, Maillie believed that while the emerging African business sector was intent upon calling all Africans to trade only with Africans where such an alternative did exist, they often appeared to ignore the conditions under which the majority of Africans lived. Profits derived from African business activity should be directed in ways that would allow the African working class to both strengthen and advance.⁵⁷ Thirdly, Maillie, who had apparently been loosely associated with many African trade unions in earlier years,⁵⁸ asserted that workers should demand a clear voice in African political movements. Throughout the period Maillie, who was a member of neither the ANC nor the CYL, was engaged in laying the groundwork for such a policy through his attempts to mediate between the CYL and the ANC.⁵⁹ Mtole remembers that

He would often tell Champion a thing or two. Champion did not like that kind of behaviour...but he also told us where to get off. You had to listen - we didn't really disagree really. He was respected by all. He had friends in the trade unions but he would often tell workers not to leave their jobs, but to go to night schools.⁶⁰

In general the plan was a combination of certain principles of craft unionism and mission school education which had been integrated into a general notion of developing the economic base of a broad Africanism in which ordinary Africans would play a, if not the, influential role. Embodied in the idea were certain elements of a separatist Africanism. Maillie's initial strategy asserted that African women should withdraw from work in shops and residential areas. However, two essential issues must be emphasised. Firstly, it appears that many Indian business and political leaders were receptive to such plans.⁶¹ Secondly, the ideology of a militant 'New

53. These aims were clearly indicated on this organization's letterheads. See CKM; reel 15 A; 2: XC 9: 30/69; V L D Maillie - A W G Champion, 15 May 1950.

54. Ilanga lase Natal, 26 January 1946.

55. Ibid., 14 September 1946.

56. Ibid., 26 January 1946.

57. Interview with Mr S S L Mtole, 10 June 1983.

58. Ibid.

59. Father B Huss Papers, Catholic African Union meeting, 12 December 1943.

60. CKM; Reel 3B 2 : XC9:30/84; V L D Maillie - A W G Champion, 15 January 1950 and interview with Mr G Bhengu, 2 February 1982.

61. Interview with Mr S S L Mtole, 10 June 1980.

Africa' did embrace a concept of revenge as part of its strategy of transforming the position of Africans in Durban.⁶² Revenge, Africanism and anti-Indian feelings were closely related. It was but a small step to the Riots of January 1949.

While the African Industrial and Central Society was ultimately unsuccessful it was to create a favourable reaction from workers who were constantly being enticed into all kinds of self-help schemes which were really intended to advance a new African entrepreneur class. Thomas Shabalala recalls worker attitudes to these latter activities:

People get wise after a while. There were always ideas, often put forward by people who never had education but who were sharp. You would listen because they looked like Africans - but you never got bugged all. They were careful - they never showed their money...always in rags but you knew they had yours.⁶³

Many such schemes were started in Durban in the late 1940s, offering shares in freehold land companies⁶⁴ and prospective bus companies.⁶⁵ All such enterprises, whether initiated by the established elite or the 'bush lawyer' were to fail in their attempts to secure anything but an often meagre initial capital. While it cannot be denied in analysing the failure of such movements that the legal and political obstacles in the way of African business activity were enormous,⁶⁶ it is significant that these particular schemes never really attracted sustained support. In essence such activities ran counter to the principles espoused by the African proletariat.⁶⁷

In Durban, the period from 1946 to 1950 was the heyday of the Africans co-operative movement.⁶⁸ In Natal agricultural co-operatives and land banks had long been a dominant part of African rural life.⁶⁹ Many of these groups had been initiated by Father Bernard Huss and the Catholic African Union as a means to promote rural self-sufficiency and a Christian communalism to counter the growth of more radical ideologies.⁷⁰ Among Durban's African population, which had always maintained close links to the rural areas and was continually attempting to sustain a populist-orientated consciousness, there had always been self-help and co-operative schemes.⁷¹

62. Jacoby, *Wild Justice*, pp 301 - 2.

63. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 30 June 1985.

64. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 25 May 1946 and interview with Mr H C Sibisi, 11 November 1985. Sibisi was one of the 'directors' of the company; along with Dr Pixley Ka Izaka Seme and the Rev. A Mtinkulu, then a member of the Joint Councils and legal advisor to the ANC.

65. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 12 April 1947.

66. Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, pp 261-307.

67. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 21 April 1985.

68. For important perspectives on co-operatives, see M Mellor, J Hannah and J Stirling, *Workers Cooperatives in Theory and Practice*, (Milton Keynes, 1988).

69. L Brouckaert, 'Better Homes, Better Fields, Better Hearts : the Catholic African Union, 1927-1939' (Honours thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1985).

70. Father B Huss, Lecture notes on land banks, n.d..

71. Interview with Mr H C Sibisi, 11 November 1985.

However in the late 1940s, the confidence imbued through the proletariat's own actions created in the co-operative movement a new political dimension. In the same way as 'New Africa' gained a material base in the co-operative movement, so the co-operative movement acquired a more fervent ideology. During the late 1940s African workers saw in the co-operatives not merely a single element in their everyday lives, but the vital organisational structure through which they could commence the task of transforming their economic and political position in the city. Gerhard Bhengu, the artist who was to illustrate Ukubambisana, the Nabantukop Co-operative magazine, comments on co-operatives in Durban in the late 1940s :

We had always needed to trust one another... We had to have these ways of keeping together - even if it was small - you and your neighbours in Cato Manor... We all knew about these things from being farm boys - you know at home. But in the forties when I started drawing - Nabantukop's magazine - those people in Durban were cross - very cross. They wanted to do all kinds of things. There were these co-operatives all over the place - many even in a place like Cato Manor. It was something new that was happening and people went to the co-operatives.⁷²

In April a meeting of the Durban Co-operative buying clubs was held at the Msizini Hall despite harassment by municipal officials.⁷³ The meeting was chaired by W J Mseleku, a member of the Committee of the Natal branch of the ANC,⁷⁴ so-called 'father of the co-operative movement'⁷⁵ and composer of numerous songs urging Africans to wake up, unite and remember the dignity of their forebears.⁷⁶ In the early 1940s Mseleku had also, like Victor Maille, been loosely associated with the African trade union movement.⁷⁷ He in fact approached Father Huss eager to discuss alternative strategies.⁷⁸ At the meeting were 109 representatives of co-operative clubs from Msizini, Dalton Road Hostel, Chesterville, Mayville, Umlazi, Maydon Wharf, Klaarwater and Clermont. While some complained of intimidation by the municipal Native Affairs Department,⁷⁹ this, it appears, actually rebounded in favour of the concept of co-operative clubs. Charles Khumalo has his recollection:

It often happened that KwaMuhle would try to stop you registering your club or holding a meeting but there was just too much going on and people were so against KwaMuhle that they carried on.⁸⁰

72. Interview with Mr G Bhengu, 2 February 1982.

73. Ilanga lase Natal, 6 March 1946.

74. Interview with Mr B B Cele, 18 August, 1947.

75. Couzens, New Africa, p 250.

76. W J Mseleku Izingeniso, n.d.

77. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

78. Father B Huss Papers, File : 'Catholic African Union Minutes Durban', August 1944.

79. Ilanga lase Natal, 6 March 1946.

80. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 17 April 1985.

Some of the societies were quite prosperous, with the Sizanani Credit Bank in Mayville having capital reserves of 230. The Chesterville society, the Blackhurst Co-operative Buying Club run by C K Nakasa, had a capital of 300 and 190 worth of stock.⁸¹

These co-operative clubs were generally one of three types.⁸² First people would often endeavour to reduce the time and costs of providing household items by contributing to a common fund and then taking turns to journey to town where bulk purchases could be made. Other clubs operated along similar lines, except that the items were intended to be re-sold by each particular member of the co-operative. The third type of society was in essence a co-operative loan bank where each prospective member would have to pay a percentage of his salary to join and then "around 1 or 10 shillings each month depending upon how much he could afford or wanted to."⁸³ For supplying this capital the member was entitled to secure loans from the society. As Charles Khumalo remembers

Each month you would dress up in your smartest and there would be a meeting of the club. The Treasurer would tell all about the finances and then people could stand up and ask for loans. If you wanted to build a house, children's school, hospital - not silly things - but fine that was OK. Then the treasurer would tell everyone how you had contributed and we would all discuss it. After the meeting you would go and get drunk - it was because you were so happy things were coming right.⁸⁴

Underlying the functioning of the co-operative clubs were two economic principles which workers felt particularly eager to develop in their own ways. While the concept of profit was always accepted, it is clear that the popularity of the idea of a proper and acceptable profit⁸⁵ led to people criticizing the existing industrial and commercial sectors with a new-found militancy. Charles Khumalo explains the position:

Look if you go into an Indian store and want to buy something you know that you are being cheated. That Indian also has a family and has to live but so does the African who works there. You knew your brothers were getting peanuts so you were getting cheated.⁸⁶

Here was the essence of workers' perception of the city economy. Africans believed that their inability to secure sufficient earnings was a result of the imperfections, and indeed, the built-in bias, of the market. Hence the realisation through the co-operative movements of the power of controlling at least a segment of the city's redistributive cycle of capital. With the evidence of the success of Indian and later the newly immigrant traders

81. Ilanga lase Natal, 6 March 1946.

82. For a general analysis see M Ballinger Papers C1.2.5-13, "The Native and the Economic Question", n.d. and "Questions on Co-operation" and Father B Huss Papers, File "Co-operatives in Durban" passim.

83. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 30 June 1985.

84. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

85. U G 36/49; Evidence of A Mchunu and J Shandu.

86. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.

and the way in which Afrikaans-speaking people were then boycotting non-Afrikaner shops, Africans saw in control of commercial capital the key to power in the city.⁸⁷

From this perception came the co-operatives' attitude towards Africans who were employed in the city. A distinction was generally made between those who were employed as domestics or shop assistants and those who laboured in industry. In order to extract revenge against shop-keepers and domestic employers and teach them the value of African labour, all Africans so employed should withdraw from such labour.⁸⁸ They should then receive education at the co-operative schools held each summer and winter⁸⁹ and either be employed by an African businessman or operate as an independent entrepreneur with the assistance of the co-operative.⁹⁰ While a strike or boycott tactic was upheld for such workers it was accepted that these tactics were clearly inappropriate for the majority of the working class. Gerhard Bhengu comments: "How could you do that. It's nonsense. There were no African industries anyway. We could teach the Indians and the madams a lesson but not the bosses - no we never said that".⁹¹ Instead the attitude was similar to that advocated by the African Industrial Central Society: Africans should learn the dignity of labour and work in the factories while bettering themselves at co-operative skills.⁹²

This approach is interesting, not only with regard to the inherent weakness of the co-operatives in the face of organised industry, but also in view of the fact that during this time capital/labour relations in the city were being strained by, amongst other things, a productivity crisis.⁹³ Many of the struggles waged during this period were aimed at attacking the dominant ideology in the city. With the limited scope available for co-operative movements, such movements accepted the need to work harder to change the ideology.

The second economic principle which underlay the co-operative movement was the belief that the faster money, goods and services could circulate the more economic wealth would be enhanced.⁹⁴ The velocity of capital circulation was crucial.⁹⁵ Workers should bring into the community as much of their salary as possible, and involve themselves in selling and buying. It was through this cycle of selling and buying that a community of workers, families and 'unemployed' would unite. Viewed from this position the value of wages from African labour employed in organised industry and commerce was central to the whole task of

87. For details see D O'Meara, *Volkskapitalisme : Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1934-1948*, (Johannesburg, 1983) , pp 113-114.

88. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 30 November 1946.

89. M Ballinger Papers, C1.2.14. File 3; "The Co-operative movement among South African Natives", and *Ilanga lase Natal*, 13 April 1946.

90. *Ukubambiswano*, November/December 1947.

91. Interview with Mr G Bhengu, 2 February 1985.

92. *Ibid.*

93. Natal Chamber of Industry, annual report, 1950-1951.

94. *Ukubambiswano*, June/July 1946.

95. See B K Short, "The velocity of money and per capita income in developing economies : Malaysia and Singapore", *The Journal of Development Studies*, vol 9, no 1 (1973).

transforming African city life. However one of the implications of the approach was to dilute the class consciousness of workers.

A similar dilution of class perception was however not discernible in the co-operative societies' policy towards so-called "independent African business". To the co-operative movement such enterprises should be destroyed, by violence if necessary, because they saw themselves as merely part of a whole economy and felt no obligations to other Africans.⁹⁶ While this approach was criticised by some who felt that the future of co-operatives was uncertain because they were at "a disadvantage in a capitalist economy",⁹⁷ the general attitude among African workers seems to have been one that viewed such African business as being identical to White and Indian enterprise.⁹⁸

Throughout the late 1940s the number of co-operatives continued to grow. The main force behind the movement was Mseleku, leader of the Nabantukop Co-operative. This co-operative had been formed in 1945⁹⁹ but proved to be popular in Durban even before it officially started in the city in May 1947 when over 800 people attended the inaugural meeting.¹⁰⁰ Through Mseleku's guidance, probably after consultation with Father Bernard Huss,¹⁰¹ a Natal Bantu Co-operative Advisory Council was formed in April 1946; annual general meetings began to be held; and a series of winter and summer schools were organized.¹⁰²

At the second winter school held in Durban from 2 to 21 July 1946 prospective organizers of co-operatives were taught the following subjects: economic virtues, the principles and practice of cooperation, social hygiene, bookkeeping, music and drama, and various other topics.¹⁰³ While many of the lessons appear to have been given by Huss himself,¹⁰⁴ it is clear that neither Mseleku nor the co-operatives themselves felt any reluctance in gaining advice from more militant people and organisations. A colleague of Huss remembers:

Father Huss was involved in teaching, yes, but there were a lot of communists around and a great many of the African co-operatives did not appreciate a tight rein. They talked to whosoever they pleased and as a result became rather radical. I do not believe that there was much that anyone could have done.¹⁰⁵

96. Ilanga lase Natal, 30 November 1946.

97. Ibid.

98. Interview with Mr G Bhengu, 2 February 1985.

99. Ukubambiswano and Ilanga lase Natal, 13 April 1946.

100. Ibid., 28 July 1947.

101. Father B Huss Papers, File: "Durban" Father B Huss - W J Mseleku, n.d.

102. Ilanga lase Natal, 12 July 1947.

103. Ukubambiswano, December 1949.

104. Father B Huss Papers, File: "Pundolani" passim.

105. Interview with Father St George, 10 September 1985.

While other schools were held for new organisers,¹⁰⁶ the co-operatives also offered literacy classes,¹⁰⁷ a music festival where the municipal orchestra explained and then played various classical pieces,¹⁰⁸ and other evenings of dancing, choral recitals and music played by *jasbaadjie* bands.¹⁰⁹

The views of the African co-operatives were, rather strangely, to accord with and be influenced by the ideas of Roman Catholics and communists, who were both at that time conducting a running battle over whether the Communist Party of South Africa was anti-religious.¹¹⁰ While this often bitter debate ensued,¹¹¹ both the Catholic Church and the Party were eagerly sustaining and encouraging the co-operative movement.

For the Catholic Church the co-operative societies were the basis for future social harmony, at least in African society, and a counter to communism. For the church the co-operative movement would prevent the spread of trade unionism¹¹² while providing Africans with a new social structure suited to the needs of the urban environment.¹¹³ To the Catholic Church the conflict between "capital and labour" produced a situation where "not only wealth but despotic power is concentrated into the hands of a few". Furthermore, the tendency for capital to unite and "labour unions (to)...internationalise" resulted in the creation of "two opposing camps who consider their interests mutually antagonistic". The solution for Africans was a co-operative society which was, in Father Denis Hurley's view, "that form of society which is not organised according to positions in the labour market but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society."¹¹⁴

The Communist Party of South Africa had developed a renewed interest in the political value of the co-operative societies during the latter part of the Second World War.¹¹⁵ In 1944 Moses Kotane, then Party secretary, wrote a pamphlet on how to operate co-operatives. Noting that "it is harder to break 20 matches than it is to break 1", Kotane saw in the societies the organisational means whereby people "learn how to do it together".¹¹⁶

106. Ilanga lase Natal, 13 April, 1946.

107. Ukubambiswano and Ilanga lase Natal, 12 July 1947.

108. Ibid., 8 February 1947.

109. Ukubambiswano, December 1949.

110. Father B Huss Papers, File : "Communism"; J R Khumalo "A Report on Communism in Durban" n.d. The Guardian and interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

111. See Edwards, "Recollections", pp 70-1.

112. Father B Huss Papers, File : "Durban", Father B Huss - Father A Kerautet, n.d.

113. Interview with Father St George, 10 September 1985. These attitudes are strikingly similar to those upheld and defended by Huss in the 1930s. Despite the criticism then levelled against them, the Catholic Church remained intransigent. See P B Rich, White Power and the Liberal Conscience : Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism 1921-1960, (Johannesburg, 1984), pp 47-9.

114. Father B Huss Papers, File : "Issues", Father D Hurley "The Catholic Faith in South Africa", n.d. **Emphasis added.**

115. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

116. M Kotane, Lets do it Together, (Cape Town, 1944).

In the period after the war the Party in Durban still maintained close links with trade unions¹¹⁷ but became even more eager to sustain and promote a militant grass roots nationalism that would pressure the then leadership of the ANC in Natal into becoming both more democratic and more militant.¹¹⁸ This thinking was in line with the general theoretical debate within the Party which was best articulated in a Party report issued shortly before dissolution in 1950:

...the national organisations can develop into powerful mass movements only to the extent that their contents and aims are determined by the interests of workers and peasants. The national organisations, to be effective, must be transformed into a revolutionary party of workers, peasants, intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie....In this party the class conscious workers and peasants of the national group concerned would constitute the main leadership. It would be their task to develop an adequate organisational apparatus, to conduct mass struggles against race discrimination, to combat chauvinism and racialism in the national movement, to develop class consciousness in the people and to force unity in action between the oppressed people and between them and the European working class.¹¹⁹

As was often the case such statements obscured as much as they revealed. In Durban there was a certain amount of disagreement over the relationship between the ANC and radical nationalism; nationalism and class and particularly on the question of whether a militant but small organised working class could assume the desired role of vanguard influence.

It was in this context that the strategic role of the co-operative movement appears to have been discussed. While there were some who saw the co-operative movement as developing an economic base for a racist and generally reactionary nationalism the matter never seems to have been resolved. However at least one Party member was actively engaged in assisting the movement. Arenstein explains the rationale:

The national question usually arises in the market. It arises particularly when a group which is economically backward starts trading and goes into business and then starts trying to get its own people to buy from it in preference to buying from others. The Afrikaners did that on a big scale when they started their Reddingsdaadbond in 1938.... Africans also began to use this Africanism to try and build up their business.¹²⁰

However while both the Catholics and communists were keen to see the importance of the co-operatives, it is fair to say that while both were able to assist the movement, the thrust behind the co-operatives came essentially from a grass roots level.¹²¹

The co-operative movement was to be the real site of organisational growth in Durban in the period from 1946 to 1950. While older overtly political or trade union bodies remained static and lacked a really

117. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

118. Informant to remain anonymous. Whilst this informant was only to become closely involved with ex-Party members in the early 1950s his testimony is generally extremely reliable.

119. UG 10/53; Report of the Select Committee on the Suppression of Communism Act.

120. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

121. Interview with Mr G Bhengu, 2 February 1982.

coherent support base, the co-operative societies were to develop and sustain a growing militancy which was intended to provide ordinary Africans with confidence, skills and a belief in their economic power to transform their position in society. Stanford Mtolo recalls:

It was a real beginning. You tell me how many groups - African political groups...can now ignore their people. Ja none. Well they could then and always did. Look at what Champion was doing. You laugh at the societies holding concerts, but the Africans are a part of the city - it was their money that bought the orchestra. We demanded our legitimate place in Durban. All that stuff about us being dirty and things. That really offended people. So we had to teach people a lesson. Showing our power to ourselves was the beginning. Up till then no other body had brought Africans to that stage.¹²²

The radical nature of the co-operative movement was to be clearly seen in an article written by a Chesterville co-operative leader which appeared in Ilanga lase Natal on 16 August 1947:

As an oppressed group there is a tendency, natural and understandable to place too much accent on politics. In a sense this cannot be avoided. The vote, however useful it is, is not everything. There are other powerful forces at work besides the vote, one of them being economic power. The man who wields a financial whip is often the master, the ruler, the law. We therefore congratulate the growth of the Co-operative Movement in Durban.¹²³

Having thus set out the perceived limitations which were embodied in other African political strategies and explained the economic dimension of politics, the writer then went on to offer a thinly veiled criticism of the ANC: the co-operative movement "is much more powerful, in membership and accumulated funds, than the Congress". Focussing on the city as a whole the article asserted that "this movement can easily penetrate the enemy camp and strike telling blows".¹²⁴

The tone of these articles then changed noticeably. The writer went on to declare in a rather sinister fashion that if the wishes of Africans, expressed through the co-operative movement, were not gained then a second stage would have been reached: "The authorities will only have themselves to blame if in their desperation, Africans resort to underground movements. History has shown that you cannot oppress a whole community without this happening. Already there are whisperings..."¹²⁵

There were more than whisperings. Many of the African proletariat felt frustrated and angered with an increasingly repressive city society. Taking to the streets in open revolt appeared to offer clear benefits. The outbreak of the January 1949 Riots was merely one indication of the changing tempo of proletarian struggle.¹²⁶

122. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1980.

123. Ilanga lase Natal, 16 August, 1947.

124. Ibid.

125. Ibid.

126. For an important analysis of these riots see T Nuttall, "It seems peace but it can be war: The Durban Riots of 1949 and the struggle for the city". Paper presented at the South African Historical Association conference, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, January 1989.

In Mkhumbane there was considerable enthusiasm for the abortive general strike call made by Zulu Phungula.¹²⁷ Although lacking both effective trade unions, having an ambivalent relationship to the Congress Youth League and specifically trying to avoid conflicts in the sphere of formal employment, the 1950 'Stay-Away' was relatively successful.¹²⁸

But there was more. In the proletariat there was a small group who desired to take to the streets in armed rebellion. Shack leader and staunch African nationalist Ashmon Nene explains:

Just a few people. Maybe twenty. They were mad. 'This country must be liberated' - you know like with the rest of Africa, by guns. 'The time has come - Vukani!' They even used our motto but the Congress Youth League was not part of that.¹²⁹

In the immediate aftermath of the January 1949 Riots the aspirant insurrectionists were in Mkhumbane, encouraging shack-dwellers to embark on a larger scale rebellion.¹³⁰ These attempts were to fail.

In a similar manner, by 1950 most of the more militant and idealistic of the co-operatives had either disappeared or changed into relatively profitable groups having no interest in transforming society. Often those that had never sustained a militant outlook also disappeared, due to both managerial incompetence or the very fact of their success. The availability of large sums provided people with the opportunity to embezzle or leave the co-operatives and set up individual enterprises. A number of the African independent traders who operated in Durban from the 1950s onwards had their origins in the co-operatives.

Many of the co-operatives became integrated into the expanding Nabantukop movement which had always been more middle class in orientation. As time went by they focussed more on bureaucratic issues leaving the more visionary aspects by the wayside. As the Nabantukop foundered it also became involved in such operations as the 'selling' of letters of exemption.¹³¹

As the co-operatives developed, prospects for transforming the whole concept into a more communalist socialism disappeared as they remained concerned just with marketing. While manufacturing co-operatives are generally accepted to be more difficult to develop than marketing ones, with lack of capital and technical knowledge being primary constraints, no-one ever attempted to develop upon the ideas of Victor Maillic.

Indian-owned shops and merchants effectively competed with African co-operatives through offering credit facilities and in offering certain goods, like paraffin, or bars of soap, at vastly reduced prices.¹³² Under

127. See Hemson, "Dockworkers", p 371.

128. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 1 July 1950.

129. Interview with Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984.

130. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 22 January 1949.

131. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985. By 1952 the Nabantukop operation had collapsed into bankruptcy.

132. MNAD; Cope Trading Report, September 1953.

the guise of assisting African co-operatives in the face of Indian competition, wealthy African traders then started "wholesale" business which began to compel small co-operatives to trade with them.¹³³

By 1949 the "fertilizer ran out". With workers earning declining real wages and the City Council halting, in 1950, the entry of Africans from any area but those reserves which surrounded Durban and still maintained a certain level of viable agricultural production, the amount of money available for redistribution within the city declined drastically. Shabalala, a resident of Mkhumbane explains:

After the Riots (of January 1949) was the time when the fertilizer ran out. That was the start of people becoming poor. No food, no jobs and lots of sickness. Then you had to look after yourself.¹³⁴

It was then that class tensions within the African proletariat became increasingly more evident.

Conclusion

The notion of 'New Africa' was intended to stimulate mass unity among ordinary Africans. The idea of mass movement means a diverse leadership, but the leaders were never really able to clearly define the ideology and lacked a real notion of how the city could be restructured. Many of the ex-peasants, while providing insights into capitalist market relations, lacked real experience in the city. Many were trying to steer clear of formal wage relations. While having charisma and able to make political capital out of the weaknesses apparent in the African elite's belief in the clear distinctions between righteousness and lawlessness, many of the new leaders were perhaps more jealous of the position of the elite than they were prepared to admit. Within the proletariat the notion of a broad mass unity was in contradiction to the deepening class contradictions then developing amongst the city's workforce. The working class had foregone struggles at the workplace, accepted the existence of the capitalist economy, and tried to sustain a notion of what it meant to be a worker through struggles outside the factory floor. While the proletariat was able to exert a clear and vociferous constraint over political expression in the city during the later 1940s, their failure to produce either radical or social democratic gains and the way in which African society had developed during the period was to result in a generally reduced level of political consciousness that was to last well into the 1950s.

133. Interview with Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984.

134. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 21 June 1985.

CHAPTER 3

'MKHUMBANE OUR HOME': MATERIAL STRUCTURES OF A NEW SHANTYTOWN COMMUNITY

Mkhumbane and the Pogrom of January 1949

By the late 1940s the African shack settlement at Cato Manor Farm had developed into a densely populated, vibrant and self-assertive shantytown community manifesting forms of consciousness which were of important influence among Durban's African population. In the period from 1946 to 1950 Africans had created a new sense of residential life in Cato Manor. 'Mkhumbane our home'¹ became the spatial centre of attempts by Africans, in the face of their growing estrangement within the rest of the city to establish the coherence of the world in which they lived. Central to this desire was the shack-dwellers' determination to acquire increased control over land in Cato Manor Farm.

During the 1949 riots, through the destruction of Indian-owned residential and trading property² and the virtual expulsion of Indian inhabitants from the area,³ Africans believed that they had 'won the battle of Cato Manor.'⁴ Immediately after the riots Africans organised a civilian guard in Mkhumbane in order to control their newly won space and to counter any police attempt to enter the shantytown maze.⁵ Shantytown leaders also endeavoured to compel the City Council to accept the fact of Africans now controlling their own territory.⁶ Mkhumbane was to be 'liberated' from all forms of unwanted external authority: 'Cato Manor was now ours through right of conquest.'⁷ Albertina Mzimela, a resident of the area recalls the significance of these riots for the African shantytowns: 'When the riots started, God, you knew what you were doing on that day. That lightning that struck that day made Africans think differently from the way they had been thinking'.⁸

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1. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.
 2. Only 18% of the total number of Indian shops attacked during the January which were either badly damaged or totally destroyed were located in this same area. U.G.36/1949; Commission of Enquiry into Riots in Durban, Exhibit 46. (Hereafter cited as U.G.36/1949).
 3. Of the 59 Indian families living on their own land in the Mkhumbane area before the riots, only nine families still remained in occupation of their land by the end of 1950. H2/CM, Vol 1; City Valuator and Estates Manager, undated. Forty-three percent of the Indian owned residences attacked during the riots were located in Cato Manor Farm. U.G.36/1949, Exhibit 44.
 4. MNAD; H2/CM, Vol. 1; Manager MNAD - Town Clerk, 30 July 1949.
 5. KCAV; Interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 21 July 1982.
 6. MNAD; H18/CM, vol. 1; Sworn Affidavit of Mr Esau Makatini, 15 March 1949.
 7. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985 and Mr C N Shum, Personal Memorandum, 3 November 1960.
 8. KCAV; Interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 21 July 1982.

The rioting in Mkhumbane in January 1949 was not merely a "free for all".⁹ In the shacklands, the riots assumed the characteristics of a pogrom: the organized killing of a class of Indians who controlled land and trading facilities in the area.¹⁰ In the shantytowns an increasingly assertive African populism became focussed on a struggle for residential amenities in the city. With shack residents having decided to make Mkhumbane their home, Africans clearly realized that Indian legal tenure in the area had to be swept away. Within the political culture of 'New Africa' were important notions of African ethnic unity, the acceptability of revenge, and a disrespect towards established notions of legality. Indians stood in the way of African shackdwellers' ambitions. The way to achieve control of city land was to overturn existing social structures in a way which allowed African shackdwellers to assume a dominant position in Mkhumbane. Aware of municipal weakness in controlling shantytowns, through looting and killing Indians power could be avenged in a way that would produce a social class in which African control could be established.

The recollections of Africans who marauded and burnt in the Cato Manor area in 1949 clearly indicate a probably then partially conscious determination to create a situation of political and social influx. In this vacuum the 'liberation' of the area could be effected. Tembinkosi Phewa's account illustrates this vividly:

We ran up to Pelwane's place at the top. There were some other Indians living there as well. Pelwane was inside his shop sitting himself. Then the cops arrived navy in blue coats. We sat on their truck and Pelwane came out. He said we could take everything - just leave me alone. Ja, but you see we just laughed and said we just want his women - the police - they could take the blankets and things! He just ran away with all the others - the Indians they were cowards. They were all like Italians - always with their hands up!¹¹

In amongst the killing and carnage, Africans were conscious of their ability to create a situation where no power themselves could dictate the terms of battle. Charles Khumalo recalls: "Ja! The police - they spoilt things sometimes, but they also stood by you know. Those policemen they hadn't seen us at Mkhumbane before - and they also wanted to steal".¹²

Using expressions from a never-forgotten past mixed with military images derived from recent service in World War Two,¹³ the battle cries bore witness to a community on the advance: crying "Zulus! Zulus!",¹⁴

9. Interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 21 July 1982.

10. Interview with Mr B Nair, 21 June 1985.

11. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 23 June 1985. Pelwane was later killed during these riots. For analysis of this term see G Rude, *Ideology and Popular Protest*, (London, 1980). It must be noted that this use of the notion of liberated zones and situations of political and social flux differs importantly from the use of the term in understanding revolutionary war. For such analysis see B Davidson, *The Peoples' Cause: A History of Guerrillas in Africa*, (London, 1981), pp. 161-8.

12. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 23 June 1985.

13. *Ibid.* According to this informant who himself served as a stretcher bearer in North Africa, was captured at the Fall of Tobruk and returned to Mkhumbane in 1947 after being demobilised, there were many ex-servicemen who settled in Cato Manor.

14. KCAV; Interview with Mr W S Manyathi, 16 September 1980

remembering Bambata,¹⁵ talking about "forcing the Indian tribe across the Umgeni" and worrying about "the Indian army forming to extract revenge". Mkhumbane came under the effective control of the African shantytown community.¹⁶

A further central feature in the consciousness of Africans living in Cato Manor at that time is that most memories of the outbreak of the riots are couched in terms of the needs of the shantytown community.¹⁷ Indians were at fault for standing in the way of shackdwellers' aspirations. As Charles Khumalo recalls, "We were all happy in that place until the Indians went and spoil everything. We were getting all we wanted and then - with the Indians - that was then the riots started".¹⁸

Within days of the conflagration subsiding, Africans took over land over the remains of the Indian shops in the area,¹⁹ while other, less wealthy entrepreneurs, filled the roadsides with small tables selling fruit and vegetables.²⁰ Within the African community there had for long been a call for Africans to be permitted to trade in the area. As the riots subsided, these aspirant entrepreneurs, who had even before the riots regarded themselves and been accepted as "our first leaders",²¹ formed the Zulu Hlanganani Buying and Co-operative Club, with a view to securing control over and access to the new facilities.²² Bryant Mqadi says, "...the Blacks were now at an advantage as the Indians had left. The Indians did leave. We beat them up. We burnt them."²³

As a result of this desire to gain access to more material wealth, many of the new entrepreneurs seriously believed that the killing of Indians during the riot was inevitable. Esau le Fleur, himself one of the African leaders, told Justice F.P. van der Heever, chairman of the Commission appointed to examine the Riots: "I think that (these killings) are justified - if you go into a snake's hole and keep prodding that snake, when that snake comes out he will bite you".²⁴ Clearly, if you were prepared to question Indian power in the area you must also be prepared to pre-empt the counter attack.

African workers living in the area also noted what they believed to be a "new trend of ill-feeling amongst the Indians" towards African aspirations.²⁵ Talking about the episode immediately prior to the

15. UG 36/1949; Evidence of Mrs I Mkwana and Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 23 June 1985.

16. Interview with Mrs A Mnguni, 25 September 1980.

17. For such analysis see E G Webster, "The 1949 Durban Riots - a Case Study in Race and Class", in P L Bonner (ed.), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, (Johannesburg, 1977), pp 23-7.

18. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 30 June 1985.

19. KCAV; Interview with Mr W S Manyathi, 16 September 1980.

20. Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, pp 296.

21. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 8 July 1985.

22. KCAV; Interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980 KCAV; Interview with Mrs A Mnguni, 25 September 1980 and Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p 303.

23. KCAV; Interview with Mr B Mqadi, 11 August 1980.

24. UG 36/1949; Evidence of Mr E le Fleur. This person was also known as Esau Makatini.

25. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 30 June 1985.

outbreak of rioting Ngcobo recalls: "Well, we did live amongst them but a certain degree of recalcitrance was discernible in such affirmations they would make such as 'This is our place, our home. We were born here.'²⁶ To shackdwellers such claims were seen as both unreasonable and provocative.

In the vacuum created by the riots many Africans began to stockpile large quantities of shack-building material. A municipal inspector commented that "Natives have stacks of second hand corrugated iron stacked next to their shacks along Pataan Road. Some of this material is used to repair their shacks and some to build kitchens onto their shacks. I have also seen shacks where additional rooms have been built."²⁷

Prior to the riots there were already 3 093 African occupied shacks on Cato Manor Farm. Soon after the disturbances ended, a further 303 shacks had been erected.²⁸ Most of this development occurred in the Mkhumbane area. Of this area only thirty-five and a half acres had maintained agricultural rates status prior to January 1949. The vast majority of these agricultural ratings had been cancelled due to the existence of shantytown settlements on the plots. By the end of 1950 only eight and a half acres of land in the Mkhumbane area still held agricultural ratings.²⁹ Prior to January 1949, there were 4 040 African families living in Mkhumbane. Soon after the Riots 4 456 African families lived in 1 264 shacks.³⁰

The liberation of Cato Manor was the first really tangible indication of the new found assertiveness of the African shackdwellers in the area. Here in these shantytowns was the spirit of a 'New Africa': now confidently assertive and eager to entrench itself and expand. The news of Zulu Phungula's call for a general strike for March 1949 was greeted enthusiastically in Cato Manor,³¹ and many of the shantytown dwellers eagerly responded to the 1950 "Stay Away Campaign" called jointly by the African National Congress and the Natal Indian Congress.³²

A major feature of the public debate which ensued after the riots concerned the manner in which Africans in the city offended dominant bourgeois morality. According to the latter, Africans in Cato Manor were illegally resident, enjoyed the criminal life and generally cast a shadow over the civilised citizenry.³³ However, in the municipality there were influential officials who were conscious that the role of the Cato Manor shantytowns during the riots was merely symptomatic of a far more serious problem, the response to which

26. KCAV; Interview with Mr A Ngcobo, 13 September 1980.

27. MNAD; H18/CM, vol. 1; Handwritten notes by Municipal Native Administration Department Inspector and City Medical Officer of Health - Manager, MNAD, 2 March 1950.

28. MNAD; H2/CM; vol. 1; Chief Superintendent - Manager MNAD, 2 March 1950.

29. MNAD; H2/CM vol. 1; City Valuator and Estates Manager, undated. See also Natal Regional Survey, Additional Report No. 2, The Durban Housing Survey, (Pietermaritzburg, 1952), p 361.

30. MNAD; H2/CM, vol. 1; Chief Superintendent - Manager, NAD, 2 March 1950.

31. Interview with Mr M Kunene, 19 May 1985. The action was nevertheless a failure.

32. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 8 July 1985 and Mr B Nair 27 June 1985.

33. See Natal Mercury, Daily News, passim. Editorials in Ilanga lase Natal were constantly dealing with the problem of why such attitudes remained entrenched within Durban's White population. See for example Ilanga lase Natal, 2 February 1946.

would require the recognition of complexities not encompassed in the public morality of the times. Havemann, the newly appointed Manager of the Municipal Native Administration Department, noted that "the sheer removal of the same people to another place can hardly change their character", and that "While there are criminals and idlers, the residents of Cato Manor are not a mass of brawling insurgents. They are on the whole decent working men trying their best to provide for their families...The problem has merely changed its venue and come out in the open".³⁴ Key municipal officials recognised that the ratepayers' ideas as to the supposed existence of a hegemonic urban culture existed in a close and uneasy relationship to other, quite viable, patterns of social relations and values, which were becoming increasingly popular.

However the ability of the Cato Manor residents to unite and gain a certain control over their living space did not amount to the beginnings of any form of 'peoples' revolt'.³⁵ As is so often the case, the idea of securing a liberated zone does create a certain transient unity amongst shack residents. However such strategies are often ill-conceived and rather more the expression of crises in a society than a manifestation of real political strategy. There were certain fundamental contradictions in these peoples' own concept of power and its relationship to their developing structures of material life and between their newly won space and state and capital that were never really resolved in ways that could permit a qualitative leap into determined and organised political activity, even that conducted at the level of maintaining their tenuous security.

The seizure of land and power in the area revealed an enthusiastic unity among the shack residents. The manner in which the shantytowns had expanded since January 1949 was a vindication, even a legitimation, of the patterns of consciousness that had developed in a rather traumatic fashion since the middle 1940s. Within this actually rather transient unity and collective fervour there were, however, certain contradictory perceptions.

Much of the militancy which had developed amongst working-class Africans in the earlier 1940s filtered through into Mkhumbane, where it became transformed in the shantytowns. While the fervour and many of the symbols of working-class consciousness were sustained, the purpose and direction of African workers' perception of class conflict changed.

In the shantytown the aspirant entrepreneurs, already respected as a leader group, and the newly urbanised African peasants viewed themselves as being in conflict with the established business and manufacturing interests in the city.³⁶ Promoting within a shantytown settlement, which was rapidly gaining a greater influence in the informal or "illegal" commercial network that operated throughout the city's African areas, the idea of a community united in its attempt to create a 'New Africa', the leaders acquired a vociferous support base amongst an already militant population.³⁷

From this impulse developed the idea that Mkhumbane was somehow different. This often rather vaguely expressed feeling for the alternate society was composed of three important attitudes. Firstly a

34. MNAD; H2/CM, vol. I; Manager MNAD - Town Clerk, 30 July 1949.

35. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

36. Interview with Mr H C Sibisi, 11 November 1985.

37. Interview with Mr J Hlope, 24 July 1985.

rejection of authority, particularly municipal, police or Indian authority that originated from outside of the perceived spatial boundaries of the African shantytowns.³⁸ Secondly, a desire to establish and legitimate Mkhumbane as a new haven existing outside of the patterns of conflict present in the rest of the city.³⁹ Finally the articulation of a new morality, a consciousness aimed at escaping from subjection to a dominant ideology. This could and often did involve the rejection of both White standards, the ideology of the 'educated African', and also the concepts of class divisions within the African proletariat. This striving for an alternate society became fused with a more general level of consciousness to produce a dynamic and vigorously assertive notion of the meaning of life in Mkhumbane.

This idea of a new shantytown society was rapidly grafted onto both a widely held belligerency and chauvinism. The belligerency was less focussed and therefore more varied in its goals than the forms of consciousness and class conflict sustained by the African working class since the early 1940s. Such a belligerency ranged over issues which had not yet become fully integrated into organised working class politics and led to actions whose sustaining force varied considerably. The chauvinism essentially derived from processes sustained within the industrialising local economy through their important role within the labour process. Penetrating all aspects of life, this chauvinism vitiated an aggressive, self-conscious, ambitious mentality based upon the existence of regional and ethnic differences in the African population in the city. The chauvinism produced a politically conservative form of millenarian populism which exaggerated the qualities of one's own perceived group and belittled and vilified the social norms of those perceived to be outsiders.⁴⁰

In order to comprehend these forms of consciousness and the manner in which they inter-related - a collective feeling and perception which was reflected in the nature and form of the Mkhumbane shantytown's responses to the crises of the late 1940s - it is necessary to look back to the origins of that new society. Contemplating this vibrant new society which emerged during the later 1940s, it is evident that the material structures of everyday life in the area changed in various important ways. However, some changes came more rapidly or more completely than others. Issues affected the lives of various people in often extrinsic fashion. The newly urbanised, the factory worker, the aspirant entrepreneur, the shebeen keeper, the marginalised wife or girlfriend or the *tsotsi*: each have their own history. For each there were different patterns and periods of growth and crises which did not of necessity proceed alongside or correlate with the material processes affecting the lives of other shantytown dwellers.⁴¹

38. Interview with Mr C N Shum 18 July 1985.

39. For discussion on the concept of regional differences and the relationship between consciousness and space, see C Gore, Regions in Question: Space, Development Theory and Regional Policy, (London, 1984).

40. For similar analysis see E Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels, Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries (Manchester, 1959), and Bandits, (Harmondsworth, 1969).

41. For the debate which surrounds the problem of conceptualising the nature of a community see F Cooper (ed) Struggle for the City: Migrant Labour, Capital and the State in Urban Africa, (Beverly Hills, 1983) and D Smit 'Towards a Framework for Analysing Community Struggles', Paper presented to the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa, (Cape Town, July 1985).

City, Countryside and the People of Mkhumbane

In 1932, when Cato Manor was incorporated into the Borough of Durban, the African population of the area was approximately 2 500 persons living in 500 shacks. In 1943 and 1944, surveys estimated that there were between 15 000 and 17 000 living in this area.⁴² In October 1946 the results of a further survey found that there were 5 000 African families living in this same area.⁴³ With numerous statistics indicating that average African urban family sizes in Durban during the period were small, it is thus possible to state that in the years between 1943 and 1946, when the total African population of the city increased enormously, the population in Cato Manor Farm either remained static or probably even decreased. It appears that most of the people who entered the city during this period either sought accommodation in the already over-crowded municipal or privately owned compounds and hostels,⁴⁴ or in backyard kias in the city or in the other shantytown areas such as in Merebank, Bayhead or Sea Cow Lake.⁴⁵ Evidence to support the idea that there was no really settled population in Cato Manor Farm derives from the correspondence of Roman Catholic priests in both the centre of the city and Bellair, an area adjacent to Cato Manor Farm. During this period the Roman Catholic Church was experiencing great difficulties in acquiring a stable congregation due to the African population continually moving around within the city and always being spread out in the many small kias and backyard quarters.⁴⁶ Furthermore the fact that the African people in Cato Manor Farm did not increase in number during this period was not due to the building and settlement of the Chesterville Location.⁴⁷

The vast majority of the people who were re-located to Chesterville came from the hovels in central Durban or had already been living in shacks on the land used to develop Chesterville Location. While the land of Cato Manor Farm was potentially suitable for shantytowns, the real growth of the area occurred only from the middle of 1940 onwards. Up until 1946, Cato Manor Farm had a semi-agricultural feel to it. Indian market gardeners continued to keep highly profitable vegetable and fruit lands while Africans living in the area grazed large herds of cattle on the grassy slopes soon to be covered with shack settlements. Even the African freehold areas of Chateau and Good Hope Estates, which adjoined both Chesterville and Cato Manor Farm were not

42. TCF; 19L, "Crime and Unauthorized Shacks", vol. 1; Cato Manor Ratepayers' Association - Health Committee, 1 September 1944; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 24 October 1943 and Town Clerk, Memorandum re Crime and Disease in Booth Road Area, 29 May 1944.

43. Ilanga lase Natal, 12 October 1946.

44. City of Durban, Mayor's Minute, Report of the Municipal Native Administration Department, 1946-1947.

45. Ibid.

46. Interview with Father St George, 10 July 1985 and Father B Huss Papers, File : Durban, Father B Huss - Father B Kerautet, undated.

47. TCF; 19L, vol. 1; Cato Manor Ratepayers' Association - Town Clerk, 19 October 1944 and Manager MNAD - Town Clerk, 15 November 1944.

densely populated. Many of the African residents of these areas had large and neat plantations of mango, avocado pear and pawpaw trees.⁴⁸ An African resident of Cato Manor Farm from 1939 onwards recalls that during this period Mkhumbane "did not have a condition of completeness".⁴⁹ However, by 1947, Mkhumbane was accurately described as having the appearance "of a recently disturbed anthill".⁵⁰ By 1948, out of the more than 150 000 Africans officially believed to be resident, legally or illegally, in the city,⁵¹ reliable estimates put the total African population of Cato Manor Farm at 29 000.⁵² The pace of this development can be seen in the fact that in 1944 one small area of Mkhumbane had only 27 shack buildings. By 1948 this same area housed 780 people in 111 shacks. Of the people in the area who were new to the city, the vast majority had only been in the city for less than five months.⁵³

With the beginnings of an Indian-owned bus transport system to Chesterville and the totally overcrowded conditions in areas closer to the city, Cato Manor Farm became an area of new shantytown growth.⁵⁴ The area was now within easy commuting distance of the main factory area, which then stretched along Sydney Road to Jacobs and to those parts of the city centre which were the nexus of African life: offices of Kwa Muhle, the beerhalls, markets, bus ranks and shops in the Grey Street, Alice Street and Warwick Avenue area. Cato Manor Farm was also hilly, allowing, initially at least, for the easy disposal of any waste matter,⁵⁵ and fairly effectively concealed both from the city itself and the White residential areas of Westville and the old Main Line suburbs of Sea View, Bellair and Malvern. Furthermore many of the Indian landowners in the area were becoming increasingly aware of the profits which could be earned through allowing shack settlements to be developed on their land.

The African shantytowns in Cato Manor Farm did not really start to expand significantly until 1946. By 1950 the African population of the area could have constituted approximately twenty percent of the total African population of the city.⁵⁶ However, that growth in absolute and relative terms signifies little, particularly

48. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

49. KCAV; Interview with Mr M Nngadi, 11 August 1980.

50. UG 46/1947, Durban Native Administration Commission, Report of Commission.

51. MNAD; H2/CM, vol. 1; Manager, MNAD, "Native Housing Policy", November 1948. This figure was 50 000 higher than estimated by the Report of the Durban Native Administration Commission. See UG 36/1947, Report of Commission. Officially the municipality refused to admit to such a high figure, citing only 110 000. Mayor's Minute, Report of the Municipal Native Administration Department, 1947-1948.

52. MNAD; H2/CM, vol. 1; Chief Superintendent - Manager MNAD, 2 March 1950.

53. Ilanga lase Natal, 30 October 1948 and MNAD; H18/CM, vol. 1; Survey of a Cato Manor Shacks Settlement, 15 October 1948.

54. For details of this transport system see L Torr, "A Ticket to Drive: The Struggle over African Bus Services in Durban, 1930-1950". Paper presented to a Conference on the History of Natal and Zululand, (Durban, July 1985), p 9.

55. UG 46/1947; Evidence of the City Medical Officer of Health.

56. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985.

when analysing levels of consciousness.⁵⁷ The key issues in understanding of the increasing popularity of the area and the associated growth of militancy concern the type of people who moved into the area and the increasing material wealth controlled by members of that new community.

The influx of people into this area cannot merely be ascribed to the fact of the continuing collapse of viable agricultural production in many of the rural areas both in the province and in areas further afield.⁵⁸ It is true that labour service on many White-owned farms did decline during this period. Similarly drought conditions, the loss of cattle, and the drastic reduction of the cereal harvest did result in extreme hardship for Africans in areas such as Msinga, Ladysmith, Nongoma, Hlabisa, Harding, and in Pondoland.⁵⁹

However, the structural relationship between the industrialising economy of Durban and the countryside encompassed a far greater complexity of tensions and ambivalences than has previously been accepted. It is wrong to see the relations of production and reproduction in the African countryside as producing forms of society which were merely marginalised, systematically ravished of intrinsic autonomy and functional only in terms of providing a cheap adult male labour force for the city. In the city itself various class conflicts over the nature of space and its control revealed Durban not to be fully capitalist, even by the 1940s. The obvious requirements of any system, with both determinations in the city and countryside to reproduce itself cannot really explain how specific class conflicts reveal a resolution of particular contradictions and the commensurate development of further contradictory processes.⁶⁰

Many of those entering Durban came as individuals. Some came to the city on the advice of elder relatives having secure employment in Durban.⁶¹ Others, with artisan skills, went directly to Mkhumbane to build the new shacks, often leaving fairly secure employment to avail themselves of the new opportunities.⁶²

Many of those who entered the area individually were women. Health and medical facilities in the rural areas were for the most part totally inadequate.⁶³ Many pregnant African women journeyed by train to hospitals and doctors in Durban. King Edward VIII Hospital's maternity section was forever overcrowded.⁶⁴ Many of these patients came from areas outside of the city. During 1947 it was reported that 500 African women were admitted to this hospital after having given birth on the roadside on their way to the hospital.⁶⁵

57. It was never merely the actual growth of the shantytowns that concerned municipal officials, but rather the relationship between that growth and consciousness. MNAD; H2/CM, vol. 1; Manager MNAD - Town Clerk, 31 January 1952.

58. For such an analysis see A Manson, "From Cato Manor to Kwa Mashu", *Reality*, March 1981.

59. D Hemson, "Dockworkers, Labour Circulation and Class Struggles in Durban, 1940-1959", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 4, no. 2 (1978), p106 and KCAV; interview with Mr C C Majola, 20 June 1979 and interview with Mr S Bourquin 12 July 1980.

60. Cooper, *Struggle*, pp 16-18.

61. Interview with Mr M Kunene, 21 April 1985.

62. KCAV; Interview with Mrs A Afrika, 25 September 1980.

63. Interview with Matron Z Nkosi, 12 July 1980.

64. UG 46/1947; Evidence of City Medical Officer of Health.

65. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 17 April 1948.

The consciousness on the part of African women as to the need to undertake in some cases long and expensive journeys to health facilities in Durban did not merely arise through peoples' innate beliefs in the benefits of the city. In many cases health facilities in Durban were as inadequate as those existing in rural areas.⁶⁶ Many doctors operating in Durban had fairly sophisticated information and advertising networks which endeavoured to attract rural patients.

One such doctor, a Dr Edwards, whose Zulu name was 'Bobese', employed African male agents who journeyed on the trains, even going as far as the Witwatersrand male migrant hostels, handing out literature advertising 'Bobese' as a specialist in pre-and-post-natal care.⁶⁷ In Durban, 'Bobese' had under his influence many of the ricksha-pullers who would wait at the railway station, search for pregnant women and take them, by a circuitous and thus more costly route, to the wealthy doctor's consulting rooms which were in fact situated in Alice Street, just a short distance from the railway station down Soldiers Way.⁶⁸ While many of these women did not have close relatives in Durban, many remained in the city due to complications at child-birth, impoverishment, the inability to return 'home', or other diverse reasons. Situations could thus develop where many men would enter Durban in search of their female friends⁶⁹.

Many women journeyed to the city after the male migrant spouse working in Durban had consistently failed to send money to the rural home,⁷⁰ which in many cases was now almost solely dependent upon cash remittances from the growing African proletariat. Often wives and children moved to the city after hearing of the husband's infidelity.⁷¹ Rural life also caused tragic personal dislocations that pushed many women into the city to restart a shattered life.⁷²

For African women in Durban the only official sanctioned accommodation was at the Grey Street and Merebank Women's Hostels. Conditions in these hostels were appalling.⁷³ Facilities were poor, with no special accommodation available for either expectant women, or women with infants; overcrowding had already reached endemic proportions; and continual police harassment made these hostels a tenuous place of abode for many new to the city.⁷⁴

Many women moved into the growing shack settlements. In his assessment of the November 1948 statistics on the total African population of the city, Havemann, the new Manager of the Municipal Native Administration Department commented:

66. Interview with Dr C Nupen, 13 July 1980.

67. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 21 April 1985 and Mr C Khumalo, 14 July 1985.

68. *Ibid.*

69. Interview with Matron Z Nkosi, 12 July 1980.

70. Interview with Mr M Kunene, 21 April 1985.

71. *Ibid.*

72. MNAD; H18/CM, vol. 1; Report of Shack Survey Inspector, undated.

73. UG 46/1949; Evidence of Mrs M Lavoipierre.

74. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 1 June 1946 and 31 May 1947.

I have arrived at my figures by taking the number of males registered and assuming that females and children have increased in rough proportion since the 1946 Census. The growth of shacks suggests that this is a conservative approach, and that the influx of women and children has probably exceeded the proportionate increase in the number of men.⁷⁵

Many of the African nuclear families who moved to Mkhumbane in the period from the middle 1940s onwards did not do so as a result of rural pestilence and disease or of cattle, land or crop shortages, or because of changing labour conditions on farms. Many destitute people were forced to vacate the countryside as a direct result of the activities of African entrepreneurs based in Durban. Most of these entrepreneurs who lived in Mkhumbane had close connections to rural areas. Indeed many of the Mkhumbane residents who were later to become wealthy through the running of legal licensed business ventures in Durban gained their initial capital through their active intervention in promoting the penetration of a money economy in the rural areas. The extent to which these tragic displacements were occurring should not be underestimated.

During this period an African agent for wool producers was consistently embezzling funds which should have been forwarded to independent African sheep-farmers in East Griqualand. Growing desperate many of the farmers journeyed to Durban, seeking and eventually gaining legal redress. Already in debt and living in Mkhumbane, many merely remained in the city.⁷⁶

Many racketeers had either been peasant farmers themselves, sons of peasants, or fairly well educated. Knowing the peasant way of life and still having close connections in particular rural areas, they organised sweepstakes in which they sold off 1 tickets to passersby. Always changing their area of operation, but remaining within the Grey Street and Alice Street shopping area, the operator and his assistants would set up a table on the pavement, diligently take down the particulars of each entrant and inform the person when the draw would be made. The draw for these ventures, which were called "i-link" were often never made, but when there was a "lucky winner" the fortunate person was always one of the unknown instigators of the whole operation.⁷⁷ While Africans rapidly grew wise to these fraudulent dealings, the city was always full of visitors and unsuspecting rural immigrants.⁷⁸ Not satisfied with the extent of these operations in the city some operators even took the ventures into rural Natal. Encouraging peasants to sell off many of their cattle to purchase "shares", cattle that the peasantry were desperately trying to protect against the Union Government's attempts to reduce overstocking,⁷⁹ these entrepreneurs "killed each area, one by one, but never returning to

75. MNAD; H2/CM, vol. 1; Manager MNAD Native Housing Policy, November 1948.

76. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.

77. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 21 April 1985.

78. *Ibid* and Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 24 July 1985. Khumalo, who had been a wagon and then car driver for a farmer in the Orange Free State during the 1930s, would often journey to Durban collecting Africans "wandering around" and take them to Durban.

79. Walker, *Kaffirs*, p 33.

the same area again".⁸⁰ Hoping for a cash windfall but suffering the loss of much of their valued capital, many left the land, some settling in Mkhumbane.

A further income-generating device involved migrants from Pondoland. Poverty-stricken Mpondo were often seen in and around Durban, walking along the way to Johannesburg and the mines.⁸¹ This apparently provided the inspiration for many entrepreneurs to hire a car, journey to the gold-mines and offer to transport the Mpondo back to their home district. Mpondo migrants, now with brand new khaki trousers, sparkling new mine helmets purchased solely for the welcoming party in their rural district accepted the offer eagerly. With a fair amount of cash and possibly also a few gold sovereigns,⁸² the migrants spoke enthusiastically about their home life to the listening driver. Arriving in Durban the driver would take the travellers to a beerhall where he would tell his cronies all the personal details of his passengers. By the time the beerhall closed "there were the Pondos - in their blankets and shiny hats, with all their money gone!"⁸³ Many of these people merely remained in Durban, where in their destitute state they filtered into Mkhumbane, living in the settlement called Draaihoek which soon became one of the most filthy and most militant areas even by the standards of Mkhumbane.⁸⁴ Significantly these entrepreneurs, although having connections with Mkhumbane never attempted to conduct such activities in the shantytown. Kunene recalls: "They would get killed - beaten. We knew them, they were our leaders."⁸⁵

There were also many people who moved voluntarily to Durban. There is evidence to suggest that peasant farmers often spent valuable money on educating their eldest sons at the various mission schools. When this son acquired a basic education, mainly in technical subjects, the whole family would then move to Durban. Hlope, who lived with his family in Harding, went to School in the late 1930s and came to Durban in 1947. The decision to move to Durban and prosper on Hlope's education was thus made long before drought conditions hit in Harding in the middle 1940s. It is not accurate to assume, as Hemson does, that all people who moved to Durban after a period of crisis in a rural area were merely responding to that crisis.⁸⁶ Hlope recalls:

My father was a farmer down the South Coast at Harding. He was good and even the Europeans respected him. He sent me to this mission school and when I learnt about

80. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.

81. Interview with Mr N Mcnyama, 21 July 1985.

82. These were purchased from the mine company as a "type of investment". Interview with Mr S Shabalala, 21 July 1985.

83. *Ibid.*

84. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985 and Mr J Mzimela, 20 October 1985.

85. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 19 July 1985.

86. Interview with Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1985. For valuable theoretical analysis on peasant attitudes over time see C Meillassoux, "The Economic Bases of Demographic Reproduction : From the Domestic Mode of Production to Wage Earning", *Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1 (October 1983). Hemson, "Dockworkers", p 108.

machines and passed Standard Five or Six we all came to Durban. That was in 1946. We stayed at Cabazini where my father had some shacks. I was conductor and then driving the Indian buses.⁸⁷

This permanent movement into Mkhumbane manifested itself not only in individual or family settlement, but also in larger more purposeful groups. In the late 1940s a group of Basotho settled in Draaihoek.⁸⁸ At around the same time a group of wealthy peasants from the Ladysmith area entered Mkhumbane, intent upon setting up shackshops.⁸⁹ Many of these people were to become the main instigators and leaders of the Zulu Hlanganani Buying Cooperative Club. A group of Mpondo women settled in Draaihoek where they set up lucrative shimeyane brewing activities.⁹⁰ Drew comments upon this process :

In Cato Manor I can assure you, it was a cosmopolitan bunch. Both the Sothos, the Transkeians, Zulus...they all lived there because they - it wasn't the best of places to roam through, It was a very dangerous place because there were these...there were those who lived there because they had to live there; they had nowhere else to live, but there were the opportunists who took the opportunity of getting in there as well.⁹¹

The new residents of Mkhumbane had the makings of an African entrepreneur class. Among this group many had recollections of a parental wealth which they were intent upon restoring for themselves, albeit in different circumstances. Remembering his childhood days at Obivane near Paulpietersburg, Sibisi, one of the leading behind-the-scenes people among the aspirant entrepreneurs, remarked: "I was also headboy at the place called Kwa Mayingaza, meaning the sea patch of land where you look over and come to no end. ...there was a very big piece of land ploughed with mealies".⁹²

This crop was cultivated and owned by the Africans living on the farm owned by an Afrikaner. Living on the farmer's land they were allowed to keep cattle and horses, and cultivate land in exchange for labour services. The farmer was keen to ensure that his labourers were relatively prosperous. Sibisi continues:

You can have your home, have cattle and have a plot. In fact the good advantage that was there - the bull, the farmer's bull you would be able to use. There was no jealousy in getting good seed. You see what was important...was that the Dutch people did not want a poor man. If a man was poor, he was given cattle and food and all then came and work....Very fortunately my mother was brought up when she was very young in farms. She could do dressing, cooking. I was a European when I was brought up. While I went to school I was just like a young man from town...And the house - a four roomed house - a very nice house. Table and all...with a silver bed and a watch, a big watch....⁹³

87. Interview with Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1985.

88. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 9 January 1981, and Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980.

89. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985.

90. Port Natal Development Board slide archive.

91. Interview with Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980.

92. Interview with Mr H C Sibisi, 5 November 1985.

93. *Ibid.*

The municipality had for long recognised this fact. In June 1943 the Town Clerk had stated that 'undesirable native (male and female)...leave their kraals and settle in the City for the purposes of following activities which to them are remunerative but are in any case undesirable from every moral and social point of view'.⁹⁴ The settlement of most of such minded Africans in Cato Manor in the late 1940s was to be a vital component in the changing nature of Mkhumbane.

When considering the influx of people moving into Durban in the period from the middle 1940s statistical data confirms and complements the testimony of many of those new city dwellers. The vast majority of African males employed in Durban did not originate from areas in close proximity to the city. In 1951, approximately 60% of the city's African male labour force came from areas in Natal and Zululand, but remote from Durban. A further 20% entered the city from outside the province.⁹⁵ Within the growing shantytown sprawl in Cato Manor Farm the overall trend was much the same. In the Haviland Road area, only 11% of the African shack dwellers originated from areas around Durban. Nearly 29% of the Africans in this particular area came from other areas, some as far afield as Nyasaland and Lesotho.⁹⁶

Of the 364 Africans living in the Newtown shantytown in May 1948, only 18% originated from the near vicinity of Durban. Approximately 35% came from other areas in Natal while 47% came from outside the province.⁹⁷ In this particular case the proportion of people who came from outside Natal was higher than the norm owing to the fact that a large group from the Harrismith area had all moved down to Mkhumbane and settled in Newtown.⁹⁸

Of the people who were moving into Durban for the first time and settling in Mkhumbane, the vast majority came from rural reserves not White farms.⁹⁹ This was in spite of the fact that during this period the basis upon which Africans lived and worked on White farms was being restructured. Massive resettlements from White farms were taking place and Africans were being compelled, reluctantly, to accept wage labour conditions of service on many White farms. In Mkhumbane, 780 Africans lived in a shantytown on land owned by Karim Shah, a shantytown only developed after 1944; 59% of the 320 people living there who were new to Durban came from rural reserves. Only 35% of these 320 Africans came from White farms.¹⁰⁰

94. TCF; 19L, vol. 1; Town Clerk-Native Administration Committee, June 1943.

95. Natal Regional Survey, vol.7; The Native Reserves of Natal, (Cape Town, 1949), pp.94-100.

96. MNAD; H18/CM, vol. 1; Schedule of Shack Dwellers : Haviland Road, May 1948.

97. Ibid., Schedule of Shack Dwellers : Newtown, May 1948. Both of these surveys were undertaken with a view to resettling people to the newly developed Umlazi Glebe Emergency Camp. Ibid., Acting Manager MNAD - Inspector de Klerk, 3 May 1948.

98. Interview with Mr S Shabalala, 21 June 1985.

99. CKM; Reel 15A 2 : XC9 :30/84; ANC (Natal Branch), Annual Report, 1946, p 136.

100. MNAD; H18/CM, vol. 1; Survey of a Cato Manor Shack Settlement, 15 October 1948. See also 19L, vol. 1 'Report of an Investigation into the Position of Natives at Cato Manor and Newlands', conducted on Tuesday 22 June 1943, undated.

Durban derived only 20% of its adult male African workforce from the rural areas which surrounded the city.¹⁰¹ Agricultural production in the Lower Tugela, Ndwedwe, Pinetown, Umbumbula, Umziato and Inanda areas appears not to have declined to the extent that Africans from these areas were compelled to enter wage labour in Durban.¹⁰² Furthermore those Africans who did work in Durban and came from any of these seven reserves appear to have preferred to utilise the relatively developed road and rail network to commute on a weekly or fairly frequent basis.¹⁰³

In the peri-urban areas this preference for choosing not to reside permanently in the city was even more marked. A survey conducted by the Municipal Native Administration Department and compiled in April 1951 found that the vast majority of the 4496 African male workers in registered employ in the city and originating from these areas, commuted on a daily basis. This survey was found to correlate accurately with an earlier Local Health Commission report.¹⁰⁴

Africans living in these areas immediately surrounding the expanding city were generally reluctant to become involved in wage labour. Many of the agricultural producers were defiantly upholding the virtues of a barter economy and merely viewed the growing African population of the city as a potentially rich source of gain. The most well-known and resilient of these barter enterprises in the city was that run by women from the Umbumbulu region. Bringing goods ranging from live poultry to goats, fresh fruit and vegetables to basket weaving, these women set up stalls on the wide pavements surrounding the Dalton Road Mens' Hostel and Beerhall.¹⁰⁵ With both parties always haggling over value, the women would exchange their commodities for "almost anything" which could be purchased from shops in Durban.¹⁰⁶ Most of the commodities accepted by the women were clothing, blankets, cloth, paraffin, candles, soap or lanterns. With the city becoming increasingly dominated by capitalist social relations these and other similar activities were highly valued by many Africans in the city. As Thomas Shabalala remarks,

You have to have some clothes. If you bought a shirt you went to Indians in Grey Street. They would shout at you - swear if you took your time but you always got vest or handkerchief free with your shirt, socks with a pair of khakis. That was a lot of money and you don't need all these socks. So if you don't have money you go to Dalton and give them to get a fowl or something.¹⁰⁷

By the middle 1950s this barter operation and other similar activities had disappeared.

101. *The Native Reserves of Natal*, pp 94-100.

102. *Ibid.*, MNAID; H2/KM, vol. 1; Union Government, Department of Native Affairs Commission, February 1949.

103. R H Smith, *Labour Resources of Natal*, (Cape Town, 1952).

104. C N Shum, *Totals and Percentages Extracted from the Peri-Urban Survey*, 18 April 1981.

105. Interview with Mr M Kenene, 5 May 1985.

106. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 20 June 1985.

107. *Ibid.*

During the massive movement to the city in the later 1940s, the great majority of Africans settling in the city were compelled to seek employment in Durban through rural poverty. This process has been long accepted as a basic characteristic of proletarianization. But the reasons for rural poverty and movement to the cities are more complex than has been accepted. Furthermore, many moved into the city for other reasons which often had little to do with rural poverty or with the drive to enter formal wage employment. Most of the new population came from areas remote from Durban and "certainly viewed themselves as in the city for good".¹⁰⁸ Africans living close to the city were reluctant to work in the city and many used the city environment in ways that could assist in sustaining pre-capitalist social relations both in their own rural settings and among the African population of the city itself. Those who did work in the city and came from these nearby areas preferred to migrate and few entered Cato Manor.

The growing population of the African shantytowns in Cato Manor Farm was not solely composed of people new to the city. For example in one particular area, it was found that 41% of the inhabitants were new to Durban; 59% having moved into this settlement from other areas in Durban.¹⁰⁹ Many members of the African proletariat working and living in various parts of the city moved into Mkhumbane. Most merely rented rooms or a part of a room from shacklords. However some did group themselves together and build a large shack structure which they then partly sub-let while living in the remaining rooms. Owing to the huge discrepancy between the costs incurred in building such large shacks and the average wage earned by African workers most of these enterprises must have been assisted by a large cash contribution by at least one of the group. Some of these more wealthy investors were ex-servicemen who returned home with a Union Government lump sum cash gratuity. One such ex-soldier recalls :

Smuts said he would give us all some land. He came around and promised us this - when the war was over he would give it to us. He also called us asses¹¹⁰ but I did get an old Harley Davidson sidecar. Some of us then sold their presents and got rich in Mkhumbane.¹¹¹

Other individual African workers often rented a room and then sublet part of it out to another single African worker.¹¹²

For men and women who, whether married or not, desired to live together, shacks and rooms in Mayville, Overport and Cato Manor were particularly favoured.¹¹³ Of these three areas it appears that people favoured Cato Manor because it was "out of town" and "new and right" - it was when we were doing things

108. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985 and 19L, vol. 1; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 4 December 1943.

109. MNAD; H18/CM, vol. 1; Survey of a Cato Manor Shack Settlement, 15 October 1948.

110. This is obviously a reference to Prime Minister Smuts' comment, made while on a tour of the United States of America, that Africans have the patience of asses.

111. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

112. *Durban Housing Survey*, pp.376-7.

113. KCAV; Interview with Mrs A Mzimela, 21 July 1982 and UG 36/1949; Evidence of P N Shabangu.

properly.¹¹⁴ While there was a shortage of officially sanctioned African married accommodation, there were other shantytown or backyard premises in the city. However Mkhumbane was seen as special. Some of these people were formally married, others were not. Kunene, employed by Safco, the fertiliser company, officially lived in the company compound in Sydney Road, but "my girlfriend stayed in my shack at Mkhumbane". Most of Kunene's off-duty time was spent in Mkhumbane.¹¹⁵

The population of Cato Manor was also swelled by the attempts of hospital authorities to get Africans suffering from tuberculosis deported from the city and by police attempts to declare ex-convicts "idle and undesirable". While the police did not always succeed in deporting people, all ex-convicts were left poverty-stricken and jobless outside the prison on release. Such people fled into the growing shantytown sprawl.¹¹⁶

An interesting feature of the movement by people already in the city to Cato Manor concerned the male barrack and hostel dwellers. Conditions in these barracks were unsatisfactory, the lack of proper amenities, overcrowding and a generally dirty environment creating appalling living conditions.¹¹⁷ Furthermore the police, often without the municipal authorities' knowledge, persistently raided the hostels late at night - the ubiquitous search for "illegals".¹¹⁸ The punishment for "illegals" was normally a 10s fine or 30 days; the raids were carried out with great regularity. But these rather tenuous living conditions do not appear to have caused a massive movement into the shantytowns.¹¹⁹ Male Africans from these quarters did move into the Mkhumbane area, but most of the barrack inhabitants preferred to visit Mkhumbane in their leisure time.¹²⁰

Indeed, most of the people who moved into Mkhumbane in the period from the middle 1940s onwards came from other shantytown areas. In one particularly large shantytown sprawl in Cato Manor it was found that of the 59% of people who came to this area from other parts of Durban, the vast majority came from other shantytown settlements.¹²¹ During this period there were massive movements between the various shantytowns as people looked for more suitable accommodation. Many eventually saw in Mkhumbane their home.

During the later 1940s, people living in the existing shantytowns of, say, the Bluff, Clairwood and Umhlatazana, Stella Hill and Umgeni, and Sea Cow Lake saw that the spatial determinants of the relatively

114. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

115. Interview with Mr M Kunene, 21 April 1985.

116. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 7 June 1947, 27 April 1946 and 23 November 1946. While relating to a later period, Bruno Mtolo's own personal account of such a predicament is interesting. B Mtolo, *Umkonto we Sizwe: The Road to the Left*, (Durban, 1966), pp 6-7.

117. UG 46/1947; Evidence of O A Nkwanyana, 17 November 1947 and *Durban Housing Survey*, pp.324-8.

118. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 16 October 1946 and 29 September 1946.

119. *Ibid*, 16 October 1946.

120. Interview with Mr R G Wilson, 21 December 1980, Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980 and Hemson, "Dockworkers", p 112.

121. MNAD; H18/CM, vol. 1; Survey of a Cato Manor Shack Settlement, 15 October 1948.

sparsely populated land of Cato Manor Farm offered exciting opportunities for starting a new life. Furthermore, Cato Manor did not have a large police force present in the area, while the municipality had never really established a real presence in the area. People believed that perhaps they could re-establish their lives in this area in a manner that would allow them to escape if not actually transcend the tenuous and fragile security offered in other areas.

The Municipality and the Making of Mkhumbane

Before proceeding to analyse the material base of the shantytown, the municipality's own contradictory policy towards African settlement in the area must be understood. Essentially the municipality played a crucial role in both creating conditions which saw settlement in Mkhumbane and then later moulding a vociferous and unified shantytown community vehemently determined to protect and advance the legitimacy of their settlement against all attempts to alter or destroy it.

Municipal officials were prepared to acknowledge that the growing shack settlement, situated mainly in the Added Areas and on the outskirts of the old borough, did assist in alleviating a crisis caused by the shortage of officially licensed accommodation.¹²² However these shantytowns created conditions which allowed for the unrestricted entry of Africans into the city, and posed alarming health, sanitation and policing problems. While the police had effectively wiped their hands off the issue, refusing to implement pass laws in the shantytowns unless it was believed that a suspect was about to commit a civil offence, or prosecute shack dwellers or land owners on whose property shacks were erected until alternative suitable accommodation was available, the City Council was determined to take action.¹²³ Operating under severe personnel and material shortages brought on by the dictates of the war economy, the municipality brought a relative degree of inexperience and fervour to the issue. They acted in a muddled, often illegal and always contradictory fashion, and thereby assisted in perpetuating and enhancing the militancy of the shack residents. The municipality was not able to develop any coherent overall housing policy.¹²⁴ Responding in an incremental way, they often were vividly aware and remorseful of the effect which many of this earlier action had caused. By 1947 the City Council had exhausted itself of all ingenuity in solving the ever-increasing crisis caused by the shantytowns and was, along with other local authorities, calling for an effective restructuring of the relationship between state and capital insofar as they involved the creation and control of an African labour force in the city.¹²⁵

122. TCF; 19 L, vol. 1; Town Clerk-Native Administration Committee, June 1943.

123. *Ibid.*, vol 2; Legal Advisor - Councillor KJ Clarke, 20 March 1945 and vol. 1; Building Inspector - City and Water Engineer, 13 November 1944.

124. P Wilkinson, 'Providing 'Adequate Shelter': The South African State and the Resolution of the African Urban Housing Crisis, 1948-1954', in D C Hindson (ed), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, vol. 3 (Johannesburg, 1983), and P Maylam, 'The 'Black Belt': African Squatters in Durban, 1935-1950', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 7, no.3 (1983).

125. UG 46/1947; Evidence of the Durban City Council

In the early 1940s the City Council attempted to halt all shack building before such settlements were even erected. While letters were sent to owners of vacant land in the 'added areas' threatening dire legal consequences if shack settlements were created on their land, this action was ill-conceived.¹²⁶ Legally structures could not be demolished until they were actual dwellings, already being inhabited.¹²⁷ Furthermore there was no legal barrier against landowners who built shacks.¹²⁸

Many landowners who actively took part in lucrative shack-building pleaded ignorance, saying that they had no power over shack growth. Mooruth, one of the Indian landlords in Cato Manor Farm who sub-let premises to African shack-dwellers was threatened by the municipality with prosecution. Arenstein, acting as legal representative for Mooruth recalls: "...the City Council decided that Mooruth was attempting to defy the City Council. In fact he was, but there was very little the City Council could do about it".¹²⁹

While Africans officially required the consent of the Governor-General before they could lease land in Durban, sub-letting of land to Africans could not be halted.¹³⁰ For the City Council the position was exacerbated by a new clause in the Natives (Urban Areas) Act which in effect sanctioned African occupation of unlicensed dwellings until formal housing became available.¹³¹

One of the main problems apparent to municipal officials was the vast potential which Cato Manor Farm offered for new shantytown growth. In order to counter this the City Council recommended that a shack survey be conducted in the area with a view to "pegging" the shack population.¹³² It was believed that this shack survey, which was completed by May 1944, would enable the municipality to detect and limit any further growth in the area.¹³³

However, in the very act of "pegging" the shack population in the area, the municipality caused a significant resettlement of shacks from established settlements in Cato Manor Farm. Africans moved into new shacks in the more central areas of the city: Bluff Valley, Merebank, into Shallcross and Cavendish outside the Borough; and into vacant land of Cato Manor Farm, such as Haviland Road.¹³⁴ While the municipality was delighted by the movement to Shallcross and Cavendish, it was alarmed by the possible dispersal of 17 000 Africans from established areas in Cato Manor Farm into new areas.¹³⁵ One City Councillor reported the

126. MNAD; L19, vol. 4; Town Clerk - Mr A Gwillam, Honorary Secretary, Ward IV, Hillary, 22 November 1945.

127. *Ibid.*, vol. 4; Shepstone and Wylie - Town Clerk, 15 October 1948.

128. *Ibid.*, vol. 1; City Valuator and Estates Manager - Town Clerk, 9 December 1947.

129. Interview with Mr R. Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

130. MNAD; 19L, vol. 1; Town Clerk-Native Administration Committee, June 1943.

131. *Ibid.*

132. Minutes of City Council, 7 January 1944.

133. MNAD; 19L, vol. 1; Manager, MNAD - Town Clerk, 27 May 1944.

134. *Ibid.*, City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 16 January 1945, Legal Advisor - Councillor K J Clarke, 20 March 1945 and vol. 1; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 23 April 1945.

135. *Ibid.*, vol. 1; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 6 July 1944.

existence of one to two hundred "Native pondokkies of the most primitive type" in Merebank. While the Montclair police believed the area was a real "red spot" and refused to conduct him on a tour of the area, he ascertained that the settlement was recently built and "...occupied I believe by the rabble of the Natives thrown out of Cato Manor."¹³⁶

While there was an influential body of opinion among municipal officials who, responding to this crisis, believed that Cato Manor Farm should be used as a virtual dumping-ground for the relocation of all the shacks located in other areas of the city, the idea never really gained acceptance. In advocating this policy the City Medical Officer of Health stated:

Booth Road and several other areas capable of being serviced with roads, water and sanitation should first be thus prepared and opened up for shack building to a reasonable density, enabling the clumps of shacks widely scattered throughout the other areas to be gathered in...¹³⁷

While the City Medical Officer of Health persisted with this suggestion, other municipal officials recoiled in horror from the idea of tampering with the location of shacks.¹³⁸ Furthermore legal advice pointed out that such a policy could be illegal in the sense that the City Council would be actively enhancing the growth of shacks on land which it did not itself own.¹³⁹ However while these points were argued City Health officials were actively engaged in forcing people to move from various areas in Cato Manor Farm to the Mkhumbane area.¹⁴⁰

The problem of shack growth did not however relate solely to location, but to conditions in the shantytowns. Thus after the "pegging" of shacks in Cato Manor Farm the municipality issued 1 637 notices to Indian landowners in the area, calling upon them to either provide essential water and sanitation facilities to the shacks or face prosecution.¹⁴¹ The viability of such a tactic appeared justified on two grounds. Firstly, it was accurately pointed out that any preventive or curative health programmes could have little chance of real success until the "truly basic" water and sanitation facilities were changed.¹⁴² Secondly, while public health and city building by-laws placed the onus of providing decent dwellings and facilities on the occupier, the municipality, again accurately, acknowledged that African poverty and insecurity of tenure mitigated against any such endeavour ever succeeding.¹⁴³ Thus, amidst some rather racist rationalisation maintaining that the

136. *Ibid.*, vol. 1; Councillor J M Rogaly - City Medical Officer of Health, 30 May 1945.

137. *Ibid.*, vol. 1; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 4 December 1943.

138. *Ibid.*, vol. 2; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 16 January 1945.

139. Interview with Mr R G Wilson, 21 December 1980. MNAD; 19L, vol. 1; Legal Advisor Town Clerk, 21 August 1944.

140. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

141. Minutes of City Council, 7 January 1944.

142. MNAD; 19L, vol. 1; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 14 October 1943.

143. *Ibid.*; City Medical Officer of Health - City Valuator and Estates Manager, 1 March 1944.

problem had in essence been caused by the Indians' desire to forgo market gardening and foster shack-building, the municipality settled for a policy of harassing Indian landowners.¹⁴⁴

In terms of the City Council's aims, the response of Indian landowners in Cato Manor Farm was disappointing to municipal officials. Some landowners ignored the letters of demand and then irregularly paid the fines imposed for their continued truculence.¹⁴⁵ Compared to the profits of shack-farming, the fines, normally around 10/-, were a source of only minor irritation.¹⁴⁶ Other landowners, using the rights granted under the Slums Act, evicted African tenants, thereby causing even more people to wander around and settle in other areas with equally deficient health facilities.¹⁴⁷ Other Indians sought legal advice and thereby effectively delayed municipal actions for many years.¹⁴⁸

However it was not merely the landowners' stubbornness or the delays in implementing the idea which made this policy a decisive failure. The City Council also owned land on which Africans were living in shacks and where there were virtually no facilities.¹⁴⁹ The municipality itself steadfastly refused to pay for the development of proper basic residential facilities in these areas.¹⁵⁰

The essential issue was that Africans erected or lived in accommodation in areas where the private owners were relatively poor and where the rateable value of land was low because of the absence of water mains and sewerage reticulation mains.¹⁵¹ There was a water main stretching up to Chesterville Location, but it would not be able to cater for new sub-routes into adjoining land such as Cato Manor Farm; the City Council realised that it could not expect any landowner to pay for excessively lengthy connections. Proper facilities in Cato Manor could only be provided under a large-scale replanning of the whole area.¹⁵² The City Council was reluctant to undertake such a project for two reasons. Firstly, there was a shortage of capital and building materials.¹⁵³ Secondly, such a development would imply a degree of permanent African occupation of Cato Manor. Throughout the whole period the City Council remained adamant that Cato Manor Farm should not be for permanent African occupation.¹⁵⁴ The City Council repeatedly asserted that the proper area for

144. *Daily News*, 3 May 1944.

145. MNAD; 19L, vol. 1; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 6 July 1944.

146. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

147. MNAD; 19L, vol. 2; Public Law-Town Clerk, 6 February 1946.

148. *Ibid.*, City Medical Officer of Health - Public Health Committee, 9 January 1945.

149. *Ibid.*, vol. 1; City Medical Officer of Health - City Valuator and Estates Manager, 1 March 1944.

150. *Ibid.*, Town Clerk Memorandum for Joint Meeting of Public Health and Works Committee, 5 December 1944.

151. *Ibid.*, City and Water Engineer - Town Clerk, undated.

152. *Ibid.*, City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 26 August 1943. Notes of Sub-Committee re Crime and Disease in the Booth Road Area, 1 June 1944 and Legal Advisor - Town Clerk, 15 December 1944.

153. *Ibid.*, City and Water Engineer - Town Clerk, undated.

154. *Ibid.*, Town Clerk Memorandum for Joint meeting of Public Health and Works Committee, 5 December 1944.

permanent African housing was on the South African Native Trust land of Umlazi, an area of land that the Union Government refused to accept as suitable for African urban housing.

The net effect of the City Council's continued pressure on Indian landowners and the demolition of shacks under highly questionable legal authority¹⁵⁵ was to produce a militant African shantytown population growing weary of being continuously on the move.¹⁵⁶ In July 1945 the City Medical Officer of Health admitted that "...the stage has already been reached where the inarticulate element of the community is simply being buffeted from 'pillow to post' and that the object of health protection is not being achieved".¹⁵⁷

Municipal authorities noted with alarm how African shack dwellers began to unite under "self elected" leaders and build shack settlements having a greater density than previously.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore they became increasingly aware of the possibility that such groups of people would deliberately erect shantytowns on municipal property as an act of defiance.¹⁵⁹

Among the apparently numerous groupings which became established during this period, the most successful and militant was the Natal African Tenants and Peasants Association. The leader of the group, probably started in the middle 1940s, was Sydney Myeza, who through holding numerous meetings in Mkhumbane rapidly gained respect as being "strong and hot".¹⁶⁰ Earlier in the 1940s Myeza had been responsible for the creation of various nominal trade unions whose names and offices were continually being changed. Publicising some of his 'victories' in local newspapers, Myeza offered to assist African workers in resolving any problems which arose between themselves and employers. Most of the problems were technical in nature and concerned employers' failure to pay regulated minimum wages, delays in back-pay, and incorrect deductions from wages for services such as accommodation. Myeza would correspond with the employer demanding settlement for which the worker would be charged either a straight fee or a part of the money received in any successful negotiation.¹⁶¹ Whilst operating under various different guises, Myeza was to continue with these activities throughout the 1940s.

155. *Ibid.*, vol. 5; Deputy Town Clerk and Legal Advisor - Town Clerk, 14 June 1949.

156. *Ibid.*, vol. 2; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 30 May 1945.

157. *Ibid.*, City Medical Officer of Health - Public Health Committee, 17 July 1945.

158. *Ibid.*, vol. 3; City Health Department Memorandum re Haviland Road Shanty Settlement, 22 September 1947.

159. This had been imminent throughout the period under discussion. See MNAD; 19L, vol. 1; City Valuator and Estates Manager - Town Clerk, 9 December 1941 and *Ibid.*, vol. 5; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 30 June 1949.

160. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985. See also Ballinger Papers, B2.5.16; Natal African Tenants and Peasants Association - M Ballinger, 30 June 1952. It appears as if this organisation was initially called the Natal Native Tenants and Peasants Association. The change could possibly have been as a result either of Communist Party influence, as they "consistently refused to recognise the insulting term 'native'", or through the more general widespread popularity of 'New Africa'. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

161. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 28 April 1985 and Ringrose *Trade Unions, Natal Regional Survey*, vol. 4 (Cape Town, 1951) p 59.

It appears that Myeza was a close confidant and associate of various militant Zionists and herbalists who were continually calling upon Africans to rise up and regain their "promised land".¹⁶² Through the Natal African Tenants and Peasants Association, Myeza was able to unite various shantytown communities, and "lead the homeless to new areas".¹⁶³ Most of these new settlements were in Mkhumbane, where some sustained an impressive degree of militancy, one even having its own "police and government".¹⁶⁴ Myeza himself was always critical of the police and municipality; and whenever a shantytown area was threatened by harassment, raids, or eviction he was quick to organise opposition among the shantytown residents.¹⁶⁵

At some point in the later 1940s Myeza made contact with the Communist Party of South Africa, which was already engaged in assisting various shantytown communities and attacking the City Council for its attitude towards the African housing shortage.¹⁶⁶ In September 1947, for example, the municipality was engaged in demolishing the shacks of fifty legally employed African men and their families in Mkhumbane. While the demolitions were being carried out, Mrs M.B. Lavoipierre of the Bantu Child Welfare Society and Miss J. Lax, a Party member and local correspondent of The Guardian, arrived on the scene and gathered all the women together and marched to the offices of the municipal Native Administration Department in Ordnance Road. With the offices being closed they then marched to the City Hall and refused to move until they were provided with homes. Their militancy continued, even in the face of police threats. Eventually they were allocated places in the male and female hostels for that evening. Jacquie Lax recalls: "They were all strong, nothing really mattered but that they get their houses back. We all marched off, Mrs Lavoipierre and myself at the head of the women and children and Rowley at the head of the men - right through town to the hostels".¹⁶⁷

The City Council was then forced to back down with the people being allowed back to their land in Mkhumbane and provided with municipal assistance to rebuild their shacks.¹⁶⁸ It was through the Communist Party actively intervening in such situations and through their more formal contact with groups like the Natal

162. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 16 July 1983 and Ringrose Trade Unions, p59.

163. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 28 April 1985.

164. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 21 June 1985 and The Guardian, 22 January 1948.

165. MNAD; 19L, vol. 3; Natal African Tenants and Peasants Association - Mayor, 30 August 1946; Natal African Tenants and Peasants Association - Town Clerk, 14 October 1946 and Minutes of the Native Locations Advisory Board, 19 May 1947 and Ilanga lase Natal, 29 November 1946 and 8 February 1947.

166. MNAD; 19L, vol. 4; Mr R Arenstein - Town Clerk, 1 November 1947; Acting Town Clerk - Mr R Arenstein, 23 December 1947; vol. 5, Communist Party of South Africa - Town Clerk, 19 September 1947; The Guardian, 10 July 1947; Ilanga lase Natal, 20 September 1947 and Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

167. Interview with Mrs J Arenstein, 24 July 1985. Mrs Lavoipierre was apparently "horrified" after realising that she had been working with Communists and felt that she was being "used". Informant to remain anonymous.

168. The Guardian, 15 September 1947 and Ukubambiswano, September 1947.

African Tenants and Peasants Association that they were able to reinforce Mkhumbane residents' determination to affirm their permanent residence in Mkhumbane.¹⁶⁹

During the same period many militant Zionist groups were established in Mkhumbane.¹⁷⁰ Many of the original members originated from the Charlestown area, an important Zionist shrine, and had moved into the shantytowns as a result of the Union Government's resettlement policy in northern Natal.¹⁷¹ Others appeared to have either followed or later become supporters of Essau Makatini, a Zionist descendant of the Le Fleur peasant family who had fought against White land acquisitions in the East Griqualand area and in South West Africa.¹⁷² Having a well-established liturgy, much of which was centred around the need for land, the Zionists gained widespread acceptance amongst people vigorously asserting the right to declare Mkhumbane their home.¹⁷³

Faced with these developments, municipal officials began to grant stays of eviction¹⁷⁴ and get Indian landowners to rescind their decisions to evict African shack-dwellers living on their land.¹⁷⁵ By the late 1940s, when Africans began to resettle in Cato Manor Farm, the City Council had forgone any attempt at regulation. Africans coming from shantytowns in the city but outside Cato Manor Farm, erected the settlement known as Killarney,¹⁷⁶ developed Newtown to such a density that it eventually spilled over into adjoining land and became a second Newtown,¹⁷⁷ and generally expanded into the whole of the Mkhumbane area. These new settlements, which comprised many who had lived in Cato Manor earlier in the 1940s, became the basis for "Mkhumbane our home."¹⁷⁸

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169. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 16 July 1983. By late 1947 the Natal African Tenants and Peasants Association was clearly heavily reliant on Party advice and assistance. Their memorandum to the Broome Commission was identical to that written by Mr G Gokul, then local Party Secretary, and submitted on behalf of the Natal Indian Congress.
170. B Sundkler, *Zulu Zion and some Swazi Zionists*, (Oxford, 1976), p 77.
171. CKM; reel 15B 2: OA 19:96/1; "Political Activities", n.d. ; reel 3A 2:XC9:30/84; A N C (Natal Branch) annual report 1946, and interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 4 February 1985.
172. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 21 June 1985 and W Power *The Party Annals of Kokstad and Griqualand East* (Pietermaritzburg, reprint, 1978), pp 119-25 and 164-7.
173. B Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, (London, 1964) *passim*.
174. Minutes of City Council, 5 December 1947. This particular extension order which was granted until 30 June 1948 was then extended to 31 December 1948. Minutes of City Council, 10 March 1948. See also Minutes of Native Administration Committee, 19 December 1945 and *The Guardian*, 10 July 1947.
175. MNAD; 19L, vol. 4: Deputy City Medical Officer of Health - City and Water Engineer, 24 June 1948.
176. *Ibid*, Minutes of Joint Meeting of Public Health and Native Administration Committees, 23 October 1948.
177. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985.
178. MNAD 19L, vol. 1; Town Clerk - Native Administration Committee, June 1943, City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 26 August 1943, Report of an Investigation into the Position of Natives in Cato Manor and Newlands, undated, Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985 and MNAD 19L, vol 2; Manager, MNAD - Town Clerk, 26 June 1945.

Structure of a New Shack Society

The shantytowns which developed in Cato Manor in the period from around 1946 onwards were different from those which had already existed in the area. In the earlier period Africans who desired accommodation in the area merely went to the Indian landlord, gained agreement and then constructed or rented a shack or room suitable either for himself or for his dependants as well. While there were African and Indian shacklords and dense shantytown sprawls in the earlier period, most of the inhabitants of the area were living in accommodation intended only for individual or single family use.¹⁷⁹ Shabalala, who in 1943 lived in the area which later expanded into the Newtown settlement after 1946 recalls that "things were free and easy there. You had a nice house, all painted...no shebeens and plenty of garden we grew ourselves."¹⁸⁰

This particular memory is probably idealised. Many of the shacks in the area were squalid, rapidly erected and offering only a shelter of the most basic kind.¹⁸¹ What the statement and others like it do reveal,¹⁸² however, is the real change that came over the area through the rest of the 1940s. In 1943 the main area of African shack settlement in Cato Manor Farm was in the Mkhumbane area, with two smaller concentrations towards the south side of Booth Road and two further settlements in the Ridge View Road area.¹⁸³ In 1943 most of the estimated African population of 15 000 in all Cato Manor Farm stayed in the Mkhumbane area. By the late 1940s, with the rapidly expanding African shack settlement, nearly 30 000 people also resided in this same area.¹⁸⁴

The changing nature of the shantytown's spatial structure throughout the 1940s is clearly evident from surveys carried out by the municipality in 1948. In the Newtown area, situated on land owned by Mr Panjalai,¹⁸⁵ there were approximately 887 African residents, living in 640 rooms in 112 shacks. There was an average of 5,7 rooms per shack and an average 1,3 Africans per room. These rooms were owned by a total of 288 people, both Indian and African. There were 249 Indian owners of shack material, and 39 African owners, only 19 of whom actually lived in the settlement.¹⁸⁶ Likewise in the Haviland Road settlement, there were 490 Africans living in 55 shacks comprising 365 rooms. With a similar shack density to that existing in Newtown, 57

179. Interview with Mr S Shabalala, 21 June 1985.

180. MNAD19L, vol. 1; Cato Manor Ratepayers' Association - Health Committee, 1 September 1943, Sub-Committee re Shacks : Cato Manor and Booth Road Area, 19 November 1943 and City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 14 October 1943.

181. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

182. MNAD 19L, vol. 1; City Valuator and Estates Manager - Town Clerk, 9 December 1941 and Report of an Investigation into the position of Natives at Cato Manor and Newlands, undated.

183. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985.

184. MNAD 19L, vol. 4; City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 9 April 1948.

185. MNAD H18/CM, vl, 1; Schedule of Shack Dwellers in Newtown Area, October 1948.

186. MNAD H18/CM, vol. 1; Schedule of Shack Dwellers in Haviland Road Area, October 1948.

Indians and 36 Africans owned components of the shantytown while only 20 of the Africans who owned pieces of the buildings lived in Haviland Road.¹⁸⁷

Most of the dwellings were of either wood and iron or wood and mud construction.¹⁸⁸ Considering the technical skills and finances available, many of the shacks were relatively well-built, ventilated and even elaborate.¹⁸⁹ For example, the bedroom of Esau Makatini's house was raised like a "stage" and in the middle was "a very impressive looking brass double bed."¹⁹⁰ At the top of Ridgeview Road was a well built double-storeyed shack of wood-and-iron which was popularly referred to as "e-Stairs".¹⁹¹ The residents of this particular building had certain attitudes to life that found favour amongst others in Cato Manor. Charles Khumalo recalls: "Hey they were mad. Europeans build like this - so can we! This is our home! They even told the dairies to deliver milk to them and they did everyday!"¹⁹² But in general the average size of the shacks was 23' x 14', while the average size of the rooms were 8' x 6'.¹⁹³

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the price of shack materials, particularly corrugated iron sheets, rose steadily.¹⁹⁴ The materials for a three or four-roomed dwelling could cost as much as 20, with a further 10 often being charged for the erection of the building.¹⁹⁵ While in the earlier 1940s Africans had often erected their own dwellings in their spare time, leaving a half-built construction for a couple of weeks until they had more leisure time or money, this was no longer possible.¹⁹⁶ In the new shantytown, builders, often Coloureds, trained as builders but not in possession of an artisan ticket,¹⁹⁷ relatively wealthy Africans and Indians co-operated and became influential within the community due to the inability of the majority of the Africans to provide the funds or time to erect their own accommodation timeously.¹⁹⁸ An African tinker with a horse and cart eagerly supplied building material; this was often bribed off African night-watchmen in the middle of the night at municipal road work sites.¹⁹⁹ An unemployed and thirsty African youth responded to

187. MNAD H18/CM; Survey of a Cato Manor Shack Settlement, 15 October 1948.

188. MNAD H18/CM, vol. 1; Schedule of Shack Dwellers in Haviland Road Area, October 1948.

189. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985 and Port Natal Administration Board slide archive.

190. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985.

191. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 21 June 1985.

192. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 June 1985.

193. Shum Papers; C N Shum Cato Manor Survey, March 1950

194. MNAD H2/CM, vol. 4; City Valuator and Estates Manager - Town Clerk, undated and Superintendent, Cato Manor Emergency Camp - Manager MNAD, 14 October 1954.

195. Durban Housing Survey, p 372.

196. Interview with Mr S Shabalala, 21 June 1985.

197. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 18 July 1985.

198. MNAD H2/CM, vol. 1; Manager, MNAD, Cato Manor Shacks, July 1950 and Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

199. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 June 1985.

the call and erected substantial dwellings over a weekend in exchange for sufficient *shimeyane*.²⁰⁰ The so-called "Weekend Home" proliferated, nearly always as an adjunct to an already erected shack. Charles Khumalo remembers how

You would go to the person and say 'Have you got a room'. 'No, but do you want to build?' 'Ja'. 'Come back at the weekend.' You went back at the weekend and he had dug a new site - onto the rest and there were the *tsotsis* all ready to build for you. Hey sometimes by Saturday evening you were asleep already.²⁰¹

Commenting upon this process, the City Water Engineer wrote, "In practice, it will be found that only a small proportion of the Natives...build their own houses or could afford to. In general the Native does not build his own house and even for a shack he contracts to a "Native builder",²⁰²

By the late 1940s these shantytowns had developed into densely populated ever-growing settlements with a vast array of road and foot-path networks linking the various shack clusters.²⁰³ For those not resident in a particular area, the settlements were virtually impenetrable. Consciously desiring to create a degree of confusion for outsiders, many painted randomly selected 'shack numbers' on their doors, thus obliterating the effect of the earlier municipal shack survey and creating a spatial structure whose logic was only clear to residents. As Charles Khumalo recalls,

They had this survey by the Corporation. These people in blue coats came and painted a red patch on your door and then painted a number on it. I forget - my number....But you see it was no trouble. We could just go down to Baker Brothers and get some paint. It was no-one's bloody business who lived there. We were...²⁰⁴

The Natal African Tenants and Peasants Association bought their paint from Esop Hassim.²⁰⁵

By the later 1940s African shack life in the Cato Manor Farm area had changed in many important ways. The shantytown society in the area was very different, both in terms of population density, housing style and the more confident attitude of shack-dwellers to earlier African shack settlements in the area. Here was a community resisting all municipal attempts to either harass, relocate or destroy shack life asserting their desire to both remain in and gain increased security in the area. Many of the city's African proletariat saw in the growing shantytowns of Mkhumbane clear evidence of proletarian power. Here indeed was the spirit of 'New Africa'. Taking advantage of municipal weaknesses, the abundance of vacant land and landowners' willingness

200. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 21 June 1985. As a young boy in Cato Manor in the late 1940s, Mzimela had been one such "shack *tsotsi*".

201. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 June 1985.

202. MNAD H2/CM; City and Water Engineer - Town Clerk, 26 August 1949.

203. PNAB slide archive.

204. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

205. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 23 October 1983.

to allow shack settlements, the shack-dwellers had established a new 'city'. As Brutus Mthethwe, then a dockworker living in the Bell Street compound says, "it was the African city, Mkhumbane. It was not Thekwini, it was ours. That was what Cato Manor was for."²⁰⁶

A central concern of the shantytown communities to defend the future of the shantytowns. During the late 1940s the municipality appeared, to shack residents, to have virtually accepted the permanence of the shacklands. However, while municipal authority seemed muted, daily life in the shacklands served as a constant reminder of the continuing power of Indian landowners and traders. At its most blatant shack residents declared that "we wanted that land for ourselves. It was ours. When that boy was beaten by the Indians, this is when we had to do the things to give us that place in Cato Manor."²⁰⁷

Here was an ambiguity in Mkhumbane residents' attitudes towards the outside world. Shack residents were often myopically concerned with the problems of daily life and with defending their residential area. Nevertheless, the community spirit within Mkhumbane was also based on the shack-dwellers' determination to gain greater security of residence. Within the shacklands, the desire for permanent residential facilities in Durban gave rise to a consciousness which was both defensive and highly aggressive.

Mkhumbane society was dominated by a distinctly proletarian consciousness. The shack-dwellers came from different backgrounds: the African countryside, White farmland or cities and from various places within the broader southern African area. The shacklands were home to members of the African elite, traders, fully or casually employed workers, the unemployed and others who desired to resist full proletarianization. yet the shackland residents developed a powerful sense of proletarian unity. Thomas Shabalala depicts this sense:

For the simple Africans. Not too much dressing up, not too much for the cars and the ... all the things that the won't works and the people who do not have to carry passes carry with them.. If this was there in Mkhumbane then people could see them from their clothes. If you have your money then you must not show it!²⁰⁸

It was within this context that a new shantytown leadership element developed. Many of the residents settling in Mkhumbane came in groups from either the countryside or other slum areas in Durban. The groups, often comprising only a few families but sometimes larger already had their own leaders, who when moving into Mkhumbane, saw it as their responsibility to ensure that "their people" could find a place to live.²⁰⁹ Leading their followers into Mkhumbane, the leaders of such groups were viewed as the "prophets" who would "lead us into the new land and give us guidance": they were the prophets of the Old Testament and Mkhumbane the promised land.²¹⁰ Such persons would either simply move onto and assume control of a particular area or

206. Interviews with Mr B Mthethwe, 14 January 1985 and Mr N Matiwane, 15 August 1985. See also Matiwane's comments in A von Kotze, *Organize and Act*, (Durban, 1988), p 73.

207. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 23 October 1983.

208. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 7 July 1985.

209. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 28 April 1985.

210. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985. For useful comparative analysis see J L Machor, *Pastoral Cities. Urban Ideals and the Symbolic Landscape of America*, (Wisconsin, 1987).

conduct negotiations with Indian landowners who would allow the shack leader to erect the required shacks. Considerable power would accrue to such leaders through their very task of mediating between landowners and shack dwellers.

Leadership roles were often inextricably linked to the ability of various persons to either gain control over various key material resources or determine access to such resources. In this way major shacklords or those who, for example, had negotiated with Indian landowners over water resources saw themselves and were seen by residents as leaders. Mr Ndlovu recalls:

When you wanted to ask a question about something that was troubling you you spoke to the man who owned your place. You know that because you are giving money to him and you are staying in his place that he would help you. He would be very cross if he knew that you did not do this. He was there to help you.²¹¹

But with the complex shack ownership and tenancy agreements evident in the Mkhumbane shacklands, there were many people who could claim such power. The major leaders of Mkhumbane emerged through a long term struggle within the shackland residents. These were the 'mayors' of Mkhumbane. As residents recall, 'these were our first leaders.'²¹² Charismatic, undemocratic and often despotic, many shackland leaders controlled key material resources in the area and were themselves thereby endeavouring to avoid full proletarianization. Many remember leaders such as Esau le Fleur, Sydney Myeza, Isaac Zwane, Mathonsi and others as having a scorn for 'working for the White man, they were nobodies men.'²¹³ It was such people who were the real leaders of the proletarian populism so integral to 'New Africa' and not the more educated persons who congregated in and around the Congress Youth League.

Those who acquired respect within particular shantytown areas or in Mkhumbane as a whole often gained such power through successfully reducing the authority of others during the course of battles over the control of space and resources in the shacklands. Many petty leaders owned, in many crucial respects, their power to the ability to mobilize shack residents into local vigilante forces. These were the 'impis', mainly comprised of the underclasses of Mkhumbane society. Receiving either payments of cash or kind or various forms of preferential treatment from leaders and shack residents, the authority of such bands ranged over much of Mkhumbane.²¹⁴ However these vigilante bands had a wider purpose. In many ways the protection of local areas was left to such groups. Through the impis, the shack residents asserted their desire to remain residents in an Mkhumbane not controlled by any unwanted external power.

Shack leaders also gained increasing power not merely by asserting the common wish of shantytown-dwellers to gain permanent residential rights in Mkhumbane, but through distributing patronage within their

211. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 21 April 1985.

212. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 23 June 1985.

213. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 27 November 1986.

214. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 14 July 1985.

particular settlements and through their concern with the day-to-day problems of shack residents. As Mrs Phewa remembers,

If you wanted anything a shack, or if Kwa Muhle says you must leave Durban and go back to your home, or a shebeen, then you must go to your leader. They will fix it for you. Even if you want a shackshop, then you must ask your mayor and ... if you did not talk to him and give them money to fix it then they were after you.²¹⁵

Such shantytown leaders would often guard their power fiercely, sometimes even giving police information on the existence of trading ventures operating without leaders' sanction.²¹⁶ However for the most part, shack leaders operated within the restrictive bounds of a collective community consciousness which stressed the need for social stability and proletarian ordinariness.

Influence within the shacklands was not however solely related only to ability to control material resources or successfully mobilize and maintain support through either direct co-ercion or patronage. Respected persons were often those who could explain to residents the power and future of the shantytown community. Amongst these were many Zionist priests who constantly depicted the struggles of the Mkhumbane residents in terms of images directly lifted from the Old Testament and a past Zulu rural prosperity. Recalling 'how we Zulus had lived in this land before the White man and how things should be', such leaders provided residents with the means to both understand and legitimize their struggles within the city.²¹⁷ Within a shackland community living on clearly contested terrain, and, furthermore, both outside of direct chiefly authority and rejecting the leadership of the urban African elite, a new leadership defined the nature of shackland residents' struggles. Along with expressions of a Zulu proletarian populism came a formulation of what constituted opposition and, in a more extreme fashion, heresy. The ultimate sin was opposition to the power of shantytown residents and the demands of proletarian populism.²¹⁸

Among shack-dwellers was a powerful belief in the need for social levelling. The smartly dressed tsotsi would be castigated.²¹⁹ Those who endeavoured to start shackshops without the permission of local leaders suffered not just the counter-attacks of other shackshop dealers and local leaders but condemnation from other shack residents. Brutus Mthethwe explains:

'You cannot just go and do what you want. You must talk to the people around you and see what they feel. And you must ask your man. If you did not do these things, sit down and give food and drink and tell them your story, then how can you expect to have your brothers with you. 'No', they will say, 'this path is what you have chosen and it is not going the same way that we are walking'.²²⁰

215. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 23 June 1985.

216. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 14 July 1985.

217. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

218. See for example interviews with Mr T Phewa, 23 June 1985, Mr J J Shabalala, 27 November 1985 and Mr T Shabalala, 14 July 1985.

219. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 7 July 1985.

220. Interview with Mr B Mthethwe, 14 January 1986.

For the outsider it was often extremely difficult to tell from personal appearances who were the community leaders. Not only were such people "nobodies' men", rejecting wage labour and having little influence outside the shacklands. As a resident recalls "they were just the same. Just the same as anybody else. They had tatty clothes and their shoes were all torn. To outward appearances they looked like ragamuffins but they were using their heads and people respected them for this."²²¹ This essential element in the characterization of the new shantytown leaders is probably best exemplified in the person of a well-known and respected Mkhumbane "bush lawyer" who would wander around the shacklands offering legal assistance to residents. Leather briefcase in hand, the shabbily dressed "leader" would "ramble off a whole lot of Latin phrases that had nothing to do with law - he had no idea of what he was saying - as a means of impressing people that he could help them."²²²

In the shacklands social bonds had to sustain what many refer to as a "classless" unity.²²³ However, in effect, during the later 1940s, shack-residents sought not a classless society but rather a proletarian communal unity. Within this proletarian consciousness lay a strong desire for normality the quest to establish and maintain a social structure that would both accord with the day-to-day lives of shack-dwellers and allow the shantytowns to acquire increasing power within the city. Gaining increased land rights in Mkhumbane was one critically important issue.

The roots of this new proletarian consciousness lay in the gradual growth of an economic structure in the shantytowns of the later 1940s. This entrepreneurial and redistributive system, known to residents as "robbing Peter to pay Paul" had not existed in the African shantytowns of Cato Manor Farm during the earlier 1940s. It was central to the nature of shack life in the area during the later 1940s.²²⁴ This redistributive system was based on various entrepreneurial ventures.

In this sense it was not particularly strange for the shantytowns to have been controlled or lead by persons fervently resisting full proletarianization. Many shack-dwellers wanted to become involved in petty commodity production and exchange. Such activities were vital to the survival of women, who had no access to established formal industrial and commercial employment, and to the casually employed and the unemployed. Even for fully employed workers the profits which could be derived from limited entrepreneurship, whether it be in the form of purchasing shack material or, say, liquor-brewing, allowed workers a material security which could not be provided through wages alone.

With specific regard to the Mkhumbane shantytowns of the later 1940s, the general assertion that "squatting was a response to a situation in which the costs of family subsistence had to be met entirely from

221. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutha, 4 April 1982.

222. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

223. For such a perspective see von Kotze, *Organize and Act*, p 72.

224. KCAV; interview with Mr C C Majola, 20 June 1979.

wages, yet in which wages were below the costs of family subsistence' is only partially correct.²²⁵ The shantytowns were in many ways assuming the role which the rural reserve economies had previously played in ensuring to the reproduction of an urban workforce. However, squatting was not just a form of residence which could be cheaper than life in formal townships. Often shackland life was more expensive but unavoidable due to the scarcity of formal accommodation. But for many squatting was not just a reactive response to city conditions but the self-conscious making of a new life whereby people sought to gain access to a level material wealth which would allow shack-dwellers to break apart that clear discrepancy between formal wages and costs of living. The shacklands unstable and imperfect economic structure was based on gaining access to what residents referred to as 'fertilizer'.²²⁶ This 'fertilizer' came not only from the circulation of monies derived from formal wage labour but through gaining control of other sources of material wealth.

In the shacklands those wages earned by predominantly male workers resident in the area were obviously central to shantytown life. The Friday evening ceremonies whereby workers would hand wage packets to their wives indicate the importance attached to such wages. Constance Matiwane remembers:

"After my husband would come back from work on the Friday he would give his money to me. Now this is for busfare, this for rent, this... Now we can live again. Those were the days when the children got sweets. It was important to be able to say that my husband was working. With that money I was also making dresses to sell".²²⁷

Although highly regarded the notion of full waged employment did not produce a strong militancy centred around the process of production itself. Trade union activity among the African proletariat during the later 1940s was noticeably absent.

Within the Mkhumbane of the late 1940s, working class wages were essential but working class struggle through industrial factory floor action was viewed as certainly divisive. Many remember such criticism as coming from the fact that "for us Africans we could not join trade unions without getting into 'Meleko' we would be arrested".²²⁸ Nevertheless, it was during this precise period that concepts of legality were being reformulated within the African proletariat. Similarly it was during the later 1940s that the proletariat were clearly accepting an industrializing city while objecting to the manner in which the profits of such progress were being redistributed. The absence of effective trade union organization amongst Durban's African proletariat was not simply due to the weak organizational structures of such unions.

For the African proletariat of the late 1940s, the centre of power lay within attempts to build residential communities. Within such politics any notion of a specifically working class consciousness was simply unacceptable and indeed untenable. It was not merely that much power within the shantytowns lay in

225. For such analysis see A W Stadler, "Birds in the Cornfields: squatter movements in Johannesburg, 1944-1947", in B Bozzoli (ed), *Labour, Townships and Protest*, (Johannesburg, 1979), p 22.

226. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 21 June 1985.

227. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1983.

228. Interview with Mr B Mthethwe, 14 January 1986.

the hands of an alliance between shacklords and the unemployed – the tsotsi and the “civic guards”.²²⁹ As with other African residential suburbs in the Durban area, in Mkhumbane the striving for community unity was based on a series of class alliances far more complex than those between shacklords and the lumpen-proletariat. For an African waged labour force resident in Mkhumbane, power within the city came through residence and prosperity in Mkhumbane.

Yet this did not indicate a lack of militant struggle in the proletariat. As with the growth of co-operatives in the city and the ideas so central to people like Victor Maillie, in the shacklands the struggle to gain increased material wealth was centred not within existing production processes but within a redistributive cycle of commercial activity.

Apart from wages, ‘fertilizer’ came from various sources. With many men in the shantytowns often not fully employed or unemployed, the people of Mkhumbane were constantly looking for other means to acquire wealth. Theft and cunning could yield a rich harvest. As Kunene remembers, “You know at the weekends you knew Durban was full. Lots of people. Sometimes you would have too much of this [alcohol] and so off you went on the K.P.s to Durban. Man people there were stupid.”²³⁰ Among the more popular activities were the crooked ‘i-link’ sweepstake and numbers games, pavement counter and dice scams and a general practice called ‘imbazo’.²³¹ Here a person would buy up gallons of sorghum beer, sit in the municipal beerhall and wait for the beerhall to run out of beer. At the end of work-shifts workers coming into the beerhalls paid over double the regulated price for sorghum beer from such entrepreneurs: ‘Ja they were cross, but they paid double - that’s just luck.’²³²

Other more nefarious schemes were far more lucrative. Mkhumbane became the centre of a middleman operation whereby stolen goods were transferred from the thief to their eventual market in the city itself. In collusion with White dockyard foremen and crane drivers and often African winchmen on ships unloading in the harbour, African dockworkers would break open deliberately damaged crates, distributing them to those involved. Be they watches, clothes or whatever, the goods rapidly went to fences in Mkhumbane who would then sell the goods to Indian traders in the city. Charles Khumalo recalls that ‘Inyati are cross and strong, but not clever- and Customs don’t trust them. ‘Ja we will take this and sell it’ ... Then they [the African dockers] would come and talk to you next weekend.’²³³

229. Interview with Mr J Mnguni, 20 July 1985. Many refer to the ‘impi’ by using the far more acceptable term ‘civic guards’. See also Edwards, *Sibisi*, p.24.

230. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 21 April 1985. The K P was model number of a bus manufactured by International Harvester and popular amongst bus owners because of the vehicles’ reliability. With the shortage of reliable bus transport in Mkhumbane, the KPs gained legendary status amongst shack-dwellers.

231. *Ibid.*

232. *Ibid.*

233. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

Others could make money through a fairly acute perception of racism and the ideology of work within the labour process. Charles Khumalo, at the time a 'delivery boy', a driver for a large clothing firm, recalls his activities at Cato Creek railway station:

You would stand in the queue with the boer just swearing at all the 'kaffir boys' in the queue. Too much work. Sometimes he would just sit. Everybody would just stand there waiting. I would shout out to the clerk, 'More' my baas! Ek het pakkies hier.' He would shout you over, 'Waars hulle?' They were really in the van all the time. He would never look at you- just sing and stamp and throw [the documentation] in the tray. 'Fuck away!' 'Weg jou ...!' And you would thank him nicely, but you were really thanking the parcels in the van.²³⁴

Khumalo recalls that while Mkhumbane was a 'smelly place... everybody had money - everything was so cheap and there were lots of fences selling everywhere.' Khumalo personally had a contract with an Indian-owned shop near the Emmanuel Cathedral and always took his stolen goods there.²³⁵ During the later 1940s another source of 'fertilizer' lay in the often large cash sums which ex-wartime servicemen and many of the ex-peasants who entered Mkhumbane brought into the shacklands.²³⁶ Yet these sums were not only incremental but so insubstantial as compared with the the money which came from Mkhumbane's 'own tourist trade.'²³⁷

Mkhumbane was a distinct area relatively isolated from the commercial facilities available in the city. Shack-residents had to provide their own residential amenities. The residential facilities which developed were however both far more numerous and broader in scope than was required solely to satisfy residents' own daily requirements. Mkhumbane was also an area where the police and municipal authority were less dominant than in many other areas of the city. Within the area thrived a whole variety of entrepreneurial ventures and the circulation of money, goods and services which made Mkhumbane 'the place where everything happened. If you want to shop without the police, then go to Mkhumbane!'²³⁸

The shack population often doubled over weekends as workers from hostels and barracks throughout the city flocked into the shacklands.²³⁹ Within the shantytowns the range and assortment of activities was for more diverse than in any other single area of the city. From the selling of passes, often supplied from pickpockets operating on the buses to and from Mkhumbane, the making of leather belts, the collecting and selling of empty 'White man's liquor' bottles, the dagga networks extending to Pondoland and northern Zululand, to fruit, vegetable and cooked meat vendors, to the shackshops and ubiquitous shebeens. All could be found in Mkhumbane.²⁴⁰ Indeed the diversity of amenities in the shacklands led to the remark about the

234. *Ibid.*

235. *Ibid.* See also interview with Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980.

236. Interviews with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985 and Mr B Mngadi, 29 October 1986.

237. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

238. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 29 November 1986.

239. See Maasdorp and Humphreys, *From Shantytown to Township*, chapter 3.

240. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

Draaihoek area: "There man you could get anything! It was our Chicago. Anything! If you want a back then you must go to Draaihoek."²⁴¹

In the shantytowns the circulation of money, goods and services created a sense of unity and community. The complex shack tenancy and ownership relations were merely aspects of this broader economic system. Like the co-operatives, Mkhumbane's economy was based around the need for money to circulate rapidly within the shacklands. Together with the co-operatives the main venue for the redistribution of money was the stokvel. Within the shantytowns there were few people who lent money: "it all happened at the stokvel."²⁴²

The stokvel host would buy meat and alcohol which could include 'White man's liquor' and often hire musicians. Such musicians could either be a *jasbaadjie* group or a "three man band". Such a band would comprise guitar, drum and either the double bass which was a tea chest, with a string attached at the top and held taut, or a violin. If a drum was not available "musicians could play on the shack walls."²⁴³

Stokvels could be widely advertised in advance or "people would just hear the music and come along." People would move between various stokvels, the only constraint being the need to pay the required entrance fee and willingness to spend money.²⁴⁴ The host would hire a 'master of ceremonies', the "M C", who was usually chosen because the man was literate, had a lively and enthusiastic character and could shout.²⁴⁵ The 'M C' would commence proceedings by announcing the purpose behind the stokvel in ways which stressed the respectability of the host, his loyalty to the community and publicly reveal the hosts' aspirations and ambitions. Thomas Shabalala remembers:

"Now gentlemen, Mr Shabalala is inviting you all to come and enjoy this occasion which Mr Shabalala is having so that he can build his house properly.' Or you want to get money to invest in a bus. Or shackshops. These things. Not stupid things. 'Now as you all know Mr Shabalala has lived here in Mkhumbane for a long time and all think very highly of him. He is a good man for us and he shall always be with us."²⁴⁶

In such often highly ritualized opening speeches was a social contract between the host and the community, a stressing of the needs of the community and an understanding that limited capital resources needed to be pooled in order for increased material prosperity.

When entering a stokvel people would go directly to the 'M C', pay an entrance fee, have their names written down and receive something to eat and drink. From then on everything else had to be paid for. Joshua Mzimela recalls:

241. KCAV; interview with Mr C C Majola, 20 June 1979.

242. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

243. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

244. *Ibid.*

245. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 21 April 1985.

246. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 7 July 1985.

If you want more then you went to the M C and said 'With this 10d I am taking this piece of chicken.' The M C then gave you a fork to select the piece you wanted. Just as you were choosing your chicken the M C would stop the band. 'With this 10d Mr Mzimela is eating a chicken.' Then the other people would play around. We were just trying to get money - just playing. Other people would do up to the M C and say 'With this 12d I am taking Mr Mzimela's chicken.' It could go on and on. Sometimes you could get 1 for a chicken.²⁴⁷

The general level of hilarity provided considerable amusement. Shouting 'Water! Water!' which was derived from 'order! order!', the M C would announce the guests' every whim.²⁴⁸ Charles Khumalo recalls: 'You could even bid for the band and the M C would stop the band. Or to change the tune or for the band to bugger off! - 'Now with this 15d you are too rubbish, bugger off!''²⁴⁹

At the end of the stokvel the 'M C' would give the host a list of how much each guest had spent. There was an extremely strong moral compulsion on the host to attend stokvels held by his guests and to spend equal if not larger amount. Thomas Shabalala recalls:

If you spent 2 at someone's stokvel, then he had to spend 2 or more at yours- so that he can also get a lot of money at one time. This was the way were were doing it. To give everyone a chance to do the things that were needed. If that man did not give you that money, then he was looked down upon. By everyone.²⁵⁰

But it was not just money which became redistributed within the shantytown community.

Conscious of the need to sustain a livelihood within the whole community and understanding the problems of obtaining both sufficient wages and even continuous employment within an industry desiring unskilled and casual African labour, residents would often provide the elderly, unemployed or indigent with employment. Shebeen queens would "employ" men as bodyguards and for the various menial tasks so essential to illicit liquor manufacture. Likewise women would be taken on for serving shebeen clientele.²⁵¹ Unemployed men would often be the labourers erecting shacks.²⁵² Children would be "paid" to collect empty bottles for gavine and shimeyane. Various womens' associations would gain the services of unemployed women to assist in making childrens' clothes.²⁵³ Invariably for undertaking such tasks people would receive not money but food and drink.²⁵⁴

247. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

248. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 23 June 1985.

249. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 8 July 1985.

250. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 29 November 1985.

251. See I Edwards, 'Shebeen Queens, illicit liquor and the social structure of drinking dens in Mkhumbane', *Agenda*, no 3 (1988).

252. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 8 July 1985.

253. Interview with Mr C Matiwane, 23 April 1983.

254. Interview with Mr M Meanyana, 12 July 1985.

As with the ambiguity central to shantytown residents' attitudes towards the future of their residential life in the area, the very nature of the shacklands' internal economic structure produced both a highly defensive outlook and a very much more belligerent outgoing competitiveness. Shack residents were continually aware of the need to ensure that as much of their own money should circulate within the shantytowns as possible. But this was a very imperfect currency. In the city there were far stronger economic structures that also provided goods never to be either produced or available in Mkhumbane. It was from this conflict between the shantytown economy and the wider spheres of production and consumption that the roots of much of the shantytown residents' militancy lay. The weaknesses of the shantytown economy should be overcome by assuming greater influence over an extending sphere of trading ventures. This was a highly aggressive undercurrent within shack-residents' lives.

During the 1940s there was thus continual conflict over municipal beer-brewing operations and an often violent rejection of municipal and police attempts to curb illicit entrepreneurship in Mkhumbane. Similarly Indian trading and other commercial ventures in the Cato Manor Farm area should be restricted. Africans should not trade with Indians as this diminished the amount of money which could circulate within Mkhumbane. Furthermore, Africans should acquire an exclusivity of trade within the shacklands. Indian trading operations should cease.²⁵⁵ Here lay the material roots of an ethnic conflict so vividly exemplified during the course of the riots of January 1949.

Conclusion

Immediately after these riots African shack-dwellers believed that they had both liberated Mkhumbane and thereby gained control of the land area and acquired a near absolute dominance over material resources and entrepreneurial ventures in the area. The aspirations of the proletarian society of Mkhumbane seemed to many to be much more closer to fulfilment. With the successful outcome of the riots the Mkhumbane residents seemed to be really making their own future.

And yet within a few years the municipality had assumed a ever increasingly influential role in the shantytowns. Furthermore, in those few years, the weaknesses in shantytown society were becoming apparent. The shack-dwellers had always been unable to provide those residential facilities so integral to social stability in the shantytowns. Health and sanitation conditions grew worse and shacks still remained a inadequate as housing structures. Furthermore, despite the attempts at creating a broader proletarian unity during the later 1940s, there were increasing indications of class divisions within shack society. As the nature of capitalist production changed so divisions occurred within the working class; these could threaten proletarian unity. Such a broadly based populist unity was rather more rapidly shattered by the way in which, cast in the forge of 'New Africa' and the structures of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul', arose a new, powerful and prosperous African trading class from

255. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 21 June 1985.

amidst the ranks of militant populist shack-leaders,²⁵⁶ During the 1950s both state and capital were to work towards making these very class distinctions that much more delineated. During the 1950s the policies of both state and capital were to both erase many of the apparently victorious struggles waged by the proletariat during the later 1940s and serve to dramatically restructure the basis of African labour employment and residence in the city.

256. Kuper had recognized the growing importance of such traders after the riots of January 1949 but is unable to explain the origins of such trading aspirations. See Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p 301.

PART TWO

TAKING INITIATIVES AND THE TERRAIN OF FUTURE

CONFLICT : STATE AND CAPITAL CREATING A NEW

AFRICAN WORKING CLASS, 1946-1962

Introduction

The later 1940s was a period of social upheaval in Durban. Along with increased industrial and commercial activity came the indications of an ever more militant proletarian political power within the city. To many municipal officials, with the outbreak of the January 1949 riots, the clearly assertive character of the Mkhumbane shantytown residents and the upsurge in African militancy served as final confirmation that municipal authority over Africans in the city could only be acquired through a total restructuring of African residence. The state should assume greater control over the future of city society.

For municipal officials this involved increased control over both the process of proletarianization and the nature of African residential life in Durban.¹ Municipal officials pointed to the collapse of influx control regulations, the critical shortage of formal housing, the lack of adequate transport services and the almost total breakdown in those paltry health services available to the city's African population.² Representatives of industry and commerce concurred, but added their own particular issues of concern. The high rate of crime, increasing drunkenness and absenteeism, "indifferent output" and the prevalence of shantytowns which were both diseased and assisted in fostering a proletarian culture scornful of full waged employment, impeded capitalist economic growth.³ Furthermore, employers believed that African labour had become too "political" and had thereby "lost confidence in the European." White paternalism, trusteeship over Africans in the city and control over future economic and political change seemed to be threatened.⁴

Such expressions of concern were not particular to the later 1940s and early 1950s. Both state and capital had for long expressed worry over the conditions of African labour and residence in the city. What was, however, particular to these perceptions was the belief that the issues had reached critical proportions and that their solution required a fundamental restructuring of the central aspects of both the work-place and residential lives of Durban's African workers.

The townships which were planned and built during the 1950s and early 1960s came alongside and were directly related to the massive restructuring of African employment patterns within the city. With the differentiation between permanent urban workers and migrants came changes in residential accommodation. Essentially, both the state and major employers of urban African labour desired to create a new urban African

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1. Mayors Minutes, 1948-1949 and MNAD, H2/KM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 31 January 1952.
 2. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council and report of the City Medical Officer of Health, Natal Provincial Administration, report of the Commission of Enquiry appointed to investigate the Durban passenger transport undertaking, 1948 and MNAD; vol H2/CM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD "Native Housing Policy", November 1948.
 3. See for example Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1945-1946 and 1949-1950, Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1946-1947 and South African Industry and Trade, vol 49, no 8 (1953).
 4. Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1949-1950.

working class. During the late 1940s and 1950s, a new urban policy was developed in order that the already discernible patterns of differentiation within the urban African proletariat could be exploited and enhanced.

Through new influx control, labour bureau and wage determination legislation, both the state and capital attempted to segment the existing and future African labour force of the city into those having the legal privilege of being permanent urban residents and those who would only be considered migrant workers. Such legislative interventions over the role of African labour within capitalist production processes developed alongside attempts to restructure the character of African residence in the city. For both the state and capital, it was not simply a matter of either controlling or even clearing urban land areas of shacks and relocating the shackland residents. New housing forms would have to be provided in order that the social structure of African proletarian residential life in shantytowns be fundamentally altered. Discussion of the merits of particular forms of housing was directly associated with a desire to ensure the growth of social relations very different to those which were sustained in shacklands. With attempts to change the nature of African labour in the city came shack demolition and the provision of male migrant hostels and single site, single tenant nuclear family housing.

Yet it was clearly apparent to both the state and major employers of African labour that such concerns could not be divorced in any way from the broader question of economic growth and the particular characteristics of Durban's local economy. By around 1950 government representatives, city councillors and leading employers of African labour were relatively optimistic that discussions aimed at revising urban African policy could accord well with measures designed to correct certain imbalances and problems within the local economy. Some, rather optimistically, saw in the very restructuring of African urban life the key to future economic growth. Problems which characterized the production and distribution of local goods could be reduced and increased levels of profitability achieved through changing African labour requirements in ways which would see rising African real wages and Africans' thus growing role as consumer both within the city and the rural reserves situated in Durban's hopefully expanding market area.

For long it was accepted that urban African township and hostel facilities were crucial elements in the creation and maintenance of a cheap and subservient labour force in South African cities. In 1974 Rex went so far as to speculate that through the controls exercised in such residential suburbs "the revolution ... cannot follow the classic Marxist pattern of a revolution led by the urbanized African workers." Such a perspective was not uncommon amongst theorists and activists.⁵ In 1969 Legassick set out the main principles behind a rurally based guerrilla, and ultimately insurrectionist, campaign and maintained that with the nature of control in cities being so high, "urban cadres, driven from political activities in the cities by severe repression" would seek refuge in the strongholds of the peasantry.⁶ Yet later events and studies have raised into question not only the

5. J Rex, "The compound, the reserve and the urban location: the essential elements in South African labour exploitation", *South African Labour Bulletin*, vol 1, (1974).

6. M Legassick, "Guerrilla warfare in southern Africa", in W Cartey and M Kilson (eds) *The African Reader: Independent Africa*, (London, 1970), p 391.

rigidified and successful nature of those control mechanisms, but issues which involve the very purpose behind the building of such residential areas.

The question of the motive behind municipal intervention in African housing in Durban has been most clearly and influentially set out by Swanson.⁷ This work has been of central importance in an understanding of the 'official mind' of the City Council. But a too close a reliance on the significance of this approach can obscure several important issues surrounding urban African housing.

Swanson's studies deal with early urban segregation in Durban and the influence which the so-called 'Durban System' held over both later municipal and state policy. A key organizing concept in this work is what Swanson refers to as the 'sanitation syndrome'. Exploring elements of the dominant White and municipal morality, Swanson notes how attitudes towards urban African issues become couched in terms of a concern over health, sanitation and cleanliness.

Although reticent on the relationship between housing forms and residential social structure, Swanson accepts that the municipality was able to successfully exert repressive and oppressive controls within formal residential areas. Although Rex has seen in housing forms and the structures which attempt to control the pace and character of proletarianization the key to urban political quiescence, Swanson focuses merely on municipal control.

Although having less of a formalized perspective than Swanson, Maylam also views municipal concerns over health and sanitation as the primary reason for the destruction of the shantytowns. Never dealing with housing forms, Maylam accepts the central importance of controlled hostel and township environments in creating a subservient African working class.⁸

However, it is insufficient to assert that both state and capital provide formal housing and thereby destroy shantytowns merely from a concern over health and sanitation. Municipal officials had for long expressed their concern over shack development in Durban in ways which stressed the evils coming from the all so obvious worsening health conditions in the shacklands. But after a long period of indecision, state and capital only built new forms of African housing in the later 1950s and early 1960s.

That many White citizens and municipal officials explained the need to destroy shantytowns in terms of a concern for cleanliness, and a consequent castigation of Africans as dirty and unclean, does not mean that such statements must either be accepted at face value or accorded primary explanatory power. The 'sanitation syndrome' is but a partial reflection of municipal concerns and an inadequate basis for explaining motivation.

Similarly, racist statements of municipal officials do not totally explain the relocation of African townships and hostels to the city periphery. This is suggested by both Swanson and Maylam: new townships and hostels were built on the peripheries of Durban through a concern to achieve racial segregation. Yet when

7. See for example M W Swanson, "The urban origins of separate development", *Race*, vol 10 (1968).

8. P Maylam, "Shackled by the contradictions: the municipal response to African urbanization in Durban, 1920-1950", *African Urban Studies*, vol 14 (1982).

considering issues, questions of the removal of shantytowns and established licensed private and state owned hostel accommodation in the industrial and city centre regions of Durban cannot be considered without analysis of the changing nature of urban land usage, the capitalization of land through renting, sale and ratable value and general economic expansion.⁹

The pitfalls which result from mistaking the meaning of particular statements from municipal officials are also evident in other work. Apart from being empirically incorrect, Manson's too close a reliance on the 'sanitation syndrome' leads him to suggest that Kwa Mashu's location was due to its proximity to a municipal rubbish dump.¹⁰ In analysing the reasons for the development of Lamontville, Torr notes how municipal policies were always couched in terms of a desire for the 'right type of native.' Such persons should be 'westernized' and thus 'detrribalized', belonging to a community living in married nuclear family units, upholding a Christian outlook and respecting the values of sobriety, the dignity of wage labour and political servitude. Torr accepts such notions at face value instead of seeing these ideas as part of the dominant and very White morality of the city. According to Torr Lamont was built for an African 'petty bourgeoisie.' Torr thus views these ideas as referring to an African 'petty bourgeoisie' instead of bourgeois expressions of the need to stabilize part of an African working class.¹¹

Wilkinson has suggested that the reasons behind the massive state intervention in urban African housing development in the 1950s and 1960s are due to state and capital being concerned about three issues. These are the growth of shack settlements, general and widespread political mobilization amongst the African proletariat, and difficulties in controlling shackland society. Thus township and hostel construction was intended to provide for an increased measure of control over urban Africans and re-establish and reinforce racial segregation in South African cities. However Wilkinson believes that the reasons for the provision of particular housing had little to do with a desire to enforce certain forms of proletarian society. Housing forms came through technical discussions over various plans developed by the government.¹²

More recently, Hindson has situated the massive state intervention during the 1950s in the spheres of African urban labour and housing within the context of changing nature of capital accumulation in South African cities.¹³ Pointing to a crisis over the social reproduction of an urban African labour force, Hindson views the new pass and labour bureau legislation as being specifically designed to accelerate the process of social differentiation already emerging amongst the urban African proletariat. Although Posel has cautioned,

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9. For valuable theoretical analysis see A J Scott, *The Urban Land Nexus and the State*, (London, 1980).
 10. A Manson, 'From Cato Manor to Kwa Mashu', *Reality*, March 1981.
 11. L Torr, 'Lamontville- Durban's model village: the realities of township life, 1934-1960', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, vol 10 (1987).
 12. P Wilkinson, 'Providing adequate shelter, the resolution of Johannesburg's African housing crisis', in D C Hindson (ed), *Working Papers in southern African Studies*, vol 3 (Johannesburg, 1983).
 13. D Hindson, *Pass controls and the urban African proletariat*, (Johannesburg, 1987).

correctly, against a too simplistic notion of a reproductive crisis and differs with Hindson over the internal coherency and meaning of National Party policy prior to the 1948 election,¹⁴ Hindson's work is of fundamental importance.

That there were attempts to develop a broad policy which integrated discussions over the future of the African proletariat within the cities to future economic growth is clear. With regard to Durban, the basic elements of such a policy appear to have been formulated in the very late 1940s through discussions between the National Party government, the City Council and local employers of African labour. Within these discussions it is evident that, aside from the possibility that there had been considerable previous disagreement within the National Party over African urbanization, the views of the Department of Native Affairs were relatively unambiguous. Social differentiation within the urban African proletariat should be fostered with an African working class resident in the city given increased access to semi-skilled employment and improved nuclear family housing.

Despite the views of the Department of Native Affairs being rather clear, numerous contradictions over the means to both restructure African urban life and ensure capitalist economic expansion in Durban rapidly became evident. In the resultant negotiations, the lines of fissure often took the form of conflict between the central and local state, sometimes between the National and United Parties sometimes between state and capital.

In this regard however, de Villiers' belief that there were few substantial areas of disagreement between the National Party and the Johannesburg municipality over the African housing problem is somewhat simplistic.¹⁵ Similarly, Greenberg's stressing of the importance of conflict over urban African policy arising from the differing viewpoints of White political parties is incomplete.¹⁶ Further, it is also important to stress that, contrary to analysis offered by Maasdorp and Humphreys, during often very acrimonious negotiations between the central and local state over African housing, it was the Department of Native Affairs which compelled the municipality to develop such accommodation within the urban area.¹⁷

However there is not yet any adequate analysis of the structural contradictions which develop during the 1950s over the relationship between urban economic growth and state intervention in the spheres of African urban labour and residence.¹⁸ Wilkinson's main arguments concern the housing quest

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14. D Posel, 'Doing business with the Pass Laws: influx control and the interests of manufacturing and commerce in South Africa in the 1950s', paper presented to a conference on 'South Africa in the 1950s', University of Oxford, September 1987.
15. R de Villiers, 'The state, capital and labour allocation - the Johannesburg municipality', paper presented to the History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, February 1978.
16. S Greenberg, Legitimizing the Illegitimate: State, Markets and Resistance in South Africa (Berkeley, 1987), p.41.
17. Maasdorp and Humphreys, From Shantytown to Township, p.7.
18. For useful theoretical analysis see M Harloe, (ed), Captive Cities, Studies in the Political Economy of Cities and Regions, (London, 1977), M Harloe and E Lebas, (eds) Cities, Class and Capital, (London, 1981), P Saunders, Social Theory and the Urban Question, (London, 1981) and S Lowe, Urban Social Movements, The City After Castells, (London, 1986).

while Hindson focuses too exclusively only on labour. Further, although noting how various structural features were related in complex ways, when criticizing Hindson's analysis on a crisis of reproduction, Posel makes the simplistic point that "if industrialists were so concerned that urban wages were so low as critically to jeopardize their labour supply, they would surely have raised wages of their own accord."¹⁹ Likewise, in a critique of Wilkinson which also underplays the existence of a crisis over the social reproduction of an urban proletariat, Hendler argues for a differing perspective on the origins of Soweto.²⁰ The motive force in the development of Soweto came from the need to advance the fortunes of an ailing building industry rather than through a desire to restructure the basis of African urban labour and residence. This is a false distinction.

The essence of negotiations between the central and local state and capital during the period was concerned with the structural characteristics in the relationship between capitalist accumulation, state intervention and African urban labour and residence. Key points of concern were the relationship between the local economy, economic regulation, the African labour market, workplace restructuring, the need for a reserve army of labour resident in the city, African wages and working class housing.

Hindson and Posel are correctly at pains to stress that state intervention in the spheres of urban African labour supply and housing facilities was never designed to entirely replace or exert an overbearing influence over market forces themselves. Yet there is never really any substantive comment on the way in which various, often internally contradictory, market forces related to, were affected by and in turn affected certain forms of state intervention. While Hindson notes that it was only during the very late 1950s and early 1960s that the new pass and labour bureau legislation was really set in place, the path from earlier policy decisions to implementation is viewed as rather linear and certainly uncomplicated.

However, a desire to restrict the reserve army of labour resident in the city was balanced against economic needs and the areas of origin of the city's African labour force. The particular nature of the local economy, the relationship between the city and the reserves and the composition of the city's African labour force decisively constrained the growth of social differentiation in ways conducive to the rapid creation of a new urban working class. The mere legislative enactment of new pass and labour bureau legislation was insufficient. Social differentiation amongst the urban African proletariat had probably not proceeded as fast as Hindson would have it.²¹ Further, the successful administration of controls over African wages raised into question the ability of Africans to afford those new forms of housing desired by both the state and capital.

In a very direct way, the relationship between ensuring to the availability of particular forms of urban African labour and providing formal housing for such a working class are highly fraught with internal

19. Posel, "Doing Business", p.5.

20. P Hendler, "Production and Distribution of African Housing on the Witwatersrand as a Trajectory of Capital Accumulation", paper presented at History Workshop, University of the Witwatersrand, February 1987.

21. Although Posel does not mention this, it is likely that this was the main reason why employers could, as she notes, prefer to utilize ever increasing numbers of migrant workers instead of employing those with permanent urban residence privileges. See Posel, "Doing business", p.22.

contradictions. Legislation over African access to the cities and waged urban labour were administered flexibly so as not to cause any economic ill-effects. Once decided upon, housing plans allow for no such similar versatility.

Although the housing question was an essential element within the new urbanization policy of both the state and capital, the issue has been under-emphasized in much current research. During the later 1950s and early 1960s, the state developed massive quantities of urban proletarian housing in a manner then unparalleled in the history of industrial capital in South Africa. How did this housing policy relate to changing influx control and labour bureau legislation? Why were shantytowns viewed as so inimical to future urban economic growth? Why did shantytown society impede the desire to accelerate a process of social differentiation amongst the urban African proletariat? What is the difference between shantytown housing and the ubiquitous 51/ township houses and hostel blocks? In what ways did the very existence of shantytowns and the nature of shantytown society produce contradictory aims and policies within the state and capital. Recent work on the nature of African shantytown society during the later 1940s and other work, such as that by Maylam and Kelly, on the contradictory position of shantytowns in an industrializing economy has a direct relevance to analysis of the political economy of South African cities during the 1950s.²²

State intervention and capital accumulation were inter-related in potentially highly contradictory ways. Through their attempts to resolve these very difficulties, the state and capital laid the very basis for the massive social dislocation and city-wide rebellion which occurred during the destruction of Mkhumbane and resettlement of shack residents in Kwa Mashu and then later Umlazi. In applying policy which aimed both to restructure African proletarian life and come to terms with the various contradictions inherent to such a policy, the state and capital, partly through the use of direct coercion, created a new African working class that was not completely of their own making. The basic foundations of considerable future conflict between the state, capital and the residents of the townships were created during the very attempts made during the 1950s to restructure the workplace and residential lives of the city's African proletariat.

22. See for example, Bonner, "Popular Struggles in Benoni", Maylam, "Black Belt" and J Kelly, "Durban's Industrialization, Unskilled Labour Supplies and Proletarianization 1920-105-", unpublished seminar paper, University of Natal, Durban, 1987.

CHAPTER 4

A LEGACY OF WAR-TIME EXPANSION :
CAPITAL, AFRICAN LABOUR AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

Capitalist Production and Accumulation in Durban

During the "exceptionally fast"¹ economic boom experienced throughout the country in the period immediately after the Second World War, the rate of industrial expansion in the Durban area was greater than that of any other area excepting the southern Transvaal. However, from the year-long recession beginning in December 1948² through to the "slight recession"³ experienced virtually throughout the country in 1953,⁴ Durban's industrial sector suffered a "rather considerable fall in the rate of growth, particularly of net output"; this was to reveal the fragility of many of the structural foundations of local industrial and commercial enterprise.⁵

From 1948 to 1953 the local economy experienced a serious short-term profitability crisis as the organic composition of capital rose, markets remained constant or diminished, the power of White labour increased, and the demands of African labour became ever more pressing. This trend in many ways mirrored, in perhaps a more extreme form, the general trend in the national economy. During the immediate post-war economic expansion, the "trend of profitability of quoted industrial and commercial concerns, as measured by the percentage ratio of pre-tax profits to shareholders' funds, was downwards",⁶ reaching a "nadir" in 1949-1950.⁷ In the following year profitability rose fairly sharply, but declined by 1951-1952, and then remained relatively constant for a few years,⁸ although declining even further in the retail and wholesale and building sectors.⁹

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1. M Katzen and G F D Palmer, "Some Aspects of the Development of Secondary Industry in South Africa since the Depression of 1929-1932" South African Journal of Economics, vol 22, no 1 (March 1954), p 148-153.
 2. P K Lomas, "Industrial Profits since the War", South African Journal of Economics, vol 23, no 1 (March 1955), p 38.
 3. M Katzen, Industry in Greater Durban, Part 3 Natal Town and Regional Planning report, vol 3, (Pietermaritzburg, 1961), p 9.
 4. Lomas, "Industrial Profits", p 41.
 5. Katzen, Industry, p 3.
 6. Lomas, "Industrial Profits", p 41.
 7. Ibid, p 38.
 8. E H D Arndt, "The Union's Economy - A Review", South African Journal of Economics, vol 24, no 3 (September 1956), p 187.
 9. Lomas, "Industrial Profits", p 46 and M H De Kock "Recent Economic and Financial Developments in the Union - A Review", South African Journal of Economics, vol 25, no 3 (September 1957), p 188.

During the period from 1945 to 1954, the total amount of fixed capital invested in Durban's industrial sector increased by over 400% from just over fourteen million pounds to over fifty-eight million pounds. During the same period, the proportion of capital invested in machinery, plant and tools in relation to total invested fixed capital increased appreciably. Thus, although investment in modifying existing plant and acquiring new machinery did not result in a marked increase in the horsepower per worker ratio, there was a significant increase in the amounts of capital which had to be allocated towards capital loan and redemption charges.¹⁰

During the same period, the ratio of capital invested in land and buildings as compared to total fixed capital decreased significantly with local industry preferring to restructure their existing holdings rather than erect new premises. In 1945 the City Council acquired the 143 acre area of Amanzinyama to allow for industrial expansion. However, in spite of much advertising,¹¹ the low-lying and swampy area required much reclamation. Although partially reclaimed and provided with a single railway siding by 1953, only 11 acres of the area had been developed by 1954.¹²

In 1950 the City Council, acting partly to boost the fortunes of the local building industry, lifted building restrictions in respect of premises to be developed on the Mobeai Industrial Estate.¹³ However, little expansion was to occur. The area was distant from the major industrial area of Maydon Wharf, Jacobs and Congella. The municipality also insisted that new employers operating in the area either house their African employees or pay towards the costs of their being housed by the municipality.¹⁴ Thus the City Council's attempt to partially alleviate the shortage of suitable accommodation for Africans merely acted as a secondary constraint against industry's drive not to expand their land and building holdings.

Between 1945 and 1954, the 27% increase in industrial land holdings in the city was mainly due to the development of the 285-acre Wentworth Oil Refinery.¹⁵ Even allowing for an extremely favourable municipal rate structure,¹⁶ the ratable value of land and buildings in the industrial areas of the city in 1954/55 was still just over ten million pounds as compared to the city's total rateable value of 124 million pounds.¹⁷

Durban's market zone throughout the period under review was fixed to an area extending along the rail routes to and equidistant between Durban and Johannesburg and Durban and East London. The "fiercest competition" occurred between Durban and the Witwatersrand in the "no man's land" of Northern Natal.¹⁸ By

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10. Katzen, *Industry*, Appendix 8 D J L McWhirter, *Industry in Greater Durban*, Part 4, Natal Town and Regional Planning Report, vol 4, (Pietermaritzburg, 1961) Appendix 9.
 11. Durban Corporation, *Industrial Durban*, (Durban, 1947), p 3.
 12. Katzen, *Industry*, p 2.
 13. *Ibid*, Chapter 1.
 14. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1948-1949.
 15. Katzen, *Industry*, Chapter 1.
 16. Broome Commission, evidence of the City Treasurer.
 17. Katzen, *Industry*, p 3, table 2.
 18. McWhirter, *Industry*, p 4.

1950, the Witwatersrand had assumed market dominance in the Newcastle, Paulpietersburg and to a lesser extent Vryheid areas, with Durban influential in Dundee, Klip River and Harrismith. Within Durban's market zone, the greater Durban area was by far the most important consumer, with the remaining market share being spread out along the railway routes to Pietermaritzburg, Harding and Greytown. The possibilities of expanding the consumption of goods either produced in or transported from Durban into these areas was almost completely constrained by the slow White population increase in these areas. People in the African reserves, which comprised about 40% of the total population in Durban's market area had "but a very low purchasing power".¹⁹

For local capitalists these problems were exacerbated by the decreasing consumer activity in the greater Durban area itself. During the period from 1948 to 1952, in spite of a steadily rising population,²⁰ the annual volume of retail trade turnover in Durban declined in both nominal and real terms.²¹ The incidence of shoplifting²² and hire purchase default increased.²³

The ability of Durban's industrial and commercial sectors to expand was, ironically, decisively constrained by its very location around a major port facility. During the period from 1944 to 1954, the total amount of materials processed by private manufacturing industry increased slightly from around 54% of gross output to approximately 60%. Throughout the period only half of the materials used originated in South Africa. This made Durban's industrial sector the highest importer of materials in the country.²⁴ As a result of the Union Government's continued policy of import substitution and the consequent periodic surcharges levied on various imported materials, certain industrial concerns experienced continual difficulties in stabilizing production.²⁵

As a result, local support for the "Buy South African" campaign, initiated by the Union Government and major industrial and commercial groupings during the early 1950's,²⁶ was either muted or non-existent.²⁷ Companies complained when surcharges were levied on imported raw materials and produced goods. Others felt the ill-effects of the lifting of such charges. This was the case with the local textile industry when cheap Japanese articles appeared on the local market. In 1950 Phillip Frame maintained that imported Japanese

19. *Ibid*

20. See Mayors Minutes, 1946-1953.

21. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1951-1952.

22. *Ibid*, 1945-46.

23. *Ibid*, 1951-52.

24. McWhirter, *Industry*, Appendix 7 and Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Reports, 1948-1949 and 1950-1951.

25. *Ibid*, 1945-1946 and Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Reports, *passim*.

26. *South African Industry and Trade*, *passim*.

27. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1955-1956.

articles were 'crippling local textile industry'. Local traders supplying the African market were placing orders of up to fifty thousand pounds for Japanese textiles and crockery.²⁸

Durban's coastal location also adversely affected those manufacturing and commercial concerns which based a significant proportion of their enterprise on exporting locally manufactured goods. With the industrial expansion of Japan and India, previously secure markets, mainly within the Commonwealth, were being swamped with cheaper goods.²⁹

The potential for local industry to expand by capitalizing on Durban's major port facilities was limited by state transport tariff rates which negated any local advantage due to harbour facilities and location. This policy, long a source of anxiety amongst local businessmen, was maintained in order to allow the railway and port facilities of East London and Port Elizabeth to gain a share in the lucrative transportation requirements of the Witwatersrand. Port charges in Durban were deliberately raised as were the rail tariffs between Durban and Johannesburg. This raising of rail charges also benefitted industry centred in the Witwatersrand at the expense of local concerns. For example, it cost the same to transport all the imported raw materials for the production of paint from Durban to Johannesburg as it did to transport paint manufactured in Durban the short distance to Pietermaritzburg.³⁰

In 1947 local industrialists had been posing the question "when is the slump coming",³¹ In 1953 local capitalists were, in common with their counterparts in the other major urban centres,³² expressing concern over the state of the industrial and commercial economy. In December 1953, the President of the South African Federated Chambers of Industry criticized the private sector for having been unable to 'avoid booms and slumps'. To the 'astonished' audience, he then went on to make a call for a commission of enquiry into the 'inter-related problems of purchasing power and productive capacity', maintaining that:

We have now reached a stage in post-war development where once again we must face up to the fact that while we, under the system of private enterprise, have largely solved our problems of production, we have by no means solved the problems of distribution. It is necessary to emphasize that at a time when there are signs of some slight recession of economic activity in South Africa, that there still exists a very large unsatisfied demand for the basic necessities of life³³

Despite their professed confusion, which almost certainly had more to do with the central state's attempts to develop the national economy through state corporatist structures³⁴ most representatives of local chambers of

28. *South African Industry and Trade*, vol 46, no 4 (April 1950).

29. Katzen, *Industry*, pp 40-41.

30. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1945-1946 and Katzen, *Industry*, p 30.

31. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1946-1947.

32. *South African Industry and Trade*, vol 50, no 1 (January 1954).

33. *Ibid.*, vol 49, no 12 (December 1953).

34. *Ibid.*, *passim*.

industries and, particularly, chambers of commerce, did, however, concur.³⁵ Acceptance of such a persp was not merely a moral issue. Many industrialists did accept the broad argument that the expansion of industrial and manufacturing sector which had occurred during the 1940's had been achieved without the provision of acceptable infrastructural and service facilities in the urban areas.³⁶ In order to create conditions for a quickening pace of economic activity it was necessary to correct the economic "bottlenecks".³⁷ Most agreed that the most pressing issues were "the now familiar themes of inflation, labour and other shortages, ... backlogs in respect of housing, power and transport and other services ...".³⁸ It is thus unnecessary to distinguish between capital's desire to boost the fortunes of the building industry and their professed concern over the living conditions of the African urban labour force.³⁹ Both issues were inextricably linked as capital attempted to regulate imbalances within the economy.⁴⁰

In addition to many industrialists being concerned about the relationship between production and consumption, the position was further complicated. Many leading industrialists were less than sanguine about the state of industrial production itself. Most pointed to the rising cost structure and diminishing returns on capital investment as the key characteristics of the industrial economy.⁴¹ Some even spoke of the need to plan for a future "recession".⁴² Such trends had been noted during the late 1940's. One commentator had noted that the key factor causing the economy to be "in a bit of a jam" was the "enormous increase in importations, not only of consumer goods, but also on capital account : machinery, rolling stock, motor transport ...".⁴³ In 1954, the President of the Durban Chamber of Commerce, supporting earlier remarks by the President of the Natal Chamber of Industry,⁴⁴ commented that,

...as always at such a stage of the economic cycle, wages and business costs of operation remain high. I am convinced that this trend will continue in 1954. This coming year will demand of businessmen efficiency and a constant attention to costs of operation while maximizing productive capacity.⁴⁵

35. *Ibid.*, vol 50, no 1 (January 1954).

36. Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1947-1948.

37. Richards, "Economic Outlook", p 144.

38. Arndt, "The Union's Economy", p 184.

39. For differing analysis see Hendler, "The making of Soweto".

40. S Gelb, "Making Sense of the Crisis", *Transformation*, no:5 (1987) p.35.

41. *South African Industry and Trade*, vol 50, no 1 (January 1954); Palmer "Secondary Industry" and Lomas "Industrial Profits", p 47.

42. *Ibid.*, vol 46, no 1 (January 1950) and vol 49, no 10 (October 1953).

43. Richards "Economic Outlook", p 147.

44. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1946-1947.

45. *South African Industry and Trade*, vol 51, no 1 (January 1954).

It is exceedingly difficult to gain any clear picture of the profit margins within local industrial concerns. However, there does appear to have been a trend towards increasing monopolization and a rapid rise in the organic composition of capital. Faced with the increasing electoral and trade union power of White labour, during the 1950s both the state and capital attempted to come to terms with a series of complex issues. Within the constraints presented by White labour, increasing profitability was in many ways dependent upon a massive state "offensive" on the living standards of the African proletariat.⁴⁶ During the late 1940s and early 1950s, major sectors of local industry were experiencing a serious short-term profitability crisis. Furthermore, during this same period the real wages of African workers declined by 12% from 1946 to 1954.⁴⁷ This reduction did little to alleviate the problems faced by local industry.

During the Second World War, local industrial interests had experienced an increasing return on their capital investments.⁴⁸ However during the period 1946-1954, the ratio of fixed capital over net output increased to the point when, in 1954, fixed capital investment exceeded net output.⁴⁹ During the same time, Durban's market share of national manufacturing output dropped.⁵⁰ While the ratio of the total wage bill to net output was to remain relatively constant during the period, and investment in land and buildings over total capital decreased, the significant rise in investments in machinery, plant and tools resulted in a worsening rate of return on capital invested.

The only major industrial sector which managed to overcome this difficulty was the food, drink and tobacco industry, which during the period expanded its share of all local industrial activity.⁵¹ In this sector the main areas of economic activity were grain, maize and corn milling, cattle feed, tea blending and packaging, milk and milk by-products, sweets, mineral water, canned fruit and meats and jellies and spices.⁵² During the period the ratio of capital investment in land and buildings to total fixed capital had increased, the ratio of investment in machinery to total capital decreased; and the ratio of the total wage bill to net output was slashed by over 30%. Increasing numbers of African were being employed at lower rates of pay. In common with countrywide trends in the food sector, the local industry experienced increasing returns on capital invested.⁵³

The converse was applicable in the chemical industry, which accounted for approximately 20% of all local industrial activity.⁵⁴ As a result of the harbour's proximity to the sources of raw materials required for paint, soap, candles, oils, fats, fertilizer and petroleum, the city's chemical industry accounted for some 30% of

46. R Davies, *Capital, State and White Labour*, (Brighton, 1979), pp 331-344.

47. Katzen, *Industry*, p 41.

48. Hindson, *Pass Controls*, pp 56-57.

49. Katzen, *Industry*, p 22 and Appendix 8 and McWhitter, *Industry*, Appendix 9.

50. *Ibid*, Appendices 1 and 2.

51. Katzen, *Industry*, Appendix 1.

52. *Ibid*

53. Lornas, 'Industrial Profits', p 48-49.

54. Katzen, *Industry*, p 70.

the country's production. The local paint industry accounted for more than half of the country's production. However rising rail tariffs and dramatic post-war rises in raw material prices produced severe problems for the industry. A certain measure of relief was gained in 1954 when rail tariffs for paint were reduced. Similarly, while local production of soap, candles, oils and fats dominated total Union production by 1949, expansion was "erratic". Raw material costs increased by as much as three and half times their pre-war levels due to world-wide shortages and the price of purchased new machinery rocketed by as much as 500%

For the chemical industry as a whole, the total amount of capital investment in land and buildings declined by more than half. The ratio of African employment over total employment rose significantly. African real wages declined. However, during the same period the ratio of capital invested in machinery, plant and tools total fixed capital nearly doubled while the ratio of fixed capital to net output increased from 45% in 1945/46 to 136% in 1953/54.⁵⁵ A similar although less marked trend was evident among the other main sectors of local industrial production: metals and engineering, paper and printing, furniture, bedding and upholstery, wood and industrial minerals. Together these enterprises comprised just over a quarter of local industrial activity.⁵⁶

In the textile, leather and footwear and clothing industry the position was distinctly different. During the war, these industries had received a massive boost as a result of military requirements, and because of the "cut, make and trim" production process which allowed for significant profits to be made through the use of surplus materials or "cabbage".⁵⁷ During the war, many White textile workers had left the industry and Black workers became increasingly dominant in an industry where colour bar controls were weak and mechanized production processes required relatively little skills training. By 1944 over half the labour force was comprised of Indian workers. In the period from 1946 to the end of the decade, while the local industry dominated even the Johannesburg market, specialized in cheap clothing lines and faced little competition, there was a high newcomer and mortality rate as the "cut, make and trim" processes made way for new and expensive mechanized production.

During the early 1950's, the industry underwent a period of consolidation as profitable firms remained and fewer newcomers entered the market. However, while returns on capital investment increased, the industry was faced with a major barrier to its expansion. Competition from other locally made goods increased. This situation was exacerbated by the availability of cheaper goods from Japan, Hong Kong and Southern Rhodesia, where wages were lower and there were less stringent factory regulations.⁵⁸

During the period from 1946 to around 1954, as Durban's industrial sector attempted to consolidate and expand their operations, representatives of local industrial interests became increasingly concerned by their inability to stem the declining rate of return on capital investment. While fewer new firms entered the market

55. *Ibid*, Appendix.

56. *Ibid*.

57. *Ibid*, p 34-35.

58. *Ibid*, p 38-41.

and increasing numbers of local firms became entrenched as public companies,⁵⁹ there was a significant reduction in capital charges other than those payable for the acquisition of new machinery. Industrialists remained cautious about future prospects for the local economy.

Faced with increasing capital charges, the increasing real wages of White workers, many of whom were rapidly moving into supervisory positions,⁶⁰ and the assertiveness of White labour,⁶¹ local capital's attempt to avert a fall in the rate of profit by slashing the African wage bill was to be fraught with contradictions. Such an onslaught would threaten attempts by both the state and capital to increase capital accumulation through a further integration of African wage labourers and proletarian housing into the spheres of industrial and commercial capital. If African wages declined, their ability to afford new forms of housing would be placed in considerable jeopardy.

Within both the state and capital a key debate during the later 1940s and 1950s concerned the means whereby capitalist production costs could be reduced at the same time as ensuring the availability and reproduction of a transformed African urban workforce. However, although much state policy was deliberately designed to ensure both continued economic growth and the transformation of an urban African proletariat, such state intervention never completely displaced or over-rode certain characteristics within local capitalist production or major features within the African labour market.

The Countryside, African Labour and Capitalist Production

Statistical evidence on Durban's African population derives from diverse sources which are often directly contradictory.⁶² Apart from Union Government general and manufacturing census figures, further evidence is provided by the municipality's official figures, unofficial statistics, reports and correspondence from the municipal pass office, labour bureau, location and hostel superintendents, and the Supervisor of Shack Surveys, a post formally established in November 1951 to co-ordinate the existing Inspectorate of Shacks Section, and certain important and reliable personal recollections.

During the 1940's the municipality lacked both the resources and the personnel to accomplish what would anyway have been a virtually impossible task.⁶³ With the suspension of influx control and the massive movement of Africans into the city, calculations embodied a large measure of guesswork. Willson, who then worked in the pass office recalls that

59. *Ibid.*, p 17-18.

60. *Ibid.*, p 21.

61. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1946-1947, Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1949-1950. See J Lewis, *Industrialization and Trade Union Organization in South Africa, 1924-55*, (Cambridge, 1984) for analysis of White trade union organization during this period.

62. For important analysis of this issue see C Meth, *Sorry Wrong Number, a critical examination of African labour force estimates, 1970-1987*, (Durban, 1988).

63. Broome commission; evidence of the City Council.

Most of the paperwork was in a mess, with us being so short staffed and even then we could not really go around into the shacks. We knew how many were in the hostels ... but we really needed to count the rest. I remember Robson⁶⁴ would get furious when people asked him for figures. He would just reel off any old number and put the phone down.⁶⁵

By the end of the 1940's, the position was somewhat improved, with municipal officials being able to supply fairly accurate estimates of the shack population of the city. With improving conditions at the Ordnance Road pass office, the municipality was also able to supply reasonably reliable estimates of the city's African workforce.⁶⁶ The position was to get increasingly better during the early 1950's as the Department's own internal administrative restructuring proceeded. Major employers of African labour also appreciated the need to assist the municipality in "keeping statistics".⁶⁷

In the 1946 Census it was estimated that 110,677 Africans lived in Durban.⁶⁸ In the age group 20 to 24 years old, there were 1,97 men to each woman as opposed to the rural average of 0,66 men to each woman. With regard to those between 25 and 29 years old, the city's ratio was 2,36 men to every woman in contrast to the rural average for the same persons of 0,68. For those between 30 and 34 years of age, the urban average was 2,52 men to every woman, with the rural average being 0,66. The African female population of Durban was estimated to be around 28,000 persons.⁶⁹

In November 1948 the municipal Native Administration Department worked on a total African population of 150,000, with 115,000 being male and 35,000 female.⁷⁰ While the City Council was never to publically acknowledge this figure⁷¹ and other municipal departments disagreed with this total,⁷² Shum recalls that "in the Department it was generally accepted as the most likely estimate".⁷³ In 1950 the Native Administration Department estimated that the African population of the city had risen to 165,00. By 1953, the

64. Mr "Tings" Robson was then Chief Superintendent, Somtseu Road Mens' Hostel.

65. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 21 November 1980.

66. *Ibid.*

67. Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1954-1955.

68. Union Government Census, 1946.

For the same year, the municipal Health Department quoted a similar figure: 108,866. See *Durban Housing Survey*. Smith's unreferenced figure of 166,000 has been ignored as being impossible to substantiate and improbable. See R H Smith, *Labour Resources of Natal*, (Cape Town, 1952).

69. TCF; Crime and Unauthorized Shacks, vol 4; Memorandum by Mrs M Maytom, 22 February 1948.

70. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; Manager, MNAD "Native Housing Policy", November 1948. This figure was 50,000 higher than that estimated by the Broome Commission report of April 1948 and 40,000 higher than that set down in the 1948-1949 Mayors Minute.

71. See Mayors Minute, 1948-1949.

72. Interview with Mr D McCullouch, 23 April 1982.

73. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 30 June 1985.

estimated African population in Durban had declined slightly to 160,000, of whom 110,000 were men and 50,000 women.⁷⁴ This small decline in the African population of Durban was significant as such population reductions went against the trends in other cities in the country where the African urban population was steadily increasing. What is even more noticeable in these figures is that the African male population of the city had declined.

During the early 1950s the municipality attempted to control African entry into the city and otherwise reduce the city's African population. With the implementation of the new pass laws, a general tightening up of control in the city, and municipal officials' deportation of the unemployed or those deemed 'idle and undesirable', the municipality began to gain control over African urbanization. However, the declining African population of Durban probably had more to do with a brief improvement in agricultural productivity in many African reserve areas.⁷⁵

It is entirely possible that as a result of the massive townward movement of the 1940s, pressure on land and agricultural resources in the reserves may have decreased somewhat. With a temporary small improvement in agricultural conditions in such areas, fewer men may well have been forced into the cities. Indeed, throughout the 1950s, municipal ability to alter the composition of Durban's African labour force was to be fundamentally constrained by certain structural features within the city's relationship to the African countryside.

When compared to the total African male labour force in the city, relatively little labour originated from the reserves which surrounded the city. Most of that labour was migratory. As a result, municipal and employer attempts to restrict African city employment only to persons coming from the seven major reserves which surrounded the city were fraught with contradictions.

The majority of African males employed in Durban did not originate from the African reserves that surrounded the city. It appears that agricultural production in the reserves of Lower Tukela, Ndwedwe, Inanda, Pinetown, Mbumbulu and Mzinto had not declined to such an extent that Africans living in these areas were forced to seek work in Durban.⁷⁶ During the whole period from the late 1940's through the early 1950's, Durban derived only 20% of its African labour force from these areas.⁷⁷ Furthermore, few Africans formally employed in Durban and living in these areas chose to reside permanently in the city. Africans originating from these areas and working in the city appear to have preferred to utilize the relatively well developed road and railway networks to commute on a weekly or fairly frequent basis.⁷⁸

74. *Ibid*

75. C Simkins, 'Agricultural production in the African reserves of South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 7, (1981). More research is required into the changing relationships between African reserve areas in Natal and Durban.

76. Natal Regional Survey, vol 7, *The Native Reserves of Natal*, (Cape Town, 1957), p 94 & 100 and MNAD: H2/CM, vol 1; Union Government, Department of Native Affairs, Technical Sub-Committee of the Native Affairs Commission, February 1949.

77. Smith, *Labour Resources*, p 57-58.

78. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

In the peri-urban areas within a fifteen mile radius of the city centre, this preference for not residing permanently in Durban was even more pronounced. Of the estimated 4,494 African men who worked in the city and who came from these areas, the vast majority commuted on a daily basis while all the remainder returned home at weekends. This survey, undertaken by the municipality and completed in 1951, was found to correlate accurately with an earlier Local Health Commission report.⁷⁹

During the late 1940's and early 1950's, approximately 60% of Durban's African labour force originated from areas of Natal and Zululand distant from the city. A further 20% of the city's African male labour force came from areas outside the province.⁸⁰ Willson remembers that one of the 'striking things about that period ... was that all the blokes flocking to Durban came from the bundu. A hell of a long way away. You would even get [African] from [Nyasaland], Sothos, Mpondos .. the works.⁸¹

The specific rural origins of Durban's African labour force had much to do with the very differing conditions in particular rural regions. The effects of legislation aimed at stimulating White capitalist agriculture and curbing the growth of an African peasantry, and the creation of African reserves and an African farm labour force had an uneven impact in the countryside. These legislative strictures, when combined with climatic and other agronomical features, produced often sharp distinctions within the southern African countryside. The particular relations between the city and specific rural areas were also partially responsible for the increasingly more evident distinctions of employment, class and ethnicity which developed among the African proletariat.

During the same period increasing numbers of Africans began to settle permanently in the city, either bringing their families and establishing new households in Durban or renting single accommodation in hostels or shantytowns. Colin Shum offers his recollection:

I think it would be safe to say that by the time I became Superintendant in Cato Manor (1953), probably a full 50% of all Africans [in Durban] were living permanently in the city. You only had to look at the shantytowns to see that. When you add that total to the people in the townships it was around half.⁸²

Having streamed to the city during the war time economic boom, by the early 1950's such Africans were determined to remain as permanent residents of the city.

During the period from 1946 to the early 1950's, while the pattern of migrancy continued, an increasing number of African male migrants tended to stay in Durban for longer periods of time and rely more heavily on their wages to assist in the maintenance of rural households.⁸³ Willson recalls:

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79. Shum Papers; C N Shum, Totals and Percentages Extracted from the Peri Urban Survey, 18 April 1951.
80. Smith, *Labour Resources*, p 57-58.
81. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 21 January 1981.
82. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.
83. D Hemson, "Dockworkers, Labour Circulation and Class Struggles in Durban, 1940 -1950, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 4, no 2 (1978), p 106, and J Kelly, "Durban's industrialization, unskilled labour supplies and proletarianization, 1920-1950", unpublished seminar paper, University of Natal, 1987.

Most service contracts were for a month. Before the war when I started lots of people would pop in as it were, work for a couple of months and then bugger off. All that changed after the war when I came back. Now you had most people living in Durban all the year and only going back when the factories closed over Christmas. Everyone wanted to renew their contracts.⁸⁴

Mr Mthethwa, then living in the South African Railways and Harbour compound at the Point confirms the tendency:

I came to Durban during the war as a boy. I got a job in the Railways sweeping the trains in Durban station. I would live with my brother who had a room at Msizini,⁸⁵ but I would go home every few months to look after my mother. My father was on the mines. But then as I got older I stayed in the Point Road Barracks all the time and sent money home. Then I moved to Mkhumbane when I was married.⁸⁶

In 1950, the Natal section of the Industrial Employers Association recognized this tendency, remarking that whilst it was "well nigh impossible" to provide a definition of "an urbanized Native", it was nevertheless true that the number of Africans who, apart from annual leave, remained with employers in the city was growing.⁸⁷

It is significant that in Durban there were fewer women in relation to the number of African male residents than was the case in any of the other main urban centres of the Union. In 1946 the Union-wide male-female ratio for African urban dwellers was 1,8 men to each woman. By 1951, this ratio had declined to 1,6 men to every woman.⁸⁸ However in Durban, the male-female ratio stood at 3,28 men to every woman in 1948 and declined to 2,2 men for every woman by 1953. Municipal officials were constantly aware that their "figures probably underestimated the number of women in the city",⁸⁹ but it was generally true that Durban's African population was significantly more male in composition than was the case in other South African cities. African proletarian culture in the city was thus largely based on mens' consciousness of the city. Nevertheless, three key characteristics of the role of African women in the city were to influence the manner in which both the state and capital could intervene in social relations.

First, there were very few opportunities for African women to become formally employed in either industry, commerce or domestic labour, with the latter the sole, although slowly declining preserve of 'kitchen boys'. From the middle 1950s onwards African women did gain increasing domestic employment, mainly as 'nannies'.⁹⁰ However throughout the 1940s and 1950s African employment in the hotel and domestic sectors

84. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 21 January 1981.

85. Popular name for the Somtseu Road Mens' Hostel.

86. Interview with Mr H Mthethwa, 28 November 1986.

87. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1949-1950.

88. Hindson, *Pass Controls*, p 53-54.

89. MNAD; H/Gen vol 1; Manager, MNAD 'Native Housing Policy', November 1948.

90. *Nanga lase Natal*.

was predominated by men. In industry and commerce there were almost no employment opportunities for African women.⁹¹ Willson sums up the position:

Look African women did not work in those days. ... Where could they work? There was no factory work. That was all men and Indian women in the clothing places - laundries - ...there were a lot of them but they were full of Indians who had been involved for donkey's years. The other real thing was that kitchen work was scarce. People used to have boys.⁹²

Second, many of the African women who entered the city, not necessarily with either spouse or male relatives, desired to settle permanently in the city. Finding few formal job opportunities, such people rapidly became a pivotal force in the range of expanding petty entrepreneurial activities centred in all the African residential areas of the city. These activities, while officially frowned upon and castigated, were a vital component in ensuring the reproduction of the city's total African population: both male and female, permanently employed, casually employed and unemployed.

Realizing this problem, Havemann, the Manager of the municipal Native Administration Department, attacked those city councillors who were engaged in fulminating over the illicit ventures prevalent in Mkhumbane. Havemann noted that "while there are criminals and idlers, the residents of Cato Manor are not a mass of brawling insurgents. They are on the whole decent working men trying their best to provide for their families".⁹³ Determined to remain in the city and aware of their importance in African urban society such women were an awesome presence for municipal and police officials alike. Drew, then a policeman stationed at Cato Manor maintains:

You should have seen it. Everyone had a little pondok there. Just the girlfriend - often young ... and the cheek. Shit you would think you were talking to the queen. Even the Bantu constables were furious. They were just girlfriends but they controlled the whole show.⁹⁴

Finally, many of the African women in the city would sustain casual live-in relationships with African who might also have been married to someone in the rural reserves. Kunene, who came to Durban in 1949 and gained work at the newly expanded South African Fertilizer Company in 1952, recalls,

When I got the job at SAFCO I took a wife in Mkhumbane. You would have to get the whole house nice - buy the bed and the pots and things. I stayed in the compound in Sydney Road but I had rooms in Cato Manor for us. When my wife came from the farm I stayed in the compound. It was a common practice.⁹⁵

91. Katzen, *Industry*, p 79.

92. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 21 January 1981.

93. MNAD; HZ/CM, vol 1, Manager, MNAD - Town Clerk, 30 July 1949.

94. Interview with Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980.

95. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 21 April 1985.

All attempts to restructure African society in Durban would have to come to terms with these features of African women's life in the city.

In summary, the African population of Durban originated primarily from areas far distant from the city, had a far higher average of men to women than national urban averages reveal and was, while divided between permanently urbanized and migrant, either totally or ever-increasingly reliant on the urban wage for the costs of their reproduction in both the city and countryside. The movement and character of this population was not solely the result of the imperatives of local capitalist accumulation itself. Local employers and the municipality confronted an urban African population that was not solely of their own making. It was this proletariat which was to decisively constrain both the state and capital in their attempts to restructure city life. In the city itself however, the specific nature of capitalist production was to shape a particular African labour force in ways which were to deepen the complexity of the issues faced by both the state and capital.

During the period from 1946 to 1951 the number of Africans living in Durban who were between the ages of ten and fifty years old and thus were regarded by both the state and capital as the economically active African urban population rose from 103,551 persons to 136,279 persons.⁹⁶ From 1946 to 1953 the number of African men formally employed in the city by either the local or central state, commerce and industry, domestic and hotel concerns or other registered employers rose from 74,610 persons to 100,367 persons.⁹⁷ However, during this period, the number of Africans who were in employment remained fairly stable at around 72% of the total economically active population. However, the wages received by this African workforce were increasingly required to support spouses and other dependants, as both the urban African birth-rate had increased sharply⁹⁸ and elder relatives moved into the city.⁹⁹ Therefore in this period the number of Africans employed in the city over the total African population of Durban dropped slightly from 67,4% to 64,3%.

For the vast majority of African male workers, whether they be migrant or permanent city dwellers, their involvement in the local economy was at the level of casual, unskilled labour. While certain particular industrial sectors had expanded their production in a manner which permitted African labour access to semi-skilled positions,¹⁰⁰ the great majority of industrial enterprises, let alone other employers of African labour, still employed Africans in predominantly unskilled positions. Stanford Mtofo, then an organizer for the African Dairy Workers' Union remembers that 'it was only much later in the 1950's that Africans could say 'I am an operator in the mills', or 'I drive a lorry for the Railways'. Before this time everyone would do the same work.¹⁰¹

96. Statistics derived from Union Government Population Census, 1946 and Katzen, *Industry*, Table 4.

97. Statistics derived from Katzen, *Industry* and MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; 'Registered Native Labour' undated. This latter set of statistics excludes tog labour.

98. Mayors Minutes, 1946-1953, reports of the City Medical Officer of Health.

99. Interview with Mr T Sbabalala, 21 August 1985.

100. Natal Regional Survey, additional report no 5, *The African Factory Worker*, (Cape Town, 1951).

101. Interview with Mr S S L Mtofo, 10 June 1983.

This was acknowledged by most of the main employers of African labour.¹⁰² In 1953 the Chairman of the Industrial Employers Association in Natal commented,

I would liken the employment of Africans in industry to that of pouring untrained troops into a military operation in order to cope with an emergency, but always in the hope that sooner or later respite will be gained and an opportunity afforded to remedy the absence of pre-employment training.¹⁰³

The position was such that an accurate commentator on the local economy pointed out that Durban's African labour supply resembled "one huge casual market".¹⁰⁴ As a result, in this labour market the African proletariat resorted to 'job hopping'. Willson explains:

At the Pass Office you would get hundreds of people queuing to change their jobs. Some labour service contracts were for a month. Others for 12 months. But you would get lots of blokes changing in midstream. It was a circus or job hopping we used to call it.¹⁰⁵

It has been argued that this practice was the result of African labour mainly originating from the rural reserves around Durban being able to "resist total subjection to the work disciplines of wage employment" through having access to resources produced in these reserves.¹⁰⁶ In 1945 municipal officials estimated that given the relatively stable conditions which prevailed in these reserves, "it can be seen that it is Natives coming from areas close to Durban who undertake the highest number of separate jobs".¹⁰⁷ However the scale of job hopping was far greater than that which could solely have been undertaken by such workers, who only accounted for some 20% of the city's African labour.

Nevertheless there is evidence which reveals a clear tendency for many Africans who originated in areas stricken with declining agricultural production and far distant from the city to remain in a particular job for many years. Furthermore African workers were keenly aware that employers would only select people from certain areas for particular jobs: "if you wanted to be a guardboy you had to put on the earrings of people" from the Mahlabatini and Nongoma area.¹⁰⁸ Such workers, known for their "loyalty" to a single employer became the subject of derision within the proletariat.¹⁰⁹ Shabalala recalls:

There was this stupid old Zulu with his big earrings. He was a watchboy who, if the boss said 'Do not let anybody come in tonight', would even refuse to let the boss back in! If you

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102. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Reports, 1945-1946 and 1949-1950.
 103. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1953-1954.
 104. Broome Commission; evidence of the Department of Economics, Natal University College, 1947.
 105. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 21 January 1981.
 106. Kelly, "Durban's Industrialization", p 12.
 107. Smith, *Native Reserves*, p 113.
 108. Interview with Mr M Mthethwe, 14 January 1986.
 109. Interviews with Mr H Mthethwe, 28 November 1986 and Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985.

wanted to be a guard you had to get earrings! They would do the same thing for years. Just stalk up and down with their sticks. Even if their relatives came to visit they would not even open the gates. 'Yes what do you want?' And they would talk to them through the gates.¹¹⁰

The riposte to this joke however warns of the pitfalls likely to be experienced by those too scornful and dismissive of the disciplines of the workplace and confident of their ability to find eagerly sought after work. This story, again obviously apocryphal, concerns a youth from northern Natal who gets a job as a nightwatchman:

When the boss leaves in the evening he puts an upturned bowl next to the boy's stool. 'Now boy, I want you to see that nobody ever touches this bowl.' 'Yes boss'. But ... in the night he looks at the bowl all the time and he cannot help himself. So he lifts it up and out runs a little mouse. The next day he is fired.¹¹¹

To many African workers, their mobility within the city's labour market was a crucial bargaining power which they endeavoured to uphold. This was recognized by local employers who often complained that registered African workseekers adopted 'a very selective attitude as to the type of work which they were prepared to accept'.¹¹² But many members of the African proletariat could hardly afford the luxury.

Conditions in the African countryside varied from area to area. These varying circumstances explain the nuances of the proletarianization process. Certain people would accept certain forms of employment. A regionalism or ethnicity could be sustained in the workplace.¹¹³ This was furthered by many employers deliberately choosing workers from a particular area,¹¹⁴ or through the practice of workers gaining employment for their relatives in the same company. This tendency, common in the stevedoring industry,¹¹⁵ was how Kunene got his job: 'My brother worked at SAFCO as an induna and I went to the gates and the boss tells me that 'if you do not work well your brother will give you! [a hiding]'.¹¹⁶ Only arriving in Durban as work seekers during the 1940's and 1950's, Mpondo became known for their willingness to accept the most menial and dirty of work which henceforth became known as 'Mpondo work'. Mpondo workers were employed

110. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 7 July 1985.

111. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985. For the prevalence in the Johannesburg area for Zulu nightwatchmen sitting around braziers see E Mphahlele, *Down Second Avenue*, (London, 1973) and C Themba, *The Will to Die*, (London, 1979).

112. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1950-1951.

113. For such argument see A Sitas, 'Class, nation and ethnicity in Natal's Black working class', paper presented at the Workshop on Regionalism and Restructuring in Natal, University of Natal, Durban, 1988.

114. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985. Details on employer attitudes are sketchy.

115. Interview with Mr M Mthethwe, 28 November 1986. See also G D Sack, 'IziMpholo: the bachelors. A study of Black migrant labourers in Durban', (M A thesis, Rhodes University, 1976).

116. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 28 April 1985.

on the night soil bucket rounds,¹¹⁷ and as sugar plantation field labour¹¹⁸ for which there was then a serious shortage.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, the growth of regionalism was to be counteracted by other forces. With most African labour being unskilled, many employers often chose African workers with the skills to boost company-sponsored sporting, musical and dancing teams.¹²⁰ However an even more important counter-balance to the force of ethnicity came from the practice of 'job hopping', which was essentially the result of the nature of capitalist accumulation in the city.

While there had long existed a practice whereby new entrants to the city would first secure domestic employment while scouting around for a place in the industrial and commercial sector,¹²¹ the practice of job hopping within these latter sectors was distinctly different. As a result of the rapidity of economic expansion during the war, and the eagerness of both the state and capital to gain sufficient African labour and avert potentially costly strike action, the state had continually laid down various different wage determinations affecting unskilled African labour.¹²² By 1947 there were 78 controlled industries in the Durban area which were affected by 20 different wage rates for unskilled African labour. These stipulated minimum wage rates varied between seventy-six shillings per week and less than twenty-three shillings per week.¹²³ As a result employers often complained of their inability to obtain sufficient African labour through the unfair advantages of those employers able to pay higher wages.¹²⁴ While representatives of local employers called for a single regional minimum wage rate for African unskilled labour, provided all 'competitors' were willing to abide by the principle,¹²⁵ their attempts to thereby reduce labour turnover were fundamentally flawed. In 1956 the Natal section of the Industrial Employers Association was still noting that there were 'so many' different wages 'for the same job'. In forty-three industries there were eleven different minimum wage determinations affecting unskilled African labour.¹²⁶

Durban's economic activity was to a large extent based upon the city's location as a coastal tourist resort and its relatively well developed and situated harbour and airport facilities. Durban's sub-tropical climate and coastal location made the city a premier tourist resort which in addition stood 'at the centre of a

117. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 7 July 1985.

118. Union Government, Department of Native Affairs, Report, 1948-1949 and interview with Mr R Arenstein.

119. Ilanga lase Natal, 12 June 1949.

120. Interviews with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985, Mr T Mcaayana, and Mr T Phewa.

121. Interview with Mr D McCullouch, 23 April 1982 and interview with Mr J Mzimela.

122. Edwards 'Recollections', p 35.

123. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

124. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 14 February 1981.

125. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

126. Natal Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1955-1956.

chain of coastal holiday resorts stretching far to the north and south ... a gateway to Zululand with its fauna and native life, and to the Natal hinterland with its multifold scenic attractions.¹²⁷ However the tourist market was subject to significant seasonal trading fluctuations and whilst consistently employing many thousands of African workers in any one year, was never in a position to stabilize its unskilled African labour force.¹²⁸

With regard to trade through Durban harbour, in 1947 the harbour handled more than half the Union's total import and export trade, dealing with more cargo than all the other South African ports combined.¹²⁹ There were however always significant fluctuations in the amounts of cargo handled and thus often dramatic changes in the amount of casual togt labour required.¹³⁰ This had the obvious effect on local industry. Employers always had the needed to employ African labour "at the gate"¹³¹ in order to assist in the "loading and unloading of trucks" and other tasks.¹³²

As a result of the seasonal nature of the local tourist industry and the constant changes in the import and export trade, various different economic interests required different amounts of African labour throughout the year. Justice Broome, chairman of the Durban Native Administration Commission of Enquiry remarked in 1948 that "the demands of industry fluctuate; all Native labourers cannot be employed all the time. But the requirements of industry demand that there shall be readily available a reserve of labour that can be drawn upon to meet seasonal demands. This is particularly the case in the harbour areas."¹³³ With the vast majority of Durban's African male workers having originated in areas far away from the city, it was thus imperative for employers that a large reserve army of unskilled labour be resident in the city.

Such needs coincided with the desire of an increasing number of both permanent urban residents and supposedly migrant workers. When confronted by the long distances to their rural households, and ever more dependent upon urban wages, Africans remained in the city during periods of unemployment. The benefits to employers of having such a population close at hand were noted in October 1946 by Durban's Chief Medical Officer of Health:

Although the activity of wartime industry has greatly diminished, the effect of its stimulus remains such that it has not been possible, even if it were politic, to repatriate the Native workers and their families back to the Reserves. Indeed were it possible to do so, it is at least doubtful whether it would be politic in view of the far reaching plans which are now

127. Durban Corporation, *Industrial Durban*, p 6.

128. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; "Registered Native Labour" (minus togt labour). It is difficult to gain a clear picture of how many Africans were employed in the hotel trade. Prior to 1949 such persons were included within the general category of "hotel and domestic" but from 1950 were included in the general category "commerce and industry".

129. Durban Corporation, *Industrial Durban*, p 7.

130. For example see Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Reports, 1950 - 1951 and 1951 - 1952.

131. *Ibid.* 1953-1954.

132. *Ibid.* 1950-1951.

133. Broome Commission Report.

being conducted for the expansion of Durban's post-war industry, commerce and general development.¹³⁴

With the expansion of industry in the later 1940's and early 1950's increasing numbers of casually employed African workers were needed. Africans waiting for employment would often sit in the beerhalls and discuss employment possibilities, following a rather structured ritual whereby certain seats would be clearly demarcated for use by people from a certain area or chiefdom.¹³⁵ Mr M Mthethwe explains:

At the Victoria Beerhall we had our place for everyone from Kwa Mbonambi. It was the same at Point Road because lots of us lived in the Railway Barracks at Bell Street. There we would sit and listen and talk about jobs - what ships were in the harbour. People would talk about how many boys Dusty Smith needed to scrape and paint tomorrow.¹³⁶

By the early 1950's local employers were continually complaining that the reserve army of African labour was too small.¹³⁷ As a result particular sectors of the local economy had the greatest difficulty in securing both a 'sufficiency of full-time Native employees'¹³⁸ and in satisfying their need for temporary African labour.¹³⁹ Some employers remarked that because of the labour shortage Africans quickly became aware that 'their labour was at a premium' and thus became choosy about what work they would accept.¹⁴⁰

Such employers' views contradicted the generally held attitude amongst White citizens of Durban who complained about the existence of apparently huge numbers of work-shy 'illegal' Africans in the city.¹⁴¹ However, employer analyses were borne out by municipal statistics. In 1948 it was estimated that there were only 4,400 African males in legal employment who were not officially registered. However it was estimated that there was a further 8 000 to 10 000 adult males who were either unemployed or seeking work.¹⁴² Throughout the early 1950's, the total African reserve army of labour in the city was to remain relatively high.¹⁴³ Most unemployed African men lived in those same shantytowns which both the state and capital wished to destroy.

134. MNAD; "Housing and Shacks", vol 1, City Medical Officer of Health - Town Clerk, 14 October 1946.

135. For similar analysis see J K McNamara "Brothers and Work Mates: Home friend networks in the social life of Black migrant workers in a gold mine hostel" in P Mayer (ed), Black Villagers in an Industrial Society, (Cape Town, 1980) and Sack, "The bachelors".

136. Interview with Mr M Mthethwe, 28 November 1986. The firm of "Dusty Smith" had for long been one of the major stevedore firms.

137. For example see Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1951-1952.

138. Ibid

139. Ibid, 1952 - 1953.

140. Ibid, 1950 - 1951.

141. See Natal Mercury and Daily News passim.

142. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; Manger, MNAD "Native Housing Policy", November 1948.

143. South African Industry and Trade, vol 49, no 9 (September 1953), p and interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

During the early 1940's many, including members of the Communist Party of South Africa, had believed that African participation in the industrial and commercial economy would quickly lead to the growth of a stable, permanently urbanized African working class increasingly employed as semi-skilled labour.¹⁴⁴ While changes in the labour process¹⁴⁵ had not resulted in many Africans being employed as semi-skilled labour, this does not necessarily imply that the African proletariat was in any sense absolutely weakened in the face of both capital and a rejuvenated state.

Conclusion

During the late 1940's and early 1950's, although still employed as largely unskilled labour, the African workforce of the city had as a result of changing relationships between countryside and city and the nature of industrial and commercial production within the city, acquired certain characteristics at the point of production which were to present both the Union Government, municipality and local employers with severe problems when they discussed various means whereby the life of the city's African population could be altered. Such problems were to be compounded by the essential features of African residential life in the city as a whole.

144. Edwards, 'Recollections', p 35.

145. Lewis, *Industrialization*, chapter 7.

CHAPTER 5

REGULATING THE CRISIS :
STATE POLICY, CAPITALIST ACCUMULATION AND AFRICAN LABOUR*African Wages and the Structure of Residential Life*

The still predominantly illiterate¹ African proletariat had been able to assert increasing power in the labour market because of both the relative shortage of African labour which could be secured on terms favourable to employers, and imbalances within the local economy. Nevertheless, during the period from 1947 to 1954 African real wages had declined steadily, although not to a point below their immediate post-war levels. Whereas in the period from 1939 to 1947, the real wages of African labour increased by approximately 50%, during the period from 1947 to 1954, African real wages declined by nearly 12%.² There were however significant sectoral variations. For example in the period from 1945 to 1954, African real wages in the paper and printing industry rose by 20%, and in the furniture, bedding and upholstery trade by 33%. However, neither of these sectors employed much African labour³ In the majority of those industrial sectors which did employ large numbers of African labour real wages did decline. In the period from 1945 to 1954 African real wages in the food, drink and tobacco industry declined by 44%; in the wood industry by 14%; and in the industrial minerals sector the real decline was 15%.⁴ While this decline in the food industry assisted in ensuring the increased profitability of this particular sector, similar wage declines in other sectors did little to alleviate crises of profitability. However the wage reductions did in themselves create increased problems among the African population of the city.

During the early 1950's, the few remaining vestiges of the once flourishing African operated barter markets which had proliferated around the bus and railway centres in Durban had disappeared.⁵ Such places, where the women of the Umbumbulu⁶ and Ndwedwe⁷ districts used to exchange commodities for their own surplus agricultural production, were well patronized in Durban in the late 1940's. Khumalo recalls that you

1. Union Government Census, 1961.

2. Katzen, *Industry*, p 15.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. The existence of such markets does not necessarily contribute anything to the already fierce debate as to when the countryside was fully capitalist. For this debate see H Bradford, 'Highways and byways and cul-de-sacs: the transition to agrarian capitalism in South African historiography', unpublished paper, 1988.

6. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 29 April 1986.

7. Interview with Mr C D S Mbuthe, 28 October 1983.

'would go around on a Saturday buying things, ... clothes and things and then go to Dalton Road and get the fowl for dinner'.⁸ With fowls costing an exorbitant amount at both the municipal and Indian markets in Durban, recourse to the barter markets was a source of relief for many Africans.⁹ Such markets were very important to the African proletariat. As Khumalo recalls, 'You need a shirt so you go to the Indian shop and if you buy a shirt you get some hankys - if a pair of trousers then you could get a pair of socks, which we would then take to Dalton and give to the women for ... lots of things we could need'.¹⁰ Mthethwe, then a migrant railway worker, explains further:

You could go to Dalton and swap things. You could take money to the Indian shops in Point Road and buy things and before you went home you go to Dalton and talk to the women about your shirt, trousers and jacket. Your town clothes. And you could get seed and saddle leather and nails ... to take back to the farm'.¹¹

By the early 1950's the African proletariat could no longer rely on such methods of partial subsistence in either the city or the countryside.¹² The barter markets had either disappeared or been transformed into produce markets operated by those independent producers who lived close to the city. The women from Mbumbulu 'did not want candles and blankets, but money ...',¹³ and were competing with women from the Ndwedwe and Mbumbulu reserves for 'our money'.¹⁴ African workers were increasingly virtually completely reliant on the cash wage.

In 1951, it was estimated that a basic subsistence food charges for an African family resident in the city with a single wage earner was just over £10.12.0 per month. Added to this basic cost would be charges of rent, transport, cleaning materials, medical and schooling expenses, furniture and taxes.¹⁵ However, in a thorough survey,¹⁶ conducted in 1951 among formally employed African men resident in the townships of Lamont, Lamont Extension and Chesterville and the S J Smith mens' hostel, it was found that the majority of those surveyed earned less than £15 a month. In Lamont and Lamont Extension, where 580 men, or 76% of the total registered male population of the area, were questioned, 26% earned £10 or less, and 68% £15 or less a month. In Chesterville, of the 856 surveyed men, constituting over 93% of the registered male population of the

8. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 29 April 1986.

9. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 28 November 1986.

10. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 29 April 1986.

11. Interview with Mr M Mthethwe, 14 January 1986.

12. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 29 April 1986.

13. Interview with Mrs M Mnguni, 20 July 1986.

14. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 20 November 1986.

15. O Horwood, 'Some aspects of Urban African Employment in the Durban Area', *Race Relations Journal*, vol 25, no 3-4 (July - December 1958).

16. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

area, 39% earned £10 or less, and 80% £15 or less. In S J Smith where virtually all the inmates were questioned, of the 3,524 interviewees, 57% earned £10 or less and 88% £15 or less.¹⁷

While over 90% of the surveyed hostel dwellers were employed by commerce and industry, the mean wage earned was not significantly below that of similarly employed people resident in the two townships surveyed. However, what does distinguish hostel dwellers employed by commerce and industry from their counterparts in the townships is that over 77% of the hostel inmates earned £10 or less a month. The comparable returns for Chesterville and Lamont were 39% and 23% respectively. It is thus possible to argue that in the industrial and commercial sectors of the local economy, the vast majority of those employed at the lowest rates of unskilled labour lived in the hostels.

There was thus a process of differentiation developing within the African working class between those living in townships and those resident in male hostels.¹⁸ A similar trend was evident among those Africans employed by the Union Government living in hostels as opposed to townships.¹⁹ There were thus growing indications of class differentiation within the African proletariat. In hostels and barracks which accommodated a more migrant African workforce, residents were employed in work more inferior to the nature of work undertaken by workers living in formal townships.

In 1948, of the total African city population of 150,000 persons, there existed licensed municipal, Union Government, private employer and private non-employer, and African-owned accommodation for 82,700 persons.²⁰ This accommodation was both incapable of satisfying the existing demand and the expected increase in the African population of the city. The position was slightly aggravated by the desires of many industrial and commercial employers of African labour to abolish their compounds,²¹ often located alongside their concerns²² to make way for alterations to the plant. Disregarding those Africans in domestic employment, the municipality was the greatest single provider of housing: controlling hostel accommodation for 15,000 persons, both male and female and family accommodation for 10,000 persons.²³ Conditions in all these municipal housing schemes was generally accepted to be unsatisfactory.

Baumannville, the first African family location to be built in Durban and completed in 1918,²⁴ had 120 houses or tenements, comprising a single room and kitchen. Outbuildings consisted of a toilet and shower

17. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; "Income Surveys", 1951.

18. Hindson, Pass Controls, p 63.

19. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; "Income Surveys", 1951.

20. Ibid., Manager, MNAD "Native Housing Policy", November 1948.

21. Mayors Minute 1952 - 1953. Throughout the period neither commerce nor industry housed very many of their own African employees. See Mayors Minutes and MNAD; H /Gen, vol 1; "Registered Native Labour" (Minus togt).

22. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 14 February 1981.

23. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; Manager, MNAD "Native Housing Policy", November 1948.

24. Natal Regional Survey report number 6, Baumannville: A Study of an Urban African Community, (Cape Town, 1959).

cubicle, a pantry and wood and coal shed. A water standpipe was situated in each yard. The monthly rental was £1. Some of the more recently constructed tenements had an additional room, but otherwise for most residents the kitchen doubled up as a bedroom.²⁵ By the early 1950's this residential location was simply dirty, overcrowded and required major maintenance work. The nearby C T Loram School was swamped both by children from Baumannville and other African pupils.²⁶

Lamont had 200 three roomed houses, comprising two bedrooms on either side of a kitchen and coal and wood store. Pit privies existed on each site. Communal water standpipes were located between houses. Drainage facilities were totally inadequate with most of the houses positioned on steep hilly inclines. Rentals varied between 12 shillings and 6 pence and 17 shillings and 6 pence depending on the wage of the male tenant.²⁷ Although the township was relatively new, residents still complained about inadequate schooling facilities and the lack of other residential amenities.²⁸

Chesterville had 1265 four-roomed houses. Each house comprised two bedrooms, a living room and kitchen. Kitchen facilities included a cold-water tap and sink. Waterborne sewerage and ablution facilities were provided on each site. The economic rental was £5.10.0 a month, but rentals charged never exceeded 17 shillings and 6 pence a month. There were two government schools and municipal trading facilities. The schools operated two sessions daily but were unable to meet the demand.²⁹

Africans also owned land under freehold title in the small areas of Chateau Estate and Good Hope Estate. This area comprised about 91 acres of land sold to Africans in the early 1930's. The majority of the houses were of wood-and-iron construction. Bare water and sanitation facilities were provided. Rates were in the region of £3.17.0 a month. In order to supplement their own income African land-owners would either build additional accommodation for tenants or informally lease part of their land to a shacklord. The plots could usually be broken into three or four platforms for shack building. The usual rental for one of these plots was £1 a month. The single 250-pupil school was overcrowded at most of the daily sessions.³⁰ Land-owners in the area attempted to force tenants to grow fruit and vegetable trees³¹ as an obvious ploy to prevent the municipality from altering the land's ratable value to residential as opposed to agricultural scales.³² Despite this, the area was in many respects of similar appearance to the adjoining shantytown sprawl of Cato Manor.

25. Durban Housing Survey, p 332-335 and Broome Commission; evidence of M Vilakazi, 23 April 1947.

26. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutso, 4 September 1986.

27. Durban Housing Survey, p 328.

28. For details on Lamont see Torr 'Lamontville'.

29. Durban Housing Survey, p 332-335.

30. Ibid, p 300-301.

31. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 29 April 1986.

32. Many residents of the freehold area of Clermont were also aware of the financial benefits of such gardening. See M W Swanson, 'A history of Clermont', unpublished draft.

In July 1950 there was official single accommodation for 654 African women in the Thokoza Municipal Hostel in Grey Street. Women paid a monthly rent of 5 shillings for a bed or 5 pence a night for casual accommodation. If a woman had babies or female children sleeping with her, a further 1 penny a night was charged for those not yet able to walk. For children old enough to walk, the woman was charged an additional full tariff. All children slept on mats on the floor.³³ The hostel was totally overcrowded and unhealthy. Mrs Lavoipierre, of the Durban Bantu Child Welfare Society described the conditions in the following way:

I found about a hundred women, many with newly born and young children, sleeping on the cement floors on the open court yard and open verandahs. It was very cold and many of these women and children had very little or no covering and no mats to sleep on. The whole appearance ... gave me the impression of refugees fleeing from an invading army ... Many of the babies are sickly and I was told that no facilities exist for the preparation of hot beverages should an ailing child require it during the night ... Finally those women who sleep on boards in the dormitories testified unanimously to the verminous conditions.³⁴

Facilities and conditions in the municipal and South African Railways and Harbour Services male hostels were possibly more unsatisfactory than conditions at Thokoza. Accommodation varied between single rooms with an iron bed, hanging space, sink and hot plate, to dormitories for 40 persons who would sleep on bed boards and provide their own bedding. The single rooms were reserved for indunas, clerks and teachers. The monthly rental for these rooms was 15 shillings. The rentals for the better dormitories varied between 5 and 10 shillings a month. Casual lodgers paid 3 pence a night to sleep on the corridor floors of the larger dormitories. The majority of the hostels had no cooking facilities and inmates either purchased cooked or fresh food from the African traders hiring out stands in the municipal trading sites situated in close proximity to hostels. Overcrowding was commonplace. Officially the Somtseu Road Mens' Hostel could accommodate 4456 persons, but there were often up to 13,000 people crowded into the hostel.³⁵ Facilities for visiting women and children were virtually non-existent.³⁶ The paltry recreational and sporting facilities which did exist were situated at the Somtseu Road, Dalton Road and Jacobs hostels.³⁷

In 1948 it was estimated that of the total African population of Durban, 67,300 persons had no official accommodation. An estimated 30,000 persons lived in the ubiquitous kios and backyard hovels in an around the city while the remainder lived in the various shantytown sprawls.³⁸ The main areas of shantytown development were at the Bluff, Clairwood and Mhlatazana, Stella Hill, Mgeni and Sea Cow Lake and Cato Manor Farm. By

33. Durban Housing Survey, p 336.

34. Broome Commission; evidence of M B Lavoipierre, 18 November 1947.

35. Durban Housing Survey, p 324-328 and Broome Commission; evidence of O A Nkwanyana.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., memorandum of the Durban City Council.

38. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; Manager, MNAD, 'Policy' November 1948.

the late 1940's the densest, most popular area of shantytown settlement was in the Mkhumbane area of Cato Manor Farm.

Rents in the shantytowns were based on the size of the shack, the costs of construction, rents payable in municipal sub-economic housing schemes and the popularity of a particular shantytown area.³⁹ Rentals in Mkhumbane were thus possibly higher than those prevailing in other African shantytown areas in the city.⁴⁰ Rooms in the shantytown could be rented out for between 12 shillings and 6 pence and 25 shillings a month.⁴¹ It was not unusual for rooms to be sub-divided or inhabited by more than one person. In 1951, the average African family was estimated at 2,7 persons, while the average density of the Cato Manor Farm shantytown dwellings was 8,8 persons per shack.⁴²

The shantytown areas, and particularly those in Cato Manor Farm, were places where municipal,⁴³ South African Police and any other form of unwanted external authority could be either easily evaded or repulsed. The police limited their operations in Mkhumbane to occasional forays, the well-known "Melek" raids,⁴⁴ and motorcycle "enquiries" into what they saw as "the dreaded hole of all policemen".⁴⁵ The only policemen who had any knowledge of the shantytown's intricate road, path and shack layout and who were capable of conducting routine enquiries in the area were the policemen at the understaffed Cato Manor Police Station.⁴⁶

The "Melek" raids were large-scale crime prevention incursions. The Cato Manor police, aided by reinforcements from other police units would cordon a particular area off and then comb the shacks for any evidence of "illegal activity".⁴⁷ During such raids, Africans would vacate their shacks and stand in the open in an attempt to confuse police attempts to ascertain the owners or residents of a particular shack. Ngcobo, a resident of Cato Manor remembers that "... when people saw the Meleko approaching they all flocked out of their houses .. It was the warning signal. When they shouted 'Meleko!' everyone knew they had to hide their liquor because a police raid was on".⁴⁸ Drew, then a policeman stationed at Cato Manor, recalls the same

39. See also Kelly, 'Durban's industrialization'.

40. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 26 July 1985.

41. Durban Housing Survey, p 372 and 376-377.

42. Shum Papers; C N Shum, Cato Manor Survey.

43. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 2; Manager, MNAD - Town Clerk, 31 January 1952.

44. The South African Police 3 ton pick up vans were commonly referred to as "Meleko" after their similarity with milk delivery trucks. The name "Kwela" (jump) vans was also used, See Mphahlele, Second Avenue.

45. Interview with Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980.

46. Ibid.

47. See Daily News photograph appendix to interview with Mr R F Drew, 16 January 1981.

48. KCAV; interview with Mr Z A Ngcobo, 13 September 1980.

tactics: "I mean I knew that when we went out that perhaps we would get knocked around, but I think that was part of the game ..."⁴⁹

With regard to the the provision of health facilities in African residential areas, it was openly admitted that municipal, provincial and Union Government health services had, to all intents and purposes, broken down. As City Medical Officer of Health commented,

An impartial analysis of the present state of health services must recognize the patent limiting factors of the existing administrative set up which are themselves explicable of a tardy recognition by legislative authorities of the revolutionary changes which have taken place in native life of late years and particularly during the last decade. Whereas formerly the Native was a sojourner in the city for a few months - a seasonal migrant, he now generally comes to stay, accompanied in ever increasing degree by his dependants. This transformation in Native life and custom has imposed a shattering strain on the elementary system of health service ...⁵⁰

Notwithstanding the administrative difficulties of introducing more improved services, nor the difficulty of controlling the entry of disease into the city from the countryside,⁵¹ the situation posed problems which required more than preventive or curative health schemes. Typhus, dysentery, typhoid, tuberculosis, bilharzia, clinical malnutrition, kwashiorkor and infant mortality could not be eradicated because of the very living conditions of Durban's African population.

The shantytown areas of Cato Manor Farm and Mayville yielded by far the greatest incidence of disease. While preventive schemes were in operation in the area, their effectiveness could only be limited. Indeed that measure of success which had been attained was due in large part, so the City Medical Officer of health believed, to "climatic conditions, hot sunshine, drenching rains and high winds in season, together with the steeply sloping and self draining ... sites has played an immeasurable part in the dissipation of epidemic potential".⁵² However, by early 1951, the City Medical Officer of health stated that the problem was now completely out of control: "... now even nature herself, as a purifying agent, revolts in the filth and the faeces - at the chaos and the confusion."⁵³

City Health officials noted that the problems of overcrowding, alcoholism, dietary deficiency and fatigue, and the incidence of tuberculosis in Cato Manor Farm and Mayville African communities was higher than in any comparable area in and around Johannesburg.⁵⁴ A similar situation was found to exist with respect to cases of both amoebic dysentery and venereal disease in Cato Manor. Referring to the venereal disease rate

49. Interview with Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980.

50. Broome Commission; memorandum of the Durban City Council, Chapter 3.

51. *Ibid.*

52. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 2; Manager, MNAD - Town Clerk, 16 April 1951 quoting an earlier report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

53. *Ibid.*

54. *Ibid.*

in Cato Manor, City Health officials, somewhat aghast, maintained that "we find it difficult to award the palm to either side - Cato Manor Farm or Johannesburg - all we can say is that we believe the Durban team is unbeatable."⁵⁵ Hospital facilities at King Edward VIII were swamped by Africans from Mayville and Cato Manor Farm. In 1950, of the 857 admitted cases of gastro-enteritis contracted by children under four years of age, 271 came from these two areas. Of the 1050 cases of malnutrition admitted to the hospital, 240 came from the Cato Manor shantytowns.⁵⁶ City Health officials believed that such figures "throw into relief the embarrassing relationship which exists between Cato Manor and the King Edward VIII Hospital".⁵⁷

For Africans moving between such residential areas and their places of work and other locales within the city, the transport system had for long been inadequate.⁵⁸ By the late 1940's and early 1950's local employers⁵⁹ amongst others,⁶⁰ were calling for drastic changes to the local road transportation network as it affected African commuter traffic. In 1950 there were only 282 municipal, Indian or African-owned buses available for African passengers,⁶¹ the two main African bus ranks, Warwick Avenue Market and Dalton Road being overcrowded and disorganized.⁶²

The transport crisis was in many ways brought to a head immediately after the 1949 Riots when all Indian-owned buses stopped entering African areas⁶³ so that the daily transport requirements of places like Cato Manor Farm overburdened the municipal resources. The municipality set up an emergency bus rank outside the Alice Street Bus Depot and made its fleet of Leyland double-decker buses, only acquired in 1948, available for Black commuter routes. Municipal transport staff worked 18-hour shifts in order to cope with the demand. However the problems grew worse, even with the double-decker buses, designed to carry a maximum of 64 passengers, often carrying up to 125 persons.⁶⁴

While another thirteen buses were permanently added to the municipal African commuter fleet soon afterwards⁶⁵ neither this increase, nor the increase in African-owned buses during the early 1950's, would alleviate the position.⁶⁶

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. See L Torr, "A Ticket to Drive: the Struggle over African Bus Services in Durban, 1930-1961". Paper presented at the conference "The History of Natal and Zululand", University of Natal, Durban, July 1985.

59. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1949-1950.

60. Ilanga lase Natal, 7 January 1950.

61. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1949-1950.

62. Interview with Mr S Shabalala, 21 June 1985.

63. Interview with Mr J Hlope, 29 June 1985. Hlope who was then a bus driver for an Indian firm operating in Mkhumbane.

64. Municipality of Durban, Durban Transport Management Board, Annual Report, 1949-1950.

65. Mardon Papers; K Mardon, A History of the Durban Corporation "Green Mamba" Bus Service", unpublished, August 1985.

66. Torr, "Ticket to ride", p 13.

The municipality operated bus services to and from the city to Somtseu Road, Umbilo, Sydenham, Brighton Beach, Maydon Wharf, Mayville and Queen Mary Avenue; to and from the Market to the Point, Somtseu Road and Mayville, and to and from Dalton Road and Chesterville; and it tried to cater for the heavy morning and afternoon traffic. But the system was never able to cope.⁶⁷ The municipality operated 20 services from Chesterville through the middle of Mkhumbane down through Wiggins Road to Dalton Road between 4.30 and 9.00 in the morning.⁶⁸ At these peak times, and again in the evenings, commuters could wait up to 2 hours for transport.⁶⁹ While there were also 17 African buses running in the Mkhumbane area by 1951, it was often the case that only two would be operational on any one day.⁷⁰ Employers found that many of their employees spent between forty and eighty minutes walking to work while many of those choosing to catch buses could spend up to two hours commuting to work.⁷¹

By the early 1950s both the municipality and leading employers of African labour had recognized that the lack of residential and urban amenities for the city's African labour force had produced alarming consequences. The lack of suitable housing, the appalling health conditions so prevalent in residential areas, and the inadequate transport amenities lent support to those increasing number of calls for a restructuring of African employment and residence in the city.

African Workers, Capitalist Production and State Regulation

By the early 1950's the Union government, the City Council and representatives of major local employers had striven for basic consensus on broad policy guidelines on future African employment. These negotiations brought the various parties into a closer working relationship than had ever previously been the case⁷² and resulted in numerous inter-related policies⁷³ which were seen as providing for a dramatically restructured urban African working class. These often acrimonious discussions on policy, the future of local industrial enterprise, and the function of both the local and central state, did result in an important measure of consensus being achieved by the mid-1950's. But the policy was full of inherent contradictions, incorporated both long and short-term goals, and was ultimately never to be fully implemented.

All parties clearly recognized that the basic success of these policies was crucially dependent upon the manner in which African labour in the local economy could be refashioned in a way which would assist

67. See Municipality of Durban; Tram and Bus Timetables, 1943- 1954.

68. *Ibid.*, November 1949.

69. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 28 July 1951.

70. *Ibid.*

71. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1949-1950.

72. For similar analysis see Wilkinson, "Adequate Shelter" and Posel, "Doing Business".

73. *Ibid.*

economic growth. Interventions initiated by either the local or central state were to be constantly monitored to ensure that they either served to support or override market forces evident within the local economy.⁷⁴

For local employers of African labour the starting-point of these discussions was, as the Natal Chamber of Industries commented in 1950, that "(the) evils of inefficient and so-called cheap Native labour must go ...".⁷⁵ Local employers were afraid that the Nationalist government might try to restrict both urban economic growth and supplies of African labour to the cities;⁷⁶ so they therefore eagerly supported Dr Eiselen's remarks on how an entirely different conception of the function of African labour in the cities should be viewed and noted that such ideas went against White "public opinion".⁷⁷

In 1950 Eiselen, who as Secretary for Native Affairs and an influential figure in the government,⁷⁸ maintained that "our present economic life bears the stamp of very expensive cheap (African) labour" with "low standards of efficiency ... and a huge turnover of African labour", being detrimental to the industrial economy. To alter this situation, it was necessary for local employers to recognize "the diverse aptitudes" of African labour and, through "selective canalization of labour into appropriate channels of occupation" and rewarding "continuous service by progressive grading", begin to change the labour functions of urban Africans. Employers should stop seeing the African labourer as "a jack of all trades ... one African equals one African".⁷⁹

Such a view was in many ways identical to those of local employers of African labour and local city councillors, despite many being United party supporters.⁸⁰ In his address to the Natal Chamber of Industry in 1947, the Mayor of Durban echoed earlier calls by local industrialists⁸¹ that Africans be recognized as permanent urban workers who should be gradually employed in more semi-skilled capacities so as to create greater consumer demand for locally produced products.⁸² In 1950 the Natal Chamber of Industry, somewhat optimistically, maintained that through job grading and aptitude testing it would be possible to employ increasing numbers of Africans in semi-skilled employment and reduce the total African population of the city

74. Hindson, Pass Laws, p 55.

75. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1949-1950.

76. See for example Daily News, 13 June 1953 and South African Industry and Trade, vol 49, no 7 (July 1953) for general analysis of this point see A Torchia, The Business of Business: An Analysis of the Political Behaviour of the South African Manufacturing Sector under the Nationalists, Journal of Southern African Studies, vol 14, no 3 (April 1988).

77. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1949-1950.

78. Kenny, Verwoerd, p 7.

79. W M Eiselen, "Plan to Rationalize South Africa's Native Labour", Native Affairs Fact Paper no 13, (Pretoria, State Information Office, 1950), p 10.

80. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association and interview with Mr S Bourquin, 6 September 1980.

81. Natal Chamber of Industries, Annual Report, 1945-1946.

82. Ibid., 1946-1947.

'in a few years'.⁸³ Peppercorn, then President of the Chamber believed that this could only be effected through the government intervening to 'remove obstacles' to the increasing use of Africans as semi-skilled labour.⁸⁴

Such calls were to be repeatedly made by economists and employer groups throughout the country during the late 1940's and early 1950's.⁸⁵ In the period around 1950 many local industrialists viewed these ideas as a virtual panacea for all social and economic ills. It was generally believed that the idea of employing increasing numbers of African in semi-skilled capacities would alleviate many of the economic troubles which characterized local industry at the same time as ensuring a more stable and less militant African urban population. Through introducing measures to stabilize a large section of the urban African population it would be possible to reduce the costs of training and re-training,⁸⁶ to achieve increased labour productivity⁸⁷ and curtail the process of 'job hopping'. This had already been done by the South African Railways and Harbour Services. From 1947 onwards, the SAR&H, which was the largest single employer of 'togt' labour in Durban, had already introduced pay, pension and leave incentives to induce the workforce to become more stabilized.⁸⁸

Such a policy, it was believed, would reduce the total African population of the city⁸⁹ and ensure the future growth of the economy.⁹⁰ With the permanently settled African workforce, long recognized as 'our future customers',⁹¹ being settled in new townships,⁹² the resultant increase in consumer expenditure would 'justify heavy capital investment in industry'⁹³ and halt declining consumer demand and the shrinking local market zone. This idea was to be central to the thinking of many industrialists throughout the country. An editorial in the influential South African Industry and Trade asserted that the then current debate both inside and outside of Parliament over whether African labour was essential or not to the industrial economy was in many respects missing the main issue. The editorial commented that 'this debate over non-European labour virtually ignores the even more vital contribution of non-European consumers to a stable, progressive economy'.⁹⁴

When it came to discussing the wages which should be paid to this semi-skilled African labour force opinion was fiercely divided. While many employers were at pains to reveal how wages would automatically rise

83. Ibid, 1949-1950.

84. South African Industry and Trade, vol 46, no 1 (January 1950).

85. N N Franklin, Economics in South Africa, (Cape Town, 1954) p 171.

86. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1952-1953.

87. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1946-1947.

88. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

89. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1949-1950.

90. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association and Prof H Burrows.

91. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1945-1946.

92. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

93. South African Industry and Trade, vol 46, no 3 (March 1950).

94. Ibid, vol 50, no 5 (May 1954) and Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1946-1947.

if African labour became utilized in semi-skilled capacities, such broad perspectives embodied little substance when employers concerned themselves with the nature of their own production processes. At various times the Durban Chamber of Commerce stated that increased labour productivity would "obviously" lead to higher wages with commensurate improvements in social conditions and "more spending power".⁹⁵ On other occasions they maintained that it would be "a fatal mistake to improve Native wages any more (sic)."⁹⁶ There were five main reasons for such indecision.

Firstly, there was general concern over the "rising cost structure" of local production,⁹⁷ with increases in the total wage bill and capital's determination to avert a profitability crisis. This was compounded by the existing large variations in minimum wages for unskilled African labour. Many local employers, unable to afford wage increases and facing rising capital costs, were experiencing problems in securing sufficient African labour.

Secondly, during the late 1940's there had been some employers who maintained that there was a surplus of African labour in the city that could either be expelled from Durban or "rounded up" and made to work. Other employers maintained that they had never experienced any difficulty in getting adequate supplies of African labour on suitable terms.⁹⁸ However by the very early 1950's most employers were expressing concern over general shortages of African labour and fearing that market forces would push up the costs of even unskilled African labour.⁹⁹ Local employers were thus unanimous in rejecting Eiselen's belief that there existed a large under-utilized African labour force resident in Durban.¹⁰⁰ For employers the question was not so much around levels of unemployment *per se* but the need for and functionality of a reserve army of unemployed resident within the city area.

Thirdly, both the municipality and local employers were concerned that any rise in wages paid to African workers would result in such labour being more expensive than either 'Coloured' or Indian workers.¹⁰¹ In such an event employers would either employ less African labour¹⁰² or large-scale unemployment amongst the already fully urbanized 'Coloured' and Indian working classes would produce serious problems within the city.¹⁰³

Fourthly, employers were fully aware of the power of organized White labour. White labour resisted the idea of employers opening up semi-skilled labour to Africans at either the rate for the job or at lower

95. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report 1946-1947.

96. Broome Commission; evidence of the Durban Chamber of Commerce.

97. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1946-1947.

98. Broome Commission; evidence of the Durban Chamber of Commerce.

99. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1950-1951.

100. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1949-1950.

101. MNAD; Housing Policy, vol 2; Manager, MNAD, African housing, commerce and rentals, August 1952.

102. South African Industry and Trade, vol 49, no 9 (September 1953).

103. Broome Commission; evidence of Prof H Burrows.

wages.¹⁰⁴ Although often resenting the power of White labour, employers appeared reluctant to openly challenge the already highly politicized influence of White workers.¹⁰⁵

Finally, employers rejected the idea that all African labour in the city could be fully employed at any one moment. Employers needed a reserve army of unskilled African labour permanently resident in the city. Employers also desired to ensure that part of the African labour force remained migrant. Therefore employers opposed wage increases by using a variant of the old argument¹⁰⁶ as to the relationship between higher wages and working class preference for increased leisure time activities or consequent ability to escape from the disciplines of continual wage labour.¹⁰⁷ Employers maintained that if migratory labour was paid higher salaries then Africans would remain in the reserves for longer periods of time or otherwise remain in the city but seek employment for diminishing periods of time. Higher wages for such workers would lead to idleness, vagrancy and the growth of shack settlements.

Throughout these discussions on how a segment of the urban African population could be suitably employed in semi-skilled work and the economic advantages and disadvantages which would be entailed by such a process, local employers were insistent in their view that there was both a shortage of unskilled African labour in the city and that employers would always require adequate supplies of African migrant labour.¹⁰⁸ While keen to encourage a certain section of African labour to remain permanently in the city, hold down a near permanent job and eventually fill semi-skilled posts, local employers never really saw the migrant labour system as completely at odds with the needs of economic growth. In 1951 the Federated Chamber of Industries maintained that,

Because it moves constantly from country to town and back, and from job to job within the town, migrant labour tends to be casual and to produce less and earn less than stable labour ... Movement from job to job also enlarges the difficulty of training. Even in tasks requiring little skill, the training period is one of low output, and the longer this period lasts, the greater is the total loss of production. Constant movement involves constant retraining and readjustment and hence a continuous state of sub-optimum efficiency.¹⁰⁹

Local employers accepted that casual work and migrancy did imply a lower level of productivity, and they were continually concerned about levels of productivity. But radical changes in the labour process were seen as

104. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1949-1950.

105. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

106. See P Mathias, "Adam's burden: historical diagnoses of poverty" in P Mathias, The Transformation of England, (London 1979).

107. Broome Commission; evidence of Prof H Burrows. By not analysing the structure of capital and the various counterposing problems which besett local industrialists, Posel's rebuttal of Hindson's work is unconvincing. See Posel, "The contribution of apartheid" p 5.

108. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

109. South African Federated Chamber of Industries, The Native in Industry, (internal memorandum, 1951), quoted in Hindson, Pass Controls, p 57.

impossible. For certain types of work, employers would have to maintain a supply of either migrant labour or unskilled labour resident in the city which could be drawn on, according to the changing seasonal and other variations in the local economy. Various discussions were held with the Department of Native Affairs and the municipality, and it was decided not to limit African labour supplies to the city to only the natural increase in the city's existing African population. But all new entrants to the city would have to return to their place of origin after their period of urban labour.¹¹⁰ Faced with the dual constraints of reducing the costs of local industrial production and the problems which would arise through attempting to achieve a significant measure of local economic growth by creating more semi-skilled jobs for permanently urbanized African workers, local employers saw in the new influx control, labour bureau and labour laws the means whereby certain market and social forces could either be enhanced or negated. But both the Durban municipality and local commercial and industrial interests were convinced that existing influx control mechanisms had simply 'broken down'.¹¹¹ Existing legislation was incapable of being applied and was in any case unsuited to the labour needs of the local economy.¹¹²

From the late 1940s, as local industrialists, the municipality and the government conducted negotiations over a new pass law system, the municipality attempted to introduce various measures to stem the flow of Africans into the city. During this time the Durban municipality was clearly in the vanguard of those local authorities which were in many ways experimenting with new methods of influx control regulation.¹¹³ This was in total accordance with the wishes of the government. After the 1948 Parliamentary session the new Minister for Native Affairs, Dr E G Jansen, initiated an enquiry to ascertain whether the number of Africans resident in the major cities was above the labour needs of the local economies.¹¹⁴ The Department of Native Affairs also convened a series of conferences to discuss how to effect 'a tightening up of internal and influx control measures under the existing provisions of the law pending the introduction of new legislation'.¹¹⁵

In 1948 and 1949 the Durban municipality endeavoured to restrict the number of Africans registering as tog labourers for the stevedoring trade by only registering those workers who had accommodation provided by employers.¹¹⁶ In both November 1948¹¹⁷ and July 1949¹¹⁸ the municipality also started to enforce Proclamation 39 of 1940 which allowed for the expulsion from the city of any supposed surplus African

110. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1951-1952 and interview with Mr S Bourquin, 6 September 1980.

111. Broome Commission; evidence of the Durban City Council.

112. Interview with Mr R G Wilson, 14 February 1981.

113. See Wilkinson, 'Adequate Shelter', p 97.

114. Union Government, Department of Native Affairs, Annual Report, 1948-1949.

115. *Ibid.*

116. Mayors Minutes, 1948-1949.

117. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1948-1949.

118. Mayors Minutes, 1948-1949.

population: those deemed to be idle, undesirable and workshy.¹¹⁹ Between July and August 1949 some 4,000 African men were expelled from the urban area.¹²⁰ The enforcement of such legislation was opposed by the municipal Native Administration Department. The Manager, Havemann, noted that "while the City Council could screen redundant natives it had never been tried and adequately served its purpose".¹²¹

The enforcement of all these regulations, which were aimed essentially at trying to control the further growth of shantytowns,¹²² was soon relaxed. Employers complained of dire labour shortages within a matter of a few weeks.¹²³ Employers also noted how wages in certain economic sectors had risen rapidly and appreciably as a result of labour shortages. This was particularly evident in casual and unskilled hard manual labour.¹²⁴ Employers became "alarmed" at the situation. Both the Natal Employers Association and representatives of the stevedoring industry met with the City Council to seek immediate relief.¹²⁵ These meetings and further discussions with the Native Administration Committee and the Manager of the municipal Native Administration Department proved "fruitless". It was only after the intervention of the Minister for Native Affairs in June 1950 that the restrictions were lifted.¹²⁶ Taking the side of local employers, it was the National Party which drew the Durban City Council into line.

In the interim, the City Council tried to deflect blame for the increasingly bitter relations between the City Council and employers¹²⁷ on to Havemann whom they accused of "following the letter and not the spirit of the law".¹²⁸ But it also promulgated a further law by which only Africans originating in the seven reserves which surrounded Durban would be allowed to enter the city to seek work. In terms of proclamation 250 of 1950, which had been formulated with the consent of the Department of Native Affairs,¹²⁹ only Africans from Lower Tukhela, Ndwedwe, Mapumulu, Mbumbulu, Pinetown, Mzinto and Inanda were to be permitted to register as work seekers in Durban.¹³⁰ Commenting on these moves, the Department of Native Affairs noted

119. For comparative analysis see S H Alatos, *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, (London, 1977).

120. Hemson "Dockworkers", p 116. These figures derive from correspondence between the Native Commissioner, Durban and the Department of Native Affairs.

121. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD - Town clerk, 3 august 1949. City councillors refused to accept Havemann's assertion, implying that his department was incapable and even inefficient. Havemann merely rephrased his point, saying that "he knew of now cases where it had been tried and adequately served its purpose. See minutes of the Native Administration Committee, 3 August 1949.

122. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

123. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 14 February 1981.

124. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1950-1951.

125. *Ibid.*

126. *Ibid.*

127. *Ibid.* 1951-1952.

128. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

129. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

130. Mayors Minutes, 1949-1950 and Horwood "Urban African Employment", p 24.

with appreciation that "the municipal Native Administration Department (of Durban) has introduced a very strict influx control and is taking every possible step to deal with natives of the vagrant type already in the area".¹³¹ In 1949 1,876 Africans had been refused work-seekers' permits in Durban. In 1950, with the enforcement of the new provisions, 7,481 Africans were refused permits.¹³²

With Durban deriving only 20% of its African labour supplies from these areas, local employers experienced almost immediate labour shortages.¹³³ They again faced the possibility of wage rises. It was noted that Africans were "quickly realizing" that "their labour was at a premium".¹³⁴ While the labour problems of the stevedoring industry had largely been alleviated, the labour problems in the ship building industry were "as bad as ever". Industrial and commercial concerns located outside the harbour area could hardly get any casual labour and many employers complained that they could not even obtain "a sufficiency of full time Native employees".¹³⁵

The proclamation was not to be abolished and in fact became the key element, albeit in an amended form, in the new pass laws as they affected the Durban area.¹³⁶ Under this system, only introduced and implemented from around 1954 onwards, all African labour originating from outside of these seven reserve areas and coming to Durban for work, would be required to return to their "homelands" after their period of contract service had ended. This provision would not affect those Africans originating in areas outside of the seven reserves who were already resident in the city and qualified for permanent urban residential status.¹³⁷

With regard to those workers already resident in the city and either permanently or intermittently employed, local employers, together with counterparts in other urban centres, vigorously and successfully opposed the government's initial desire to force such workers to be permanently employed in order to qualify for permanent urban status.¹³⁸ Most of Durban's African workforce originated far from the city and Durban's economy was still subject to significant fluctuations in levels of activity. It was thus imperative that the city have within close proximity a substantial reserve army of labour which could be utilized in periods of peak need. Thus the amended pass laws gave to "urbanized men, women and youths the legal right to resist taking jobs which they did not want, remaining unemployed if they chose to".¹³⁹

The new pass laws were specifically designed to further enhance the process whereby Durban's African labour-force had already become differentiated between low paid hostel workers and those resident in

131. Union Government, Department of Native Affairs, 1949-1950.

132. Mayors Minutes, 1953-1954.

133. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

134. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section) Annual Report, 1950-1951.

135. *Ibid.*

136. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 21 January 1981.

137. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 6 September 1980.

138. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1951-1952.

139. Posel, "The Construction of Apartheid", p 19.

formal townships who generally received more substantial, if still unsatisfactory remuneration. In the flurry of municipal shack and wage surveys, academic analyses of African labour migration patterns and employment trends, and studies by individual companies undertaken in the late 1940's and early 1950's, both the municipality and local employers were able to clearly discern this differentiation and to fashion legislative enactments which would further enhance and institutionalize differentiation within the African urban proletariat.¹⁴⁰

Both local employers and the municipality accepted and advocated policies to assist in creating or enhancing the growth of a class of permanent African city workers. However, initially both favoured that population being removed from the city and resettled in formal accommodation located on the periphery of Durban. When faced with the issue of the political status of Africans in the city and the costs of providing African housing, neither body accepted the United Party's policy on African urbanization.¹⁴¹ In 1947 the Natal Employers Association, giving evidence to the Broome Commission, favoured the idea that African workers be housed outside the municipality and then be given "some say in the Local Government of the area in which they live". Relations between these areas and the city should be controlled by a regional body with representatives from all local authorities and employers.¹⁴² The Durban City Council agreed. While it desired to see the permanent African working population of the city stabilized, it stated that African residents of the city "will never form a productive part of the city". Land allocated for African residence was not profitable to a local authority whose "main source of revenue was through facilitating the capitalization of its land". Africans should be relocated to housing on the outskirts of the city.¹⁴³ Such views were to be frequently advocated by White ratepayer groups in Durban. For instance the Durban Branch of the National Council of Women believed that "eventually" permanently urbanized African families should be "allowed", but they should live in their own areas "away from the city" but in close proximity to their places of work.¹⁴⁴

Both Jansen and then Verwoerd, who had become Minister for Native Affairs in 1950 were implacably opposed to such ideas. As a result Douglas Mitchell, then leader of the United Party in Natal, accused Verwoerd of attempting to make "political capital".¹⁴⁵ While Mitchell was clearly being disingenuous, councillor Percy Osborn, the Mayor of Durban was even more cynical, publicly accusing Verwoerd of endangering the social health of Durban.¹⁴⁶ The Department of Native Affairs however saw these ideas as

140. Hindson, *Pass Controls*, *passim*.

141. See Davenport, *South Africa*, for further details on United Party urbanization policy.

142. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association. Although relatively undeveloped, these ideas appear to be very similar to the more recent state sponsored Regional Services Councils.

143. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council.

144. *Ibid*, evidence of the National Council of Women, (Natal Branch).

145. House of Assembly Debates, vol 76, 21 May - 21 June, 1951, column 8330. The incorrect belief that Verwoerd was essentially making political capital is upheld in Maasdorp and Humphreys, *From Shantytown to Township*, p 7 and 17.

146. *Daily News*, 18 June 1951.

attempts by both employers and the Durban City Council to abrogate their responsibility to provide the permanent urban African population with houses. By 1953 the Department of Native Affairs had after many heated discussions compelled both local employers and the City Council to drop such attempted distinctions between a stabilized African workforce and legal residence in the city. That there was organized resistance to certain ideas advocated by the government is apparent, but this does not imply that the battle lines were always and necessarily drawn between opposing White political organizations.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, it was the National Party which during the early 1950s compelled the United Party dominated Durban City Council to accept African residence in the city.

In the period between the enforcement of proclamation 250 of 1950 and the enactment and implementation of the new pass laws, which were to be totally accepted by local employers,¹⁴⁸ local employers and the municipality were engaged in continuous discussions over the mechanisms whereby periodic and seasonal labour shortages could be overcome. Such shortages occurred in the domestic labour market during the early 1950's, during peak holiday seasons and with upturns in economic activity. When shortages did occur restrictions were temporarily relaxed to maintain an "equilibrium" in the labour market.¹⁴⁹ In response to the labour shortages, local industrialists applied for and received government permission to be exempt from stipulations in Wage Determination legislation.¹⁵⁰

From the optimistic days of 1950 through to the early 1950's employers, municipal officials and the Department of Native Affairs gradually became aware of the impossibility of rapidly and radically transforming the function of African labour in Durban. Local economic growth would not be achieved through raising the skill level and consumer power of the urban African population. While there was a large measure of differentiation within the African proletariat working in the city, most African workers, whether permanently employed or casual would still remain as unskilled labourers.

Both the government and the municipality had desired to introduce stringent but temporary measures to control new shantytown development. But all measures to control the growth of the city's African population were to be finely co-ordinated with employers' needs for labour. Initially at least the government was more receptive than the municipality to the labour problems of local industry and commerce.¹⁵¹ It was soon accepted that because local employers were experiencing shortages of African labour and because of the seasonal and cyclical fluctuations in economic activity, a permanent reserve army of labour would have to be located in or close to the city. Influx control measures were thus to be used not to halt the movement of African labour to the city, but to achieve what the Natal Chamber of Industry and the Durban City Council called "orderly and controlled" urbanization.¹⁵²

147. Greenberg, *Legitimizing the Illegitimate*, p 41.

148. Interview with Mr S B Bourquin, 6 September 1980.

149. Mayors Minutes, 1951-1952.

150. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1950-1951.

151. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 3; Secretary for Native Affairs-Town Clerk, 5 December 1952.

152. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report 1948-1949.

With all parties agreed on the long-term need to assist with the development of an increasingly semi-skilled African urban workforce, employers of African labour would nevertheless continue to require significant supplies of unskilled, and even casually employed, workers. Based on the existing distinctions within the African proletariat, it was believed that through careful and constant monitoring of the new pass laws it would be possible to facilitate the creation of a permanent urban African working class which through economic growth, education and training would become increasingly semi-skilled and at the same time ensure the continued availability of sufficient supplies of unskilled labour through bolstering up the migrant labour system. The success or failure of this policy, decided on during the early 1950s, would only become apparent during the very late 1950s and 1960s.

Closely related to the new influx control and pass laws was the re-organization of the local labour bureau and the introduction of regional and national labour bureau. In the late 1940's the City Council was to continually impress upon the government the need for such a national system in order to make the local labour bureau more efficient¹⁵³ and to stop people drifting unnecessarily to the city to seek work.¹⁵⁴ While it was only in September 1953 that Durban's labour bureau was to become part of the new national system¹⁵⁵ established in terms of legislation enacted in 1952, from April 1950 onwards the municipal Native Administration Department had restructured its own local labour bureau and begun attempting to control the influx of Africans into the city.¹⁵⁶ Willson, then employed at the pass and labour bureau office¹⁵⁷ recalls the process:

In the old days you really did not know what was going on. Blokes would just get off the bus or the train and come and want to register. Now they could not do that. They had to get permission to come to the city and we would only register them if there was work. You still got the guys who went to the factory first and then came. Then you checked what the wages was - if it was right and he was OK then you could register him as well.¹⁵⁸

The purpose of the labour bureau system was to ensure that African workers, who now had to register as work-seekers at a rural labour bureau, would only be allowed to move from particular reserve areas to certain prescribed urban areas, and then only if work was available in that prescribed area. On entering the city, the

153. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 21 January 1981.

154. Mayors Minutes, 1951-1952.

155. *Ibid.*, 1951-1952.

156. *Ibid.*, 1949-1950. Local urban authorities were empowered to establish such systems if they so wished in terms of Government Notice 1032 of 1949. In terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 and its various amendments including the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 any local urban authority was permitted to establish labour exchanges. During the early 1940's it appears as if these systems had been either ignored by local employers or collapsed.

157. Due to accommodation problems both the pass office and the labour bureau were, for a while, unsatisfactorily housed within the same office space. See Mayors Minutes, 1952-1953.

158. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 16 January 1981.

prospective African worker would have to register at a local labour bureau, which would then allocate particular employment to him according to local employer needs. On expiry of the service contract the employee would be obliged to return to the reserve area of origin before seeking either a renewal of the initial contract or other work in the city.¹⁵⁹

The structure of the new national labour bureau system was "pyramidal".¹⁶⁰ Over the local urban labour bureau and rural district offices were regional bureau and then a central labour bureau. This central body was to monitor and control the demographic movement of African labour in the country and between various economic sectors.¹⁶¹ The key instrument in ensuring the success of the new system was the issuing of new reference books to Africans. Under the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents) Act of 1952, African women were potentially liable to carry such new pass books.¹⁶² However through the protests of African political organizations, and in the Durban area, the appeals by both the municipality and local employers¹⁶³ as a result of the massive popular militancy against such moves,¹⁶⁴ African women were not required to register for new passes until much later in the 1950's. For African men however, the issuing of these documents was to be central to the success of the new labour bureau and pass control system. Tom Roche, then a municipal official in the labour bureau comments: "You could tell at a glance where the guy came from, where he was working, if it was only domestic labour, if he could stay in the city for ever and what he was being paid. It helped the cops no end".¹⁶⁵ In Durban, the Durban Chamber of Commerce, the Natal Chamber of Industry, the Natal Employers Association and the Master Builders Association supported the idea of the labour bureau system in broad principle.¹⁶⁶

However under a system worked out by the Natal Chamber of Industry and accepted by the municipality,¹⁶⁷ the precise "laws of procedure" whereby the new system was to be interpreted and controlled were adapted to local demands.¹⁶⁸ Employers demanded and received the right to employ African labour "at the gate" and then refer employees to the labour bureau for ratification "even if they came from Timbuktu"¹⁶⁹:

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159. For the workings of the labour bureau system see interview with Mr R G Willson, 18 January 1981 and Hindson, *Pass Controls*, p 63.
160. *Ibid.*
161. *Ibid.*
162. *Ibid.*, p 64.
163. Mayors Minutes, 1952-1953.
164. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 12 August 1951.
165. Interview with Mr T Roche, 22 April 1982.
166. Union Government, Department of Native Affairs, Report 1954. See also Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1951 - 1952 and Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report 1952-1953 and 1954-1955.
167. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1949 - 1950.
168. *Ibid.*
169. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 16 January 1981.

those areas which did not fall within those seven non-prescribed reserve areas in close proximity to the city. Furthermore, when the labourer returned to the rural areas after the expiry of his contract, "the worker would be given a letter by the employer saying that he must come back to work on such and such a date".¹⁷⁰ The ability of the migrant to job hop was thus severely constrained as was his freedom to become active in any militant groupings on the factory floor: "in this way individual workers could be victimized without the danger of fellow workers striking in solidarity".¹⁷¹ This policy was supported by A J Turton, then Chief Native Commissioner in Natal, who publicly announced that if an African man had been away from his rural area for 12 months and was to return to his "last employer in the same class of work" then the regional labour bureau would permit him to return to the city.¹⁷²

By 1954, when the Department of Native Affairs began to issue the new reference books to African men in the Durban area,¹⁷³ the labour bureau was functioning "very well".¹⁷⁴ By the end of 1954, 38,000 reference books had already been issued to African workers in Durban.¹⁷⁵ In spite of employers and the municipality using the system flexibly, employers began to perceive that with the expansion of the labour bureau system, African labour was less able to become choosy about employment.¹⁷⁶ As early as 1952 employers noticed that "in recent months" Africans were becoming scared of being thrown out of the city and "are willing to accept any suitable employment".¹⁷⁷

Conclusion

During the period from the end of the Second World War through to the early 1950s, the local economy experienced a serious short-term profitability crisis. Faced by rising costs and declines in production and consumption of locally produced goods, employers began to believe that it was possible to rejuvenate the local economy through rapidly restructuring the role and function of African workers in the city.

Most of Durban's African labour originated in areas far away from the city. Over half of the city's African proletariat was either permanently resident in Durban or continually migrating between reserve areas and the city and fully reliant on urban wages. Within this still largely unskilled and often casually employed labour force an unregulated, but by the early 1950's clearly apparent, process of differentiation in terms of wage

170. Interview with Mr T Roche, 22 April 1982.

171. See Editorial Comment, "Free Wage Labour and the Labour Bureau System", *South African Labour Bulletin*, vol 3, no 9 (1977).

172. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1956-1957. My emphasis.

173. Mayors Minutes, 1954-1955.

174. Interview with Mr R G Wilson, 16 January 1981.

175. Mayors Minutes, 1954-1955.

176. Interview with Mr T Roche, 22 April 1982.

177. Industrial Employers Association, (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1950-1951.

remuneration had developed between those living in hostels and those who lived in the formal family residential areas.

Concern over the condition of the local economy occurred at the same time as did an increasing awareness that the very conditions of city life among the African population were totally unsatisfactory. With the shortage of formal hostel and township accommodation, much of which anyway was either overcrowded or in a bad state of disrepair, the chronic deficiencies in transport and health facilities, and growing shantytowns, many employers and municipal and state officials saw the need to re-fashion the very basis of African life in the city. By the middle 1950's the optimism which had characterised earlier ideas on how the economic crisis and the inadequacies of African life in the city could be rapidly and dramatically alleviated had largely disappeared. Employers soon gave up the idea of quickly boosting economic growth through employing Africans as semi-skilled labour. Employers became more keen on curtailing any rise in African wages.

By the middle 1950's, after some often acrimonious negotiation, the basic policy guidelines for African access to city employment and conditions of employment had been laid down and accepted by employers, the municipality and the government. With the new pass laws and labour bureau system, the focus of attention turned more towards regulating the toward movement of Africans and on further enhancing the already existing divisions within the urban African proletariat in a manner which would secure both a permanently urbanized African working class with a legal right to city residence and a requisite supply of migratory labour. However, while the labour bureau and new pass law system served to assist local employers in maintaining an appropriate supply of labour, this merely served to exacerbate the already critical problem of the residential conditions of Durban's African population.

The government, the municipality and local employers became involved in ever more bitter negotiations over how to finance the housing and residential facilities for both migrant labourers and permanently urbanized workers and their families. Central to these discussions was the problem of the Cato Manor Farm shantytowns. As a result of the central location of Cato Manor Farm within the city, the massive African population in the area and the nature of life within these shantytowns, all attempts to find alternative land and provide housing for the residents of Mkhumbane raised the more general problems of African housing and its relationship to African waged labour service and economic growth.

CHAPTER 6

THEIR FATE IN THE BALANCE :
FUTURE AFRICAN RESIDENCE IN DURBAN AND THE HOUSING QUESTION

Proletarian Housing, Capital Accumulation and Power

With the ending of the Second World War both the municipality and major employers of African labour began to become ever more anxious to discuss the problems presented by the paucity of officially approved accommodation for Africans in the city, the location of housing, and the continuing growth of shantytown sprawls. These discussions were a continuation of negotiations which had occurred during the Second World War over post-war reconstruction policy. The debates clearly revealed the basic economic and political attitudes of both the municipality and local employers to the question of African urban housing. By the end of 1949, these preliminary negotiations had deadlocked as both parties endeavoured to highlight their own difficulties and abrogate basic responsibilities towards the urban African population.

The Natives (Urban Areas) Acts imposed very few conditions which could compel obdurate city municipalities to provide official African housing. Yet the Durban City Council's responsibility for ensuring the suitable housing of urban Africans was clearly set out in the Housing Act of 1920 and the Natal Ordinance of 1945. However, whilst recognizing and accepting these legal obligations, the municipality consistently declared that such obligations were never intended to override the basic financial structures upon which accepted principles of urban African administration were founded. In 1947, the Town Clerk, in giving evidence to the Broome Commission of Enquiry into urban African administration in Durban, remarked that "if the Local Authority refused to impose upon its city a (financial) burden that was too great to bear, then the Local Authority would be right and the coercing authority wrong".¹

A major component of the "Durban System" a component which later became integrated into statutory legislation covering all urban local authorities, allowed such local authorities to operate a separate Native Revenue Account. In terms of various legislative enactments, this fund could be the sole source from which the municipality financed its responsibilities for administration and the provision and maintenance of facilities for urban Africans. This fund, which derived its revenues mainly from the profits of the municipal beer monopoly and the renting of premises to African traders, was intended to be both self-accounting and distinct from other financial accounts administered by the local authority.

In effect the self-accounting basis of a Native Revenue Account was intended to allow urban local authorities to financially segregate and discriminate against the interests of Africans in the city from those of its

1. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council, 10 December 1947.

White citizens. This prevented urban Africans from having access to municipal income accruing from the process of capital accumulation in the city.

The manner in which the municipality of Durban operated its Native Revenue Account was unique and further constrained the ability of the municipality to provide housing services to urban Africans. It had for long been the City Council's policy that no funds from municipal sources other than those in the Native Revenue Account be utilized for the provision and maintenance of urban African facilities or the general administration of Africans in the city. Bourquin, who joined the municipal Native Administration Department as Assistant Manager in 1950, remembers that:

... a matter which made our financing somewhat difficult was the declared policy of the Durban City Council that it would not use its own funds to subsidize or support the (Native) Revenue Account. If there was a shortfall in the Native Revenue Account, it was expected of a Local Authority to make good the shortfall or to contribute from its rate fund ... Now this had been the practice of most municipalities, including Johannesburg for instance, which at one stage contributed a million and a half from its rate fund to the Native Revenue Account. But in Durban this has never happened and it was the Durban City Council's declared policy not to contribute one single cent to that fund.²

However Durban's Native Revenue Account was not only self-accounting. In terms of an agreement reached with the Union Government in 1937, the Durban City Council was enabled to administer its Native Revenue Account in a manner which in essence allowed the municipality to extract profits from the Native Revenue Account.

It was the municipality's policy to "pool" all land required for native administration buildings and the use of and occupation by Africans under municipal ownership. Funds for such purchases came from the municipal Public Improvement Funds or from loans raised on the open market. This land was then rented out to the Native Revenue Account on the basis of the market valuation of the land. In the same way, if the municipality provided buildings for administrative use by the municipal Department of Native Administration, the Native Revenue Account would pay rental on the basis of the market value of such buildings. Furthermore as the owners of such land and buildings, the municipality would be able to sell such property on the open market and thereby secure profits which went to the municipality's own accounts.³

As owners of the land, the municipality would be required to provide and maintain essential services. For these services, the Native Revenue Account paid rates 'in the same way as did any other ratepayer in the city'.⁴ However, in interpreting this relationship, the municipality rarely provided all the services due to the Native Revenue Account as a ratepayer. When such services were provided the municipality levied the costs of such services as an additional charge against the Native Revenue Account. When charging such costs to the

2. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 December 1980.

3. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council, 10 December 1947.

4. Interview with Mr D McCullough, 23 April 1981.

Native Revenue Account, the municipality treated the Native Revenue Account as an outside customer, not as either a tenant or a ratepayer.⁵

Further profits were extracted from the Native Revenue Account when any municipal department apart from the Native Administration Department itself, which was always totally funded by the Native Revenue Account,⁶ provided services for the Native Revenue Account. For example, when the municipal City and Water Engineer's Department erected or maintained buildings rented by the Native Revenue Account, the costs of labour and material were charged to the Native Revenue Account. In addition to these charges however, a further amount equalling two-thirds of the total salary bill involved in the provision of such services was deducted from the Native Revenue Account. It was believed that this "fine" was justified: whilst municipal workers were engaged on these projects, they were prevented from completing other tasks of benefit to White citizens.⁷

In order to secure such profits, which municipal Native Administration officials accurately believed were intended to "bleed" the Native Revenue Account "dry",⁸ the municipality was authorized, under the 1937 Agreement, to establish two Working Balance Reserve accounts in both the general and Kaffir Beer sub-accounts of the Native Revenue Account. Native Revenue Account profits would first be entered in the Working Balance Reserve Accounts. Before making any of these profits available for the subsidization of sub-economic rentals or the allocation of grants-in-aid to welfare, sporting and such organizations operating among the African urban population, the municipality always claimed preferential rights. It deducted its own charges first. In giving evidence to the Broome Commission Enquiry the City Treasurer summarized the benefits of this accounting policy in the following way: 'I think I have made the point that Johannesburg has no Working Balance Reserve, I am convinced that if they had ... they would not have to call upon their General Rate Fund to meet the deficiency ...'⁹

Through municipal manipulation of the Native Revenue Account Africans in Durban were financially separated from the profits derived from the economic growth of the city. Through the municipality viewing the Native Revenue Account as "virtually a private company .. run by themselves", the Native Revenue Account was "plundered" by the extraction of funds and their channelling into general municipal accounts. Not only was the municipal Native Revenue Account in Durban self-accounting, it was also capitalized and thereby used as a source of profit for the municipality.

Officials in the municipal Native Administration Department were often highly critical of the manner in which the Native Revenue Account was administered. McCullouch, then a clerk in the Department continues:

5. *Ibid.*

6. Municipality of Durban, Native Revenue Account, Financial Estimates, *passim*.

7. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 September 1980.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Treasurer, 11 December 1947.

It was always a very wealthy Account. All the massive funds from beer and things. But this was the irony. While it was always very profitable, the City Council always viewed it as a debtor ... claiming preferential rights to the Account's money. And in a sense it was always bankrupt, but only because of how the loot was filched.¹⁰

In 1947, the legal representative for the Joint Councils during the Broome Commission, Mr L R Caney, saw the position in significantly similar terms: that municipal administration of the Native Revenue Account was 'making a pauper a saver for someone else's benefit.'¹¹ Havemann, on assuming control of the municipal Native Administration Department in 1950, simply referred to the accounting procedures of the municipality as 'the farcical finances of Mr Green', the City Treasurer.¹²

By the late 1940's municipal officials were constantly maintaining that the municipality was not in a position to consider providing further housing for urban Africans. The Native Revenue Account could not bear the costs of such development. During the course of the Broome Commission, the Town Clerk maintained that '... we [the municipality] see the red light on this particular question in regard to meeting the requirements of the present and the future in the field of Native houses.'¹³ However the basis upon which such statements were founded requires substantial scrutiny. Such comments were, whilst partly true, often disingenuous and often deceitful. The City Council cited three reasons why it was unable to consider any future African housing development in the city.

First, as a result of the persistent shortage of housing capital available through government loans and the enormity of the African housing shortages in all the major urban centres, it was unlikely that sufficient funds would be made available by the state.¹⁴ This was true. As Bourquin remembers, 'one would get, I just mention by way of example, say three million to start with and you would gear yourself to spend three million a year ... and the next year you would only get a million and a half.'¹⁵ All capital for African urban housing came from the government which was unable to provide the required amounts.

The municipality claimed that the system whereby capital loans for sub-economic African housing were allocated to various urban authorities placed an 'inequitable' financial burden on the municipality of

10. Interview with Mr D McCulluoch, 23 April 1981.

11. Broome Commission; cross examination during the evidence of the City Treasurer, 11 December 1947.

12. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1986.

13. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council, 10 December 1947.

14. *Ibid* and interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

15. *Ibid*. Ladlau mentions this problem, but views the shortage of capital for African housing as stemming largely from administrative factors, rather than the result of financial authorities reluctance to allocate large amounts of capital to projects where capital returns were extremely minimal. See Ladlau 'The Cato Manor Riots', p 14-15. For theoretical accounts of capital availability for proletarian housing see P Wilkinson 'The Politics of Housing in South Africa', *Work in Progress*, no 17 (April 1981).

Durban.¹⁶ This was simply not true. The municipality had never been responsible for providing any finances for African urban facilities apart from those which could be recouped either directly from the Native Revenue Account itself or from government repayments.¹⁷

The municipality maintained that the Native Revenue Account was no longer in a position to continue subsidizing the rentals of existing sub-economic housing and would thus not be able to assist in subsidizing future housing. This was partly true. In 1949, for the first year ever, municipal financial estimates provided for a sum of £10,000 to be allocated from the General Rate Fund to the Native Revenue Account.¹⁸ However, the City Council did not permit these funds to be allocated to the Native Revenue Account.¹⁹ Instead it proceeded to extract further profits for the Native Revenue Account. The price of sorghum beer was raised, as were the rentals on municipal trading premises and new beerhalls, eating houses and trading premises, in all major urban African residential areas. Many of these facilities had been built out of capital in the "welfare" accounts of the Native Revenue Account.²⁰ It was thus not so much that the Native Revenue Account could not subsidize rentals. Such subsidization would drain finances which could otherwise be utilized to create further sources of profit in order to maintain the self-accounting status of the Account and allow the municipality to profit from the Account. Furthermore, the municipality was then engaged in negotiations with the government over means by which the 1937 Agreement could be altered in ways which would enable the municipality to increase their charges against the Native Revenue Account.²¹ The Native Revenue Account was and would remain wealthy. But it was unable to subsidize the rentals on future housing accommodation through the municipality viewing its desire to extract profits from the Account as constituting a preferential claim against the Account and municipal refusal to provide financial assistance to the Native Revenue Account.

The issue must also be viewed in a broader context. The White citizens of Durban claimed unto themselves sole power over, access to, and the distribution of the wealth created by capitalist growth. As such, municipal accounting procedures had to ensure that the needs of Black city residents be treated as distinctly inferior. For Africans living in Durban the material roots of racial segregation and class exploitation lay in the very accounting principles which underpinned the Native Revenue Account.

Ultimately, however, all official protestation about the weak financial position of the Native Revenue Account was a diversionary tactic. During the late 1940s, the municipality was trying to see to what extent it was able to abrogate all future responsibility for the provision of African housing in the city. This strategy was complementary to the politically motivated ideas of those city councillors who desired that Africans be housed

16. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Treasurer, 11 December 1947.

17. *Ibid.* Cross examination of evidence of the City Treasurer, 11 December 1947.

18. Interview with Mr S B Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

19. Municipality of Durban, Native Revenue Account, Financial Estimates, 1950-1951.

20. Broome Commission; evidence of the Town Clerk, 10 December 1947 and Mayors Minute, Report of the Manager, MNAD, 1948-1949, 1949-1950 and 1950-1951.

21. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council, 10 December 1947.

outside, but within close proximity, to the city.²² No matter how much money the municipality was able to either save or extract through the Native Revenue Account, the residence of Africans in the city prevented the municipality from gaining revenues through the full capitalization of the land area of the city. Such revenues formed the basis of municipal finance.²³ Throughout the later 1940s the City Council was reluctant to provide any further African housing in the city. It attempted to prove that the responsibility for providing such housing lay either with local employers and the government or with the government alone.

In 1948 the Broome Commission Report suggested that the City Council embark on a massive scheme to provide formal sub-economic houses for Africans.²⁴ The City Council summarily dismissed these suggestions and in March 1948 sent a delegation to discuss the matter with the Union Government.²⁵ The City Council emphatically refuted any suggestion that it could provide further African formal housing. All that the City Council was prepared to discuss was the rapid removal of African shantytown residents to the Umlazi Mission Reserve, lying immediately to the south of the city, and the temporary establishment by the municipality of a transit camp on the Umlazi Glebe lands which lay within the city boundary. The municipality expressed its willingness to lease part of the Umlazi Mission Reserve and develop a 'native village' scheme in the area.²⁶

These proposals were turned down by the government and representatives of the South African Native Affairs Commission, who were responsible for the administration of the Umlazi Mission Reserve. The government stressed that they intended to develop sub-economic housing on the Mission Reserve and suggested that the City Council reconsider its objections to the permanent settlement of Africans in municipally built, formal, sub-economic housing located either in Cato Manor Farm or to the north of the city in the Richmond - Zeekoei Valley Farm area.²⁷ The meeting ended inconclusively and in April 1948, the City Council merely reaffirmed its previous intentions. On the 19 May 1948 the Secretary for Native Affairs refused permission for the municipality to acquire any land on the Umlazi Mission Reserve for anything but the erection, by the municipality, of formal sub-economic African housing.²⁸

In a similar way, deadlock was reached in the various negotiations between representatives of major urban employers, the municipality and the government over the question of employers providing accommodation for African employees and their families. Representatives of major employers continually stressed that they desired to have such labour provided with either formal hostel accommodation or resettled

22. *Ibid.*, evidence of the City Council, 10 December 1947.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *DNAC*, Report of the Commission.

25. Municipal Native Administration Committee, agenda, August 1948.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. City Council agenda, 13 August 1948.

into nuclear family housing schemes.²⁹ However employers refused to pay anything towards the costs of such accommodation.

Employers stressed that they were unable to pay the costs of African family accommodation as this would raise the price of commodities produced in the Durban area above those produced in other areas.³⁰ Furthermore such an indirect subsidization of African rentals would directly affect the relationship between African, 'Coloured' and Indian labour.³¹ Employers were thus in favour of African family housing been built by Africans in areas located outside of the city but within close proximity to places of employment.³² Employers consistently suggested that the most suitable area for such family settlement would be the Umlazi Mission Reserve lands.³³

When considering African migrant accommodation, employers believed that such accommodation should be situated close to the major areas of employment.³⁴ However, the majority of employers refused to accept full responsibility for the provision of such accommodation,³⁵ or their obligation to financially assist the municipality in providing such accommodation,³⁶ unless employers were allowed to deduct such charges from the wages received by African workers living in such hostels.³⁷ This position brought employers into constant conflict with the municipality. When opening up the Mobeni Industrial Estate in 1946, the municipality only permitted industrial development in the area providing employers agreed to house their own African employees.³⁸ This provoked outcries from employers. Conflict continued in 1948 when the City Council informed employer organizations that from November 1948 it was intending to prohibit entry of Africans into the city to take up employment unless the prospective employer was in a position to provide housing.³⁹ Employers were outraged at the proposal, maintaining that it was so unreasonable "as to carry with it its own refutation".⁴⁰

Similarly during the late 1940s, employers steadfastly resisted attempts by the government to compel urban employers of African labour to accept some financial responsibility for the accommodation of African workers. In April 1949, a conference was convened in Cape Town for local urban authorities, employer

29. Natal Chamber of Industries, Annual Report, 1949-1950.

30. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

31. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; Manager, MNAD 'Native Housing Policy', November 1948.

32. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

33. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Reports, *passim*.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Reports, 1947-1948 and 1949-1950.

36. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1947-1948.

39. Mayors Minute, 1949-1950 and Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1951-1952.

40. Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1948-1949.

organizations and the government to discuss the urban African housing question and the financial position of local authorities. The meeting failed to resolve any main issues, as employers refused to consider bearing any direct financial responsibility for African housing.⁴¹

Aside from their public statements however, both the municipality and local employer organizations were involved in a series of more open-ended discussions over various critical issues raised by the shortage of African housing and their desire to alter the nature of African work in the city. These discussions were of central importance. They raised major problems which would continue to be evident throughout the planning and development of both the Cato Manor Emergency Camp and Kwa Mashu township.

Both employers and the municipality recognized that it was necessary to restructure the very basis of African residential life through the provision of both single male hostel accommodation and nuclear family housing.⁴² The shantytowns would have to be destroyed and housing allocated to African families on a single site, single tenant basis.⁴³ In discussing the spatial location of such African nuclear family residence, both municipal officials and employers were less categorical than their publically expressed assertions that African family residence should be situated outside the city, preferably on the Umlazi Mission Reserve. In November 1948 it was estimated that whilst there were an estimated 40,000 Africans employed in the southern areas of the city, there were a further 30,000 Africans employed in central Durban and in areas to the north of the city.⁴⁴ It thus became clear to both parties that it would be inappropriate to provide all future African nuclear family residence solely on the Umlazi Mission Reserve.⁴⁵ Furthermore, it was also accepted that the benefits of relocating all African family accommodation to areas outside the city did not outweigh certain disadvantages. Employers were quick to realize that whilst this might be politically acceptable to many,⁴⁶ and might relieve employers from paying towards the provision of such housing,⁴⁷ the very development of such housing would encourage the growth of peri-urban industrial and commercial enterprises to the detriment of business located in Durban.⁴⁸

In discussing the type of African family accommodation which should be built, yet further problems arose. Whilst both the municipality and employers stressed that Africans should build their own homes according to laid down standards, both recognized certain difficulties with this approach. The City and Water

41. Mayors Minute, 1949-1950.

42. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1946-1947.

43. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association and the Durban Chamber of Commerce. Throughout all municipal discussions on the future of shack dwellers there was never any questioning of the idea that single-site single-tenant residence was intended.

44. MNAD; H2/CM; vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 30 July 1949.

45. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

46. Interview with Mr D McCullouch, 23 April 1981.

47. Broome Commission; evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

48. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1950-1951.

Engineer noted that as a result of various surveys in the shantytown areas, it was clear that African residents did not build their own homes. Rather Africans paid a 'native builder' to erect dwellings. However, such builders had not the technical expertise or capital to provide the required sanitary and drainage facilities. As unlicensed operators, having no artisan's ticket, such people would anyway be prohibited from involvement in any formal construction work. Such builders could operate in the "happy freedom" of shantytowns, but they would be prohibited from any formal housing development scheme.⁴⁹

During their discussions over African housing, both the municipality and employers raised major objections over the costs of such housing. Firstly, employers noted that many of the residents in shantytowns like Cato Manor would in fact be able to pay a rental of around £2 to £2.10 for "a proper house" because "people are paying more than that for their shacks."⁵⁰ This was certainly true for many shack dwellers. But the municipal Native Administration Department raised a further problem. Many of the shantytown residents derived part of their income from activities which would be prohibited in formal townships: sub-letting room space and other forms of petty entrepreneurship.⁵¹ Such problems would remain central to all future discussions over the provision of housing for urban Africans in the city. However, during the late 1940s, notwithstanding the manner in which employers of African labour and municipal officials constantly expressed concern at the shortage of African housing in the city, both the municipality and industrial and commercial interests were primarily interested in absolving themselves of any financial responsibilities for such housing.

This virtual stalemate was to be broken, not so much through the January 1949 Riots revealing the problems of unregulated shantytown growth, but through changes in the balance of power within the central state and between the central state, industrial and commercial interests, and municipalities. After Verwoerd became Minister of Native Affairs in 1950, the Department of Native Affairs began to assume increasing power within the government over African housing policy. From 1950 many of the housing functions of state departments, such as the Department of Health, became consolidated under the influence of both Verwoerd and the Secretary for Native Affairs, the ex-University of Stellenbosch anthropologist and former colleague of Verwoerd's, Dr W M Eiselen.⁵² Urban labour and housing policies henceforth came under what was to become one of the most influential state departments.⁵³

In the early 1950s, during negotiations over how best to restructure control over African urban labour, the Department of Native Affairs was to stress to both employers and the municipality that such restructuring was impossible without complementary changes in African residential life. By the early 1950s

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49. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; Manager, MNAD "Native Housing Policy", November 1948 and H2/CM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer- Town Clerk, 26 August 1949.
50. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1949-1950.
51. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 3; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 9 November 1957.
52. H Kenney, *Architect of Apartheid: H F Verwoerd - an appraisal*, (Johannesburg, 1980), Chapter 3.
53. Posel, "The Nature of Apartheid", p 7.

major urban employers had accepted this interlinking of issues. After some coercion, employers came to bear some financial responsibility for African housing.⁵⁴ The municipality of Durban was however to remain impenitent. However during discussions over African housing in the early 1950s, the municipality was still defiantly attempting to absolve itself from any responsibility for the provision of permanent African urban housing on any large scale.

Verwoerd takes charge: the City Council and the Cato Manor Emergency Camp

Immediately after the January 1949 Riots a city councillor suggested that in view of the municipality's inability to control shack growth in Cato Manor Farm, the municipality should purchase land in the Mkhumbane area and erect permanent African nuclear family housing.⁵⁵ In July 1949, Havemann similarly suggested that the municipality should build between 1,500 and 2,000 sub-economic houses for Africans on a sparsely populated area of Cato Manor Farm. The most suitable land was that which adjoined the African freehold areas of Chateau and Good Hope Estates and a further area immediately to the north of Chesterville. These houses would be occupied by African families living in the shantytowns of Mkhumbane. Having thus reduced the population density in the main area of shantytown settlement, the municipality would be able to provide better facilities in Mkhumbane and eventually allow for the "later eventual stabilization" of Mkhumbane into a permanent African nuclear family scheme. Havemann believed such a policy would enhance the already strong community feeling which existed in the shack settlement.⁵⁶ However Havemann pointed out that the municipality would have to provide further African formal housing, particularly for those Africans employed in the central and northern areas of the city. He suggested that the municipality purchase and develop such formal housing on the Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms.⁵⁷

Havemann's proposals incorporated three main principles. He was at pains to reject the commonly held notion that the African shack dwellers in Cato Manor Farm, were *dirty, diseased and socially intolerable*. Havemann maintained that,

Whilst there are criminals and idlers, the residents of Cato Manor are not a mass of brawling insurgents. They are on the whole decent working men trying their best to provide for their families. The municipal barracks also suffer in the same way at weekends from visitors who are law abiding enough during the week. This is an inevitable result of males living in barracks away from the normal constraints of family life.

Until land is provided where natives can live legally, the City's choice is between having new uncontrolled shack settlements like Cato Manor and allowing natives to live in backyards and

54. Wilkinson, "Adequate Shelter", p 19.

55. Durban Housing Survey, p 379.

56. MNAD;H2/CM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 14 July 1949 and Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, undated memorandum for submission to the Native Administration Committee, 16 January 1950.

57. Ibid.

to overcrowd already insanitary shacks. The problem has merely changed its venue and come out into the open.⁵⁸

Havemann also wanted housing provided in the city for African nuclear families legally permitted to live in the city. Such people could not merely be relocated to another shack area: "the sheer removal of the same people to another place can hardly change their character."⁵⁹ Finally, Havemann maintained that the only way in which the municipality would be in a position to afford such sub-economic housing was through the municipality making substantial and continual financial contributions to the Native Revenue Account.⁶⁰

Havemann's policy recommendation was summarily rejected by the municipal Native Administration Committee, which after much debate, agreed to request a further joint proposal from the municipal heads of departments concerned with African housing. This report was to be based on an acceptance of certain key constraints. Not only was the Native Revenue Account to remain self-accounting, but because the City Council was both reluctant to acquire any more land for permanent African housing and had already stated its belief that Cato Manor Farm should eventually be developed as a White residential area, the report rejected the idea of permanent African housing in Cato Manor Farm.⁶¹

The African shantytowns in Cato Manor Farm were located on Indian-owned land. Even though the majority of the landowners paid residential as opposed to agricultural rates on their properties,⁶² the municipality had provided pitifully few services to the area.⁶³ With the area being suitably close to the commercial and industrial nexus of the city, remaining undercapitalized and outside the effective day-to-day control of the municipality, the area was ideal for shantytown growth. However, by the 1950s the area was becoming a key urban space in the municipality's plans to provide for White urban residence and a consequent capitalization of its land-holdings.⁶⁴

The heads of department report suggested that as many of the African residents of Cato Manor Farm as possible should be relocated into either formal houses in Lamont Extension or onto the Umlazi Glebe, where residents were required to erect their own homes on sites which the municipality had provided with basic sanitary services. With regard to Cato Manor Farm, the municipality should acquire the Mkhumbane area, which had the greatest shantytown settlement, and develop a 'native village' scheme. As owner of the land, the municipality would be responsible for the provision of roads, stormwater drains and communal ablution and

58. MNAD:H2/CM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 30 July 1949. Havemann's words are still remembered and accurately recalled by persons who had then been officials of the MNAD.

59. *Ibid.* My emphasis.

60. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1986.

61. Native Administration Committee, minutes, 21 July 1949 and 3 August 1949.

62. MNAD:H2/CM, vol 1; City Valuator and Estates Manager, undated. See Also Durban Housing Survey, p 362.

63. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer- Town Clerk, 20 August 1948.

64. Durban Housing Survey, p 381.

water facilities. As the land would be eventually occupied by Whites, all major drain and road developments should be those services required by residential plots of 3,000 square feet. During the period in which the area was to be occupied by Africans, sites of a maximum of 1,750 square feet would be provided on which individual tenants would erect their own homes. Thus for the duration of the 'native village' scheme, the main drainage and water facilities would be catering for almost twice their intended capacity. Temporary sites were planned on very steep land because "there are always people who would fill them".⁶⁵ All sites would be allocated to individual tenants who were neither to sub-let or rent more than one site. Financial loans for the breaking down of existing premises and the erection of new houses would be available from the Native Revenue Account. The report envisaged that the dwellings erected in this scheme would be of similar construction to those already in existence in the area. But through sites being allocated on an individual basis, the communal nature of shantytown life would be destroyed. No trading, welfare, school or recreational facilities were planned. The only health facility envisaged was a municipal mobile immunization clinic if and when the municipal Native Administration Department requested such a service.⁶⁶

The report was in stark contrast to that proposed by Havemann. Both reports accepted the need to destroy the basis of shantytown life and revealed an awareness of how particular housing forms would constrain or enhance particular social relations. However, the heads of department report accepted certain policy constraints and thus formulated a plan which seemingly went against the expressed desires of city councillors to transform the residential life of African shack dwellers. While residence would be based on single-site, nuclear family housing the plan did not envisage the provision of adequate drainage and sanitation and in no way altered or improved existing conditions of community life in the area.

The heads of department report was submitted to the Native Administration Committee in September 1949. It was immediately the subject of bitter and heated discussion between what would rapidly develop into two factions within the City Council. This division was essentially between the Mayor, Councillor Boyd and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Clarke, who had long been vociferous in condemning urban Africans for being diseased and morally reprobate and Councillors Nicholson and Spanier Marson, the respective chairman and vice-chairman of the Native Administration Committee.

The only area of agreement between the two factions was their common belief that it was necessary to control and destroy shantytown society in Mkhumbane. Councillor Clarke asserted that the "irascible" and "petulant" African shack dwellers should be "subdued" and noted that "the ingredients" of a practical solution "were available to the local authority". He maintained that the shantytown population should be "thinned out" by the police liquor raids, the building of a municipal beerhall in Cato Manor Farm, the prosecution of illegal traders, the demolition of all new shacks. Clarke maintained that the Crime and Disease Committee, which had

65. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 2; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 17 May 1950.

66. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 20 August 1949 and vol 2; City Medical Officer of Health-Town Clerk, 13 May 1950.

been disbanded in 1944, should be 'resuscitated'.⁶⁷ Councillor Spanier Marson's perceptions of the problem were similar. Spanier Marson believed that the City Council should declare Cato Manor Farm "out of bounds to town natives", the police should intensify their raiding into Mkhumbane and all municipal beerhalls should be open on Sundays.⁶⁸

The City Council's inability to either introduce many of these suggested measures or, at the very least, control the Cato Manor Farm shantytowns through effecting some of these suggested controls had already been discussed in the municipality. The City Council had not yet gained the right to demolish shacks in the 'added areas', which included Cato Manor Farm. Furthermore, shacks in Cato Manor Farm could only be demolished in terms of the Slums Act if alternative accommodation was available. Both the municipality and the police had long accepted that their ability to maintain any long-term influence in the area was non-existent.⁶⁹ Native Administration Department officials believed that the idea of introducing another curfew which would prevent Africans who did not reside in Mkhumbane from entering the area over weekends was unwise.⁷⁰

The castigation of African shack dwellers revealed clearly the frustration felt by many City Councillors. While they resisted any idea of the municipality providing further African housing, they were aware that the problems raised by shantytown growth could not be entirely controlled through direct coercion. Both factions within the City Council publicly upheld a policy of overt coercion and in their very language revealed a desire to blame African shack dwellers for the conditions of urban African residential life. But both sides were intent upon setting forth the benefits of particular housing policies as the only really effective way of eliminating shack society.

Councillor Nicholson proposed amendments to the heads of department recommendations on the basis of African employment statistics. Nicholson believed that all African workers employed in the area north of Berea Road should be settled in formal housing on Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms. African workers employed south of Berea Road should be relocated to formal housing on either the Umlazi Mission Reserve or further south between Isipingo and Mbogintwini. The municipality should undertake all housing development.

For raising such suggestions Councillor Nicholson was vehemently attacked for "preaching apartheid" - an accusation which he proudly agreed with.⁷¹ Nicholson maintained that his "amendment was like the Act of

67. K J Clarke, "Some Observations on the Shack Settlements in Durban", Native Administration Committee agenda, 3 August 1949, Natal Mercury, 1 October 1949.

68. Native Administration Committee minutes 3 August 1949 and 4 November 1949, address by Councillor Spanier Marson to the Durban Parliamentary Debating society, 24 January 1950 and Daily News, 2 November 1949.

69. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 1; Acting Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 31 January 1952.

70. During this period, the municipality was resisting implementing such similar calls from many citizens. See MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Cato Manor Indian Economic Housing Scheme Ratepayers Association - Town Clerk, 12 August 1949; Natal Indian Organization-Town Clerk, 13 September 1949; Natal Indian Congress - Town Clerk, 14 September 1949 and 16 September 1949; Housewives League of South Africa (Durban Branch) - Town Clerk, 16 December 1949 and Montclair Ratepayers Association-Town Clerk, 1 October 1949.

71. Natal Mercury, 1 October 1949.

Union; in fact it was the Magna Carta for the Natives in Durban".⁷² He attacked other City Councillors for not seeing that the destruction of shantytowns required new housing. As a result of its dilatory approach, the City Council was "timidly yielding to the demands of unruly elements" in the shantytowns. He warned that "there was a cold war going on between various factions and that if the Council backed the Bantu, revolution and not just riots would start".⁷³ Implicit in these suggestions was the belief that shack life could only be destroyed through the provision, by the municipality, of formal housing.

The crux of city councillors' objections to Nicholson's proposals was that the Native Revenue Account would be unable to finance the proposed housing schemes. Under attack at an open meeting of the Native Administration Committee, Nicholson was at pains to assure councillors that the Native Revenue Account should remain self-accounting.⁷⁴ But once the City Council had adopted his suggestions, the municipality should approach the government, because the question of African urban housing was a "national issue" which required a "total solution".⁷⁵

The opposing recommendation was put forward by the Mayor, Councillor Boyd. This was based on the premise that whilst it was necessary to destroy the basis of shantytown life, the municipality should rather convince the government of its duty to provide permanent formal accommodation. Boyd believed that the City Council should accept the recommendations of the heads of department plan for a temporary, long-term 'native village' scheme in the Mkhumbane area, but that the municipality should not declare itself willing to provide any permanent housing for Africans. With regard to African housing on Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms, Boyd believed that all the City Council should state was that this land was the "logical outlet" for African housing to the north of the city. Concerning African housing to the south of the city, Boyd shrewdly maintained that "the Government did intend to urbanize the Umlazi Mission Reserve and (thus) he stressed the inadvisability of submitting to the Government at this stage any alternative proposals for Native housing on the South Coast".⁷⁶

The Umlazi Mission Reserve was land set aside under the 1936 Natives Land Act for occupation by Africans. During the 1940s the City Council had repeatedly requested that the government allow the municipality to acquire part of the Reserve, at no cost, for the development of a 'native village' scheme.⁷⁷ For any change in the legal status of any land within the Umlazi Mission Reserve the formal consent of Parliament was required. An essential pre-condition to such a statutory change in the status of the Reserve was that alternative rural land would have to be provided for the occupants of the Reserve.⁷⁸ In the late 1940s, the City

72. Daily News, 2 November 1949.

73. Natal Mercury, 1 October 1949.

74. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 26 August 1949.

75. See for example, Native Administration Committee, minutes, 30 September 1949.

76. City Council, minutes, 30 September 1949. My emphasis.

77. Broome Commission; memorandum submitted by the City Council, Chapter 6 and evidence of the City Council, 10 December 1947. See also Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

78. Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council, 10 December 1947, Report of the Commission and MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Town Clerk's confidential memorandum for the City Council's delegation attending a meeting with the Department of Native Affairs, 13 August 1948.

Council's suggestion that the most suitable alternative land was a White farming area in the Illovo and Umkomaas district was dismissed by the government,⁷⁹ as was the City Council's desire to develop a 'native village' in the Reserve. Both the government and the South African Native Affairs Commission, who administered the Reserve, were adamant that no Reserve land should be transferred to the municipality and that only formal housing should be provided in the Reserve.⁸⁰ In 1949, the Minister of Native Affairs announced that the Umlazi Mission Reserve would be developed by the government as a formal African urban residential area. This development would be independent of the City Council's own urban African housing schemes.⁸¹

The central tactical argument behind Boyd's proposal was that the City Council could rescind its earlier expressed desire to assume control of a part of the Reserve. Instead the City Council should convince the government of their responsibility to develop housing in the Reserve as quickly as possible. The municipality would thus be in a position to relocate shack dwellers out of the city without being involved in building projects.⁸² Boyd proposed that Councillor Nicholson's amendments be turned down. The report of the municipal heads of departments should be accepted but re-phrased in a way which blamed the government for the City Council's inability to acquire part of the Reserve and implied that government failure to provide formal housing in the Reserve raised the possibility of renewed racial tension in Cato Manor Farm. Boyd's proposed resolution read: "while the City Council desired another area for native housing, its inability to take over the 1,000 acres in the Umlazi Mission Reserve, forces it to declare that it has to try and put both Indians and natives separated in Cato Manor".⁸³

During the early 1950s, this strategy was to be the basis on which the City Council conducted its negotiations with the government on the question of African housing. Consequently both the City Council and United Party members of parliament for Durban constituencies were continually attempting to speed up the government's formal housing scheme plans for the Umlazi Mission Reserve.⁸⁴ On the 21 November 1949 the City Council turned down Nicholson's counter proposals, causing both Nicholson and Spanier Marson to resign from the Native Administration Committee.⁸⁵ Boyd's proposals were accepted, but referred back to a special sub-committee comprising Boyd, Councillor Barns, a supporter of Nicholson, and three other councillors, none

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

81. House of Assembly Debates, vol 70, 20 January-24 June 1950, columns 540-541 and 717-722 and interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

82. Interview with Mr D McCullouch, 23 April 1981.

83. City Council minutes, 21 November 1949.

84. House of Assembly Debates, vol 70, 20 January - 24 June 1950, columns 540-541.

85. City Council minutes, 21 November 1949. Both councillors were to withdraw their resignations within the space of a couple of months.

of whom had played any leading part in the conflict. This special committee was to liaise with the heads of department committee concerned with African housing.⁸⁶

The special committee, which first met on the 29 November 1949, attempted to formulate a detailed plan for a 'native village' scheme in the Mkhumbane area. Such a scheme would have to accord with three constraints. The City Council desired that Cato Manor Farm be eventually re-zoned for White residential occupation. The self-accounting status of the Native Revenue Account must be upheld. Finally the municipality's own financial involvement in the 'native village' scheme had to be as profitable as possible.⁸⁷ As a result of these constraints, the question of temporary African accommodation in the Mkhumbane area raised up certain intractable difficulties for the municipality.

It had for long been municipal policy that landowners on whose land shack settlements had developed should be compelled to provide essential sanitary services to the shack settlements at no cost to the municipality.⁸⁸ However, the City Valuator and Estates Manager pointed out that the local authority's ability to compel landowners to provide such services was severely constrained, involving lengthy arbitration procedures, and could be expected to be further drawn out through the 'non co-operation of the present owners'.⁸⁹ Furthermore, as municipal officials had long pointed out, when landowners were harassed many simply attempted to evict their shack tenants; this resulted in shack settlements being further dispersed and causing renewed tension in the city.⁹⁰ It was clear that the municipality would have to acquire the land in Mkhumbane and, as landowner, provide essential services in the area.

In discussing the question of how best the municipality should acquire ownership of the required land Havemann noted that all existing powers, except those in the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, would involve protracted discussions over the basis for assessing compensation. The land could be easily acquired in terms of provisions set out in the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act and then deproclaimed once the land's use for temporary African housing ended. In addition the Union Government would provide the finance required for the purchase of the land. There were however two important considerations. Firstly, the Minister of Native Affairs had the power to deproclaim, not the City Council. The government would thus be in a position to close down the temporary scheme and thereby compel the municipality to provide permanent African housing, irrespective of whether government-built permanent African housing was available in the Umlazi Mission Reserve. Secondly, because the land would be acquired under the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, the Native Revenue Account, and not the municipality, would be the registered landowner. Thus, when the land was eventually taken over by the municipality, the City Council would have to purchase

86. City Council minutes, 21 November 1949.

87. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Special Committee Native Housing, minutes, 29 November 1949.

88. City Council minutes, 21 December 1948.

89. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Special Committee Native Housing Agenda, 12 December 1949.

90. See Edwards, 'Swing the Assegai', p 23.

according to the market valuation of all land and buildings calculated on the date of sale. The profit from the sale of this land would thus accrue to the Native Revenue Account.⁹¹

Both of these considerations went directly contrary to the wishes of the City Council. A key strategy underlying municipal policy towards African housing was to compel the government to provide permanent housing, rather than allow the Minister of Native Affairs to dictate terms to the City Council. Furthermore, it was the declared policy of the City Council that all land intended for use by Africans should be owned by the municipality. The councillors on the special committee were thus forced to recommend that the City Council purchase the land through its Public Improvement Fund or through raising a capital loan on the open market as it was impossible for the municipality to escape 'the existing formalities (sic) of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act'.⁹²

Not only was it apparent that the municipality would have to purchase the land, and use its own financial resources to acquire the land, but as a result of the temporary nature of the scheme, the municipality would be involved in further expenditure. If the local authority purchased an area of Mkhumbane and provided permanent housing, the financial obligations of the City Council would be significantly less than the costs to the municipality in developing a temporary 'native village' scheme.⁹³ If the municipality purchased land and provided permanent housing the municipality's only capital outlay would be to purchase the land and provide half the costs of developing essential services in the area. As the City Council desired to own the land, such capital would either have to be allocated from the Public Improvement Fund or secured through a loan on the open market. The cost of building the houses and the remaining half of the costs of developing essential services would be borne by the Native Revenue Account through government loans at reduced rates of interest.⁹⁴

In developing a temporary 'native village' scheme in Mkhumbane, the municipality would still, as the landowner, be required to finance land acquisition. However, under existing policy, the Minister of Native Affairs would not permit the Native Revenue Account to provide half the finances for the development of essential services in the area. Thus even though many of the essential services which were required could not later be utilized for White residential housing, the City Council would have to pay all the costs of providing essential services. The City and Water Engineer noted that this 'would have the effect of transferring the development expenditure from the Native Administration Committee ... to the Works Committee and doubling it'.⁹⁵

A further set of financial problems was raised by the City and Water Engineer. The cost of servicing temporary housing was often greater than the finances required if the City Council were to embark on an

91. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Special Committee Native Housing Agenda, 12 December 1949.

92. *Ibid*, Special Committee Native Housing Minutes, 29 November 1949.

93. *Ibid*. ; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 26 August 1949.

94. *Ibid* and Broome Commission; evidence of the City Treasurer, 11 December 1947.

95. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 5 December 1950.

extensive programme to redesign all existing facilities in the area. The City and Water Engineer commented that,

In broken areas such as Cato Manor, the layout is usually bad and extravagant; and it is usually less costly for the Council, after obtaining control of the land to re-lay it out because a properly planned layout has a smaller length of roads and services per lot than has the existing bad layout, for which the Council is already liable. It therefore obtains a properly planned layout at no greater cost than the bad one and frequently with a decreased expenditure.⁹⁶

The City Council was thus faced with the disconcerting possibility that permanent housing could ultimately require a reduced municipal financial involvement than would the provision of temporary housing. Commenting specifically on the suitability of the land in Cato Manor Farm for development as a temporary 'native village', the City and Water Engineer maintained:

It will be apparent that Native Village schemes MAY represent some small saving to the local authority where topographical conditions are suitable, land abundant and the climate dry. On the Coast, the conditions which create dangerous slums in shack areas also create a position where housing built by the Council ... will ultimately remain the cheapest to the local authority as well as the Native.⁹⁷

Further, both the City and Water Engineer and the manager of the Native Administration Department noted that the regulations pertaining to 'native village' schemes did not allow for dwellings much inferior to those provided in municipal sub-economic African housing areas. In view of the fact that the scheme was temporary and that Africans could not provide such dwellings themselves, it was likely that the municipality might be compelled both to provide such housing and bear all the resultant costs.⁹⁸ The City and Water Engineer also noted that while the municipality envisaged the provision of only communal toilet and ablution facilities, it might, nevertheless, be compelled to provide such facilities on individual sites in order to protect its financial outlay in purchasing the land. Such a situation could easily arise because "it is the absence of such sanitary services which makes the shack areas dangerous".⁹⁹ The development of such services would have to be borne solely by the City Council through its own capital borrowing powers.

The effect of all these constraints was clearly pointed out by Havemann. Irrespective of whether the City Council was both willing and able to raise the finance required to develop a 'native village' scheme in Mkhumbane, it was by no means certain that the City Council would be permitted to charge all its capital loan and redemption costs to either the Native Revenue Account or to individual tenants. For example, because the scheme was temporary, the municipality could not charge to the Native Revenue Account the cost of providing

96. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 26 August 1949.

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*

major arterial stormwater drain piping or water services to the area. In addition, in terms of the 1937 Agreement the municipality was not permitted to levy an additional charge against the Native Revenue Account, as a ratepayer, for water usage and refuse removal. Furthermore, the rentals paid by individual site-holders would have to be both sub-economic and not greatly higher than the rents which shack dwellers were already paying in the area.¹⁰⁰ Whilst such charges had usually been levied, illicitly, against the Native Revenue Account, during the course of these negotiations, Havemann had, with the knowledge of other municipal officials, informed the Department of Native Affairs about the various ways in which the municipality was profiting from the Native Revenue Account.¹⁰¹

Because of the financial implications for the municipality of the proposed 'native village' scheme in Mkhumbane, the special committee eventually did no more than the City Council's desire to develop temporary housing in the area, and called for the City Council to be given powers of shack demolition in the 'added areas'. The special committee maintained that municipal funds should only be allocated for the purchase of the land and the provision of very basic sanitary facilities. These rather vague recommendations, which took no account of the problems raised by the municipal heads of departments, were submitted to the City Council on the 22 December 1949. Whilst the Finance Committee of the City Council turned the proposals down, the City Council, apparently making 'one of its momentous decisions', accepted the recommendations.¹⁰²

In accepting the recommendations of the special committee all the City Council was doing was merely restating its earlier objections towards the municipality being responsible for anything but the provision of temporary African nuclear family accommodation. City councillors then attempted to negotiate with the government over the ways in which municipal capital expenses for the development of the 'native village' could be reduced and the municipality could further profit, through the development of the scheme, from the Native Revenue Account.

The municipality maintained that government capital loans at low rates of interest should be made available to the municipality for the acquisition of land intended for use by urban Africans, even though such land would not be acquired under the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act and would be owned by the municipality and not the Native Revenue Account. The municipality also maintained that while non-African ratepayers were not subject to additional surcharges for water consumption and refuse removal services, such additional charges should be made against the Native Revenue Account. Both of these issues, which had been raised in a general way by municipal officials during the course of the Broome Commission Enquiry,¹⁰³ were to become, what a municipal official referred to as 'points of principle'.¹⁰⁴

100. Ibid, City Valuator and Estates Manager - Town Clerk, undated. See also Broome Commission; evidence of the City Treasurer, 11 December 1947.

101. Havemann's protestations were eventually to lead to the Department of Native Affairs appointing a departmental inspector, Mr I P van Onselen, to investigate the manner in which the municipality was administering the Native Revenue Account.

102. Natal Mercury, 22 December 1949 and City Council minutes, 22 December 1949.

103. DNAC, Evidence of the City Treasurer, 10 and 11 December 1947.

104. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

The City Council also attempted to absolve the municipality from paying any compensation to shack residents for shack materials when such residents were forced to move to both new temporary plots in Mkhumbane and eventually to permanent formal housing elsewhere. As a result of his total opposition to the idea of temporary African housing in any area of Cato Manor Farm and his belief that compensation should be paid, Havemann attacked the City Council. Havemann maintained that whilst the City Council asserted that it desired a healthy and law-abiding African urban population, its very policy would produce the opposite. Havemann believed that

It is necessary at this point to comment on the merits of proposals for using land temporarily for native housing and subsequently for another purpose. Such a scheme may have merits from the political or town planning angles: it has none from the point of view of building up a stable and law abiding community, or of safeguarding the economic position of the natives concerned.¹⁰⁵

Havemann's comments were not accepted. Instead, the Native Administration Committee determined to present the City Council's plans for a 'native village' in Mkhumbane and their desire to reduce municipal financial involvement in such a way that the position could be seen as 'extraordinary'. The municipality's confidential document maintained that:

The Council has been driven to adopt its temporary Cato Manor proposals by the unlawful act of the persons it proposes to accommodate and thus no compensation would be payable ... As much as possible should be made of the special features of the project ... with such others as may be found. [sic]¹⁰⁶

City councillors had for long commented on the social, health and political evils which were evident in the shantytown areas of the city and had often insisted that Africans were to blame for living conditions there. However questions of health and quality of housing mattered little against other municipal concerns. During the late 1940s, the municipality opposed the idea of providing additional permanent African accommodation in the city, preferring to play a waiting game and compel the government to provide such accommodation. This policy represented the views of the majority of city councillors who, for political reasons, believed that African family residence should be relocated outside of the city boundaries. Related this belief was an awareness that the urban land space of Durban was a finite quantity of land from which the municipality desired to achieve the greatest amount of capitalization. The provision of urban African residential suburbs impeded this full capitalization. Furthermore any African residential facilities built by the municipality should be undertaken in ways which would allow the municipality to both gain profit and reduce their own financial responsibility.

The question of central government intervention in restructuring African labour and residential life in the city has been clearly discussed in much recent work. What is not however present in their work is any

105. MNAD; CMHP, vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 24 December 1949.

106. MNAD; CMHP, vol 1; Deputy Town Clerk and City Legal Officer-Town Clerk, 16 February 1950.

analysis of the way the government sought to compel certain urban local authorities to provide permanent African urban housing.¹⁰⁷ During the early 1950s, it was the Department of Native Affairs which was to force the United Party City Council to assist with the provision of African housing.

The City Council gained the consent of both the Minister of Native Affairs and the Land Tenure Advisory Board for the development, by the municipality, of a temporary African housing settlement in the Mkhumbane area.¹⁰⁸ However, the Native Commissioner for Natal informed the municipality that compensation, estimated by Havemann to be between £10,000 and £50,000,¹⁰⁹ would have to be paid to African shack dwellers and suggested that the General Rate Fund be liable for such compensation.¹¹⁰ The City Council's proposal for a temporary 'native village' scheme in Mkhumbane was also rejected by the Natal Housing Board, which maintained that the scheme 'disregarded the need for basic services', and failed to cover the issue of compensation for those residents who suffered material losses during the process of relocation.¹¹¹ In reviewing the City Council's proposals, the Natal Housing Board maintained that the City Council should rather develop permanent African housing on Cato Manor Farm.¹¹² To compound the problem even further, the Department of Justice refused the municipality's request for shack demolition powers in the 'added areas'.¹¹³

Faced with these difficulties, in September 1951 the City Council adopted a new plan for temporary African accommodation in Mkhumbane.¹¹⁴ In terms of the newly promulgated Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act, the municipality would acquire 588 acres of land in the Mkhumbane area and develop an Emergency Camp. The Emergency Camp was planned around the levelling of 6,000 sites each 1,200 square feet in size. African tenants would erect dwellings for use only by themselves and their dependants. No sub-letting would be permitted. The site rental was fixed at 20 shillings a month while loans from the Native Revenue Account would be available to assist tenants in providing housing. The General Rate Fund would pay tenants compensation for the loss of their houses when residents were moved to permanent accommodation. The municipality would erect one sanitary block for every 133 families and provide one water standpipe for every 25 persons living in the Emergency Camp.

107. Greenberg gives a cursory mention to opposition to the Nationalist Party government, but fails to probe the reasons for this, viewing the issue instead as merely political antagonism between the two parties. See Greenberg, *Legitimizing the Illegitimate*, p 37.

108. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 2; Native Commissioner, Durban - Town Clerk, 11 May 1950.

109. *Ibid.*, vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 16 January 1950 and vol 2; Native Commissioner, Durban - Town Clerk, 11 May 1950.

110. *Ibid.*

111. *Ibid.*, vol 1; Minutes of the meeting between the Native Administration Committee and the Natal Housing Board, 23 May 1950.

112. *Ibid.*

113. *Daily News*, 23 May 1950 and *Mayors Minute*, 1950-1951.

114. City Council minutes, 28 September 1951.

The municipality was empowered to expropriate the land required and only provide compensation to the landowners on the basis of the municipal valuation roll estimates. These were substantially less than the market valuation of the land and buildings, plus 10%.¹¹⁵ As the municipality would own the land, the municipality would have to finance land acquisition. All development costs would be shared equally by the municipality, through the Public Improvement Fund, and the Native Revenue Account which would be funded by government loan.¹¹⁶ As owners of the land, the municipality was obliged to provide a refuse removal service and bear the costs of water usage without debiting the costs of such services to the Native Revenue Account.¹¹⁷ The Emergency Camp was to operate for a maximum of fifteen years. While the City Council attempted to increase the duration of the Camp's operation to thirty years their requests were rejected.¹¹⁸

The government Department of Health, after expressing initial concern over the minimal sanitation services envisaged for the scheme, finally agreed.¹¹⁹ The Department of Native Affairs however refused to accept the proposals. Verwoerd was not convinced of the City Council's sincerity and willingness to provide African housing. Verwoerd made his Department's acceptance of the scheme conditional upon the City Council making three commitments. Firstly Chateau and Good Hope Estates, Chesterville and all of Cato Manor Farm must be included within a "broad belt" of White residential land linking the Berea to Westville. Secondly, the City Council should rescind its policy statement of the 21 November 1949 and all policy decisions which declared that the City Council was compelled to develop temporary African housing in Cato Manor Farm through the municipality being unable to acquire a portion of the Umlazi Mission Reserve. Thirdly, the City Council should affirm its intention to develop permanent African housing on the Richmond-Zeekoe Vallei Farms.¹²⁰

These three demands effectively negated the basic principle that the City Council's Camp was simply the means whereby the municipality could both destroy and control shantytown society until those shack dwellers could be relocated out of the city to formal housing constructed by the government on the Umlazi Mission Reserve. Whilst desiring to compel the City Council to accept partial responsibility for the provision of African housing for those Africans employed in the city, Verwoerd, during the course of various meetings with municipal officials, assured the City Council that the government was aware of the potential financial burden

115. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; City Valuator and Estates Manager- Town Clerk, undated.

116. Native Administration Committee minutes 14 February 1952, City Council minutes, 30 September 1952, Shum Papers; 'Cato Manor Emergency Camp Plans' and interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 September 1980.

117. The City Council later refused to provide such services unless the Native Revenue Account could be debited with the costs.

118. City Council minutes, 21 January 1952.

119. Native Administration Committee minutes, 14 February 1952.

120. Native Administration Committee minutes, 16 May 1951, recording the minutes of a meeting between the Minister of Native Affairs and the City Council on the 2 May 1951 and Native Administration Committee minutes, 17 August 1951. See also *Natal Mercury*, 8 December 1951 and *Daily News*, 17 April 1952.

which African housing might place on local authorities. The City Council was assured that in terms of a revised housing policy, the municipality would bear no costs resulting from the provision of African housing.¹²¹

However because Verwoerd's demands contradicted the very basis of municipal policy, the Mayor, Osborn, attacked Verwoerd for endangering the 'social health' of the city. Durban's daily newspapers noted the inability of the government to understand the unique situation which existed in Durban.¹²² Details of Verwoerd's correspondence with the City Council were kept secret from the majority of city councillors and only discussed by an Action Committee formed by the Mayor.¹²³ The sole purpose of this Action Committee, which comprised of the Mayor, Councillor Asher and the chairman of the Native Administration Committee, Councillor Nicholson,¹²⁴ was to gain government consent to the Emergency Camp plans on the basis of the City Council's resolution of the 21 November 1949.¹²⁵ The Action Committee refused to accept municipal responsibility to provide permanent African accommodation to the north of the city. This committee also issued the threat that if Africans were not to be permanently relocated from Cato Manor Farm to the Umlazi Mission Reserve, the City Council could declare Cato Manor Farm zoned for permanent occupation by Africans.¹²⁶

In spite of the emptiness of this threat, the refusal of the municipality to accept Verwoerd's demands created a severe crisis between the municipality and the government. Bourquin, then Acting Manager of the municipal Native Administration Department informed the Department of Native Affairs of the situation and demanded that the City Council accept the policy guidelines of the Department of Native Affairs. Bourquin asserted that,

There appears to be room for the belief that the City Council might deviate from the assurances given to the Minister of Native Affairs as regards the future of Cato Manor and the conditional approval of the Minister might therefore have been brought into jeopardy. There is a strong reason to believe that the relevant Government departments, both provincial and central are greatly perturbed about this alleged change of mind and are giving consideration to the withdrawal of the various approvals received so far and without which the scheme cannot continue.¹²⁷

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121. Native Administration Committee minutes, 13 April 1951, recording the minutes of a meeting between the Minister of Native Affairs and the City Council in Cape Town, April 1951.
122. City Council minutes, 22 October 1961, Natal Mercury, 16 April 1951 and Daily News, 13 April and 22 October 1951.
123. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 3; Town Clerk-City and Water Engineer, City Medical Officer of Health and Acting Manager, MNAD, 23 August 1951, Natal Mercury, 17 April 1952 and Daily News, 21 and 22 April 1952.
124. By this stage councillor Nicholson had reassumed his position on the Native Administration Committee.
125. Native Administration Committee minutes, 20 September 1951.
126. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 2; Acting Manager, MNAD- Councillor A L Barns, 21 October 1952.
127. Ibid, vol 2; Acting Manager, MNAD - Mayor, 31 January 1952.

The City Council was eventually compelled to accept the proposals of the Minister of Native Affairs and thus accept policy guidelines which directly contradicted all previous City Council attempts to resist municipal involvement in the provision of permanent African residential suburbs in the city.¹²⁸ As a result of the City Council agreeing to Verwoerd's stipulations, in December 1952 the Secretary for Native Affairs informed the City that permission for the development of the Cato Manor Emergency Camp had been granted. Eiselen concluded his letter by stating that 'I shall be glad to be informed what stage has been reached by your Council in regard to the selection of a permanent site for the accommodation of natives to be temporarily housed at Cato Manor in the interim.'¹²⁹

128. City Council General Purposes Committee minutes, 2 June 1952.

129. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 3, Secretary for Native Affairs - Towns Clerk, 5 December 1952.

CHAPTER 7

**FURTHER CONTRADICTIONS DOWN MASHU WAY :
WAGES, SHANTYTOWN SOCIETY AND THE BUILDING OF KWA MASHU**

A Housing Policy for Kwa Mashu

Kwa Mashu township, named after Sir Marshall Campbell, the first Director of Natal Estates,¹ was developed on an extensive portion of the 6343 acre area known as Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms. This area comprised nearly all the land bordered by the Mgeni River, the road from Sea Cow Lake through Effingham and Duff's Road and extending to the Inanda Village, and the South African Native Trust administered areas of the Inanda Mission Reserve, Dalmeny and Released Area 33. By far the largest part of Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms comprised sugar cane plantations owned and cultivated by the Natal Estates sugar company. The remainder of the land was either owned by smaller sugar companies or Indian market gardeners and independent sugar farmers.²

In December 1952 the City Council adopted a resolution in favour of acquiring all the land in both the Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms and the adjoining area of Newlands for the development of various forms of African housing.³ With the City Council having finally accepted responsibility for the provision of urban African accommodation, municipal officials were instructed by the City Council to develop a basic planning outline as quickly as possible. Initial municipal plans were based on achieving a series of inter-related goals.

New African residential areas had to be built in such a way that the critical health and sanitation conditions for long prevalent in the existing shantytowns would not recur. A broad plan for African housing had to be compatible with the existing and future areas of major industrial and commercial activity. The townships also had to be located as close as possible to areas adjoining the city controlled by the South African Native Trust. Such a policy accorded well with both the government's desire that African urban residential areas

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1. The name Kwa Mashu was adopted by the City Council in 1957. Prior to this all correspondence concerning the proposed schemes in the area referred to the project as either "Duff's Road" or "Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms". Whilst the City Council had conducted a public competition to select a suitable name for the new township, "Kwa Mashu" was not amongst the list of those most favoured by the selection committee. It is entirely conceivable that the name was chosen as a means of repairing the ill-feelings which existed between the municipality and its most important neighbouring sugar company.
 2. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Report of the Union Government Department of Native Affairs Departmental committee re Land for African Settlement, February 1946, Annexure B and "Durban Housing Survey", p 407. See Map no ? Ibid and City and Water Engineers Department, "Duff's Road Native Township", Plan No S T 1525 A, 17 October 1957.
 3. City Council minutes, 19 December 1952.

could, at a later stage, be excised from the city and incorporated into African reserve areas, and long-standing municipal aversion to permanent African residential accommodation in the city. Thus although Kwa Masbu was to be situated within Durban's boundaries, their continuing residence and political status within the city was by no means assured.

Municipal officials were reluctant to consider the relocation of all shack dwellers into one massive township. It was thus necessary to co-ordinate municipal development of formal African housing on the Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms with the contemporaneous development, by the government, of further African housing to the south of the city on the Umlazi Mission Reserve. With the gradual availability of formal housing in both areas, Africans living in shantytown and backyard accommodation in the city, and legally entitled to residence in the city, would be relocated to one of the townships in accordance with the site of their employment.

All those Africans employed in areas north of an "imaginary line"⁴ extending along Old Fort Road to the Berea ridge would be resettled to Kwa Mashu. Africans employed south of this dividing-line would be relocated to formal housing on the Umlazi Mission Reserve.⁵ Thus two new African residential areas would be built in a manner which aligned the provision of housing to the existing spatial pattern of African urban employment. Bourquin recalls the basic motivation: "the feeling that we should not put all our eggs in one basket, and develop everything to the south, but to provide a counterbalance to the north ... and also to meet the needs of the industrial areas to the north-Greenwood Park, Effingham and those parts".⁶

The municipality desired to plan Kwa Mashu in ways which would ensure both the destruction of shack life and the creation of a permanently urbanized African working class living in single-site, nuclear family residence. Such housing would complement attempts to enhance the process of differentiation within the urban African proletariat. Heavily influenced by British New Town planning principles,⁷ the City Council envisaged that the township would eventually consist of eleven Neighbourhood Units, each consisting of four villages of four hundred nuclear family houses. The houses would be owned by the tenant, but the land would remain rented to the tenant under non-freehold title. No hostel accommodation would be provided. Each Neighbourhood Unit would be self-contained, with its own community centre, shops, schools, recreational facilities and professional office space. A single "spinal road" would run through the township and all Neighbourhood Units would be connected to this road by one arterial road. There would be no other direct road system connecting the various Neighbourhood Units together. A railway line would be developed

4. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 30 July 1949 and vol 2; Personal Memorandum, S B Bourquin-Councillor A L Barns, "The Duff's Road Area", 21 October 1952.

5. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 September 1980.

6. *Ibid.*

7. For general details see F J Osborn and A Whitlick, *The New Towns. The Answer to Megapolis.* (London, 1963) and L Rodwin, *The British New Towns*, (Harvard, 1956).

alongside the spinal road and two stations built. All Neighbourhood Units would be within three-quarters of a mile of a railway station.⁸

The City Council also wanted to acquire the whole area of both the Richmond and Zeekoe Valley Farms and Newlands. In addition to the municipality planning a formal African housing township covering only a small area of this land, municipal acquisition and ownership of the remaining land was central to the overall success of the initial development plan. In terms of an agreement reached between the Department of Native Affairs and the City Council, once the City Council had taken ownership of all this land, the government would resettle Africans living under freehold tenure on the Umlazi Mission Reserve into this municipal-owned land and commence the development of formal housing on the Umlazi Mission Reserve.⁹

This latter aspect of the initial policy guideline for the development of housing to the north of the city was absolutely central to the success of the whole scheme and the changed influx control policy. Apart from owning a township, the City Council would also be the owner of a vast area of already partially settled peri-urban land. This land formed a significant portion of one of the seven reserves which were intended to supply Durban's future African labour needs. In so far as they were able to, the municipality was determined to ensure that all residents of the area, whether already resident or resettled from the Umlazi Mission Reserve, would not rapidly be reduced to the level of a peri-urban proletariat. In an effort to control proletarianization, the municipality desired to bolster rural production in the area. Within the city the municipality wanted its own rural migratory 'reserve': the area could contain "a number of more or less independent" African rural villages providing for settlement "in gradation from rural and tribal to urban and detribalized".¹⁰ Explaining the benefits of this new policy, Bourquin noted that "Native life in individual villages separated from one another by wide green belts will certainly be more conducive to healthy and peaceful development and will be more readily administered than a large unbroken city area".¹¹

These policy guidelines were accepted by the government and the City Council, both of whom expressed optimism that development would proceed rapidly.¹² The City Council anticipated that certain aspects of the development work on the project would begin in April 1954.¹³ However, as a result of certain major difficulties which arose during the course of further discussions over the implementation and implications

8. For the basic plan intended for Kwa Mashu see the following: MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 9 March 1953, Manager, MNAD-Department of Education, 28 April 1953, City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 12 January 1953, City and Water Engineer "Duff's Road", undated and Native Administration Committee Minutes, 27 January 1954.

9. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Report of meeting between City Council deputation and the Department of Native Affairs, in Pretoria, 14 September 1953 and *Natal Mercury*, 14 June 1955.

10. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer - Town Clerk, 28 August 1950 and Personal Memorandum, S B Bourquin-Councillor A L Barns, 'Duff's Road Area', 21 October 1952.

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, Report of a meeting between a City Council deputation and the Department of Native Affairs, 14 September 1953.

13. *Ibid.*, City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 9 March 1953.

of certain detailed plans for the area, essential aspects of the original planning outline were substantially altered. The main difficulties concerned finance, the acquisition of the required land, the housing and residential facilities envisaged, and the ability of prospective African residents to afford the rents.

During the 1950s, as part of the government's policy of restructuring the basis of African urban life, the Department of Native Affairs substantially modified the policy for financing urban African housing.¹⁴ The essential features of this policy involved changing the powers and functions of various state and provincial institutions concerned with the allocation of capital for housing, the progressive elimination of all sub-economic housing schemes, the accumulation of additional housing capital, and attempts to reduce both the standard of African housing provided and the costs of such accommodation.

In terms of existing legislation, capital loans for African urban housing were allocated to local authorities by the government through the National Housing and Planning Commission.¹⁵ During the course of the loan period all capital loan and interest charges were paid directly back to the Union Treasury. In order to limit its financial obligations the government instituted a self-accumulating system for capital allocated for urban African housing. Capital for urban African housing would be allocated by the National Housing and Planning Commission to a newly established Bantu Housing Board. The capital available to this board would consist of gradually diminishing capital loans at low interest rates from the government, and all annual capital loan and interest redemption charges paid back by local authorities having housing loans allocated from the Bantu Housing Board. Under this system all capital loan and redemption charges were not to be paid back to the Treasury, but credited to the Bantu Housing Board who would then be responsible for re-circulating this finance for the purposes of new urban African housing schemes.¹⁶

In terms of this policy, the government expressly prohibited any local authority from financing urban African housing development through loans raised on the open market and thereby diverting scarce capital resources into African housing. All requests for funds required for urban African housing had to be directed to the Bantu Housing Board.¹⁷ While the government acknowledged that the immediate shortage of urban African housing would require massive capital outlays from the Treasury, the Department of Native Affairs hoped that eventually the Bantu Housing Board would be in a position to finance urban African housing schemes without direct financial aid from the government. While this policy was only formally introduced in the Housing Act of 1957, the desire to restrict government funding of urban African housing projects was discussed with urban local authorities during the early 1950s. The Department of Native Affairs realized that it would be impossible to both eventually restrict direct financing of urban African housing and maintain the self-balancing

14. Wilkinson, "Adequate Shelter", *passim*.

15. In Natal, these funds were allocated from the Bantu Housing Board to local authorities via the Natal Housing Board. See Broome Commission; evidence of the City Council, 10 December 1947 and interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

16. Morris, *Housing*, p 34.

17. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD 'Draft', 12 January 1953.

and rotating principles of capital administered by the Bantu Housing Board unless other substantial modifications were made in urban African housing policy.

Central to the changes was the Department of Native Affairs' insistence that all new urban African housing be developed as site-and-service schemes. This would thus lower the standard and costs of such housing. While the principles of site-and-service housing had been discussed for many years, it was only during the 1950s that the policy became explicitly advocated.¹⁸ In terms of this policy individual African families would be allocated a site provided with basic sanitation and water facilities. At the corner of each site the tenant would either erect a temporary dwelling or be provided with such accommodation by the local authority. The value of such a dwelling, if financed in any way through the Native Revenue Account, was not to exceed £35. For renting the site the tenant would pay an economic rental calculated over a five year period.¹⁹ As the scheme progressed African families would be encouraged to erect more substantial dwellings without any financial assistance whatsoever. "Such houses", Verwoerd maintained, "could, from a small start, ... be enlarged from year to year into complete family homes, as the ability of the family to pay for them improves."²⁰ Formal housing would only be provided for Africans if sufficient housing capital was available and tenants were able to afford economic rentals. When full standard service facilities were provided the costs of such development would be borne solely by the tenants.²¹

In 1951 the government introduced measures designed to standardize the types of facilities provided in urban African housing schemes. All housing provided by the local authority had to conform to maximum standards laid down by the Department of Native Affairs. Any structural improvements, such as guttering and plastering, would have to be provided for and paid for by the tenants. Furthermore in order to reduce the cost of housing development, local authorities were empowered, in terms of the Natives Building Workers Act of 1951, to train and employ African building labour utilized in African housing development at lower rates of pay than those laid down for private industry.²²

As a further means to lower the standard and cost of urban African facilities, in October 1951 the government suspended the availability of loans for sub-economic housing and insisted that all existing development of housing using such funds be finalized by the 31 December 1951.²³ Whilst it was to prove

18. For details of Union Government housing policy see Wilkinson, "Adequate Shelter", Kenney, *Architect of Apartheid*, and T R H Davenport, *South Africa: A Modern History*, (Johannesburg, 1977), p 269.

19. Morris, *Housing*, p 29.

20. Kenney, *Architect of Apartheid*.

21. See MNAD, KMHP, vol 2; Secretary for Native Affairs-Town Clerk, 7 December 1955.

22. SAIRR, Natal Regional Branch, File: Townships- Kwa Mashu, Natal Chamber of Industry, "Housing for the Urban African Population, 26 September 1960. For further details see Wilkinson "Adequate Shelter" and J W Cowden *Holmes' Local Government Finance in South Africa*, (Durban, 1969), p 30.

23. Mayors Minute, 1951-1952.

impossible to effect such drastic and immediate changes, the amounts of capital allocated for sub-economic housing schemes were reduced substantially.²⁴ In 1954, in a further attempt to undermine the principle of sub-economic housing, the Department of Native Affairs adjusted the wage-rental formula whereby African tenants were eligible to pay only sub-economic rentals. The number of tenants who were required to pay the full economic rentals on land and housing increased.²⁵

As a further means to secure sufficient capital for African housing the 1952 Native Services Levy Act obliged all employers of urban labour to pay towards the costs of developing housing facilities. Despite strong initial resistance from employers, the benefits of the Act were to be accepted by both the City Council and a majority of local employers. In 1954, municipal officials calculated that over the following 20 years, the municipality would gain approximately £5,400,000 through employer contributions in terms of the Act.²⁶ Such funds, which were to be deposited in a separate sub-account of the Native Revenue Account and administered by a Native Services Levy Fund Committee under the direction of the Minister of Native Affairs, were to be utilized in financing the provision of services to African residential areas. The fund could provide finances for the development of individual pit privy sanitation, communal water standpipes, minimum street lighting, and basic untarred roadways, but only if such a housing scheme adhered to site-and-service principles. The cost of providing improved services during the course of upgrading site-and-service schemes to formal African housing would be provided for in terms of economic loans from the Native Services Levy Fund.²⁷ With the promulgation, in 1957, of the Native Services Transport Levy Act, employers of African labour were also required to provide financial assistance towards the cost of developing transport services to and from African residential areas.²⁸

During the course of the government formulating this new housing policy, the Department of Native Affairs and the municipality were engaged in a series of negotiations over how the stipulations contained in the 1937 Native Revenue Account agreement could be altered. Municipal officials believed that certain conditions in the agreement placed an unfair financial burden on the municipality. Verwoerd desired to modify the agreement so that it would comply with new housing policy. In terms of the new agreement, which took effect on the 1 August 1957,²⁹ three main changes were decided upon. Firstly, the City Council had always objected to the manner in which the municipality had to either allocate municipal funds or cover the acquisition of land for African housing through open market capital loans. Municipal officials believed that because of the high capital costs of such land acquisition, an increased financial burden was placed on both the Native Revenue

24. MNAD;H/Gen, vol 2; City Treasurer and Acting Manager, MNAD "Rentals:Native Housing Accommodation", 16 October 1951.

25. *Ibid.*

26. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Inter-Departmental Meeting re:Duff's Road, minutes, 13 January 1954.

27. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Secretary for Native Affairs-Town Clerk, 2 February 1953.

28. Cowden *Local Government Finance*, p 28-29.

29. Mayors Minute, 1956-1957.

Account and African tenants in formal housing schemes.³⁰ Verwoerd agreed to alter this stipulation. Verwoerd wanted to prevent any capital other than that available to the Bantu Housing Board being used in providing urban African facilities and accepted the need to maintain both the self-accounting status of the Native Revenue Account and keep this Account solvent. In terms of the new agreement, whilst the City Council was still permitted to own any land required for African urban facilities, special loans at low interest rates would be made available through the National Housing and Planning Commission to the City Council for land purchases. Secondly, as both the municipality and the government desired to maintain the solvency of the Native Revenue Account, the municipality would not be permitted to charge the Account a land rental. The land rental, which would still be based on the market valuation of the land, not the significantly lower municipal valuation roll estimates, would be included in the fully economic site rents payable by each tenant.³¹ Thirdly, in terms of the new agreement, the City Council was also permitted to levy further charges for the provision of refuse removal and the consumption of water. These charges would be incorporated into the individual site rents.³² When site-and-service schemes were upgraded into formal housing schemes, the municipality would install water meters in each site. Even though the municipality's other ratepayers did not pay any extra amount for water consumption,³³ the City Council gained government approval for the policy.

While the revised housing policy developed during the 1950s was different from previous state policy, its successful implementation was constrained by two factors. There was insufficient capital for the development of formal housing accommodation. All future African housing projects would have to be based on site-and-service principles. In addition, whilst the government was intent on preventing the continuation of sub-economic African housing, upheld the self-accounting principles of the Native Revenue Account and, in the case of Durban, agreed to altering the 1937 agreement on terms financially favourable to the municipality, these stipulations were achieved through placing additional financial burdens on the individual African tenants themselves. As a result of these constraining features all negotiations over the details of the development of Kwa Mashu would present intractable problems to the government, the municipality and local manufacturing and commercial interests.

Contradictory Forces and Altered Planning

When the idea of the municipality acquiring land to the north of the city had first been raised, municipal officials agreed that the greatest obstacle to municipal acquisition would be the attitude of Natal Estates.³⁴

30. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 2; City Treasurer-Town Clerk, 12 January 1956.

31. *Ibid.*, vol 1; Secretary for Native Affairs-Town Clerk, 13 January 1954 and Mayors Minutes, 1956-1957.

32. *Daily News*, 21 June 1956 and interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 September 1980.

33. *Ibid.*

34. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 8 October 1952.

Initially the company was an unwilling seller,³⁵ but then realizing that the land could possibly be expropriated, accepted that "some sacrifice ... might eventually become inevitable", and agreed to discuss the matter with the City Council³⁶. But the Natal Estates' bargaining position during these negotiations was strong. The company had access, through certain City Councillors, to all the confidential municipal documents dealing with municipal strategy for the land purchase.³⁷ As a result the company was aware that the City Council required the land urgently, and that expropriation could only be achieved through recourse to the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, in terms of which the land would then not be owned by the municipality. Whilst Natal Estates were aware that their financial claim for selling the land included many items which would be disallowed if the land was expropriated, they were however also aware that the City Council did not desire to expropriate the land. Natal Estates were thus in a far more powerful a position than was the municipality. Bourquin recalls the negotiations in the following way:

But ...although the discussions were always on a friendly basis, I mean there were no ill feelings - there was no animosity between the parties, the Natal Estates, being experienced and hard-bitten businessmen did not make it an easy matter for the Durban City Council to achieve its object. So the negotiations went on over a long period of time. They threatened to break down occasionally, not because of animosity, but simply because one could not agree on what was reasonable.³⁸

Negotiations between the municipality and Natal Estates commenced in December 1952, immediately after the City Council had eventually agreed to accept responsibility for providing new African housing in the city. In addition to the Natal Estates claim being based on certain technical data concerning the market value of the land and buildings, the value of the cane and the effect which the loss of these cane plantations would have on production costs at the Mount Edgecombe sugar mill, Natal Estates maintained that the land should be valued in accordance with certain additional considerations.³⁹ Natal Estates continually expressed their determination to place an additional value on the land because of its proximity to the city and its suitability for African urban housing.⁴⁰ In replying to Councillor Barns' request that the company provide the municipality with the relevant technical material, Halsey, the Finance Manager of Natal Estates remarked:

35. *Ibid.*, minutes of the meeting between the City Council and Natal Estates, 29 January 1953.

36. Natal Estates Archive; File: Duff's Road; Natal Estates-Town Clerk, 22 June 1955.

37. See for example Natal Estates Archive; File: Duff's Road- Land Acquisition; Memorandum, Halsey (General Manager)- Allsop (Business Manager), undated. At various times during the negotiations Mr R Butcher, then vice- chairman of Natal Estates and Mr D Panovka, a director of Natal Estates, were members of the City Council.

38. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

39. Natal Estates Archive; File: Duff's Road; Natal Estates - Town Clerk, 17 January 1952 and 20 July 1955; File: Richmond-Zeekoe Valley; Sugar Production Estimates, 1953- 1954, 1954-1955, 1955- 1956 and 1956-1957 and Basis for Evaluation, undated and MNAD;H2/KM, vol 1; Minutes of the Meeting between the Special Committee re Native Housing and Natal Estates, 30 January 1953.

40. *Ibid.*, vol 2; Natal Estates-Town Clerk, 20 July 1955.

We shall have no objection at all. Our Accounts Department will be perfectly willing to give you that information. We are working as two partners, we are working together; but when it comes to negotiating the price, that will be another thing altogether. But in arriving at the information, I am perfectly willing that each side put its cards on the table. I do not for a moment suppose we will agree, but that is inevitable.⁴¹

Natal Estates were determined to draw the negotiations out in order to finally settle on a selling price advantageous to the company.

The City Council thus became reluctant to acquire all of the land in Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms and Newlands. The purchase price would have been too high. Instead the City Council wanted to acquire only the land necessary for the provision of African township housing. The Newlands area and the remaining area of Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms should be declared an "undated" area administered by the South African Native Affairs Commission for eventual African occupation.⁴² As a result of the difficulties encountered in the initial negotiations with Natal Estates, there were also attempts by various City Councillors, including the Mayor, to halt all development plans for housing to the north of the city. Many councillors wanted to renegotiate the municipal acquisition of land on the Umlazi Mission Reserve.⁴³ Verwoerd had once again to inform the City Council that the government would only consider providing housing on the Umlazi Mission Reserve once the municipality developed an African housing scheme to the north of the city.⁴⁴ The Department of Native Affairs, in spite of Verwoerd's initial reluctance,⁴⁵ eventually gave the City Council authority to acquire only the land required for Kwa Mashu.⁴⁶

The changes in the basic plan for the area contradicted the initial plan to resettle Africans living on the Umlazi Mission Reserve on to municipal land to the north of the city and thereby facilitate government development of African housing on the Umlazi Mission Reserve. Furthermore with the policy change the municipality became involved in further time-consuming negotiations over the precise area which the municipality required. Also the government insisted that the township still be situated close to the African reserve areas of Inanda, Dalmeny and Released Area 33. The municipality was required to purchase not only the land for African housing, but a further 120 acres of canal land for the development of an "umbilical cord"

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41. Natal Estates Archive; File: Duff's Road Land Acquisition; Minutes of Meeting between the Municipal Sub Committee re Land For Native Housing and Natal Estates, 29 January 1953.
42. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Report of the Municipal Heads of Department to Special Committee re Native Housing, 27 January 1954; Native Administration Committee Minutes, 27 January 1954 and City Council Minutes, 29 January 1954.
43. Natal Mercury, 30 October 1954.
44. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 2; circular to City Councillors, Strictly Confidential, 28 May 1956.
45. *Ibid.*, vol 1; Secretary for Native Affairs-Town Clerk, 30 November 1953 and Town Clerk - Native Administration Committee, 22 April 1954.
46. *Ibid.*, vol 2; minutes of a Meeting between the City Council and the Department of Native Affairs, 12 September 1955.

road which would connect the township to the city and a further 480 acres for the buffer areas required by the Groups Areas Act.⁴⁷ It was only after the precise area required by the municipality was assessed at 2941 acres that negotiations with Natal Estates could proceed.⁴⁸

In October 1955, Natal Estates submitted a claim of £500,000 for the sale of their land to the municipality.⁴⁹ During the course of further negotiations it became evident that many city councillors were attempting to acquire the land over a long period of time and were reluctant to utilize the land for African housing.⁵⁰ After further discussions over technical details and the government threatening to expropriate the land required on behalf of the City Council,⁵¹ the City Council and Natal Estates eventually agreed to a price of £350,000 plus an additional £10,000 for that part of the sugar cane crop which could not be harvested before municipal development commenced.⁵²

However at Verwoerd's insistence, the municipality was required to purchase all the land immediately and then only lease back to Natal Estates those sections which would not be required during the first stages of housing development.⁵³ In addition, in order to compel the City Council to develop African housing in the area and ensure that such an African residential area could be later excised from the city and incorporated into the African reserves areas, the Department of Native Affairs insisted that the final terms of sale included no clauses which would disallow the South African Native Trust or any other body from acquiring the African township and incorporating the area within the African reserve areas which lay to the north of the township.⁵⁴

While the development of the township proceeded on land purchased from Natal Estates, the municipality commenced negotiations over the purchase of the remaining areas of required land with the other land owners in the area. While negotiations with the smaller sugar companies proceeded smoothly, municipal attempts to acquire land from Indian market gardeners, sugar cane farmers and some of those Indians living in the Duff's Road Indian Village which bordered the township, were strongly opposed. Opposition was based on a total rejection not only of the principles of land expropriation,⁵⁵ but also of the means by which the municipality intended to acquire the land. The City Council desired to acquire the land without providing

47. *Ibid.*, vol 1; Secretary for Native Affairs-Town Clerk, 14 March 1955, City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 7 May 1955, *Natal Mercury*, 4 June 1954, 30 October 1954, 22 April 1955 and 10 October 1955 and KCAV; interview with Mr S Bourquin, 18 October 1979.

48. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 3; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 7 May 1955.

49. *Ibid.*, vol 2; Town Clerk - Special Committee re Native Housing, 7 December 1955.

50. *Ibid.*, Secretary for Native Affairs - Town Clerk, 6 September 1955.

51. *Natal Mercury*, 9 May 1955.

52. *Ibid.*, 10 September 1956.

53. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 3; City Valuator and Estates Manager-Town Clerk, 18 July 1958.

54. *Ibid.*, Town Clerk-Secretary for Native Affairs, 21 September 1956, *Daily News*, 14 September 1956 and *Natal Mercury*, 17 and 27 September 1956. Emphasis added.

55. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 2; Duff's Road Indian Association-Town Clerk, 22 November 1955.

existing owners and tenants with suitable alternative accommodation. Municipal bye-laws prevented such action, and there were strong objections from Indian residents and the Natal Housing Board. So the City Council proceeded to alter the bye-laws. The land was expropriated under the Groups Areas Act, without any alternative accommodation being provided.⁵⁶ Commenting on City Council policy, Councillor Charles Williamson remarked:

Would we have treated Europeans in the same way as we have treated the Indians at Clairwood, Cato Manor and now Duff's Road. Certainly we would not... and the only place to which they can go with any reasonable degree of security so far as the Group Areas Act is concerned is Reservoir Hills, where they will have to pay between £300 and £400 for a quarter of an acre.⁵⁷

Protests were ignored and the municipality commenced with the expropriation of Indian-owned land during July 1958.⁵⁸ The government had assured the City Council that a special allocation of £550,000 from the National Housing Commission would be made available to the municipality for required land purchases.⁵⁹ However, the eventual cost of all the land required for Kwa Mashu came to £900,000.⁶⁰ While the government agreed to allocate extra funds the high cost of the land was to place an extremely heavy burden on the individual African tenants who would be settled in the new housing scheme.

The municipality was also engaged in complex and often heated discussions with the government and local employers over the suitability of certain housing plans for Kwa Mashu. All parties accepted that Africans should be resettled on land on the outskirts of the city and that Kwa Mashu, being located next to African reserve areas which bordered the city, was a suitable location for African housing development. However, while agreeing on the spatial suitability of the land, contradictions arose over the differing objectives of the major parties, the nature and suitability of particular housing plans, the planning timetable, the financial costs of particular housing developments, and African tenants' ability to afford the cost of this new accommodation.

While the government's new housing policy implied an increasing involvement by the central state in African housing, the actual responsibility for the development of housing remained with the local urban authority.⁶¹ Verwoerd viewed the task of the Department of Native Affairs as being essentially concerned with curbing the availability of housing funds and compelling local authorities to develop site-and-service schemes. Within the Department of Native Affairs Verwoerd assumed near total control of the decision-making process

56. *Ibid.*, Duff's Road Indian Association-Town Clerk 14 July 1956, Natal Housing Board-Town Clerk, 30 November 1956, City Council minutes, 8 December 1956.

57. *Natal Mercury*, 7 November 1956.

58. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 8; Special Committee re Native Housing Agenda, 25 July 1958.

59. *Ibid.*, vol 3; City Treasurer-Town Clerk, 12 January 1956.

60. *Natal Mercury*, 5 September 1956.

61. The only exceptions were the Union Government development of Meadowlands and then Umlazi during the 1960s.

for the approval of housing plans.⁶² Having little knowledge of the principles of town planning,⁶³ being more concerned with the African housing shortage in the Johannesburg area,⁶⁴ and unfamiliar with the topographical features prevailing in the Durban area,⁶⁵ Verwoerd remained dogmatic that Kwa Mashu could be developed as a site-and-service scheme.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Verwoerd did not see the African housing shortage in Durban as necessitating close co-operation between the municipality and the government through the collaborating committees that the City Council continually requested,⁶⁷ nor did he believe that the Department of Native Affairs or the National Housing and Planning Commission should become involved in the basic planning of Kwa Mashu.⁶⁸

While the City Council believed that the principles of site-and-service scheme development were sound, they were opposed to the development of site-and-service housing in Kwa Mashu.⁶⁹ Once the City Council had accepted municipal responsibility for the provision of African housing, the City Council soon recognized that formal housing would have to be provided. Furthermore, the municipality recognized that such formal accommodation would have to be provided for prospective tenants as Africans would not be able to either erect or contract for the erection of dwellings which met the required standards.⁷⁰ Representatives of major local industrial and commercial interests concurred with the City Council. Employers of African labour wanted the shantytowns destroyed. The local building industry, in particular, opposed any policy which might prevent the expansion of local industry through industry's involvement in the building of African formal accommodation. In any site-and-service scheme, the range of housing commodities which would have to be either produced or supplied by local industry and commerce, was far smaller than those facilities which were required for the construction of formal housing.⁷¹

Throughout the negotiations over the planning of Kwa Mashu, municipal officials pointed out that the land on which Kwa Mashu was to be situated was unsuitable for the successful application of site-and-service principles. The hilly terrain and clay soil,⁷² could not provide any natural drainage, particularly during the

62. See for example MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Native Commissioner-Town Clerk, 20 May 1955 and vol 5; Secretary for Native Affairs- Town Clerk, 1 July 1957.

63. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 July 1980.

64. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 8; Town Clerk - Special Committee re Native Housing, 13 October 1958.

65. *Ibid.*, Secretary for Native Affairs - Town clerk, 18 October 1958.

66. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

67. City Council minutes, 27 January 1954 and MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Town Clerk - Native Administration Committee, 22 April 1954.

68. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

69. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 6; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 4 January 1958 and interview with Mr S Bourquin 8 September 1980.

70. MNAD; H2/CM vol 1; City and Water Engineer- Town Clerk, 26 August 1949.

71. Hendler, "The making of Soweto", p 11.

72. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 2; City and Water Engineer - Secretary for Native Affairs, 18 August 1955.

summer rainfall period. As a result any African residential development in the area would have to be provided with full drainage and a tarred road network. In order to prevent the outbreak of diseases, full standard water-borne sanitation and ablution facilities would also be required.⁷³

Municipal officials' second objection to site-and-service development in Kwa Mashu was based on their first-hand knowledge of the inadequacies evident in some of the site-and-service schemes being developed in other parts of the country. By 1956 municipal officials had undertaken an extensive tour around various African housing schemes in both the Union and Southern Rhodesia.⁷⁴ On the tour municipal officials inspected the municipality of Benoni's Daveyton scheme, which was the first housing project to be developed in accordance with the site-and-service principles of the Department of Native Affairs. Commenting on the Daveyton scheme, Bourquin recalls:

... it was reasonably successful up to a point, but it broke down again on account of the failure of the responsible authority to secure sufficient funds to replace the temporary houses with permanent houses. Or to insist on the site owners or holders replacing their shack with a substantial house which again depended upon funds because they would have expected monies to have been made available.⁷⁵

After this tour of inspection it became clear to the municipality that site-and-service schemes could only operate effectively for a short period of time and that they should be rapidly transformed into more formal residential areas.

However the municipality also became increasingly aware that the government was reluctant to provide any financial assistance for the upgrading of site-and-service schemes.⁷⁶ While the Department of Native Affairs maintained that it was relatively easy for a local authority to ensure that site-and-service schemes could be developed "in an orderly and tidy manner ... so that temporary rooms are neatly and methodically erected so that they are not facing in all directions or are indiscriminately jumbled together",⁷⁷ municipal officials believed that site-and-service schemes would rapidly become further shantytown areas.⁷⁸ Both the City Council and local employers desired not so much the relocation of shantytowns, as their complete eradication.

Furthermore municipal officials pointed out that the costs of eventually building a formal house on a site in any way already occupied would be more than the maximum house cost stipulated by the government. And yet the government however was reluctant to provide housing capital for the development of formal

73. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Interdepartmental Sub Committee re Duff's Road Minutes, 13 January 1954.

74. Municipality of Durban; "Report of the Proposed Organization to Deal with Native Housing under the Special Committee for Native Housing", City and Water Engineer, July 1955.

75. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

76. *Ibid.*

77. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 4; Department of Native Affairs memorandum "Site-and-Service Schemes", 21 January 1957.

78. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 July 1980.

economic African housing, even for schemes which had been initially developed on site-and-service principles. The Department of Native Affairs maintained that the improving of accommodation in site-and-service schemes should be undertaken by the tenants themselves. The government would only consider providing funds for the erection of formal houses for Africans if housing capital was available, all sites were already occupied, and tenants were capable of paying economic rentals. However, even if these stipulations were met, formal houses would only be erected on every second or third site.⁷⁹ Eiselen believed that such a policy would "give a favourable impression to the scheme" and encourage other tenants to improve their own housing without the use of housing capital.⁸⁰

Under extreme pressure from the City Council, local employers and the Manager of the municipal Native Administration Department, the Department of Native Affairs eventually agreed to the immediate development of formal housing in Kwa Mashu.⁸¹ The often acrimonious discussions between the municipality and the Department of Native Affairs over the housing plan for Kwa Mashu were significant. Both sides viewed the main problems of African housing in differing ways. For the Department of Native Affairs, the primary goal was to resettle urban Africans as rapidly as possible into areas on the outskirts of the city, restrict the provision of formal economic housing for Africans and make Africans responsible for upgrading their own accommodation. Against this view, the main concern of both the municipality and local employers was to resettle African shack dwellers into housing which would ensure that Kwa Mashu society would be fundamentally different to that of shantytown areas. Nevertheless, whilst all parties to the discussions agreed to the immediate provision of formal accommodation in Kwa Mashu, the decision to build formal housing at Kwa Mashu exacerbated the fundamental contradiction between the costs of those facilities, the self-accounting status of the Native Revenue Account, government insistence on the need to provide formal housing on an economic basis and the wages of prospective tenants.

While the municipality had initially intended all eleven Neighbourhood Units in Kwa Mashu to be developed for single-site, single tenant nuclear family accommodation, the government insisted that a Neighbourhood Unit be developed as a cemetery and two Neighbourhood Units be used for male migrant housing.⁸² As a result, the costs of the planned family housing increased slightly through fewer homes being planned. The costs of each dwelling were further increased through the municipality becoming increasingly aware that Africans were reluctant to consider home-ownership schemes⁸³ and could also not afford the cash downpayment required for home-ownership.⁸⁴ Because less housing was being provided and tenants who were renting houses did not pay deposits, the economic charges for the scheme increased.⁸⁵

79. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 4; City and Water Engineer - Town Clerk, 1 April 1957.

80. *Ibid.*, Department of Native Affairs memorandum "Site and Service Schemes", 21 January 1957.

81. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 6; Secretary for Native Affairs-Town Clerk, 2 April 1958.

82. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 2; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 9 November 1957.

83. SAIRR, Natal Region; File:Kwa Mashu; notes of a talk by the Manager, MNAD, given on the 15 September 1959.

84. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 4; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 30 September 1957.

85. MNAD;H/Gen, vol 2; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 9 November 1957.

It rapidly became aware that the majority of Africans living in the Mkhumbane area would be unable to pay the required rents in Kwa Mashu. This crisis provoked increasing frustration amongst many city councillors, some of whom asserted that the municipality should refuse to provide any formal African accommodation and that the government should provide housing on the Umlazi Mission Reserve.⁸⁶ Bourquin, by then manager of the municipal Native Administration Department called a halt to all planning for Kwa Mashu until detailed income surveys were conducted.⁸⁷

In 1950, local employers of African labour had been relatively optimistic about the clear correlation between economic growth, the new pass laws and labour bureau system, rising wages amongst an increasingly semi-skilled, permanently urbanized African working class, and the provision of new economic housing for Africans in the city. However, by the late 1950s it became clearly apparent that the, in some cases restructured, conditions of African employment in the city had neither substantially assisted local economic growth nor produced a permanently urbanized African working class capable of affording the basic cost of life in Kwa Mashu. However, by the late 1950s it became clearly apparent that the manner in which the inter-connections between capitalist economic growth, African labour supply and state intervention had developed were skewed in ways which had not substantially increased social differentiation within the African proletariat nor produced a permanently urbanized African working class capable of affording the basic costs of life in Kwa Mashu.

The new influx controls had been applied in ways which had responded to and gave legislative effect to the often marked existing and continuing wage differentials between hostel dwellers and those resident in formal townships. However, amongst those who now had the legal privilege of permanent urban residence, there had been little change in the nature of their employment within the capitalist economy.

During the 1950s an increasing number of workers became employed in semi-skilled capacities. While many of these workers were either Indian, or to a lesser extent 'Coloured', there were also many Africans who became employed in semi-skilled position.⁸⁸ However, this growing use of semi-skilled labour aggravated unemployment among Africans.⁸⁹ Furthermore, while the literacy rate amongst adult African workers in the city was still extremely low, Africans were continually complaining about the difficulties which their school-leaving children experienced in finding suitable employment.⁹⁰ These trends were confirmed by various municipal statistics.⁹¹

86. *Ibid.*, vol 5; City and Water Engineer - town clerk, 29 November 1957 and *Natal Mercury*, 10 April 1958.

87. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 6; City Treasurer and Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 8 February 1958 and *Daily News*, 14 January 1957.

88. Katzen, *Industry*, p71.

89. For similar analysis see Davies *White Labour*.

90. *Ilanga lase Natal*.

91. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 2; Income Surveys, 1960 and Bourquin Papers, vol 5, address given by Mr S Bourquin of urban African literacy to the annual conference of the Institute for Administrators of Non-European Affairs, 1961.

Furthermore, throughout the 1950s the nominal wages of African unskilled labour rose only slightly. In 1956 a municipal survey estimated that the vast majority of African unskilled workers living in either Lamont or Chesterville earned a monthly wage of between £10 and £15 a month. The majority of the remaining men in these areas earned less than £10 a month.⁹² These wages, which were in accordance with the various Wage Determination rates for unskilled African labour in the Durban area,⁹³ were not peculiar to either of these two residential areas. In 1957, the municipality found that 39% of industrial employers paid their African labour less than £10 a month, with 60% paying between £10 and £15 a month.⁹⁴

Wages increases had been kept to a minimum through various means. The labour bureau had operated effectively to curtail the practice of 'job hopping'. Contemporaneously, the wide range of wages which various earlier Wage Determinations had laid down for African unskilled labour had been substantially reduced.⁹⁵ Furthermore Africans became all too aware of the increasingly large reserve army of labour resident in the city. As a consequence African employee turnover within the industrial and commercial sectors began to decline.⁹⁶ Kunene recalls that he got his first job with Dunlop, as a floor sweeper, in 1955: 'you just stay there and then you get another job, but always in Dunlops. I became a machine boy in the Sports Section and then a cutter in the tyre section - with the aeroplane tyres'.⁹⁷

Throughout the later 1940s and 1950s, both the state and capital were extremely aware that local economic forces were remarkably quick to respond to any reduction in the African population resident in the city and either seeking work or unemployed. However, by the late 1950s it was acknowledged that the problem of African unemployment in Durban had grown substantially.

By the late 1950s, the unemployment level of African men living in the various residential townships had increased significantly. In 1951 municipal surveys in Chesterville, Lamont and Lamont Extension had revealed little unemployment.⁹⁸ However by June 1960, it was evident that from the same sample unemployment had increased markedly. The later survey of Chesterville revealed that nearly 30% of African male residents might be unemployed.⁹⁹ With a view to reducing the African city population, during the late 1950s the municipality and the police embarked on massive pass raids which resulted in many Africans being either endorsed out of the city or leaving before being arrested and evicted. In addition, in terms of new pass

92. MNAD:H/Gen, vol 2; Income survey: Chesterville and Lamont, 1956.

93. *Ibid.*, Wage Rate: Labourers, undated.

94. *Ibid.*, Department of Economics, University of Natal, memorandum Wage Increases: Bantu workers Resident in the Shack Areas of Cato Manor, Durban, 9 February 1960.

95. KCM, Reel 16 A, 2-XC9:45/10; South African Congress of Trade Unions memorandum submitted to the Wage Board, 26 June 1959.

96. Interview with Mr T Roche, 22 April 1982.

97. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.

98. MNAD: H/Gen, vol 1; Income Surveys, 1951.

99. *Ibid.*, vol 2; Income Surveys, 1960.

law regulations, African males living in the seven reserves close to Durban were only permitted to enter Durban if there was a labour shortage and on condition that they returned to the reserves on expiry of their contract. However while employers did make growing use of African migrant labour originating in these seven reserves, the increasing unemployment rate in the formal townships was not simply due to employers preference for migrant labour.¹⁰⁰ During the late 1950s industrial expansion in the Durban area had been slow, and consequently there had been little real increase in work opportunities available for Africans legally permanently resident in the city.

The problem was severely compounded by the evident conditions in the Mkhumbane shack areas. Most of the inhabitants of the area were employed in the lowest categories of unskilled labour. In late 1958 a municipal survey of shack areas outside the Cato Manor Emergency Camp reported that half of the African men in the area earned between £5 and £10 a month, and a quarter between £10 and £12 a month. All of those surveyed were legally entitled to live in the city, with over half being legally married. In spite of the remaining men not being legally married but living in what the survey referred to as 'marriages of convenience',¹⁰¹ all couples and dependants were to be moved into the single-site, single-nuclear family part of Kwa Mashu. The majority of the couples in the area had more than one child or other dependant.¹⁰²

In 1951, the Department of Economics at the University of Natal had estimated that the minimum cost of food and other domestic requirements for an African family of five living in the Durban area was approximately £10 to £12 per family per month. This estimate did not include the costs of rent, taxes, transport or schooling.¹⁰³ In 1958, the Union Department of Public Health recommended that as a result of inflation, the monthly food requirements of an African family of five in Durban had risen from £14 to £17 a month.¹⁰⁴

In summary, although the costs of African labour had been kept down and some measure of increased social differentiation ensured, this rebounded on attempts to break up shantytowns and relocate and transform African urban residence. This crisis over the ability of Africans living in the shack areas in the city to afford the costs of accommodation planned for Kwa Mashu came at the same time as the local economy suffered from the recession which affected all the major industrial and commercial centres throughout the country.¹⁰⁵ Local employers of African labour expressed concern over the employers' ability to raise African wages with the local economy being "stagnant" and industrial and commercial enterprises experiencing 'considerable decreases in profit' margins.¹⁰⁶ Contrary to the ideas of local employers during the early 1950s during the later 1950s, representatives of local industry cautioned that it was incorrect to believe that a rapid

100. Posel, "The Nature of Apartheid", p10.

101. *Ibid.*, Memorandum for Manager: Socio-Economic Survey, undated.

102. *Ibid.*

103. O Horwood, "Urban African Employment", p 317, and Burrows, "Native Incomes", p 176.

104. Maasdorp and Humphreys, *From Shantytown to Township*, p 28.

105. Tichman.

106. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1958-1959.

and dramatic increase in African wages would boost local economic growth through providing the African urban population with greater spending power. The chairman of the Natal Chamber of Industry noted that such a view 'put the cart before the horse'. African wages should only increase gradually and only after industrial profits had increased.¹⁰⁷

It was during this crisis that both the state and capital realized that they had both failed to create the new African working class. Such a permanently urbanized workforce would have to be created through the very fact of removal to Kwa Mashu. Although all parties at various confidential discussions convened to discuss the crisis accepted that the actual removal to Kwa Mashu would, on the whole, only occur, by necessity, through the use of direct state coercion, the particular characteristics of the labour force resident in Mkhumbane and the housing facilities being planned for Kwa Mashu required more fundamental policy re-appraisal.¹⁰⁸

Statistics revealed that only about 24% of Africans in the Cato Manor Farm shantytowns had a formal income in excess of the minimum subsistence requirement. Bourquin noted that:

... it would appear that while the average householder could afford combined rentals up to say £2.5.0 per month, any increase beyond that limit must be regarded as imposing a severe or even unbearable burden on the majority of them, leaving them with insufficient earnings to pay for food, transport and other necessities of life. Ability to pay will have to be an essential qualification for admission to the housing scheme, and in the absence of eligible applicants in sufficient numbers, many houses might actually stand empty. It would be inevitable that losses incurred in this direction would sooner or later have to be borne by the ratepayers of the City.¹⁰⁹

The problem was further compounded by the fact that in terms of government housing policy, Kwa Mashu would have to be developed as an economic housing scheme. However all African men eligible for relocation into single-site, single-nuclear family accommodation, but having a monthly salary of less than £15 qualified for sub-economic housing.¹¹⁰ As Bourquin commented,

On completion of the Duff's Road (Kwa Mashu) scheme, it is expected that Durban will have, in addition to its existing 4,000 sub-economic houses in Lamont and Chesterville, another 12,000 economic units at Kwa Mashu. This means that of the total housing available, 25% will be sub-economic and 75% will be economic. These percentages are an almost complete reversal of the actual requirements ... whereby 80% of the population are in the sub-economic group and only 20% in the economic group.

In recent discussions with ...the Department of Native Affairs ... the fact emerged that there is no intention to make further sub-economic funds available. Financial and administrative considerations make it ... imperative to house people within their income limits. This aspect

107. *Ibid.*

108. See for example MNAD: H/Gen, vol 2; minutes of a meeting between the Durban City Council and the Department of Bantu Administration, 13 July 1959.

109. MNAD:H/Gen, vol 2; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 9 November 1957.

110. *Ibid.*, City Treasurer's Department, confidential memorandum Rentals:Native Housing Accommodation.

will have a drastic effect on the further planning of the Duff's Road scheme in which rentals are performed higher than the average in the Union, whereas the income of the average Native worker is possibly slightly lower than that of other larger urban areas.¹¹¹

During the course of discussions to resolve this problem, municipal officials and representatives of major employers raised the possibility of enforcing rent payments by threatening defaulters with eviction. The idea was immediately rejected as it went against the whole purpose of providing accommodation in Kwa Mashu: to relocate Africans living in shantytowns and ensure that a settled urban African working class was accommodated in totally different housing from that available in shantytowns. Bourquin commented,

It is reasonable to expect that people will rather default with rent payments than starve or go naked. (sic) The collection of rents would become futile or at best an invidious task ... Ejectments as such would serve no purpose as they would not induce a person to pay if he had nothing to pay with, nor would it solve the problem as it would be impossible to fill the vacancies in this manner with satisfactory tenants.¹¹²

Municipal officials and local employers also suggested that when estimating the finances available to a prospective African male tenant, any income earned by such a person's wife should be added to the African man's wages.¹¹³ A further suggestion was that the plans for housing in Kwa Mashu should be altered to permit a tenant to sub-let a room.¹¹⁴ These ideas were also summarily discounted as they went against the basic principle of providing a form of housing in Kwa Mashu which would effectively prevent the re-emergence of conditions of life prevalent in shantytowns. Municipal officials believed that any form of sub-renting would perpetuate shack conditions,¹¹⁵ while Bourquin attacked the idea of allowing non-formal income to be included in the financial assessment of future tenants:

It might be argued that if the average Native tenant is given a house he will somehow pay for it by inducing his wife or children to supplement the family income. There are of course instances where this is done, but in so many other cases it leads to illicit practices... that it would be most unwise to base a financial policy on the prospect of contributions towards rent from the various members of the family.¹¹⁶

Both the municipality and local employers also requested the government to alter the financial loan and redemption period for the scheme from 30 years to "forty or even fifty years", but with no success.¹¹⁷

111. *Ibid.*, Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 9 November 1957.

112. *Ibid.*

113. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1952-1953.

114. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 7; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 6 November 1958 and Township Manager, Kwa Mashu-Manager, MNAD, 25 November 1958.

115. *Ibid.*

116. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 2; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 9 November 1957.

117. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1957-1958.

Nevertheless the imperatives of capital accumulation during the 1950s required the provision of suitable housing for the future growth of an increasingly differentiated urban proletariat: male hostels and housing for those permanently urbanized African workers and their families. Local employers were steadfast in their insistence that a fully stabilized African working class could only be accommodated in housing that would ensure that the social relations current in shantytowns would not be recreated in new townships.

Both the government and the municipality accepted such a policy. However, the very success of measures to regulate the character of African labour in the city prevented those African workers who were legal permanent residents in the city from paying for new housing. Whilst the municipality, local employers and the government agreed on the suitability of the spatial location of Kwa Mashu as a site for relocating African shack dwellers, the nature of the terrain and the commitment to provide only formal housing in the area raised considerable problems, with neither the municipality nor the government having the financial resources to subsidize African housing. In spite of employers being compelled to indirectly subsidize the costs of new African housing, the financial costs of purchasing the required land and building an economic housing scheme in the area raised the costs of African life in the area to levels above the financial means of the majority of prospective tenants.

Local employers and municipal officials acknowledged the financial difficulties which would face those being moved into Kwa Mashu. In 1959 the Chairman of the Natal Chamber of Industries noted that even after certain wage increases, the costs of housing in Kwa Mashu "place some Natives in a worse financial position ... than that in which they were before (their relocation to Kwa Mashu)".¹¹⁸ In addition, whilst municipal officials asserted that only formal housing should be built in Kwa Mashu, they accepted that the low wages paid to African workers "lent weight to the Union Government's proposal to resettle people on a site-and-service scheme or some modification of it".¹¹⁹

These discussions occurred against a backdrop of increasing organized African resistance to any removal from Cato Manor Farm, the 'Pound a Day Campaign' was jointly by the South African Congress of Trade Unions and the African National Congress, and increasingly militant and widespread African political activity in the Durban area. As a result of this widespread political discontent, the municipality,¹²⁰ local employers¹²¹ and the government¹²² realized the urgent need to destroy shack society and relocate shack dwellers into formal housing; and they saw that such a policy would, by and large, have to be achieved forcibly. To all parties involved in the discussions over housing in Kwa Mashu, the political mobilization of Africans in the city was in many ways final confirmation that formal housing should be built as soon as possible.

118. *Ibid.*, 1958-1959.

119. MNAD;H/Gen, vol 2; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 9 November 1957.

120. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 8; Town Clerk-Special Committee re Native Housing, 13 October 1958.

121. Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Report, 1958-1959.

122. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 8; Town Clerk-Special Committee re Native Housing, 13 October 1958.

This political militancy, however constrained even further the ability of either the municipality, local employers or the government to effect any drastic change in the housing plans for Kwa Mashu. It did however serve as the context in which many, including Bourquin, who realized the "fairness" behind the African National Congress' call for wage increase,¹²³ were to call on all employers of African labour to raise wages. This call included the municipality, which was one of the "worst employers" of African labour.¹²⁴ Such a policy was supported by most municipal officials and local employers, who after they had bitterly attacked the municipality,¹²⁵ they accepted that in order for development in Kwa Mashu to proceed, wage increases were of critical importance. From 1959 onwards, employers began to grant increased wages to African workers. Whilst these increases were at first insubstantial,¹²⁶ both employers and the municipality concurred that Africans should rapidly be able to afford the cost of living in Kwa Mashu.¹²⁷

However, the ability of Africans to afford the rent in Kwa Mashu was not simply to be resolved through wage increases. During the course of further negotiations between local industry and commerce, the municipality and the government, all parties agreed on a new housing plan for Kwa Mashu. The plan was essentially aimed at reducing the cost, size and quality of housing, and at minimizing the provision of facilities other than housing.

According to the new plan, four types of permanent, nuclear-family houses were to be built. Africans wealthy enough and willing to enter into individual contracts for the erection of houses, according to standards laid down by the municipality, would be allocated a 4,500 square-foot site for a site rental and rate repayment cost of £3.19.9 a month.¹²⁸ For the erection of such houses, financial loans to the value of £250 would be available from the Native Revenue Account.¹²⁹ Secondly, four-roomed detached bungalows, the ubiquitous 51/ houses, would be built on 2,800 square-foot sites. These could be purchased for a £2 deposit and a payment of £3.1.10 a month, or rented for £3.6.3 per month. Thirdly, a four roomed semi-detached house on a 2,450 square-foot site could be rented for £3.2.0 per month, or purchased for a deposit of £2 and a monthly payment of £2.17.4.¹³⁰ Both the municipality and local employers accepted that such housing "would cater only for the better income group of African workers (ie those earning approximately £15 per month or more)".¹³¹

For those earning less, the plans provided for the erection of two-roomed formal housing, log cabins and a site-and-service scheme development. The two-roomed houses, the infamous K2D dwellings, which were

123. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 7 July 1988.

124. *Ibid.*, 8 September 1980.

125. *Ibid.*

126. MNAD:H/Gen, vol 2; Native Wage increases, undated.

127. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 September 1980.

128. SAIRR, Natal Region; File Townships: Kwa Mashu, Natal Chamber of Industry, "Housing for the Urban African Population", 26 September 1960.

129. *Ibid.*

130. *Ibid.*

131. MNAD:H/Gen, vol 2; Housing Plan for Kwa Mashu, June 1959.

to be built mainly along the main spinal road through Kwa Mashu, could be rented for £2.16.5. per month, or purchased for a slightly lower monthly payment and an initial deposit of £2. These houses were to be constructed in such a way that tenants could extend the dwelling unit relatively easily.¹³² For renting the single-roomed log cabin, which was situated on a 1,400 square foot site, the tenant would pay £1.13.0 per month. Those people building their own accommodation in the site-and-service scheme would pay a monthly site rental of £1.19.9. In the log cabin scheme, water and sanitation facilities were shared between two cabins, while in the site-and-service scheme full water-borne sanitation and water facilities were provided on each site.¹³³

One of the main purposes of both the log cabin and site-and-service schemes was to enable the municipality to remove all people from the shantytowns as soon as possible but in a way which provided homes for those unable to pay the rents required in formal housing: the "extremely poor and homeless".¹³⁴ The log cabins and site-and-service schemes would also serve as the first relocation area for those Africans who, while eligible and able to pay for single-site, single-tenant nuclear family accommodation, were not yet married. Such African men and women and their children would be settled in this area and then given a short period of time to "formalize their relationship", at which time they would be removed to formal housing.¹³⁵ If such a couple failed to become legally married, the male would be resettled in the hostel area and the woman evicted from the city.¹³⁶ The pressure on conforming to the single-site, single-tenant, nuclear-family structure desired was immense.

The layout plan for male hostel accommodation envisaged the construction of single-storey cottages accommodating either 16 or 32 men in large dormitories. All the "inmates"¹³⁷ would be provided with a steel bed and locker.¹³⁸ Every alternate dormitory would be provided with either ablution or washing facilities. No hot water would be available.¹³⁹ Full standard lighting would be provided in each dormitory. Reflecting on the reasons for building single-storey dormitories, Drew, a former superintendent of the *Kwa Mashu hostel*, commented:

If one looks at it from a maintenance point of view, the old triple-storey you can get more on the land, its easier to keep clean, you have not got the grass ... but then again you must look at it from the social point of view. You have thousands of men on top of one another. They, where they come from, are used to a bit of space around them. Secondly you must look at it from a security angle. If you had a riot, if you have a mass in one block ... whereas if you have open space one can deploy any police and people to curb it.¹⁴⁰

132. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 7 July 1988.

133. MNAD;H/Gen, vol 2; Housing Plan for Kwa Mashu, June 1959.

134. *Ibid.*

135. Interview with Mr T Roche, 22 April 1982.

136. *Ibid.*

137. Interview with Mr R F Drew, 16 January 1981.

138. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 5; City and Water Engineer-town clerk, 27 July 1957.

139. *Ibid.*

140. Interview with Mr R F Drew, 16 January 1981.

The hostel area was to be provided with a beerhall, shops and a sports field.¹⁴¹ The whole hostel area would be cordoned off from the rest of the township by a six-foot "manproof fence". Two guarded gateways would provide the only means of entrance and exit.¹⁴² Drew comments:

One had to be careful that any foreign element did not sneak into their place, such as females or homosexuality or things like that. You know, you just had to try and maintain a stable community there. Because after all, if they were undisciplined it would affect the married side of the township and again it could affect the employers.¹⁴³

After having noted the control problems which had arisen in planners single storey dormitory hostels in the Johannesburg area, revised the proposed hostel layout. Some sixteen single-storey dormitories were to be provided for renting by employers desiring to house their own unskilled labour. But the majority of the 'cottage' dormitories were modified into a number of two-roomed, four-bedded flatlets.¹⁴⁴ One of the two rooms would be fitted with two bunks, while the other served as a kitchen. The municipality felt that this modification could permit a greater degree of control over cleanliness and discipline,¹⁴⁵ and believed that Africans would prefer flatlets as 'boys could choose their own messmates'.¹⁴⁶ Drew recalls the flatlets in the following way:

Inside ... you come to a room with a concrete table and two benches adequate for four people and to the right of this you would get four food lockers for pots and primuses. Then one would go into ... the next room and you would find four bed-bunks. Each bunk had a locker so that they could store stuff in them.¹⁴⁷

The hostels would accommodate 25,000 people, who would pay an economic rental of £1 a month. Employers could rent accommodation to ensure that their workers were properly housed and then deduct such rent from the workers' wages.¹⁴⁸

As a result of sustained pressure from both the Chamber of Industries and the Master Builders Association,¹⁴⁹ the construction of all housing in Kwa Mashu was to be undertaken jointly by the municipality

141. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 5; City and Water Engineer - Town Clerk, 27 July 1957.

142. *Ibid.*

143. Interview with Mr R F Drew, 16 January 1981.

144. *Ibid.*

145. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 7; City and Water Engineer - Town Clerk, 23 July 1958.

146. *Ibid.*

147. Interview with Mr R F Drew, 26 January 1981.

148. *Ibid.*

149. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 4; Town Clerk - Special Committee re Native Housing, 18 February 1957; Laing and Roberts - Town Clerk, 14 May 1957, City and Water Engineer - Town Clerk, 15 May 1957 and vol 7; Master Builders and Allied Trades Association - Town Clerk, 6 October 1958.

and private building companies. Local industrialists and the Master Builders Association had consistently objected to the way in which the Native Building Workers Act prevented private companies from being engaged in township construction projects. Industrialists also maintained that private companies should be permitted to pay lower wages to labour engaged in township construction.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, under a scheme developed by the municipality various private construction companies had already built specimen houses in Kwa Mashu which cost the same as those which could be built by the municipality.¹⁵¹ While the government did not favour the principle of private companies erecting African housing, the Department of Native Affairs consented to the plan in order that the building programme be speeded up.¹⁵² The government assured the City Council that sufficient economic housing funds would be made available.¹⁵³

Community Facilities for Kwa Mashu New Town

From the outset of the planning for Kwa Mashu, both the City Council and various employer organizations¹⁵⁴ maintained that the success of the scheme depended upon the provision of a cheap and quick railway service to the township from the city centre. The City Council desired neither a bus service inside the township, which would have facilitated easy communication between the various distinct Neighbourhood Units but would also have required the development of a tarred road system,¹⁵⁵ nor a bus service between the township and the city.¹⁵⁶ Here municipal reasoning was less a matter of finance and more a concern with simple logistics. When the township was fully occupied, in order to cater for peak-time demand buses would be required to leave Kwa Mashu every six seconds every morning between 6 am and 7 am. Neither the existing bus terminus in the city nor the roads to Kwa Mashu could cater for such traffic.¹⁵⁷

However, as a result of the delays in purchasing the land and developing a suitable layout plan, the South African Railways was reluctant to discuss developing a rail service to the area until the township was occupied.¹⁵⁸ Bourquin recalls the difficulty:

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150. Broome Commission; evidence of the Durban Chamber of Commerce and the Natal Chamber of Industry, Durban Chamber of Commerce Annual Reports, *passim* and Natal Chamber of Industry, Annual Reports, *passim*.
151. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 4; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 6 September 1957.
152. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 July 1980.
153. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 7; Minutes of a meeting between the City Council and the Department of Native Affairs, 10 November 1958.
154. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 8 October 1956, *Natal Mercury*, 10 April and 8 December 1953 and KCAV; interview with Mr I K Allan, 10 September 1982.
155. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 17 February 1956.
156. *Ibid.*, City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 12 January 1953.
157. *Ibid.*
158. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Minutes of a meeting between the City Council and the South African Railways, 3 October 1953.

It was appreciated right at the start that the only suitable means of transport was a fast electrified railway service, but obviously the Railways administration was not prepared to put a service in until there were sufficient people to use it. ... the irresistible force and the immovable object. The Railways just would not budge and would not build in advance or in anticipation. They are again businessmen, and they wanted to establish the necessity before they would establish a service.¹⁵⁹

Finally in 1958, after houses had been built and occupied, the South African Railways and the City Council agreed on the provision of a railway service.¹⁶⁰

The development required the construction of an electrified double-spur line from Duff's Road station into Kwa Mashu and the building of two stations in the township. The existing rail link between Duff's Road and the city stations of Umgeni Road, Berea Road and Rossburgh would also have to be doubled and electrified. Furthermore, the facilities at these three central stations would have to be vastly enlarged. As it was anticipated that all the residents of Kwa Mashu would be employed in the central and northern areas of the city, no direct rail link between Kwa Mashu and the southern industrial areas was planned.¹⁶¹ South African Railways predicted that all development work would be complete by March 1962.¹⁶²

However, as a result of the increasing pace of construction and resettlement in Kwa Mashu, the municipality predicted that the existing rail and bus services in the Kwa Mashu area would be inadequate to meet the required demand by June 1960.¹⁶³ Whilst South African Railways requested that the building and resettlement programme be slowed down so as to fit in with the development of new rail services,¹⁶⁴ the municipality, local employer organizations and the Department of Native Affairs were intent upon hastening the relocation of African shack dwellers into housing in Kwa Mashu. By late 1958, 13,000 houses had been constructed, 750 of which were already occupied.¹⁶⁵ Hostel accommodation was already available, and work on the site-and-service scheme was nearly complete.¹⁶⁶ In addition, in order to reduce the costs of formal housing, the building programme was stepped up, with an average of nine houses being completed each day.¹⁶⁷

159. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 9 September 1980.

160. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 6; minutes of a meeting between the City Council, the Natal Chamber of Industry, the Durban Chamber of Commerce and the South African Railways.

161. *Ibid.*

162. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 8; Secretary for the Department of Bantu Administration and Development-Town Clerk, 8 January 1959.

163. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 8; minutes of a meeting between the City Council Transport Sub-Committee and the City Council, 13 November 1958.

164. *Ibid.*

165. *Daily News*, 28 November 1958.

166. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 8; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 5 May 1959.

167. *Ibid.*, minutes of a meeting between the City Council Transport Sub-Committee and the City Council, 13 November 1958.

The City Council was compelled to negotiate for the provision of bus transport to and from Kwa Mashu. However the City Council neither desired that the existing small-scale Indian-owned bus companies operating between the Inanda Mission Reserve and the city be allowed to extend their operations, nor considered the provision of a municipal bus system to the area.¹⁶⁸ Thus the Public Utility Bus Transport Company (PUTCO) was contracted to provide the required transport system. PUTCO was however not permitted to operate a bus service inside Kwa Mashu, and would only be permitted to transport passengers on routes not already covered by the municipal transport system.¹⁶⁹ Bourquin remarks:

Agreement was reached that PUTCO not try to get the additional services such as Lamont and Chesterville and even Clermont which had already been developed by the municipal Transport Department. ... and they were also restricted as to the bus route which they must follow. For instance it was expected of them to bring their Kwa Mashu passengers to the Central Bus Rank in Victoria Street. PUTCO was not allowed to provide a through service to the Mobeni industrial area. So people would have to change their buses at Victoria Street; into municipal buses and then carry on. Now this of course added to the costs of transportation because there were two services involved.¹⁷⁰

The only exception to this rule, was that PUTCO was permitted to transport African tog labour, who had been resettled in the Kwa Mashu hostels from the Point Road barracks¹⁷¹ directly through the city to the harbour area.¹⁷²

South African Railways refused to consider subsidizing the costs of transport from the commencement of settlement in Kwa Mashu.¹⁷³ South African Railways maintained that until daily demand for rail transport exceeded 16,000 passengers on the Kwa Mashu route, passengers would have to pay economic fares. These charges were £1.2.0. for a monthly return ticket between Kwa Mashu and the city stations.¹⁷⁴ The fare charged by PUTCO was 9 pence per single return journey and £1.9.0 per monthly return ticket.¹⁷⁵ In addition, Africans living in Kwa Mashu but employed to the south of the city would have to pay for further transport from central bus and rail termini to their places of work. It was estimated that for those Africans resettled in Kwa Mashu, transport costs would be 70% higher than the costs of transport between Cato Manor Farm and the city centre and industrial areas.¹⁷⁶

168. *Ibid.*

169. *Ibid.*

170. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 9 September 1980.

171. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 10 November 1980.

172. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 9 September 1980.

173. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; minutes of a meeting between the City Council and the South African Railways, 30 October 1953.

174. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 13 May 1954 and vol 8; Minutes of a meeting between the City Council Transport Sub-Committee and the City Council, 13 November 1958.

175. MNAD;H/Gea, vol 2; Comparative Costs of Native Housing, undated.

176. *Ibid.*

The City Council had initially envisaged the construction of one secondary and four primary schools in each of the family Neighbourhood Units.¹⁷⁷ However, as the Kwa Mashu scheme progressed the City Council declined to erect these schools, preferring to concentrate on the building of houses. The City Council also requested that the government permit a reduction in the number of schools and reduce the land area of each school in order to hasten the development of housing and achieve a higher population density in the area.¹⁷⁸ Bourquin explains:

One of our main difficulties was to secure sufficient annual capital funds for our own projects. While there was a shortage in capital, it was out of the question to consider the provision of schemes other than those falling into our own immediate sphere of activity. If there were sufficient funds to meet all our own requirements, consideration could be given to the erection of schools.¹⁷⁹

However, in accordance with the National Party's formulation of a Union-wide "Bantu Education" system, the Department of Native Affairs revised the City Council's plans for schools in Kwa Mashu. The areas intended for schools were enlarged, while the capital costs of building schools were included in the overall development programme.¹⁸⁰ To assist in the financing of schools, African tenants would pay an additional school levy of two shillings per month per family over and above the costs of housing. This levy would be included in the site rental and housing bill.¹⁸¹ These proposals were resisted, unsuccessfully by the City and Water Engineer. The City and Water Engineer explained municipal objections:

The effect of this is to make the provision of schools (in Kwa Mashu) equal to that for any other race [sic]. In fact, since the Government requires that the loans for constructing each Neighbourhood Unit must include the costs of the schools, the Native community will be better served in this respect than other races.¹⁸²

Municipal plans for other residential facilities were as paltry as their schooling policy. The basic concerns of municipal policy were to reduce financial costs, to localize each residential area, and to prevent the reappearance of those informal trading and redistributive bonds which had characterized shack life. Traders in the township would require access to capital resources beyond the means of the majority of tenants. A community centre, around which numerous trading premises were situated, was built in a central locale in each of the eight Neighbourhood Units developed as single-site, single-tenant housing. No trading, either from houses, in open air or on other unlicensed premises, would be permitted.¹⁸³ Municipal outlets for the sale of

177. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 1; Manager, MNAD-Department of Education, 28 April 1953.

178. *Ibid.*, City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 12 January 1953.

179. *Ibid.*

180. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 2; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 27 February 1956.

181. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 2; Housing at Kwa Mashu, undated.

182. MNAD;H2/KM , vol 2; City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 27 February 1956.

183. *Ibid.*, vol 6; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 14 February 1958.

sorghum beer would be provided at each community centre. No home-brew permits would be issued.¹⁸⁴ Sites would be made available for registered church groups,¹⁸⁵ welfare organizations,¹⁸⁶ professional persons, the South African Police and the Department of Justice.¹⁸⁷ The township was to have no brewery, bakery, bank, abattoir, Fire Station, or independent African building contractors.¹⁸⁸ The postal facilities which existed at the Duff's Road railway station were considered adequate.¹⁸⁹ Despite various negotiations over the building of a hospital on land adjoining the township, the only health facility which would eventually be provided was a small polyclinic, comprising a pre- and post-natal clinic and a small outpatients facility. The nearest hospital was King Edward VIII Hospital to the south of the city.¹⁹⁰

Conclusion

By 1954 the municipality, major local employers and the government had reached a basic consensus over the particular African labour needs of the city and the manner in which the new pass laws and labour bureau system should be structured and operated. However, a similar agreement was for long to elude the various parties when they came to discuss the question of African housing. In agreeing to policies which would ensure employers adequate supplies of both permanently urbanized workers and a continued but regulated supply of migrant labour, there were very few who believed that shack settlements would not have to be destroyed. The shantytowns which grew during the later 1940s constituted a considerable threat to existing power structures in the city.

By around 1950, concerns long expressed by both municipal officials and many employers over the municipality's inability to control the Cato Manor Farm shantytowns, the appalling health and sanitation conditions in the shack settlement, and the politically explosive character of the area, were becoming more pronounced. The killings, pillaging and burning of property which occurred during the January 1949 Riots, and the typhoid epidemic which swept through the shacklands in the summer of 1950 were final confirmation that the problems of shantytown growth would have to be urgently addressed. In 1950, the Durban Chamber of Commerce noted, somewhat contritely, that as a result of the 1949 Riots the Chamber accepted that 'as leaders'

184. *Ibid.*, vol 5; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 25 November 1957.

185. SAIRR, Natal Region; File Townships:Kwa Mashu, notes of a talk given by the Manager, MNAD, on the 15 September 1959.

186. MNAD; H2/KM, vol 4; District Representative, Department of Public Works-Manager, MNAD, 15 June 1957.

187. *Ibid.*, vol 6; Manager, MNAD-City and Water Engineer, 14 February 1958.

188. *Ibid.* Secretary for Native Affairs-Town Clerk, 10 March 1958 and Manager, MNAD-City and Water Engineer, 14 February 1958.

189. *Ibid.*, vol 8; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 11 April 1959.

190. Interview with Dr C Nupen, 7 July 1980.

they had failed to fully confront problems of housing, transport and civic amenities for urban Africans.¹⁹¹ Such comments were common in the municipality.¹⁹² However, whilst these motives became marshalled together in a way which revealed a new determination to finally resolve the housing issue, they were to be subsumed beneath the attempts by the municipality and major industrial and commercial concerns to both boost economic development in the city and transform the African proletariats' role in the urban labour process. When concerns over shantytowns are expressed in a manner which relates such concerns to the need to provide new housing, the spatial and financial implications of such housing require that such proposals be directly integrated into policies designed to increase the level of capital accumulation in the city.

Shantytowns undermined both attempts to create conditions whereby a section of the African proletariat could be stabilized as a permanently urbanized working class, and efforts to control African entry into the city. While negotiations over the African role in the urban economy and over influx control and labour bureaus proceeded, the problems presented by the shantytowns became increasingly apparent. As early as 1947 the Natal Employers Association asserted that it would be impossible to either partially do away with migrant labour or increase economic growth "until we have proper townships"¹⁹³

The attitudes of both municipal officials and major employers towards shantytowns reflected many concerns: such areas were inadequately provided with basic infrastructural amenities, were in various ways unregulated by either municipal or police power, and/or exerted a detrimental effect on labour productivity. Shantytowns provided for a residential life that in key ways prevented a process of differentiation from developing among the African proletariat. Residents seemed also able to avoid the rigours of total subjection to full, permanent, wage employment. Shantytown societies like that of Mkhumbane were based on complex communal shack ownership, tenancy and even domestic household structures, and comprised a myriad of ever-changing dwellings within chaotic road and pathway networks. Such a social structure is able to reduce the efficacy of any municipal attempt to assert control, alleviate health conditions or prevent further squatting. It also provides the police with a prohibitively difficult task. Such societies are also inimical to the interests of employers who desire to institutionalize the process of class differentiation within the urban proletariat.

In Durban from the late 1940s there was clearly a level of differentiation within the African labour force evident both at the 'factory floor' level and reflected in differences between hostel and formal family residential areas, but no such differentiation was evident in particular shantytown communities. As various municipal officials noted, Mkhumbane contained "a cross-section of the population: layabouts, the won't works, sotsis, criminals",¹⁹⁴ with "a labourer living next to a lawyer next to a policeman next to a parson,"¹⁹⁵ and

191. Durban Chamber of Commerce, Annual Report, 1948-1949.

192. Mayors Minute, 1949-1950.

193. Broome Commission, Evidence of the Natal Employers Association.

194. Interview with Mr D McCulloch, 12 April 1981.

195. Interview with Mr S B Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

"everybody just hunking down in one big happy family".¹⁹⁶ As Havemann commented, the mere relocation of shacks would serve little purpose: "the sheer removal of the same people to another place can hardly change their character".¹⁹⁷

All parties were in basic accord over certain general principles which related to the question of housing: the need to improve the quality of housing available for Africans legally resident in Durban, whether as permanent urban residents or as migrants, the need to provide better transport, health, education and recreational facilities for Africans, and the need to both destroy existing shack settlements and to control further shantytown growth. Nevertheless, the manner in which the direct and indirect implications of particular housing plans clashed with the interests of representatives of local industrial and manufacturing capital, the municipality and the government served to make negotiation time consuming, complex and acrimonious.

It was to prove difficult to both effect relocation and change the essential characteristics of urban residential life in the Cato Manor Farm shantytowns. The government, municipality and organizations representing major industrial and commercial interests could discuss ways in which new influx control and labour bureau mechanism would operate and try to regulate their operation. Such a flexibility could not sustain itself when matters of housing facilities were discussed. The provision of housing involves a far much more rigid set of criteria based on particular spatial and housing plans.

Such plans incorporate certain implications, which, when such plans are accepted, effectively constrain any consenting party from making any major or substantial alterations. The history of the development of Kwa Mashu involved drawn-out, often acrimonious discussions over particular spatial and residential plans. The main areas of controversy and difficulty concerned the spatial location of the housing scheme, the types of residential facilities to be built, who was to build such facilities, the development costs, the financial liability of various parties, the relationship between such costs, African urban labour and wages, and the political status of such a township.

By the end of 1953, the only outcome of these negotiations was that the municipality had been given the authority to either purchase or expropriate land for what became known as the Cato Manor Emergency Camp. The Camp, situated in the Mkhumbane area, was from the outset intended only as a short-term means of controlling the African shantytown population living in the most densely populated shack area of Cato Manor Farm. Under the scheme, which was to continue operating up until 1964, certain basic road, water, drainage and street-lighting projects were initiated by the municipality, which also built a beerhall and a series of trading premises to be let to African entrepreneurs. The municipality also tried to control rackrenting, encourage individual ownership of shacks and introduce single-site, single-family residence, with occupants paying the municipality rent for the land and then building shacks according to various basic plans already designed and approved by the municipality. An advisory body, the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board, was

196. Interview with Mr R G Willson, 23 January 1980.

197. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1, Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 14 July 1949.

formed to be the sole body whereby residents could elect leaders to represent them in discussions with the municipality.

By 1958, after more than a decade of continual and often stormy negotiation, the municipality was finally in a position to begin the process of destroying the Mkhumbane shacklands and relocating some of these shantytown inhabitants to newly built houses and single male hostels in the ever expanding Kwa Mashu township. Located on an extensive tract of land on the Richmond and Zeekoe Vallei Farms and approximately twenty kilometres north of the centre of Durban, Kwa Mashu was seen as being one of the two "labour lungs" of Durban¹⁹⁸. The second such "lung" was the development, by the government, from the early 1960s, of the massive Umlazi township situated on the Umlazi Mission Reserve, which lay approximately ten kilometres to the south of the city. Kwa Mashu and Umlazi, both of which were deliberately located either on or adjoining land under the authority of the South African Native Trust, would be the main residential areas for Durban's African labour force, both permanently urbanized and migrant.

State intervention in the African housing market did manage to alleviate and indeed counteract some of the immediate problems raised by the rampant growth of shantytowns in South African cities during the 1940s. Furthermore, state officials may well have believed that they had, as they so often maintained, "solved" the urban African housing "problem".¹⁹⁹ Such language was common in municipal and government circles. Durban municipal officials have often stressed that the building and settlement of Kwa Mashu was their "greatest victory".²⁰⁰

The townships and hostels built during the late 1950s and 1960s might have refashioned key aspects of the lives of the proletariat and altered relations between capital, the state and African labour. But the housing programmes merely recast, and in many cases exacerbated, contradictions in a fundamentally class-based society. The contradictions inherent in the very building of Kwa Mashu were to alter significantly the overall nature of the scheme, cause lengthy delays in the building programme, result in the eventual provision of unsatisfactory and inadequate facilities, and provide a source of renewed tension between township residents, local employers, the municipality and the government.

198. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1986.

199. Wilkinson, "Adequate Shelter", p 10.

200. All new employers of the now defunct Port Natal Administration Board were shown a slide and tape presentation of the building of Kwa Mashu as part of their induction training.

PART THREE

MKHUMBANE, THE 'HOTTEST PLACE IN DURBAN'? STRUCTURES OF DAILY LIFE, CLASS,

LEADERSHIP AND POLITICS IN MKHUMBANE 1949-1961

Introduction

The land occupied by Africans in Cato Manor Farm was contested space in which various parties claimed authority. Apart from the area being Indian-owned and within the municipal boundaries, it was also an area which became ever more central within the state's plans to allow the spatial and social features of Durban. It was within this very area African shack dwellers had created their own society. Whilst this shackland society was not to conform to the 'social order of state hegemony', as Cooper writes about shack settlements in general, shantytowns like Mkhumbane were, as Cooper maintains 'rarely as anarchic as the terms used to describe them suggest - 'irregular', 'spontaneous', 'illegal' ...'¹

A central characteristic of shantytown life in the Mkhumbane area during the 1950s was the way in which certain structures of everyday life acquired a virtual immutability. At this level the routines of daily life seemed to be perpetuated in an unchanging fashion. In describing these routines Bourquin commented that 'you could walk around the shacks in the day and things were very normal. Just the constant hum of flies and music.'² However other aspects of shack life were susceptible to change. Colin Shum remembers,

There was those moments when you could just sense that things were not right. On the surface of everything was OK, but there was an edge to peoples' voices. Later you would hear that so-and-so had been killed, or someone's shack burnt down and that people had become edgy. It was then that things could easily turn nasty. For everyone, I must say, not just me.³

Such changes could occur either dramatically or in a less obvious fashion over a longer time span. Often such changes would neither be initiated nor controlled by shack residents themselves. Whilst the shack residents had in many ways created their own social structures, society was often unstable. Daily routines could easily be disrupted.

Such tensions produced a social fabric in which the shantytown residents were faced with particular forces which both compelled continuity and initiated change. The shebeen queen, the tsotsi, the shacklords and the ordinary worker all have their own history: periods of crisis and stability, and differing life experiences. However none of the residents of the shacklands could remain completely autonomous or removed from the constraints which shantytown life imposed on them.

As a result of their material impoverishment and their life in an area still very much a contested terrain, shack dwellers sought to maintain a regularity in their daily existence. Daily life became dominated by routine practices. If, as Braudel has written in a different context, people 'usually remained within the limits of the possible, it was because [their] feet were sunk in this clay.'⁴

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1. Cooper, *Struggle*, p 32.
 2. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.
 3. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.
 4. F Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800*. (London, 1974), p ix.

After the riots, residents' discussions about their future in Mkhumbane always involved some consideration of the role which the municipality might play. With the development of the Emergency Camp, residents would still discuss their ability to achieve certain strategic gains through either negotiating or aligning with the municipality. Nevertheless, attempts to accomplish these aims were to occur in a completely different context: the increasingly poor conditions in an Emergency Camp where there was no prospect of ensuring permanent African ownership of the land and housing of Mkhumbane.

For long the lives of shackland residents had been dominated by the desire to sustain their livelihood in the city, ensure to the permanence of their residence in Mkhumbane and exert a decisive influence over the very nature of shackland society. Rooted in the very nature of shack life was a political culture: the struggle to reduce or control the adverse effects of proletarianization. Sustained within the context of a broader proletarian populism, throughout the later 1940s shack residents attempted to gain increasing material and political security both within Mkhumbane and the city.

From the riots of January 1949, shack residents' struggles to achieve these goals was to be made substantially more complex. Already ridden with internal contradictions, during the 1950s various features of both shantytown life and the relationship between the shacklands and the city in general changed in important ways. Many elements of material life remained immutable. Aspects of daily life had acquired a changed in ways which affected various residents in very different and often highly contradictory ways.

For shack residents, the riots of January 1949 were of the utmost significance. It was during these riots that shantytown residents believed they had liberated Mkhumbane. If the area had not been finally won, then their claim to own land and property in the area had surely been very forcefully made. However in addition to the fact that legal tenure to the land had not been changed, it was after the riots that the municipality became ever more determined to both control and ultimately destroy the shacklands.

With the development of the Cato Manor Emergency Camp the municipality assumed direct ownership of the land of Mkhumbane and endeavoured to restructure the basis of shack life. Focussing immediately on breaking the power of the African shacklords as the means to reconstitute the nature of tenancy within the shacks, the municipality initially desired to resettle all shack residents into single-site, single-tenant homes built according to specified standards. However the complexities of land ownership, shack ownership and tenancy arrangements in Mkhumbane constituted a considerable impediment to such policy. In many other ways municipal policy was however far easier to implement. For some, the development of the Emergency Camp led to an improvement in material conditions of shack life. A direct result of other municipal actions in the area led to a general deterioration of living standards in the Emergency Camp. From the late 1950s onwards the problems of population density, housing, health and sanitation in Mkhumbane were more serious than those evident in the Mkhumbane of the later 1940s.

There was also a far larger canvas to the changing relationship between Mkhumbane and the city. Although the residents of the area had always expressed the need for improved residential facilities, the vast majority opposed removal to single-site, single-tenant, nuclear-family and hostel residence Kwa Mashu. Likewise, throughout the 1950s, the changing nature of capital accumulation in the city and the nature of state

intervention in urban African life affected various residents of the shantytowns in different ways. Growing evidence of the pervasive influence which the state and shack residents' growing awareness of just how determined both state and capital were in assuming greater control over their lives led to varying responses from shack residents.

Coming alongside and steadily more intertwined with both municipal development of the Emergency Camp and broader moves by both the state and capital to transform African labour and residence in Durban came increasing indications of growing class consciousness amongst the shackland residents. Significantly, the first real indications of such developments came with the rise of African entrepreneurs and the development of the Emergency Camp.

The shantytown leaders of the late 1940s were mainly shacklords, shackshop traders, co-operative leaders, other small scale entrepreneurs and those 'bush lawyers' and 'nobodies' who gave intellectual substance to proletarian demands. Yet the very waning of populist fervour in the shantytowns was directly related to the very manner in which many such persons acquired increasing material wealth and sought legitimacy through municipal recognition of their leadership positions in Mkhumbane. Despite initial municipal attempts to control their power, many shacklords, who during and immediately after the riots of January 1949, had expanded their renting activities, kept unto themselves a substantial measure of power. Similarly, with the municipality allowing some African entrepreneurs to legalize their operations, many of the shackshop and co-operative leaders became prosperous business operators. In many ways the very fact of municipal authority in the area allowed such persons to gain that increased measure of control over some of the material resources essential to residential life in Mkhumbane that they had been unable to achieve during the later 1940s. Other shack residents both perceived and resented the growing wealth and political ambitions of what was clearly a new trading class.

However shack life had its own inherent internal contradictions. Against the social tensions within shack residents was balanced the residents' all too evident awareness of the need for community unity. The constant struggle to both create and ensure to the continued viability of a shackland community was often uppermost in peoples' minds. For this reason, residents could hardly ignore a leadership element, despite these persons' increasing distance from the ordinary shack dweller. In the same way, although during the 1950s many shack residents became involved in struggles over issues only tangentially related to residential life, the very nature of an insecure domestic and residential environment made the need for a community unit all the more pressing.

There were however deeper more fundamental reasons for the emergence of increasing class conflict within the shacklands. The shantytown population was a heterogeneous one within which a sense of populist unity was an attempt to bind people together in a sense of community unity. Populism also gave a meaning to the material inter-connections which developed through the shantytowns' own internal productive and redistributive economic structures. But as many recalled, by around 1949, the 'fertilizer' which sustained such an economic structure had gone. As wages were further reduced during the 1950s and with the increasing influence which the new African trading class gained within the shacklands, the struggle to make ends meet

produced increasing signs of class conflict within Mkhumbane. Along with a process of accelerating social differentiation occurring between hostel and township residents came social differentiation within Mkhumbane. This was a process which was particularly skewed in Mkhumbane. As the 1950s progressed it became apparent that by far the majority of men resident in the shantytowns and fully employed worked in various forms of unskilled labour. Further, the tensions between a need for community unity and social differentiation was compounded by the growing numbers of unemployed, youths and other dependents resident in the shacklands.

Through both characteristics of local capitalist production and the very commonality of daily experience in the shacklands, there was a sense of proletarian identity, which whilst opposed to the position of the new shantytown elite, nevertheless made little distinctions within the proletariat. However by mid-1950s from within the shacklands came increasing indications of a new working class consciousness. In many ways taking advantage of some of the improved facilities provided by various outside institutions or organizations, and often with the working class often now living as municipal tenants, this new working class identity was based around the increasingly more difficult struggle to secure a livelihood within the city. Accepting the notion of industrial labour, upholding concepts of sobriety, decency and normality often heavily fostered by women, an African working class began to develop a broader range of strategies to resist their exploitation. Many saw in industrial unionism the key to their future power within the city.

But the level of politicization amongst many ordinary residents of Mkhumbane was still low. The constraints of daily life and the nature of African labour within the city made for many ambivalences within all aspects of proletarian consciousness. Through changes within the shantytowns and between the shantytown and the city, the heady days of the later 1940s were long since gone. Further, the growth of organized trade unionism under SACTU was slow. Organizationally SACTU was often weak while many of this organization's strategies failed to correctly reflect the attitudes of a working class resident in Mkhumbane. This was to change in dramatic ways, but only after the removals to Kwa Mashu.

One of the central themes in the historiography of the ANC during the 1950s concerns the issue of why this organization was so unable to gain increased support among urban Africans during a period when conditions seemed to be so opportune.⁵ During this period Africans faced increasing material hardships and their workplace and residential lives were being restructured in ways more dramatic than in any other period in the history of industrial capital in South Africa. Furthermore neither the state nor employers indicated any real eagerness to seek, let alone gain, any legitimacy for established authority within this very African population.

Yet in many ways the question can be considered falsely posed, suggesting that the very aims and strategies of a well developed organization should have gained adherence within the African proletariat. Throughout the 1950s, the ANC was beset with financial and administrative problems. The reasons for the organization's failure to establish a powerful support base among the proletariat in the shacklands of Mkhumbane prior to the June 1959 beerhall riots are however more complex. The constraints of daily life in the

5. For similar analysis see Lodge *Politics*.

shacklands were such that shackland political consciousness was often both ill-developed or introverted. For various reasons many shackdwellers objected to various aspects of ANC policy or organizational structure.

African political activity within shantytown and city was to be dramatically altered with the outbreak of sustained rioting during and after the June 1959 beerhall riots in Mkhumbane. The riots were partly led by the ANC, but in the main initiated by the underclasses - illicit entrepreneurs and women for whom municipal shack demolition and removals posed an absolute threat to continued city residence. Conditions of daily life within the shantytowns and years of frustration, arising from the failure to secure permanent residence in Mkhumbane, had moulded a particular characteristic within shack life. As with the later 1940s, the January 1949 Riots, during the later 1950s, shack residents attempted to assert their desire to remain in the area through the long resorted to strategy of the violent overthrowing of established authority. In January 1949 Indian landowners had borne the brunt of such tactics. In 1959 and 1960 shack residents saw their chance to fulfill a long held desire: the overturning of established power in the city.

The possibility and then the eventuality of the destruction of shantytown life and relocation to Kwa Mashu threatened the very social fabric of Mkhumbane. It was during these removals that the people of Mkhumbane realized how fundamentally the state and capital were intending to refashion urban African life. The very direct threats which removal posed to the domestic fabric of urban African life produced tragic personal consequences. Yet it was through the very way in which the destruction of shack life and forced resettlement to Kwa Mashu made the very nature of a shack life which the residents of Mkhumbane had struggled so much to create so vulnerable that politicization occurred. From the crisis over daily life and concern over their future in the city came a shantytown rebellion. This was a rebellion which both gave considerable momentum to and itself drew from an albeit short-lived revolt which spread throughout the city. It was during this revolt that the ANC and SACTU gained that large and loyal support base which they had sought for so long. Within this revolt the people of Mkhumbane played a dominant role. By this time however most were already living in a township. For the people of Mkhumbane, the roots of their support for the ANC lies not in the years of Mkhumbane, but in the destruction of Mkhumbane and the early years of life in Kwa Mashu: that period immediately prior to and then the years after the ANC was banned.

CHAPTER 8

THE BREAKING OF POPULIST UNITY : THE NEW ENTREPRENEUR AND SHACK SOCIETY AFTER THE 'BATTLE OF CATO MANOR'

Shack Society After the Pogrom of January 1949

By the early 1950s, the Mkhumbane shack dwellers became increasingly aware that as a result of the widespread African political activity of the later 1940s and, particularly, the January 1949 Riots, their own power had become highlighted and thus subject to increased criticism from White and Indian city residents, employers, the municipality and the government. Furthermore, as a direct result of their own actions during this period, day-to-day life in the shantytowns had become seemingly caught in a vortex of change. At the very least, daily shantytown life during the early 1950s was subject to processes which threatened the close communal bonds which existed within shantytown society during the later 1940s.

After the January 1949 Riots Africans living in other parts of the city flocked into Mkhumbane which throughout 1949 continued to absorb more and more people.¹ Mr Gumede, who was born in the Piet Retief district, came with his parents to Durban "at the time of the Indian African war" and settled in Mkhumbane.² Mr Moeli, originally from the Johannesburg region had settled with his family in the Candella area of Durban in the 1940s. When the January 1949 Riots broke out, Moeli "ran to Mkhumbane."³ Soon after the Riots of January 1949, municipal inspectors reported that a further 302 new shacks had been erected in the Mkhumbane area.⁴ Municipal inspectors also reported that Africans living in the area were stockpiling supplies of "second hand corrugated iron" for use in building new shack accommodation.⁵

As a result of the flight or death of Indian residents, African shacklords assumed greater control in the area, either leasing out vacant land to "immigrants", taking over Indian-owned shacks or themselves erecting shacks on vacant land. Mr J J Shabalala, himself a rackrenter, recalls that "after the wars it was easy because now you could take the land much more easily. The Indians had gone. So you build the houses and give them [sic] out to all the people."⁶ Mr Shange, who operated a herbalist business in the city, had originally lived in

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1. This movement of people into Mkhumbane did not however lead to any boycott or municipal accommodation as occurred in the Johannesburg region in this same period. See Stadler "Birds in the Cornfields" in Bozzoli, *Townships*.
 2. KCAV; interview with Mr N Gumede, 3 July 1979.
 3. KCAV; interview with Mr J Moeli, 3 April 1979.
 4. MNAD;H 2/CM, vol 1; Chief Superintendent-Manager, MNAD, 2 March 1950.
 5. MNAD,H18/CM, vol 1; handwritten notes by municipal inspector and Chief Medical Officer of Health-Manager, MNAD, 2 March 1950.
 6. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 27 November 1986.

Mkhumbane but then, in the later 1940s, moved to Somtseu Road Location. In the early 1950s, Shange moved back into Mkhumbane, setting up his herbalist business and becoming a rackrenter owning a "twelve roomed house."⁷ Residents of Mkhumbane recall that with the exit of Indians, the African "landlords" became more assertive of the shacklands: "the landlord was king."⁸ The majority of these shacklords already owned substantial amounts of shack accommodation in the Mkhumbane area.

In December 1952 municipal inspectors estimated that 75% of African residents in the Mkhumbane area owned no housing in the area. Of those who did own shack property in the shantytowns, only 22% both owned a single shack and lived on these premises. Approximately half the accommodation in the area was owned by Africans who, whilst living in the area, owned more than one shack. Just over 20% of the shacks were owned by Africans living either in other areas of the city or outside Durban. Only 7% of the shacks appeared to be owned by Indians, although municipal officials acknowledged that many apparently African-owned shacks could in fact belong to Indians.⁹

Many of the African shacklords owned significant numbers of shacks and were totally reliant on the incomes derived from rackrenting. Residents estimated that shack owners like Esau le Fleur, the 'mayor' of Mkhumbane, and people like A W G Champion, then residing in Chesterville, collected as much as £30 a month from shackrenting.¹⁰ John Hlope recalls that his father, a rackrenter, "did not work. He was working for himself."¹¹ In 1952 municipal officials estimated that it was conceivable that nearly 20% of the population of the Mkhumbane area "were dependent only on income from rents."¹²

The growing power and wealth of established African shacklords resulted in increasing conflict between shack owners and tenants. The basis for this tension lay in the cost of accommodation and the manner in which the increasing amount of accommodation owned by existing shack owners made it very difficult for other residents to "invest" in shack property.¹³

For the majority of the fully or casually employed residents of the Mkhumbane area, shack ownership was a prized commodity having a dual function. The ownership of a few shacks allowed people to profit from renting accommodation and thus avoid the immiseration which came with full wage employment. These profits

7. KCAV; interview with Mr J Shange, 24 June 1979.

8. Interviews with Mr M Mcanyana, 19 May 1985, Mr T Phewa, 23 June 1985 and Mr J J Shabalala, 29 November 1986. It is interesting that many informants refer to African rackrenters as "landlords", thereby alluding to the seeming authority of shacklords under conditions where the legal powers of both Indian landowners and the municipality appeared to have lapsed.

9. Shum Papers; C N Shum "Survey of Shack Families: Incomes and Other Considerations", 2 February 1953.

10. Interview with Mr M Mcanyana, 19 May 1985.

11. Interview with Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1985.

12. Shum Papers; C N Shum, "Survey of Shack Families: Incomes and Other Considerations", 2 February 1953.

13. Interview with Mr M Mcanyana, 19 May 1985.

could act as both a reserve source of money and, through the capitalisation of profits, allow such persons to avoid the rigours of full wage employment. However, for many residents having few material resources, the main desire was to own shack accommodation. Such ownership was a central issue amongst the urban proletariat constantly struggling for both permanent legal urban residence and the right to own both land and housing in the city. In the same way as the already permanently urbanized Indian working class was eager to own land in Durban, so, too for the African shack dwellers, ownership of a shack dwelling allowed residents to both sustain permanent urban residence and invest their savings. This investment could either be handed on to heirs, thereby allowing dependents a future city life, or owners could profit from the sale of such buildings.

During the later 1940s, many families had grouped together and paid for the construction of one shack. When finances permitted the shack would be taken over by one family while the other family moved into a shack financed by all involved in the initial venture. With the high costs of shack building when compared to the wages earned by African workers, many residents would use money gained through stockvels to acquire property.¹⁴

The desire to own shack property was continually balanced against the availability of sites, the cost of building materials and the estimated future security of any particular shack area.¹⁵ Despite the increasing prices of shack material, with the 'liberation' of Mkhumbane during the 1949 Riots, many residents attempted to acquire their own shacks. By and large, such attempts were to be blocked by the already wealthy African shacklords. Residents recall with bitterness the way in which 'Champion came in and told us that we must build our own places and forget about the Indians. That was when Champion, who already had lots of houses, ... he puts lots of houses up himself.'¹⁶ Other recollections express a more generalized set of resentments. Charles Khumalo recalls the period immediately after the 1949 Riots: 'if you were wanting a place of your own, then you must go somewhere else. Not in Mkhumbane. There you had to rent from the mayor.'¹⁷

Throughout the later 1940s, the land and housing rents charged by Indian shacklords had been slightly lower than those shack rents charged by African shacklords.¹⁸ Furthermore, during the early 1950s, as the power of Indians waned against the authority of African shacklords and then, later, the municipality, Indian shackowners were often prepared to accept even less rent for accommodation.¹⁹ Against this trend, during the early 1950s, African shacklords, taking advantage of the shortage of officially sanctioned African urban housing and the popularity of Mkhumbane, increased the rentals which they charged for accommodation in these

14. Interviews with Messrs C Khumalo and T Phewa, 21 April 1985.

15. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutho, 19 April 1985.

16. Interview with Mr T Ndlovu, 14 January 1986.

17. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.

18. MNAD: H 2/CM vol 4: Supervisor Shack Areas- Manager, MNAD, 2 February 1953 and Acting Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk and City Treasurer, 4 March 1953.

19. See interviews with Mr B Minqadi, 29 October 1985, Mr J Mnguni, 20 July 1985 and personal communication, Mr C N Shum.

shacklands. While small rooms could be rented for as little as 5 shillings a month, other larger rooms in more favoured locales could cost as much as £1.5s, £2 or more a month.²⁰ In 1952 the municipality estimated that the average monthly rental for shack accommodation in the Mkhumbane area was £1.3s. In 1952 the sub-economic rentals charged for a three-roomed house in Lamontville varied between 12 shillings and 6 pence and 17 shillings and 6 pence. Rentals in Chesterville were slightly higher.²¹ John Hlope, whose father was a rackrenter in the Cabazini area, explains the position:

My father had ten rooms at Cabazini. This area is near to the road, good buses, good water. ... Now if you want a house there you must pay. My father built those houses. If you want to live in the location then it is okay, otherwise you must pay.²²

Whilst there is evidence of some African shacklords charging increased rentals, the tension between shack owners and tenants was probably due largely to the increasing arrogance of shacklords rather than to any widespread rental increases.

Alongside the growing power of the established African shacklords came the increasing influence of African traders. In the months immediately after the Riots, many of the existing small-scale shackshop owners, members of running co-operative concerns, and other investors began to extend their trading operations in the Mkhumbane area. As M B Yengwa recalls, after the January 1949 Riots there was a "vacuum" created through the withdrawal of Indian, municipal and police presence.²³ It was thus "very easy for us Africans to start making money."²⁴ With such persons being accurately viewed as "hardheaded" and "ambitious", it was thus a relatively simple matter for African traders to expand their existing shackshops or move into those Indian shops not burnt during the Riots.²⁵

There was however conflict among those persons trying to establish "proper businesses."²⁶ Two groupings emerged as relative calm developed after the Riots. The first of these groupings, a seemingly informal alliance between certain African traders from other parts of the city and aspirant traders living in Mkhumbane, was called Zondizitha Buying Club. As the name implied, the group was fiercely anti-Indian and pro-apartheid in so far as it claimed the right of Africans to trade in those areas of the city set aside for African residence. By the end of 1952, the Zondizitha Buying Club had been "forced" to disband and members joined the Zulu Hlanganani Association.²⁷

20. Shum Papers; C N Shum "Survey of Shack Families: Incomes and Other Considerations", 2 February 1953.

21. *Ibid.*, and *Durban Housing Survey*, pp 328-332.

22. Interview with Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1985.

23. *University of York*, interview with Mr M B Yengwa, 23 November 1976.

24. Interview with Mr B Mqadi, 29 October 1986.

25. Interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.

26. Interview with Mr B Mqadi, 29 October 1986.

27. *Ibid.*, and Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p 300.

Upholding the very same policies as had the Zondizitha Buying Club, the Zulu Hlanganani, which had been formed immediately after the January 1949 Riots, was eventually to become popular and powerful in Mkhumbane. The main purpose of this grouping was to ensure that only Africans resident in the Mkhumbane area and belonging to the Zulu Hlanganani would be allowed to trade in the shantytowns. By 1952 it seems that most of the other co-operative ventures and unaligned shackshops had either closed down or had become part of the Zulu Hlanganani. The collapse of many of the co-operatives was almost certainly due to these co-operatives own organizational weaknesses, but the power of the Zulu Hlanganani certainly contributed both to the decline of co-operatives and the, albeit brief, monopolization of trading in the area by the Zulu Hlanganani. The leaders of this group were all established traders or wealthy residents living in the Mkhumbane area.²⁸ Of these people, the majority had been involved in the various co-operative societies which had developed in the Mkhumbane area during the later 1940s.

Whilst also calling itself the Zulu Hlanganani Buying and Co-operative Club, the grouping was in some important ways different from the earlier co-operatives. Stressing the need to ensure that as much money as possible circulated amongst African shantytown residents, their racism was, in common with the earlier co-operatives, firmly rooted in a desire to claim an exclusivity of trade over Indian entrepreneurs. However, the Zulu Hlanganani also assumed to prohibit Africans not resident in the shantytowns from trading in the Mkhumbane area and so to monopolize trading in the shantytown. Furthermore, whilst many of the co-operatives of the later 1940s had been an organizational basis for those Africans desiring to fundamentally restructure the nature of civil power in the city, the Zulu Hlanganani members focussed themselves solely on gaining influence within Mkhumbane. Furthermore, the grouping was never to sustain a single political perspective.

The Zulu Hlanganani had three main areas of operation. Firstly, their buying club allowed members to unite and purchase goods in bulk. Most of the members were traders. Secondly, the grouping also operated a set of roadside stalls located near the junction of Booth and Denis Shepstone roads. Most of these stalls were run by women selling only small quantities of fruit and vegetables. Thirdly, through the Zulu Hlanganani, various wealthy residents of the shantytowns invested in "shares" for the purchase of buses, the purchase of land and other costly and large scale financial ventures. The profits from these ventures, few of which succeeded or remained viable for long, would go to those who made financial investments. The Zulu Hlanganani was a combination of a wholesale agent, a licensing authority, and what Henry Sibisi calls the "Mkhumbane Chamber of Commerce": an association of self-employed business people.²⁹

Conflict between the African entrepreneurs continued. With "money ...just spinning like this", this conflict was not merely the simple outcome of various traders trying to expand their businesses.³⁰ The seizure

28. *Ibid.*, and interviews with Mrs A Afrika, 30 November 1986, Mr R Arenstein, 22 August 1988 and Mr J J Shabalala, 29 November 1986.

29. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutho, 19 April 1985.

30. Interview with Mr J Mnguni, 20 July 1986.

of Indian stores and the proliferation of African-owned trading ventures throughout the shantytown area, with some areas having over two hundred shops by the early 1950s, produced both absolute competition and an increasingly evident differentiation between various traders.³¹ All traders, as Bryant Mqadi recalls, started off having "to rob Peter to pay Paul"; but then, with the Indians "getting out, there were many places where the clever Africans started making real money."³² Bryant Mqadi included.

Expanding their operations and gaining increasing profits, African traders were aware of the need to justify their actions and to be assisting other residents of the area. Many of the names of the shops, co-operatives and investment groupings evoked the images of the proletarian populism so popular during the later 1940s: Zakheni Ma-Afrika bus company, Phaphemeni Ma-Afrika Ltd, Thandanani Ma-Afrika.³³ Wealthy residents would announce that their schemes were intended to "help the Africans of Mkhumbane develop so that we could all live well."³⁴ In August 1949, Mr Rasube, then a trader in Mkhumbane, called a meeting to which all those who wished to invest money in starting a bus company were invited. But not only wealthy could come. Mr Rasube desired to take up the common grievance against shineyane prosecutions and thus all in the Kwa Banki area were invited.³⁵

By the early 1950s, the trading class had become so entrenched and wealthy in the shantytown area that some began to criticize the established traders for forgetting the interests of the ordinary residents.³⁶ One commentator remarked that whilst many were struggling to secure permanent residence in Mkhumbane, the leaders of the Zulu Hlanganani were noticeably quiet about such issues.³⁷ Probably as a direct result of such comments, in 1952, the Zulu Hlanganani held the first of many Mkhumbane "Xmas Tree" celebrations in the open ground near the Cabazini shack sprawl. Held on 14 January, the anniversary of the outbreak of the January 1949 Riots, leading traders would provide a feast for all residents. Along with the slaughtering of beasts and the flowing of liquor came various speeches which paid homage to those Africans who had died in the January 1949 Riots, because "it was through their sacrifice that we are where we are today."³⁸ At the first of these celebrations, at which "orderlies" of the Shembe Church officiated, the 'mayor' of Mkhumbane, Esau Makathini, himself a Zionist, exhorted the 6,500 people present to "remember the bad old days."³⁹ Through such ceremonies the meaning of the words such as "where we are today" remained suitably ambiguous.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Interview with Mr B Mqadi, 29 October 1986.

33. University of York; interview with Mr M B Yengwa, 23 November 1976.

34. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.

35. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 13 August 1949.

36. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.

37. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 17 March 1951.

38. KCAV; interview with Mr C C Majola, 20 June 1979.

39. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 1 March 1952 and 21 February 1953.

Even prior to the development of the Emergency Camp, the influence of this rackrenting and trading class was given further authority through municipal officials recognizing such persons as local leaders. The militant leaders of the shack movements and the shackshop dealers of the later 1940s gained increasing legitimacy from that quarter which had for so long been hostile to shack residents' power. In 1951, Colin Shum, then Supervisor Shack Areas, encouraged the formation of the 'Nogondayo'.⁴⁰ This body comprised a group of "leaders", all of whom were traders, shacklords or entrepreneurs. As the name implies, the function of this body was to seek ways in which African residence in the Mkhumbane area could be secured, and conflicts between Indian landowners, African shacklords and other African shantytown residents could be reduced.⁴¹

Members of the Nogandayo expressed the views of the vast majority of African shack dwellers. The Nogandayo affirmed the right of Africans to live permanently in Mkhumbane. However the basis upon which the Nogandayo affirmed this principle was ambiguous. The members of the Nogandayo were acquiring power by virtue of a municipal authority whose influence in the area was by no means popularly accepted. Ultimately, through the Nogandayo, leading entrepreneurs of Mkhumbane sought to stabilize shack society in a way which allowed such entrepreneurs to gain increased power in the shantytowns. However, it was the increasing power of such entrepreneurs which had partly caused the instability of Mkhumbane society.

It is significant that with the increasing wealth and power of the shacklord and trading class, residents recall that "the fertilizer ran out."⁴² This term, common amongst residents, in part referred to the way in which money, goods and services would constantly be redistributed amongst residents. Within the local shack economy, which residents referred to as "robbing Peter to pay Paul", it was necessary to ensure that money brought into the shantytowns by new residents - formal wages and the profits derived from enterprise - be continually recycled within the Mkhumbane area. Thomas Shabalala recalls the period after the January 1949 Riots:

It was right after the Indo-African war that the fertilizer ran out. There was nothing for us any longer. This was because of Zulu Hlanganani who had taken it all away. That was when our leaders went away with Kwa Muhle and left us.⁴³

40. For personal reasons, Mr Shum was reluctant to discuss this group other than to state that it was the forerunner of the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board, but that by the time this later body had been formed by the municipality "everyone knew that it was to be a place of temporary accommodation." Emphasis added.

41. KCAV; interview with Mr J Mnguni, 22 July 1980. See also interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 29 November 1986. The word Nogondayo appears to be a derivative attempt at conveying the demonstrative meanings of two other Zulu words. Firstly, the act of making one's dwelling permanent is conveyed through the imagery of hardening the hut floor surface using a hard and rounded stone or pebble. In other words, to entrench shack residence through employing the power of shack society. Secondly, the word evokes the images of straightening something out. This would clearly refer to the organization of shack society in a way which would allow the turbulence inherent in the relationship between shack dwellers and between the shantytowns and landowners and municipal power to be reduced.

42. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985.

43. *Ibid.*

In the Cato Manor Farm area the Riots of January 1949 were a pogrom. In these Riots, African residents of the Mkhumbane area attempted to assert their claim to permanent land rights in Durban. Also, with the Riots residents believed that they had finally achieved their desire to develop a localized trading economy that was based upon the circulation of money, goods and services dependent on both the money derived from residents and from those, mainly weekend, visitors who frequented a liberated area, allowing for the development of a proletarian culture. For the majority of shack residents, the irony behind the changes which occurred in the shacklands after the January 1949 Riots, was that with the, albeit partial, destruction of Indian control over the area, shack society had changed in ways which were diametrically opposed to the wishes of the majority of residents.

Further changes in shantytown life were, although substantially different in origin, just as important. A direct effect of this massive movement of people into Mkhumbane was that health and sanitation conditions in the area rapidly deteriorated. The serious shortage of toilet facilities became exacerbated: "there were so many holes already covered up that you had to search for a good place ... and the flies were all around."⁴⁴ The effects were first felt by young children and those new entrants to the city who were either already malnourished or elderly dependants and relatives of those already living in Mkhumbane: "the older people from the farms who had not become fit yet."⁴⁵ In the summer months of 1950-51, a typhoid epidemic swept through the Mkhumbane area with ninety-two African children dying of diarrhea in a particular twenty-four day period.⁴⁶ Health and welfare clinics, operated by both the municipality and private welfare organizations, were withdrawn during the 1949 riots and were not to be re-introduced until the development of the Emergency Camp.⁴⁷

In 1951, the municipality initiated a survey to gain an estimate of the number of Africans living in the shack settlements. Colin Shum, who controlled the operation, commented that his "job was to do a survey entirely unrelated to punitive action, (to ignore pass offences and shebeens etc), to get the confidence of the people, for the purposes of introducing control."⁴⁸ Personally Shum was respected amongst residents and thus managed to gain the "trust of those people amongst us who did not trust the White man". However, many residents rapidly viewed this survey as the first of many municipal attempts to exert municipal authority over the area.⁴⁹

The attitude of the police was apparently far less discreet. Immediately after the riots the police stepped up their patrols into Mkhumbane and their pass raiding throughout the city. In the first seven months

44. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1986.

45. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 19 May 1985 and KCAV; interview with Mr Z A Ngcobo, 13 September 1980.

46. Ilanga lase Natal, 17 February 1951.

47. Interview with Ms E Law, 2 April 1982.

48. Shum Papers; C N Shum, Personal Memorandum, 3 September 1960.

49. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.

after the riots a total of 3,166 Africans were deported from Durban.⁵⁰ The number of arrests for offences connected to the brewing and drinking of illegal liquor in Mkhumbane also increased.⁵¹ On the 16 December 1949 the police conducted what was apparently one of their first really big "Dingaan's Day" raids into Mkhumbane to "remind us who is boss."⁵² By November 1951, police activity in Mkhumbane had so infuriated residents that there was a near riot after police had attempted to arrest and handcuff a man accused of drinking shimeyane. Those who attempted to rescue the man were sjambokked and in the ensuing "scuffle" the accused was shot three times before the police retreated. On returning to recover the corpse, the police party sjambokked the grieving widow and, as a result, the White policeman in charge of the sortie, well known for his zealotry in conducting liquor raids, acquired the nickname of "Thekwane": Zulu for the hammerkop bird.⁵³

Despite African exhilaration at having "liberated" the area from forms of unwanted external authority, the land remained the legal property of the existing Indian owners or their heirs. Moreover, after a judicious absence, many Indian-owned shops again began operating in the Mkhumbane area.⁵⁴ Indian-owned bus services quickly resumed operations.⁵⁵ The return of Indians to the area not only provided clear evidence that African control of Mkhumbane was still tenuous, but also resulted in African traders and shacklords being faced with competition.

Continuing tension between African residents, wanting to ensure African control, and Indians in Mkhumbane eventually led to a renewed outbreak of rioting, looting and arson in September 1953. As with the January 1949 Riots, the incident which initiated the open conflict was hardly unusual. An African alighting from an Indian-owned bus in the Mkhumbane area fell and was killed when the rear wheels of the bus ran him over. Immediately Indian shops, houses, buses, and other property were burnt or looted by Africans, some in "well organized parties." Significantly, "most of the properties were targets for the incendiaries in the 1949 race riot and had been rebuilt."⁵⁶

However despite the increasing tension and violence of late 1953, Indian property-owners began to resume rent-collecting in the shantytowns. Charles Khumalo recalls that "in the beginning they came around in the middle of the day when everything was quiet. Just very quietly, with a long coat and hat and a little face with a big smile ... they would just say to your wife, 'I have come for my rent, never mind about the other rent [back rent]. Just pay from the beginning of the month.'⁵⁷ Soon however residents would see Indian landlords in

50. Ilanga lase Natal, 6 August 1949.

51. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.

52. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 3 June 1987.

53. Ilanga lase Natal, 17 November 1951.

54. MNAD: CM/Trading, vol 1; passim.

55. Ilanga lase Natal, 4 June 1949.

56. Daily News, 21 September 1953.

57. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 3 June 1987.

"meetings" with African shacklords and "we were made to understand that they were all back together again."⁵⁸ Racial barriers to class unity made for complex but not irresolvable conflict.

In the same way as African rackrenters were obliged to co-operate with Indian landowners, so, during the period immediately after the Riots, African entrepreneurs were never to be completely successful in controlling the growth of new shops, shebeens and other similar ventures. Albert Vilakazi, who lived in the Cabazini area offers his recollection:

My wife was brewing at the home and selling. Not a shebeen. So our man [shacklord] comes around and says 'No! No! You cannot let your wife do this. What about the police. Too much trouble' This was an excuse. We all knew his wife was having a shebeen. So we say 'No, you cannot do this, otherwise we cannot afford to stay here and we are good people.' 'OK, this can stay [pointing at the shimeyane] but I do not want to see you driving a car. I have not got a car.'⁵⁹

Whilst attempting to gain more power, shacklords and other entrepreneurs were also conscious of the need to maintain a certain equilibrium and stability in shantytown society.

There was however no equilibrium in shack society. With the growing power of an entrepreneur class, the basis of shack life was changing. However, these entrepreneurs, known by residents as "our first leaders", had not acquired full control over the area.⁶⁰ Mkhumbane was essentially a collection of smaller shack sprawls where power and authority was never fully established by anyone. There were few really effective structures in shack society that could reduce conflict in the shantytown area.

The only constraint against the increasing wealth of the entrepreneurs was through the proletariat living in the area evoking the moral benefits of the proletarian populism which had been widely accepted in the area during the later 1940s. The persuasiveness of this ideology became less and less powerful with the increasing class distinctions which were developing within the population.

During the early 1950s, the entrepreneurial class did not manage to gain complete control of the shack area nor quell the conflict between different leaders and traders. Immediately after the Riots of January 1949 leading residents of Mkhumbane were instrumental in establishing a civilian guard in Mkhumbane.⁶¹ Many residents welcomed the formation of this vigilante force, which became known as "our own Cato Manor SAP", as there were rumours that "the Indian army [was] forming to exact revenge".⁶² However, the purpose of this vigilante force was not merely to secure the shantytowns against outside aggressors. The vigilante force was a ragged collection of the various "impis" which already existed in the shantytowns. These forces were

58. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 12 May 1986.

59. Interview with Mr A Vilakazi, 19 August 1983.

60. Interview with Mrs D Nyembe, 8 July 1985.

61. KCAV; interview with Mrs E Africa, 25 September 1980.

62. KCAV; interview with Mrs A Mnguni, 25 September 1980. Very similar events had occurred in the Clermont freehold township during the later 1940s. See Edwards Sibisi, *passim*.

occasionally assembled by various leading entrepreneurs to protect their power and wealth. The civilian guard was a means whereby established entrepreneurs in the shantytowns sought both to protect their own newly acquired and existing commercial ventures and establish their power over shack residents. The civilian guard was never properly established and was not to last for very long.⁶³

Lacking any really established and secure leadership element, shack residents were unable to either unite or successfully develop those strategies essential to protect their shack area from external power. Beyond an expressed desire to remain living in the Mkhumbane area, the residents of Mkhumbane were unable to resist attempts by the municipality, the government and major local employers to transform African housing in the city.⁶⁴

The Struggle for Mkhumbane

The struggle over the future of Mkhumbane shacklands was waged in the very early 1950s and not, as many assert, in the later years of the decade.⁶⁵ During the early 1950s, the municipality was largely able to assert control over the shacklands, denying Africans permanent freehold residence and acquiring ownership of the Mkhumbane area for the development of temporary African housing. When the large-scale African protests over the destruction of Mkhumbane developed amidst the heightened African political militancy of the late 1950s, the battle was to all intents and purposes over. By that stage the municipality was already developing and administering the temporary African housing scheme in the Cato Manor Emergency Camp, had available an ever-increasing number of permanent houses in Kwa Mashu, and was involved in negotiations with government for the development of further permanent houses in Umlazi.

Although the municipality was to have difficulty in applying municipal policy in the shantytowns, the struggle over the ultimate future of the shacklands was decided with an almost complete lack of organized African resistance. Despite shack residents asserting their desire to remain in their conquered space, there was no clear political strategy and a lack of any clear leadership. Furthermore, existing African political organizations, particularly the African National Congress, did not have the political will to struggle for the Mkhumbane shantytowns.

During the early 1950s, Mkhumbane residents responded to the altering circumstances of shack life by expressing the desire that the situation in the shacklands be rapidly restored to "normal."⁶⁶ The primary goal was to secure the future existence of African residence in the Mkhumbane area. It is significant that in spite of

63. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 23 June 1985.

64. Shack dwellers' weaknesses are clearly revealed in MNAD; H18/CM; sworn affidavit of Esau Makathini (Le Fleur), 15 March 1949. For general analysis see Lloyd, *Slums*, Chapter 2.

65. See, for example, Ladlau, "Cato Manor Riots", and K Luckhardt and B Wall, *Organize ... or Starve* (London, 1980).

66. Interviews with Mr C D S Mbutho, 19 April 1985 and Mrs T Phewa, 23 June 1985.

the threat which the growing wealth and power of established shacklords and traders posed to the internal economy of the shantytowns, such a crucial issue was sidelined. Instead, the residents became united in believing that the social structure of shack life could be stabilized through either defending the area against external power or through controlling the nature of external intervention in the shantytowns.

There were, however, various ways of understanding how the security of African life in the Mkhumbane area could be achieved. Discussion within shack society encompassed four issues: firstly, a concern over municipal power within the city and, in particular, municipal control over the shantytowns. Secondly, the question of improved residential facilities in the Mkhumbane area. Thirdly, the insistence that Africans had gained the right to remain permanently in Mkhumbane. Finally debate over the question of political goals and the means whereby such aims could be achieved. Such ideas would be central to the political consciousness of Mkhumbane residents during the course of the 1959 Beerhall Riots and the strikes, boycotts and stay-away campaigns which formed part of a broader African political militancy during the crises of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Most people accepted the efficacy of the African populist militancy of the later 1940s and the gains made by Mkhumbane residents during the January 1949 Riots. However, many believed that through the very public profile which Mkhumbane had received, it was necessary to accept the limited goals achieved during the Riots as the limits of then possible achievable goals. African shack dwellers should however be allowed to live in the area without any external interference.

During the later 1940s, taking advantage of the municipality's inability to control the city's African proletariat, Africans had established a populous and tightly knit shantytown settlement in Mkhumbane. These shack residents preferred to concentrate upon the task of defending contested space owned by Indians. However during the course of the growth of the Mkhumbane shacklands, the area rapidly became the hub of an alternative African proletarian city culture, with shantytown residents playing a leading role in the increasingly militant African populist politics of the late 1940s. This rising political activity was aimed at both transforming and thereby improving the nature of African life in the city and in overturning the structures of civil power in the city.

With the eviction of Indian residents many proclaimed Mkhumbane to be "liberated". However, residents believed that the future security of the shantytowns depended upon people not "showing our heads" and thus inviting municipal intervention. After the Riots, the city was clearly full of people wishing to "put us in our place again." Charles Khumalo continues:

We were all happy with the Riots. All the Indians had gone, but we were scared. You see we had been living there quietly and now all of a sudden there is the navy, the police and the newspapers are all talking about us. You could go into work and the boss would say 'Ja, now we all know about you, you fucking rubbish. You think you are clever?'⁶⁷

67. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

Tembinkosi Phewa, who by his own admission and those of his friends, was part of the mob which burnt and looted in Mkhumbane during the Riots, recalls that: "Everyone was talking about it and telling people that was bad. But everyone did those things. Everyone! But now you cannot talk about it."⁶⁸

The newly found moderation of the militant Mkhumbane residents of the late 1940s was enhanced by other developments. Residents became frightened by the scale of violence which had occurred during the Riots.⁶⁹ Others were stung by the manner in which African leaders, such as Moses Kotane, castigated the city's African population for exhibiting such undisciplined, racist and violent tendencies.⁷⁰

As a result of a commonly felt desire to de-escalate the issue and avoid continual public scrutiny, the attempts by a small group of Africans to "carry on with the battle" were to fail.⁷¹ During the period immediately before the outbreak of the riots many Africans had been discussing the need for Africans to take to arms, go "underground" and revolt.⁷² After the Riots, using Mkhumbane as their stronghold, this small group of people, some of whom were residents of Mkhumbane, and others who had retreated into "hiding" from the police and the army⁷³ into Mkhumbane, believed that it was necessary for the shantytown dwellers to continue the offensive. Ashmon Nene, a leading resident of Mkhumbane recalls the events:

When the police and the army came down onto Cato Manor during the Riots there were lots of people running into Mkhumbane. Lots, from the Indians, from the police and everyone. Now these people, this group, came into the shacks and told people to carry on.... these people were the same ones, who wanted guns. The same as before the Riots. The same people. But it did not work.⁷⁴

Whilst cautioning that the time was not yet propitious for a further escalation in conflict, persons holding this view believed that through their victory in the January 1949 Riots, Africans had acquired permanent control of the Mkhumbane area by "right of conquest".⁷⁵ Both the municipality and the Indian landowners should accept this. Many residents were thus opposed to any attempts by either the municipality or the Indian landowners to "take our land away". J J Shabalala recalls what appears to have been a popular belief: "once Kwa Muhle comes

68. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

69. Interview with Mr B Mthethwe, 14 January 1986.

70. Kotane had in fact journeyed to Durban and stated that the Riots clearly indicated the lack of effective African political leadership in Natal. Interview with Mrs J Arenstein, 18 July 1985. See also CKM; roll 3A; 2: CC 1: 84/10; Communist Party of South Africa The Durban Riots-A Warning to South Africa", where Kotane lays a wider blame on apartheid legislation. A W G Champion was also to appeal for moderation in a statement which was probably the only instance where he co-operated with the Natal Indian Congress. See CKM; roll 3B; 2:DA 19/2:89, A W G Champion and G M Naidoo, 14 January 1949.

71. Interview with Mr A Nene, 26 January 1984.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ilanga Jase Natal*, 22 January 1949.

74. Interview with Mr A Nene, 26 January 1984.

75. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985.

it comes and that land is no longer yours.⁷⁶ If shack residents lived quietly on land and both Indian landowners and the municipality "left us alone" and accepted the fact of African occupation, then "all the troubles would be over. Then we could tell Kwa Muhle to come and build us proper houses. But it was our land."⁷⁷

Initially, such a view gained much support from existing shacklords, other entrepreneurs and those wanting to "invest" in profiteering activities as could be sustained within a shantytown relatively removed from external authority. Many of these people had been part of the militant co-operative movement during the late 1940s. As Kunene recalls, using populist images, such entrepreneurs and aspirant entrepreneurs asserted that "Africans had to show that we could get our own leaders - people of standing just like all the other races in Durban, they all had their wealthy people. We were a normal race just like the others." In order to achieve this "we had to prove that we could do things by ourselves. Us the people of Mkhumbane."⁷⁸

According to a second viewpoint, however, as a result of the 1949 Riots the existence of the Mkhumbane shacklands should be recognized by the municipality. Whilst stressing the power of the shack residents, this view accepted that the Mkhumbane area had not been 'liberated' and believed that it was possible to negotiate with the municipality over the provision of essential services and the development of a freehold African urban suburb in Mkhumbane.⁷⁹

Support for this view was almost certainly enhanced by Havemann's statements in the early 1950s. Havemann maintained that he desired a "stable" African city population; that pass laws and pass raids could be abolished; that the dirty beerhalls could be replaced by "bars"; that shops would be provided in African suburbs and that hostels could be replaced by "boarding houses" and "small lodging" premises.⁸⁰ To Mkhumbane residents, Havemann seemed to be saying that the municipality was ready to accede to many of the demands made by Africans during the later 1940s. Indeed, during the course of 1950 various reports indicated that Mkhumbane would be set aside for permanent African accommodation.⁸¹

With regard to the possibility of negotiating with the municipality over permanent African residence in Mkhumbane, Charles Mbutho expresses what was clearly a popular view: whilst accepting that you had to be "very careful" about negotiating with the municipality, "we were all proud people who wanted to develop and be decent people. We should not be treated like rats who have to scurry into a hole when the White man comes."⁸² Jason Shange, a resident of Mkhumbane from the early 1940s comments:

76. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 18 November 1986.

77. Interview with Mr A Nene, 26 January 1984.

78. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 12 May 1985. For the similar ways in which African traders legitimized their entrepreneurial ventures in Clermont see Edwards, *Sibisi*, p 15.

79. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

80. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 10 June 1950 and 27 January 1951.

81. *Ibid.*, 3 June 1950.

82. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutho, 19 April 1983.

We wanted to stay in Mkhumbane. It was not a nice place but it was ours. This we wanted to keep. Why not put all the things we have here in Kwa Mashu in Mkhumbane. That is what we wanted. This we told the City Council. They knew what we wanted.⁸³

Others resented the nature of life in the shantytowns and revealed a growing sense of working class consciousness. Albert Vilakazi believes that "I did not want to live next to a tsotsi and shebeens. That was not what I wanted. All those people the municipality must send away and give us good houses."⁸⁴

This was a view which found favour amongst many of those previously militant shackshop keepers who now desired to gain licenses to operate shops in Mkhumbane. The lawyer representing the Zondizitha Buying Club spoke of these peoples' newly found "abject humility"⁸⁵:

Let us say when you have a cow wishing to milk it and it runs away but at that time it changes its mind and comes to you. I believe that you shall never neglect it, because no matter where the beast may go, it remains and vest[s] in your powers; this [is] what applies to these Native Traders for they are yours and they shall always remain under you.⁸⁶

Similarly in an endeavour to halt the January 1949 Riots, certain unnamed, African "leaders" met "secretly" with the Chief Native Commissioner for Natal and offered to halt the killing and looting if Africans' "grievances" could also be discussed.⁸⁷ While there is no record of how such discussions progressed, they were almost certainly part of those attempts by some Mkhumbane residents to gain a secure residential area in Mkhumbane.

Neither of these views acquired any coherence in the shantytowns during the critical period of the early 1950s. There were no internal social structures capable of reducing conflict within shack society; nor was there any real means of formulating a single policy. Although all residents wanted to be allowed to both own land houses in Mkhumbane, there was considerable disagreement over how this could be achieved. Some believed that the municipality should provide formal housing which would be sold to residents. Others wanted a continuation of shack-type dwellings, with only the provision of improved basic facilities. Others saw no need to alter the existing conditions in Mkhumbane: no good could come from any external intervention in the lives of the shack dwellers. In many ways these discussions reflected the nature of class distinctions within the population. Some could afford to purchase land and housing, others could not. For the underclasses of Mkhumbane, Mkhumbane was a secure area of residence precisely because it did not conform to the aspirations of many other shack residents. Furthermore, the often increasingly wealthy shack leaders lacked any clear notion of the future of Mkhumbane. Some saw a future in a township, while others accurately perceived that with the development of such a township, the very material bases of their existing power would

83. Interview with Mr J Shange, 21 July 1985.

84. Interview with Mr A Vilakazi, 19 August 1983.

85. Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p 304.

86. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p 305.

87. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 22 January 1949.

be very threatened. Mkhumbane society was rent with disagreement and confusion over the very issue which was both so central to their lives and a key foundation in their notions of community unity.

With the 'liberation' of Mkhumbane during the January 1949 Riots, many of the established leaders had simply sidelined their earlier interest in politics and concentrated on advancing the aspirations of the African trading class. Among them were to be found the only coherent group of Mkhumbane residents, who, during the early 1950s, would continue to advocate the use of violence to attain their objectives: not the gaining of permanent residential rights in Mkhumbane, but the entrenching of African traders' rights. In a letter to the municipality, the Zulu Hlanganani maintained that

Trading rights are still in the hands of the Indians. We therefore present these grievances to you, Sir, so that they can be immediately rectified. It is not our wish to see another bloody war in this said Area, but unless things can come our way within the short space of time it is possible that our respect and endurance shall no more prevail.⁸⁸

These demands were essentially those of an organized trading class desiring to gain control of all trading ventures in the area.

Such entrepreneurs, responding to the growing criticism of their leadership by residents, endeavoured to sustain, through celebrations such as the Mkhumbane Xmas Tree days, a radical populism within the area. However these and such like celebrations embraced few concrete strategies aimed at maintaining the future of African residence in the area. Furthermore, some of the entrepreneurial leadership in Mkhumbane saw such ceremonies as the limits of their 'involvement in politics - I was a businessman and I have to look after my shop.'⁸⁹ Others however, used their increasing status in Mkhumbane to gain power within local political organizations.

Along with some local Congress Youth League leaders, many Mkhumbane leaders became interested in the Moral Re-Armament movement. This movement, which established a local presence in Durban during the early 1950s, was an international semi-religious organization which believed in the benefits of promoting reconciliation between various opposing political organizations. Profoundly conservative and offering material advantages to local leaders, some African leaders viewed the movement as the means to reduce class conflict, gain further individual status and wealth and acquire the trappings of 'normal' life. This is clearly evident in the way in which one of the African leaders of the movement in the Johannesburg area gained financial assistance from the movement to erect his own house, which he then called "This Is It".⁹⁰

88. Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p 305. It is entirely possible that this letter and the general strategy of the Zulu Hlanganani was worked out in conjunction with Rowley Arenstein who was then one of the key lawyers assisting the Zulu Hlanganani.

89. Informant to remain anonymous. Whilst information supplied by this informant has been quoted and fully acknowledged elsewhere in this work, this somewhat self critical reflection was provided on condition of anonymity.

90. *Ilanga [asa Natal]*, 8 February 1952 and University of York; interview with Mr M. B. Yengwa, 23 November 1976.

Most of the Zulu Hlanganani leaders became interested in pursuing political careers outside Mkhumbane. For a while during the early 1950s the Zulu Hlanganani was formally allied to the Bantu National Congress which established a significant presence in the city, albeit for only a brief period, during the early 1950s. This organization was heavily funded and possibly initiated by a Natal Nationalist Party member of Parliament and led by a grouping of local African herbalists, those involved in various lotteries and scams, and independent African traders. The movement was led by S S Bhengu, a local herbalist and president of the powerful Natal Bantu Medical Association.⁹¹ The Bantu National Congress was formed to combat the growth of African political organizations opposing government policy, to allow for the growth of an African political alliance between conservative chiefs and urban Africans, to support the election of National Party members as African representatives in the Senate, to and provide international legitimation for government apartheid policy.⁹²

The Bantu National Congress was rabidly anti-Indian, supporting the repatriation of all Indians, and stressed the need for an exclusive African racial identity. Employing those sexual images so integral to such politics, the leader of the Bantu National Congress endeavoured to create a 'rape scare', fulminating against sexual relations between Indians and Africans and maintaining that through such contact, Indians were attempting to reduce the power of the African 'nation'.⁹³ The Bantu National Congress also supported apartheid policy and maintained that only Africans should be allowed to trade in African areas.⁹⁴ By the mid-1950s the organization had disappeared through public ridicule and lack of support; and the government had becoming increasingly embarrassed by the crassness of the organization's public statements.⁹⁵ For a while at least, however, the organization did represent the political ideas of a significant number of the entrepreneurs of Mkhumbane.

91. Ilanga lase Natal, and Kuper African Bourgeoisie, p 305.

92. This was an issue which had begun in the late 1940s when the Nationalist Party attempted to oppose Senator E Brookes re-election to the Senate. Initially the Nationalists had tried to obtain the support of Champion who equivocated. The Nationalists finally gained support from H F Ngwenya, a highly middle class person who was a member of the executive of the A N C in Natal. Although failing to win the seat, the Nationalists used both Ngwenya and S S Bhengu to start "rival groups" such as the Bantu National Congress. This was an issue which worried both Champion and the post-Luthuli A N C. See CKM:roll 3B; 2:XC9:30/84; A W G Champion-H S Msimang, 5 April 1948; roll 15 A; 2:XC9:30/84; A W G Champion-H S Msimang, 5 November 1948; roll 3B; 2:DA 19:30/13; A N C (Natal) Executive Committee, 20 December 1952 and S Deanne (ed) Black South Africans, (Cape Town, 1978), p 151.

93. See for example The Guardian, 22 November 1951 and 18 September 1952, Ilanga lase Natal, 6 October 1952 and Advance, 25 December 1952.

94. Interview with Mr S S L Mtofo, 10 June 1983 and Kuper, African Bourgeoisie, p 305.

95. The Union Government was to withdraw their invitation of Bhengu to address the United Nations on aspects of apartheid policy and Indian African relations. See interviews with Messrs B Nair, 27 June 1985 and H J Bhengu, 21 November 1986. Mr S S L Bhengu was later convicted of fraud and forgery and sentenced to three years imprisonment. See Ilanga lase Natal, 24 April 1954.

Prior to the dissolution of the Bantu National Congress however, a split developed within the ranks of those Mkhumbane traders who belonged to the Zulu Hlanganani.⁹⁶ This conflict was partly rooted in competition over markets, and in the political alliance between the Zulu Hlanganani and the Bantu National Congress. As a result of this split some members of the Zulu Hlanganani, many of whom had always opposed the political and economic ambitions of A W G Champion, moved towards the reviving African National Congress in Durban, whilst others "stayed to run our businesses."⁹⁷

In the same way as the leadership in Mkhumbane failed to perceive correctly the nature of municipal policy, or to organize any effective opposition, so the African National Congress in Durban failed to organize any struggle to ensure that Africans would be allowed permanent residence. While AWG Champion expressed private and public joy with the outbreak of the riots of January 1949,⁹⁸ he was generally contemptuous of the Mkhumbane shack dwellers.⁹⁹ Champion saw in the riots and the eviction of Indians the chance to boost his flagging political fortunes both nationally and locally and further his own trading and investing ventures.

In spite of being chairman of the local Joint Locations Advisory Board, Champion often ignored or misunderstood City Council policy towards the area. After councillors Nicholson and Spanier Marson set out the idea of temporary African housing in Mkhumbane, Champion praised the two councillors for their desire to establish permanent African settlement in the area. Later, realizing his mistake, Champion retracted his statement; but we went on again incorrectly, to praise the City Council for wanting permanent African housing in Cato Manor Farm.¹⁰⁰

Champion's main activities during this period concerned his conflict with the Congress Youth League attempts to undermine his leadership of the African National Congress in Natal, his attempts to gain the support of chiefly authority in Natal and his desire to expand his material interests in Mkhumbane.¹⁰¹ While failing in the first two activities, his entrepreneurial ventures in Mkhumbane did expand. Already a backlord in

96. Interviews with Messrs C Khumalo, 23 June 1985 and Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1986.

97. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 28 November 1986 and interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Ms P Naidoo, n.d.

98. CKM; roll 15B; Native Locations (Combined) Advisory Boards meeting, 13 August 1947; A W G Champion-President General A N C, 31 August 1948; Resolutions passed at a public meeting held by the A N C (Natal) and the Native Locations (Combined) Advisory Boards, Durban, 12 February 1949; N S Msimang-A W G Champion, 25 January 1949 and 14 November 1949 and interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Ms P Naidoo, n.d.

99. Throughout his political career during the later 1940s and early 1950s Champion was continually directing most of his energies towards gaining support from the African urban elite and chiefs and was often heard to be contemptuous of those whom he referred to as part of the 'cultural amalgam': the proletariat. See interviews with Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1985 and Mr S Bourquin, 7 July 1988.

100. MNAD; H 2/ CM, vol 1; A W G Champion-Town Clerk, 1 December 1949.

101. See for example CKM; roll 3B;2: DA 19-96/; A N C (Natal) Presidential address, 3 August 1946; reel 15 A; 2: XC 9; 2; A N C (Natal) report of provincial secretary, 1949 and M W Swanson, *The Views of Mahlati*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1981) pp 84-91.

Mkhumbane, Champion met frequently with and invested in the Zulu Hlanganani. Champion was also active "behind our backs", meeting with various evicted Indian traders and, in partnership with them, began to establish at least one wholesale "agency" in the shantytown.¹⁰²

The main focus of the Congress Youth League in Durban was to ensure Champion's political demise. This virtually all-consuming political battle was fought not just at the level of attracting popular support for the Youth League, but over control of advisory boards and the local organizational structures of the African National Congress.¹⁰³ In fact, during the later 1940s, many Youth Leaguers had accepted that with the growing opposition of Durban's African proletariat to any participation in the Advisory Board system and their lack of enthusiasm for the African National Congress, it was likely that the Youth League would "have to fight alone."¹⁰⁴

Throughout the early 1950s, this battle continued with the Youth League finally de-throning Champion and installing A J Luthuli as Natal President of the African National Congress. From then onwards all the energies of the Youth Leaguers became focussed on improving the organizational structures of the ANC, conducting the Defiance Campaign, popularizing the newly elected leadership of the organization, and with establishing closer links with the national leadership of the Defiance Campaign and the ANC.¹⁰⁵ For instance, local Congress leaders endeavoured to gain support for the campaign against the government's proposed removals from Sophiatown.¹⁰⁶

During the period when the municipality, employers and the government were discussing the future of Mkhumbane, the newly elected members of the African National Congress in Durban made no attempt to conduct a similar campaign. The issue of permanent African residence in Cato Manor Farm had been discussed during Defiance Campaign but had been summarily dropped.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless many Congress Youth League leaders, including M B Yengwa, did use the "vacuum" created by the expulsion of Indians from the area to develop their own entrepreneurial ventures in Mkhumbane.¹⁰⁸

The question of permanent African residence in Cato Manor Farm was difficult to resolve. In spite of Mkhumbane residents' claims, the land remained Indian-owned and, in accordance with the municipal Group

102. Interview with Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1985.

103. CKM: Jordan Ngubane "I Shall Not Be Silenced", unpublished manuscript. See also University of York: interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Dr T Lodge, 23 November 1976, interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Ms P Naidoo, n.d. and interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

104. *Ibid.*

105. *Ibid.*

106. CKM:roll 3B; 2: DA 19:30/16; A N C (Natal) executive committee meeting, 6 June 1954. When discussing municipal attempts to relocate African residential areas in the city, the A N C studiously avoided the issue of Africans in Mkhumbane and focussed on the future of the African freehold areas of Good Hope and Chateau Estate which adjoined Mkhumbane. See CKM: reel 3B; 2:DA 19:30/15; A N C (Natal), report of the secretariat for the year ending 30 September 1955.

107. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

108. Interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Ms P Naidoo, n.d..

Areas plans, formed part of those Indian-owned lands which the City Council wanted to demarcate for White residential development.¹⁰⁹ For Congress members to argue for permanent African occupation of the Mkhumbane area meant taking land away from Indians. This policy was opposed to both the wishes of the NIC and the joint stand taken by both the NIC and the ANC with regard to the Group Areas Bills then tabled before parliament. Both congresses were committed to resist any evictions or change in the existing basis of land-holding in the city, and they sought the abolition of all racial barriers against land holding.¹¹⁰ Whilst accepting this policy there was nevertheless considerable sympathy among the ANC leadership in Durban for the Mkhumbane shackdwellers. M.B. Yengwa was particularly vehement in insisting that the Mkhumbane area be allocated for African freehold ownership. Throughout the campaigns against the Group Areas legislation, the Natal Indian Congress was to receive muted support from the ANC in Durban.¹¹¹

In effect, the joint stand on land allocation was both inane and simply aimed at preserving the existing pattern of land ownership in the city. Whilst the majority of Durban's population was African, the only freehold areas available to Africans were the small areas of Chateau and Good Hope Estates adjoining Mkhumbane. Nevertheless aware of the problem, but insistent that the rights of Indian landowners should be protected against intended municipal "plundering", the NIC attempted to make what was clearly a secret deal with the City Council.¹¹²

In the early 1950s, the NIC suggested that the municipality should merely develop essential infrastructural services in the Cato Manor Farm area. With these improved facilities, Indian landowners should then be permitted to erect officially approved accommodation for renting out to a "better class of African." Indian shacklords would thus be able to resume operations halted by the 1949 Riots, albeit after having provided better residential facilities on their property.¹¹³ This attempted deal was an attempt by the NIC to entrench the Indian rentier class through assisting African to live in the area but without any claim to land rights. This strategy was apparently undertaken without the knowledge of the ANC.¹¹⁴ The City Council turned the proposal down.¹¹⁵

109. City Council Group Areas map no 314/53. See also *Durban Housing Survey*, pp 409-407.

110. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 1 August 1985 and *Advance*, 5 March 1953.

111. See for example *CKM:reel 3B, 2:DA19/1:30/9*; ANC (Natal), executive committee meeting, 21-22 January 1956 and *Advance*, 3 May 1961.

112. For details on Indian opposition to the Group Areas legislation see S Bhana and B Pachaf (eds) *A Documentary History of Indian South Africans* (Cape Town, 1984), p 313-220 and interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

113. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 2; Native Administration Committee Agenda tabling the protests of the Cato Manor Residents Association, 21 December 1949.

114. None of those ANC leaders whose interview transcripts I have consulted have ever made mention of this issue. Those ANC members whom I have questioned on the matter could not recall the issue at all. There is no mention of the proposed deal in any of the local newspapers.

115. City Council minutes, 12 December 1949.

The probable reasons for the failure of the ANC to organize around the issue of permanent African residence in Mkhumbane are complex. It is clear that the local Congress leaders were attempting to sustain notions of non-racial unity so tarnished by the 1949 Riots.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, it is likely that when the issue was discussed by the ANC and the NIC, the NIC pointed out that their once powerful local branches in the Cato Manor Farm area were rapidly being taken over by the more conservative, 'racist' Natal Indian Organization.¹¹⁷ This was true, but also rather a disingenuous ploy.

Throughout the late 1940s and particularly the early 1950s, NIC branches in Cato Manor Farm comprised traders, other entrepreneurs, members of the Indian working class and residents in the Indian sub-economic housing scheme in the area. The land was owned by both entrepreneurs and workers and many of these local NIC branches were continually calling for the eviction of Africans from the area.¹¹⁸ The NIC's own constituents were opposed to African land-ownership in the area.

The main reason for the ANC willingly dropping the issue of permanent African residential rights in Mkhumbane was almost certainly due to the way in which the newly elected ANC leadership was both eager to carry out the policies of the Johannesburg based National Executive and relied on and deferred to the more established leadership of the more wealthy Natal Indian Congress. Perceiving such an unequal relationship between the two organizations, many Africans in Mkhumbane and elsewhere in the city failed to support the Defiance Campaign.¹¹⁹

As a result, support for permanent African residence in Mkhumbane was almost completely lacking from those political organizations which claimed authority from and influence amongst the urban African population. With shantytown society never developing an alternative leadership or gaining any realistic view of strategy, shack residents were in many ways left to their own devices. Their attempts to avoid further militant action, to assert their desire to live permanently in the area, and stabilize shack society were to fail.

Recognizing that their security of tenure in Mkhumbane was directly threatened by municipal plans, some residents left the area whilst many more tried to sell their shacks.¹²⁰ With many residents having invested much money in shacks in an area whose future they believed was relatively more secure than those

116. See for example discussion concerning the economic boycott and racism in CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19: 30/13, A N C (Natal), executive committee meeting, 6 June 1954. See also CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19/1:30/8; ANC (Natal) executive committee, 26-27 November 1955, *The Guardian*, 13 November 1952, *Advance*, 6 November 1952 and L. Kuper, *Passive Resistance in South Africa* (London, 1956).

117. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Cato Manor Indian Economic Housing Scheme Ratepayers Association-Town Clerk, 13 September 1949 and 13 November 1949; vol 2; Secretary, Natal Housing Board-Town Clerk, 17 February 1951 and interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

118. See for example MNAD; H2/CM, vol 1; Natal Indian Congress- Town Clerk, 14 September 1949; vol 2; Cato Manor Ratepayers Association-Town Clerk, 21 December 1949 and *Inkundla Yabantu*, 24 September 1949.

119. University of York; interview with Mr M B Yengwa, 29 November 1976.

120. MNAD, H/ Shacks, vol 2; Mr V Khumalo-Manager, MNAD, 22 July 1952 and interview with Mr M Kunene, 21 April 1985.

other shack settlements in the city, there was thus a flurry to dispose of often newly acquired property. Other residents, desiring stay in the area, became panic-stricken: "when we heard that Kwa Muhle was coming to us, lots of us got very frightened because we knew that we were finished. This was when we were in Thekwini."¹²¹

The idea that Mkhumbane was only within the city with the development of the Emergency Camp in 1953 is, in terms of spatial and administrative boundaries, quite absurd. Yet, such feelings do reveal the way in which shack society had developed as an alternate society, within the city but outside effective municipal control. Whilst being in conflict with civic and state authority, the legal rights of the existing land-owners, and the power of industrial and commercial employers, the Mkhumbane shantytowns were still very much part of the city in which their power to determine their future was limited.

Conclusion

During the later 1940s, the African proletariat living in Mkhumbane had become conscious of their own political power and the often undisguised weakness of municipal power. With the eviction of Indian residents, traders and land-owners from much of Cato Manor Farm during the January 1949 Riots, shack residents believed that they had 'liberated' Mkhumbane. At the very least the victors in the 'battle of Cato Manor' had shown both Indian property-owners and the municipality that they desired to live permanently in Mkhumbane.

Yet through the very riots residents became very more aware of how the municipality was determined to alter the conditions of shack settlement in Cato Manor Farm. To residents, the need to defend what people believed was their land was of the utmost importance. The problem could be solved through residents of the shacklands controlling the manner in which external powers could intervene in the shacklands.

However the very changes which had occurred within shack society in the period subsequent to the January 1949 Riots made the possibility of any form of community consensus around the central question of the future character of the shacklands and the role of the municipality highly unlikely. Within a period of heightened class conflict within the shacklands, residents had very different notions of how their own material and social needs could be furthered through changes in the residential structure of Mkhumbane.

To such problems was added the fact that the shackland residents had no really effective forms of internal organization or a leadership element of any truly representative kind. The existing shack leaders pursued their own material interests within the shacklands and somewhat indecisively sought to acquire a wider political influence. Their quest for a broader political leadership was based on their existing power within the shacklands. However, their very calls for populist unity within the shacklands and an acceptance of their leadership was contradicted by the very changes within the shacklands through which entrepreneurs had increased their own material wealth in Mkhumbane.

These weaknesses within Mkhumbane society were simply compounded by the failure of African political organizations to develop any clear leadership or political strategy to ensure permanent African

121. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 23 June 1985.

occupation of Mkhumbane. Neither the ANC of Champion nor that of the Congress Youth Leagues ever really confronted the problem during the very years when the issue was so crucial to the future of Mkhumbane. The purpose of those failed organizations and movements which attracted the interest of the Mkhumbane entrepreneurs had very little to do with Mkhumbane. What the shantytown residents had struggled for for so long would be lost in a relatively short period of time.

CHAPTER 9

MKHUMBANE, KWA MUHLE AND THE SHADOW OF KWA MASHU :
THE CATO MAJOR EMERGENCY CAMP, 1953-1960**Kwa Muhle Comes to Mkhumbane**

By late 1952, it became increasingly apparent to Mkhumbane residents that the municipality was finally determined to exert a more effective measure of control over the shantytowns: the "Whites" wanted "to win Mkhumbane back."¹ Despite shack residents' efforts to "liberate" the area during the 1949 Riots, Mkhumbane was still a contested space. Some residents welcomed the idea of the municipality establishing authority over the area. Charles Mbutho, who had moved into the shantytown in the early 1950s maintained that "it was good that the City Council came. We wanted them to give us better houses and fix up all the dirty people and places there. It was too filthy."²

Other residents were more sceptical of municipal policy; the idea of the municipality gaining increasing control over Mkhumbane aroused panic and anger. As soon as the municipality announced its plans for the area, municipal officials noted the increasing hostility of Mkhumbane residents, it was reported that "a meeting is to be held at Cato Manor on Tuesday which according to my information, is likely to complete the process and re-establish the undesirable element ..." ³ The municipality mistook opinion in the shantytowns. The Mkhumbane residents were all opposed to any policy which threatened African claims to permanent residence in Mkhumbane. Where there were differences between residents was over the means whereby such permanence could be achieved.

In November 1953, councillor Nicholson, the chairman of the municipal Native Administration Department, formally announced City Council plans for the Mkhumbane area at a public meeting in Mkhumbane, attended by over 2000 residents. Much to the dismay of many present, Nicholson promised that "although it has taken a long time to come to a final decision, the City Council has at no time forgotten you." Not only did Nicholson indirectly criticize shack residents by saying that the municipality desired the "rehabilitation of Cato Manor" and would "assist residents to develop their sense of responsibility", but he also revealed to residents the true nature of municipal policy. Nicholson maintained that the municipality wanted to give residents "a certain measure of security, through the development of a temporary housing scheme in the area. Furthermore, the municipality would acquire the land and thus confer no land ownership rights on

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1. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 7 July 1985.
 2. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutho, 3 March 1981.
 3. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 3; Acting Town Clerk-Dr W M Eiselen, 5 June 1952.

African residents. Finally, the municipality intended to destroy the basis of shack society through "protect[ing] the Natives against exploitation by unscrupulous shack farmers."⁴

Although finally managing to relocate the African shantytown dwellers from Cato Manor Farm to formal housing elsewhere in the city, the municipality was never fully able to achieve its stated aims through developing the Emergency Camp. However, the fact of municipal intervention in shantytown life served to alter the nature of shack society. The main effects of municipal policy towards the Emergency Camp were to increase the population living in the area, cause a dramatic decline in the residential quality of life, attempt to stabilize the operations of a section of the existing African trading class, and introduce increasingly burdensome administrative controls over the population.

With the municipality being granted permission to develop temporary African housing in the Cato Manor Emergency Camp, it gained legal sanction to demolish shantytowns located outside the Emergency Camp and relocate shack dwellers into the Camp.⁵ By the middle of 1954, all African shack areas situated on the Bluff had been cleared. During the later 1950s, the municipality began destroying certain shantytown areas outside of the Emergency Camp area.⁶ The residents of all these shack areas were relocated inside the Camp. The municipality viewed the Emergency Camp as not only introducing controls over the existing population, but also as a dumping-ground, or "transit camp", into which it could temporarily relocate squatters.⁷

Just prior to the outbreak of the 1949 riots, municipal officials estimated that there could be approximately 24,000 Africans living in the Cato Manor Farm shantytowns.⁸ In the same period, municipal officials estimated that there were 4,040 African "families" living in the Mkhumbane area of Cato Manor Farm.⁹ While municipal inspectors would continually point out how the African population of the Cato Manor Farm area had increased immediately after the 1949 Riots,¹⁰ reliable estimates of the African population increase in the area only became available through the ongoing shack survey and the registration of sites under the municipal Cato Manor Emergency Camp. In December 1952 the municipality estimated that there were 42,000 Africans living in the shack areas both in the Mkhumbane area and within close proximity to Mkhumbane.

In 1953, Mr 'Tings' Robson, then Chief Superintendent of Locations, estimated that the African population of Cato Manor Farm was 40,000 persons.¹¹ Colin Shum, the first Superintendent of Shack Areas

4. *Natal Mercury*, 25 August 1952.

5. The powers were acquired in 1951 in terms of section 8 of the Durban Extended Powers Ordinance, Natal Provincial Ordinance 21 of 1949.

6. MNAD;CM/Gen, vol 5; Further Report of the Development Sub-Committee of the Cato Manor Temporary Native Housing Scheme, 28 April 1954.

7. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; Acting Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 10 March 1953 and vol 7; Secretary for Native Affairs-Chief Native Commissioner, Pietermaritzburg, 23 April 1956.

8. MNAD;Housing/Gen, vol 1; Manager, MNAD 'Native Housing Policy', November 1948.

9. MNAD, H 2/CM, vol 1; Chief Superintendent-Manager, MNAD, 2 March 1950.

10. MNAD,H 2/CM, vol 1; City Valuator and Estates Manager, undated.

11. Memorandum by Senior Superintendent, Locations, undated and unreferenced with title page missing. I am grateful to Mr D McCullough for providing this information.

and thus responsible for the shack surveys, and from 1953 to 1955 the first Superintendent of the Cato Manor Emergency Camp, estimates that the total number of Africans living in shantytowns in Cato Manor Farm was "probably in the region of between 40,000 and 50,000 by 1953".¹²

During the later 1950s, many people, including shantytown residents themselves¹³, estimated that the population was in excess of 70,000 persons. In 1959, Dr English, the Chief Medical Officer of Health estimated that there were upwards of 80,000 Africans living in Cato Manor Farm, while "over weekends, the population may increase to 90,000 or 100,000. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner claims it is 120,000. Whatever it is, it is a town the size of Pietermaritzburg."¹⁴

While the ratio of African women to men in the shantytowns increased during the 1950s, there are no really reliable estimates.¹⁵ In 1953, municipal officials investigating one particular shack area in Mkhumbane found that the ratio of adult males to adult females was 1,1 men to every woman, but stressed that it was questionable whether such figures could reliably pertain to the whole area.¹⁶ Colin Shum recalls "that by the time I left the (municipal Native Administration Department in 1958) there were a lot more families in the community than when we started the shack survey."¹⁷ This estimate would thus appear to have been broadly in line with the official estimate that by 1960 the African male-female ratio for Durban was 1,5 men to every woman.¹⁸

Essential Services and Municipal Policy

With regard to development projects in the Emergency Camp, the municipality was reluctant to allocate funds from the Borough Fund or any other municipal account to finance those aspects of the annual development works for which the municipality was liable. During the first year of development work in the

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12. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985.
 13. Ilanga lase Natal, 16 February 1957. This resident was Mr J J Shabalala.
 14. MNAD; Personal File, Mananger, MNAD; Notes on the meeting by a Durban City Council Deputation with the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Pretoria, 3 August 1959.
 15. Such information was available to the municipality from the shack survey files on each shack in the Cato Manor Farm area. The vast majority of these files were however burnt by residents during the course of the 1959 Beerhall Riots. A new but partial set of documentation was acquired during the very process of shack removals to Kwa Mashu and Umlazi. The author managed to trace these latter files to a storeroom in the P N A B offices in Lamontville. It is significant that as of 1983 these files were kept in a storeroom in Lamont, one of only two remaining African townships where residents still qualified for permanent city rights. The files were used to verify any claims to residence in Lamont or the other relevant township of Chesterville.
 16. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; Supervisor Shack Area "Survey of Shack Families: Incomes and Other Considerations", 2 February 1953.
 17. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.
 18. Maasdorp and Humphreys, From Shantytown to Township, p 10.

Camp, the total costs of all anticipated development was £10,000. In spite of the fact that the Native Revenue Account was only liable to provide £5,000 of this amount, the municipality refused to allow the Borough Fund to allocate the remaining £5,000. Instead, the required £5,000 was transferred from the Native Revenue Account to the Borough Fund to finance municipal projects in Mkhumbane.¹⁹ As a result of this policy, municipal Native Administration Department officials realized that essential projects for the Emergency Camp would be delayed through the Native Revenue Account being unable to bear the immediate costs of development. In spite of Havemann requesting that all future costs in respect of road works could be equally shared as agreed upon", the policy remained.²⁰ While funds transferred from the Native Revenue Account would eventually be repaid, this policy had the direct effect of slowing down the development of facilities in the area, even though municipal officials were then relocating even more people into the Emergency Camp area.

Whilst these problems merely resulted in various development projects being delayed, a more fundamental problem resulted from the municipality's refusal to abide by the 1937 Agreement. During the course of the development of the Emergency Camp, the municipality was negotiating with the government over how the 1937 Agreement could be altered to the benefit of the municipality. As a result of these negotiations, which were only concluded in 1957, municipal officials steadfastly refused to provide any free refuse removal services, or pay the costs of water and electricity consumption in the Emergency Camp.²¹ Although municipal officials had constantly expressed concern about the worsening health and sanitation conditions in the African shantytowns, the municipality would not provide services which were specified in the development plan for the Emergency Camp and which were specifically intended to improve basic health and sanitation conditions in the shack area.

Only 62 toilet blocks were provided in the Emergency Camp, that was eventually to house over 100,000 persons.²² Although it had been envisaged that all dwellings would be within a 200-metre radius of municipal toilet blocks, many residents lived as far as 500 metres away from such facilities.²³ In other areas, such as the Manasa and Draaihoek region, no municipal toilets had been erected by the beginning of 1958.²⁴

In terms of the initial development plans, the municipality was required to develop a water-borne sewerage system in the Emergency Camp. However, as it was intended that the land would eventually be set aside for White residential development, the municipality provided water-borne sewerage facilities which would

19. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; Acting City and Water Engineer-Manager, MNAD, 3 January 1953 and Native Administration Committee minutes, 10 January 1953.

20. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; Manager, MNAD-City and Water Engineer, 17 June 1953.

21. See for example MNAD; H 2/CM, vol4; Manager, MNAD- City Treasurer, 13 January 1953, Acting Medical Officer of Health- Acting Manager, MNAD, 13 January 1953 and City and Water Engineer-Acting Manager, MNAD, 4 February 1953.

22. Native Administration Committee agenda, 11 February 1955.

23. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; Superintendent, Cato Manor Emergency Camp-Manager, MNAD, 30 March 1957.

24. City Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report, July 1953.

be suitable for the intended White suburban housing. This sewerage system was inadequate for the African population living in the Emergency Camp. The City and Water Engineer admitted as such: "the size of lot to be used for the permanent scheme is six times that of the present...the quantity of sewerage per site should therefore be one sixth of that expected later when permanent development takes place."²⁵ As a result of the increasing population in the Camp, the City and Water Engineer noted that "it is obvious that the sanitary blocks themselves will have to deal with two or three times the population for which they were designed."²⁶ As a result, not only were the municipal toilets always dirty, but also continually "backwashing" with effluent not being correctly channelled through the piping mains.²⁷ By the late 1950s many of the toilet blocks were unusable, while work gangs were constantly attempting to repair blocked sewerage pipes.²⁸

Not only were toilet blocks, which were divided into different sections for men and women, in many cases far distant from homes and structurally inadequate. The blocks were also not provided with any form of lighting, and the toilet cubicles had no doors.²⁹ Mrs Phewa recalls:

We had a toilet building next to us in Dabulamanzi. There were no doors in the toilets and so it seemed to us as if we were just pigs in a little shed. We all had to sit there while all people walked in and out. That was the way they treated us. And all the tsotsis that would hang around outside. It was too terrible. You could not even go there in the nighttime because it was too dark and there were no lights.³⁰

Thus, as Marshia Mtandi explains, parents would often refuse to allow their children to utilize the municipal toilet facilities:

Our parents would tell all of us that we could not go near the toilets. This was the place where you could get sick and if you needed to relieve yourself in the night then you had to tell her that you were just going outside. Never to the toilets.³¹

Numerous requests from the municipal Native Administration Department that the municipality assist in providing doors for the toilet cubicles failed. As a result, the Native Revenue Account bore the costs of building brick partitions down the middle of some toilet blocks.³² In a similar fashion the municipality rejected repeated

25. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; City and Water Engineer-Manager, MNAD, 12 June 1953.

26. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; City and Water Engineer-Manager, MNAD, 18 May 1953.

27. Interview with Mr T Roche, 22 April 1982.

28. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; Acting City Engineer-Chief Medical Officer of Health, 8 October 1958.

29. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; Manager, MNAD-City Electrical Engineer, 25 August 1953, City Electrical Engineer-City and Water Engineer, 25 August 1953 and handwritten memorandum to Manager, MNAD summarizing information received from City and Water Engineer, 2 September 1953.

30. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1986.

31. Interview with Miss M Mtandi, 30 November 1986.

32. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 6; Acting Manager, MNAD-City Engineer, 5 December 1955.

request for the toilet blocks to be fitted with electric lighting.³³ By 1958, lighting was eventually supplied to some toilet blocks, but only as a result of the municipal Native Administration Department agreeing to the Native Revenue Account bearing the costs of both connecting such blocks to the existing electricity supply and being debited for the estimated amount of electricity consumed.³⁴

During the course of initial discussions between municipal officials over the type of sanitary facilities which should be provided in the Camp, various officials had criticized the continuation of any pit privy sewerage system.³⁵ Municipal officials realized that pit privy latrines were unsuited to a high density population living in poorly drained land. During the high rainfall summer months, pit privy latrines would also "overflow or the excrement would start seeping through the hilly lands."³⁶ However, due to municipal resistance to providing further toilet blocks, the pit privy latrine system was to continue.³⁷ In order to lessen the health dangers posed by pit privies, the municipal Native Administration Department, financed by funds from the Native Revenue Account, began to "drill deeper pits" for some residents pit privies.³⁸

Prior to the development of the Emergency Camp, the only tarred roadway through the Mkhumbane area was Booth Road, which ran from the Bellair Road to Chesterville. In terms of the initial layout of the Emergency Camp, the municipality was required to upgrade certain of the existing dirt roads and tracks in the Camp by either tarring or hardening the road surfaces and developing effective drainage facilities. However, during the course of the development of the Emergency Camp, the only substantial road work undertaken by the municipality was the development of what now became known as Denis Shepstone Road, which extended from Booth Road up, through one of the most densely populated shack sprawls, to Ridgeview Road.³⁹ Denis Shepstone Road was widened, tarred and provided with storm-water drainage. By the end of 1956, the only other road development undertaken by the municipality had been the hardening or tarring of few other roads in specific areas of the Camp.⁴⁰ No other road improvement projects were ever done, in spite of

33. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; City Electrical Engineer-City and Water Engineer, 25 August 1953 and vol 6; City Valuator and Estates Manager, undated and vol 7; Manager, MNAD-City Engineer, 21 December 1956.

34. Interview with Mr D McCullough, 3 April 1982.

35. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; City Medical Officer of Health-City Engineer, 21 January 1958 and vol 7; C N Shum-S Bourquin, 1 October 1956 162 and interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985. See for example MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; City Medical Officer of Health-Manager, MNAD, 24 October 1953.

36. Interview with Mr T Roche, 22 April 1982 and MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 3; Assistant City and Water Engineer-Town Clerk, 7 January 1952 and Memorandum for Inter-Departmental Committee :Cato Manor: Miscellaneous Matters, 7 January 1952.

37. MNAD; Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board minutes, 31 August 1953.

38. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; City Medical Officer of Health, Annual Report, July 1953, vol 7; Manager, MNAD-City Medical Officer of Health and City and Water Engineer, 31 August 1953 and Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board minutes, *passim*.

39. *Ibid.*

40. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; Superintendent Loquet-Manager, MNAD, 1 March 1957.

numerous complaints from both residents and municipal officials as to the appalling road conditions in the Camp.⁴¹

As a result of so few roads being either tarred or hardened, the municipality callously refused to consider requests that the municipality provide a refuse removal service throughout the Emergency Camp. In this instance the municipality stuck rigidly to the terms of the 1937 Agreement, whereby the municipality was only obliged to provide a free refuse removal service for housing adjacent to tarred or hardened roads.⁴² However, up until 1957, the City and Water Engineer also refused to sanction a municipal refuse service to those areas where tarred or hardened roads had been provided.⁴³

The Native Administration Department thus purchased drums which were placed alongside roadways, and encouraged residents to carry their own household waste to these drums, which were then emptied by the Native Administration Department.⁴⁴ The cost of the service was borne by the Native Revenue Account. After the termination of the 1937 Agreement in 1957, the municipality operated a refuse removal service through parts of the Emergency Camp and debited the cost of the service to the Native Revenue Account.⁴⁵ For the duration of the Emergency Camp's existence the burden of operating a refuse removal service lay with the staff of the Emergency Camp, who had neither the personnel nor resources to fulfil a task that should have been undertaken by the municipality. Debris and rotting waste matter was continually strewn in ever-increasing piles throughout the Emergency Camp; as residents and municipal officials noted, this constituted a grave health threat to residents of the Emergency Camp.⁴⁶

Despite statements to the contrary, the municipality's attitude towards the shack settlements of Mkhumbane only embraced a desire to improve the standards of basic facilities in the area, if the costs of such services would be borne by the Native Revenue Account. At no time during the existence of the Emergency Camp would the municipality accept their legal responsibilities, as set out in both the 1937 Agreement and the layout and development plan for the Emergency Camp, to provide the basic facilities so crucial to the social stability of the shantytown residents. The basic facilities which were provided by the municipality were both

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41. Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board-Manager, MNAD, 16 October 1956 and interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985.
 42. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; remarks written by Mr Bourquin in the margin of Supertendant Loquet-Manager, MNAD, 1 March 1957.
 43. See for example MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; City and Water Engineer- Manager, MNAD, 18 September 1953, Memorandum by MNAD staff- Manager, MNAD, 8 October 1953 and vol 5; City and Water Engineer- Manager, MNAD, 6 November 1953.
 44. Interviews with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985.
 45. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; Deputy Manager, MNAD-City Engineer, 23 April 1957.
 46. Interviews with Mr C Khumalo, 21 April 1985, Mr C D S Mbutho, 19 April 1985 and T Roche, 23 April 1982. As Tom Roche recalls a certain municipal inspector, probing for illicit underground liquor "factories", walked into and was submerged in an ex-pit privy hole. Much to the mirth of both shack residents and other municipal officials, the person had to be hauled out: no-one went near him. We used a rope."

paltry and, in many cases, only provided after substantial delays. Municipal policy towards the provision of infrastructural facilities in the Emergency Camp merely served to create an increasingly more unsuitable residential environment.

In terms of the initial municipal plan, the municipality was to purchase the land area, develop essential services and demarcate new housing sites. Persons then either already living in shack clusters in the Mkhumbane area or in other shantytowns would be relocated into single-site, single-shack housing on these sites. The municipality desired to limit the size of all new shacks to less than four rooms, prohibit all lodging and sub-renting and ensure that there would be no more than five or six persons living on each site.⁴⁷

Shack houses would have to be built by the tenants according to house plans designed by the municipality.⁴⁸ For those tenants who required financial assistance, loans of £35 from the Native Revenue Account were made available.⁴⁹ In order to allow tenants time to either themselves erect such temporary housing or arrange for the houses to be built, the municipality erected a transit camp within the Emergency Camp. Persons removed from existing shack settlements would be allowed to rent rooms in this transit camp for up to one month.⁵⁰ This transit camp, which was situated in the area known as Shumville, was known as Kwa Tickey, named after the daily rental charged to tenants.⁵¹

Alongside the appearance of single-site, single-tenant housing built and other more fragile shanties, vast communal shack clusters were to remain in existence for the duration of the Emergency Camp operations. The municipality was never fully able to transform the existing pattern of shack cluster construction or confront and change the existing complex shack ownership and tenancy relations.⁵² Stephen Selby remembers:

When we started there at Mkhumbane, we wanted to get all the residents out of their shacks, break down the shacks and then make the residents build smaller shacks with each family having their own place. Their own site. But this was very difficult. In the end I think we just gave up. You could not do this. It was really impossible. It only happened when the Mkhumbane people went to Kwa Mashu and Umlazi.⁵³

Shack residents could not simply relocate their homes as few owned accommodation. Furthermore, neither shack owners nor tenants built the shacks.⁵⁴ To make matters even more complex, the shack designs made it difficult to reconstruct existing shacks in accordance with municipal policy.

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47. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; Memorandum re Instructions from the Manager for the use of all vacant sites ready for occupation in the Emergency Camp, 27 May 1953 and Manager, MNAD-City and Water Engineer, 4 June 1953.
48. MNAD; H 14, vol 2; questions asked by Manager regarding plans for shacks- Cato Manor Emergency Camp, 18 November 1953.
49. MNAD;H 12/L CM; Havemann- Chief Superintendant, Supervisor Shack Areas and Superintendant Umlazi Glebe, 17 June 1953.
50. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 3; Acting Manager, MNAD-Councillor Robinson, 20 November 1952.
51. Interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.
52. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985.
53. Interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.
54. MNAD;H/Gen vol 1; Supervisor Shack Areas-Acting Manager, MNAD, 19 August 1952.

It was difficult for the municipality to establish sole ownership of any particular shack with a view to demolition and rebuilding in accordance with municipal plans.⁵⁵ Moreover, many owners were absentee shacklords or operated through an agent, with the result that tenants were unable to name the owner.⁵⁶ Furthermore, as a result of the manner in which the ownership of certain shacks had become such a contested issue during the period from the January 1949 Riots onwards, municipal investigations of shack ownership often caused increasing tension. Stephen Selby recalls that "when we would go around to a particular shack and say 'This land is now owned by the City Council, who owns this place?', there would be a furious fight between the people because they all said they owned this room or that place."⁵⁷

Even after shack ownership was established, the municipality was never fully able to eradicate shacklordism. When the municipality assumed ownership of any particular piece of land, shacks had to be sold to existing tenants and rebuilt so as to conform to the single-site, single-dwelling principle. Only if such procedures were satisfactorily undertaken would the shacks be registered as legal structures. If shack owners refused to comply with municipal directives, the municipality would demolish the shacks without paying the owner any compensation.⁵⁸ However, although the municipality considered that owners of illegal shacks had no legal right to claim such property, it was in fact possible and legal for owners to demolish their own shacks, thereby leaving tenants homeless.⁵⁹ As the Acting Manager of the municipal Native Administration Department pointed out:

It is necessary to recognize however, that shack renting, being a lucrative business, and often the sole means of support, will be tardily relinquished, and that the rights of shack owners, unfettered for almost a generation, have become entrenched by custom and judgements in the Native Commissioners' court. There are many cases on record where applications by native shackowners for the ejection of Native tenants, no doubt for excellent grounds, have been upheld. It appears that these judgements, even though they do not confer on shackownership any legal status, must inevitably have had the effect of strengthening the customary rights of shackowners which have become so generally accepted that tenants do not appear to have ever seriously contested them.⁶⁰

It was thus impossible to relocate persons either into or within the confines of the Emergency Camp without "pulling down shacks about their ears." Colin Shum continued:

If the position ...were such that each family owned a shack or at least a portion of a shack ... ejected persons would have materials with which to build small temporary shelters pending

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55. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 3; Supervisor Shack Areas-Chief Superintendent, 4 October 1952 and vol 4; Memorandum to Manager, MNAD, 27 August 1953.
56. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; Deputy Manager, MNAD-City and Water Engineer, 21 October 1953.
57. Interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.
58. Inter-Departmental Committee re Cato Manor, agenda, 22 January 1953.
59. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; Memorandum: Superintendent Shack Survey re interview with Legal Advisor, 26 August 1953 and Deputy Manager, MNAD-City and Water Engineer, 21 October 1953.
60. MNAD, H 2/CM, vol 4; Acting Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 18 December 1952.

the completion of their more permanent homes. The actual position is that very few families in Cato Manor have a ready supply of materials.⁶¹

The problem was compounded by the fact that most residents in Mkhumbane did not build the shacks which they either owned or rented. Stephen Selby recalls that

Most people would have to find one of the local builders. There were quite a few around. Even some Coloured who were proper builders although they did not have their [artisan] tickets. Then there would be lots of discussion about what to build and how to build. But no, most of the people did not build their own homes. How could they, they were working most of the time but all of the time they needed somewhere to live.⁶²

The complexity of the situation is well illustrated in the negotiations between the municipality and a local Indian landowner, Mr Bux. On his land, Bux owned shacks which accommodated between 150 and 200 Africans. During the course of his land being expropriated by the municipality Bux claimed £700 compensation from the municipality for the loss of his shack material. Initially the municipality refused to agree to any compensation, but later realized that Bux, like other shacklords, "has a hold over the Corporation." Through the municipality refusing to pay compensation, Bux threatened to demolish his shacks and evict his tenants, assuring the municipality that such action "will probably cause a riot." As a result, Bux's land was only expropriated when the municipality had sufficient alternative accommodation into which Bux's tenants could be relocated.⁶³

The municipality did, through the expropriation of Indian-owned land, eradicate all forms of Indian shacklordism. African shacklordism in the Emergency Camp was to remain, however. Ashmon Nene, then an owner of shacks in Two Sticks and Mjafete, recalls:

Two Sticks was okay, those were always the same. but in Mjafete, that was where Kwa Muhle had taken all the shacks down and bulldozed the land for new places. There I sold my shacks to the people who were living there. Then they paid rent to the [City] Council. I had nothing to do with them then. But I still had my place in Two Sticks. That they never took from me.⁶⁴

African shacklordism continued. In addition, however, two other forms of housing were to be provided by the municipality. While both utilized the same building materials and construction techniques evident in existing wood and iron buildings, only some of these newly erected dwellings would improve the standard of housing in the Emergency Camp.

61. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 3; Supervisor Shack Areas-Chief Superintendent, 4 October 1952.

62. Interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.

63. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 4; City Valuator and Estates Manager- Manager, MNAD, 5 August 1953, City Valuator and Estates Manager- Manager, MNAD, 19 August 1953, Memorandum, C N Shum-Manager, MNAD, 28 August 1953 with additions dated 31 August and 12 November 1953 and City Council minutes 14 September 1953.

64. Interview with Mr A Nene, 26 January 1984.

By January 1958, there were 5,400 "families" living in the Emergency Camp in accommodation that had been erected under municipal "supervision".⁶⁵ Some of these houses were erected in accordance with municipal plans. The most popular of these designs, which were all intended for wood and iron housing, were the 'box', 'L' and 'U'-shaped houses. Nicholas Matiwane recalls:

It was too wonderful. I was living near Tatham Road [outside of the Emergency Camp, but in Cato Manor Farm] but we were taken by the municipality to Mkhumbane. There we were shown which was our site. It was in Cabazini, near to the Beerhall. Now when we built our house we could choose between certain designs. We built the 'U' shaped house. It was such that we could even put a chimney in one room. The whole of Cabazini looked like this.⁶⁶

Such dwellings were erected by African "building contractors" already operating in the shantytowns. With the municipality desiring to ensure that new dwellings be erected as quickly as possible, it established a list of contractors and directed them to various sites.⁶⁷

Some houses were of relatively sturdy construction, erected on sites in easy reach of water and sanitation facilities provided by the municipality. But many other persons were relocated to land which had not been provided with any facilities. Due to the municipality wishing to demolish African shack settlements in the Bluff area, the slow pace of municipal development in the Emergency Camp, and the paucity of services eventually provided, many people were relocated to unserviced sites in the Emergency Camp. Despite this, residents living in these areas were still required to pay rental to the municipality.⁶⁸

Furthermore, the vast majority of shack dwellers relocated to such sites refused to improve the standards of their own dwellings by taking loans from the Native Revenue Account. As the Emergency Camp was a temporary development, such houses could not be permanently owned or sold by residents.⁶⁹ Residents opposed the home loan scheme once it became general knowledge that the municipality was not to pay any compensation for the destruction of homes when residents were relocated to permanent housing.⁷⁰ By 1957, the home loan scheme had "virtually been abandoned."⁷¹

During the operation of the Emergency Camp many of the new dwellings erected in the area were fragile and unhealthy.⁷² Stephen Selby recalls that "when people would come to live in Mkhumbane, the

65. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; Houses required to meet immediate requirements as at January 1958.

66. Interview with Mr N Matiwane, 7 July 1985.

67. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 3; Supervisor Shack Areas-Acting Manager, MNAD, 19 August 1952.

68. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985. Although municipal officials recognized that this was illegal, the practise seems to have been continued in all cases other than those where residents sought no legal advice.

69. Interview with Messrs T Phewa and T Shabalala, 31 June 1985.

70. Interview with Ms E Law, 2 April 1980.

71. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; Deputy Manager, MNAD-Secretary, Natal Housing Board, 23 April 1957.

72. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 7; Houses required to meet immediate requirements as at January 1958.

Emergency Camp, they built places that were truly worrying. They were worse than before. They did not have the money to pay for good homes and they did not want to take a loan from us.⁷³ Mrs Constance Matiwane, who lived in the Cabazini area, recalls that her son, who was relocated from a shantytown near the "harbour", lived in a "terrible place here at Mkhumbane."⁷⁴

During the development of the Emergency Camp, the municipality had in effect created a residential area with a higher density of residents than that which had existed in the area prior to the development of the Emergency Camp. In spite of the basic facilities in the area being inadequate, the municipality persisted in moving as many shack dwellers there as possible. While certain municipal officials complained that this policy would lead to the breakdown of health and sanitation conditions, people were continually being moved into the Emergency Camp.⁷⁵ As Colin Shum recalls, "as far as I remember we just laughed the protests aside and just kept packing people in. That is what we had to do. Get everybody inside the Camp."⁷⁶

For the duration of the temporary housing scheme, a monthly rental of £1 per site was charged. This site rental was charged irrespective of whether or not the area had been demarcated or provided with either infrastructural services or those other services which the municipality was obliged to provide in terms of the 1937 Agreement. This site rental was way above the economic rental costs of the scheme.⁷⁷ Despite objections to such a high ground rental and the failure of the municipality to provide essential services, the ground rental remained at £1 a month. Residents who had borrowed finance from the Native Revenue Account in order to erect their homes paid an additional charge. Until around 1955, residents who took in lodgers paid an additional amount.

For shackowners the position was even more invidious. In many cases shackowners found, to their "greatest surprise", that they were virtually having to pay either a very substantial amount or all their profits, derived from renting shacks, to the municipality⁷⁸ - this in spite of the fact that the municipality, whilst being the landowner, had not provided any essential services on the land. As Colin Shum remarked: "it appeared to many, and well justified it was too, that the City Council was throwing the Indians out and then doing precisely the same thing all over again."⁷⁹ Take the case of Saul Manqele, who, whilst residing in the Emergency Camp, also owned an additional two shacks which comprised a combined total of six rooms. For these two shacks, Manqele paid both a monthly ground rent of £1 a month per shack and then five shillings a month per sub-let

73. Interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.

74. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 13 July 1983.

75. MNAD, H 2/CM, vol 4; City and Water Engineer-Manager, MNAD, 18 May 1953.

76. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

77. See for example, Native Administration Committee agenda 15 August 1952.

78. MNAD; H 2/CM, vol 5; Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 4 November 1953.

79. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985 and MNAD; H2/CM, vol 4; Chief Superintendent-Manager, MNAD, 4 March 1953.

shack room. This worked out at a total monthly charge of £5.⁸⁰ The municipality later abandoned the idea of charging lodgers' fees.

Administrative Action and Residents' Changing Circumstances

With regard to the administration of the Emergency Camp during the earlier 1950s, the municipality had little experience in such matters and gave the municipal officials working in the area a large amount of leeway. By the early 1950s the municipality had only just commenced the massive task of restructuring the personnel and administrative functions of the Native Administration Department and was thus as reliant on the 'men on the spot' as the municipality had been during the 1940s. As Japhta Mnguni recalls, after councillor Nicholson had announced municipal plans for the area, "he left and Mr Shum and Selby Ntombela were left drawing up plans."⁸¹

Through his earlier work in the area Shum had managed to gain the confidence of many residents, many of whom felt that it was possible to work with municipal officials: "it seemed as if the day was dawning."⁸² Shum encouraged shacklordism as he became aware of the legal and administrative difficulties of eradicating rackrenting.⁸³ Similarly, along with the continuing shack survey, whereby a very detailed set of information on all persons either relocated within or resettled to the Emergency Camp, was acquired came the "awarding" of permanent city rights.⁸⁴ Colin Shum remembers the process in the following way:

I think that most of the blokes in the shacks had been working in Durban for a long time. But anyway, and this was something that Havemann was very good on - we gave it [permanent urban residence] to most. I think that by the time I left Cato Manor in 1955 by far the greater amount of men had section 10 [1 a, b, c, d].⁸⁵

As Stephen Selby remembers, "we just handed it out. Who were we to tell whether people were telling the truth. You could not anyway. There had been no documents for a long time."⁸⁶ Despite the fact that labour had been employed during the war years on an often chaotic basis with little documentation been kept by the municipality, the reason for handing out permanent city residence rights was more fundamental. During the

80. MNAD, H 2/CM, vol 5; Mr S Manqele-Town Clerk, 31 August 1953. See also Mr G Sithole-The City Council [sic], 28 July 1953. Not only are these two letters virtually identical, but the hand of a lawyer is particularly evident. At this time Mr R Arenstein conducted "many battles behalf of shacklords". See interview with Mr R Arenstein, 18 June 1987.

81. KCAV; interview with Mr J Mnguni, 15 September 1980. In this interview Japhta Mnguni mistakenly refers to the mayor, councillor Osborn as giving the speech in Mkhumbane.

82. *Ibid.*

83. Shum Papers; Supervisor Shack Areas- Acting Manager, MNAD, 10 August 1952.

84. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.

85. Interviews with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985 and Mr H Strachan, 10 June 1982.

86. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.

early 1950s there was little surplus labour resident in the city and all municipal attempts to reduce the urban African population had resulted in labour shortages. Durban's economy could simply not do without the stabilization of African labour, and by the early 1950s both the municipality and employers realized that this necessitated giving workers permanent residence in the city. This was what both the municipality and local employers had briefly during the later 1940s attempted to block. However, with the development of the Emergency Camp, permanent residence in the city was allowed, but under conditions which did not give Africans in Mkhumbane the legal right to own land in the city. Forms of shacklordism however continued.

In addition to allowing shacklordism to continue and assisting residents in gaining permanent urban rights, local municipal officials allocated housing sites, controlled the process whereby African shack builders erected shacks, and collected rents. The municipality was also engaged in "shack clearance" in Mkhumbane, with Peter Cooke from the City and Water Engineer's Department in charge of shack destruction. However, while shacks were destroyed "no-one was ever left homeless", and Cooke himself became well liked amongst residents.⁸⁷ Shum also negotiated with the police for residents to purchase, at a nominal charge, weekly brewing permits. These permits allowed residents to brew sufficient sorghum beer for consumption only by themselves and their direct dependants. In spite of residents' resentment that the beer was only for "family use", could not be sold and that only sorghum beer could be brewed, women would queue from 5 a.m. every week on Wednesday and Thursday mornings when the permits were issued. Despite complaints, residents "could see that the law was sympathetic."⁸⁸

During the mid-1950s, the nature of administrative controls in the Emergency Camp changed substantially. Not only were the new officials in charge of the Emergency Camp often officious,⁸⁹ but the newly re-organized municipal Native Administration Department became ever more eager to expel all Africans not legally entitled to live permanently in the city. In 1955, the municipality again resumed attempts to compel all African women in the city to register with the municipality. In spite of enormous resistance, the municipality successfully instituted a system whereby women were given "certificates of privilege."⁹⁰

Under this system, all women who desired to be employed in the newly burgeoning female domestic service market, and those women who "wish to benefit from the protection and services of the Native Administration Department", could seek such documentation. With employment for African women being so rare and their legal position so tenuous, this administrative device placed the onus on African women to register to gain increased security in the city. In terms of this policy, the municipality could only restrict African

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87. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985. See also MNAD; H2/CM,, vol 4; Deputy City and Water Engineer-Manager, MNAD, 8 October 1953 and Cato Manor Superintendents-Manager, MNAD, 21 October 1953. Amongst the shack residents, Mr Cooke's nickname referred to his habit of continually scratching his groin.
88. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985 and KCAV; interview with Mr J Mnguni, 19 September 1980. See also MNAD; N 15; passim.
89. See, for example, *Ilanga lase Natal*, 7 April 1956.
90. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1955.

women's access to formal employment and could neither evict women from the city nor ensure that the only women living in the city would be those legally married to men having permanent urban rights. The municipality would only be capable of achieving these aims with the removal to Kwa Mashu and Umlazi. However, municipal officials believed the policy of providing 'certificates of privilege was a "step in the right direction."⁹¹

By 1958 however, the municipality also began to co-operate with the police in conducting pass raids in the Emergency Camp.⁹² Alongside the police came the ubiquitous 'blackjacks', who, under municipal White officials, often conducted their own "screening surveys."⁹³ By the late 1950s, the municipality was trying to restrict the number of "families" eligible for accommodation in the new townships. As a result, many apparently "unattached African women - mainly Mpondo" were "thrown out of Durban."⁹⁴ Moreover, with the declining rate of African employment in commerce and industry, the municipality was in a position to reduce the reserve army of labour resident.⁹⁵ During the late 1950s the various pass raids into the Emergency Camp resulted in many shantytown residents being evicted from the city.

As was recognized and indeed welcomed by African traders in Mkhumbane, one of the main principles of apartheid legislation was that "us Africans should be allowed to trade amongst our own people."⁹⁶ Amimosity between aspirant African traders and Indian shopkeepers increased steadily after the riots of January 1949 when Indians began to re-open their trading ventures. Stephen Selby, then resident in Mkhumbane recalls that "you could just feel the people getting angry when some of the Indians started doing business again. People felt that it was not right because it was now their land. They had taken it."⁹⁷

After the January 1949 Riots municipal officials had accepted that one of the main issues causing bitter resentment amongst Africans living in the Cato Manor Farm shantytowns was that Indian-owned shops proliferated in the area while African shackshops were prosecuted for illegal trading.⁹⁸ As a direct result of this recognition of the power of African traders in the area, and fearing renewed incidences of rioting, immediately after the January 1949 Riots both the municipality and various provincial authorities such as the Local Road Transportation Board had been engaged in attempts to legalize some African entrepreneurial ventures in Mkhumbane.⁹⁹ As a result, African-owned bus companies were granted road carrier certificates to

91. Ibid, 27 October 1955.

92. Ibid, 7 June 1958.

93. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.

94. See PNAB photographic collection.

95. Ilanga lase Natal, 19 April 1958 and 26 April 1958.

96. Interview with Mr B Mngadi, 29 October 1986.

97. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.

98. MNAD;CM/Trading, passim.

99. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 22 August 1988 and MNAD; NT 7/28 vol 1; passim.

operate on routes between Mkhumbane, Warwick Avenue and Sydney Road.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the municipality "turned a blind eye to all those people who had taken over Indian shops after the Riots" and, for a brief while, ceased prosecutions for illegal shackshop trading.¹⁰¹

It was however only with the development of the Emergency Camp that the municipality was finally empowered to assist in the creation of a legal, licenced African trading class in the shacklands. Having the power of licencing authority in the city and with the Emergency Camp regulations specifically allowing for legal African traders, the growth of the legal African trading class began.

Soon after the initial expropriations of Indian-owned land in the area began, the municipality commenced negotiations with Indian shopkeepers for the expropriation of their premises. The amounts of compensation involved were substantial, with many of the shops being highly profitable ventures; the municipality experienced considerable delays in acquiring these properties.¹⁰² However, by the late 1950s, only six Indian general dealer stores remained in the Emergency Camp. All the other Indian-owned shops had been acquired by the municipality and renovated.¹⁰³ During the course of developing the Emergency Camp, the municipality also built trading stalls for Africans resident in the Camp around the newly erected Cato Manor beerhall and erected further trading premises.

By the late 1950s, licenced African entrepreneurs operated eleven general dealers stores, 2 butcheries, 2 hairdressers or barber shops, three tailor and dressmaker establishments, and some tinker, cobbler and carpenter ventures in the Emergency Camp.¹⁰⁴ All these shops had to conform to local licencing bye-laws. Japhta Mnguni recalls:

These shops were very different to the shackshops. We were proper businessmen. All these [shack] shops had to have was a little room next to the bed or some place to put things. Then you could sell from your house. But when the municipality came we had to go into buildings with windows and lights and then they said how much shelving we must have. Those were proper shops.¹⁰⁵

For example, the annual operating costs borne by Mdingi Ngcobo's Dumisani Supply Stores were just over £296. His main annual overheads were rental, wages, electricity, packaging, bank charges, repairs, and annual depreciation charges for his fridge, scales and show case.¹⁰⁶

All trading premises intended for African occupation by African entrepreneurs in the Emergency Camp were owned by the municipality who rented premises to selected African traders. These rentals were

100. Ilanga lase Natal, 4 June 1949.

101. Interview with Mr T Roche, 23 April 1982.

102. See MNAD; CM/Trading, passim.

103. Ibid and City and Water Engineer's Department, Housing Section, Plan no 21430, sheet B 3: Cato Manor no 812.

104. MNAD; Cope Trading Report, 1955.

105. Interview with Mr J Mnguni, 20 July 1985.

106. MNAD; Cope Trading Report, Annexure C. See also MNAD; N28/28.

based on the economic costs of erecting the buildings and installing electricity plus further monthly charges for water and electricity usage.¹⁰⁷ Such financial overheads were vastly greater than those direct and indirect costs borne by shackshop owners. Bryant Mqadi recalls:

When we moved into our shop we had to pay rent and watch out for inspectors who would see that we were only keeping this stuff and not this. Everything was more expensive to be there than the shackshop. Even if you lost all the things to be sold in the shackshop when the police came around, it was never as much as you had to pay to be in the shops.¹⁰⁸

As landowner, licencing authority and in control of the developing of the Emergency Camp, the municipality was solely responsible for allocating trading licenses. On the whole, when deciding on the suitability of applicants, the main criteria were that the applicant have trading experience, sufficient capital reserves, and that "he must be of good character".¹⁰⁹ In many cases this latter requirement was sufficient.¹¹⁰ The municipality monitored the way in which licenses operated their ventures and in some cases withdrew and reallocated licences when it became evident that traders were incapable of running their businesses.¹¹¹ In the same way as the African shackshop traders had justified, to both the municipality and Mkhumbane residents, their desire for trading rights because they wanted to "help us African people develop",¹¹² so the municipality justified their control over African legal traders by saying that such traders should "be of real service to their own people."¹¹³ The images of a radical populism, a desire for profit and an acceptance of existing authority became both legitimized and interrelated to the benefit of both the municipality and legal traders.

Most of the African stores made lucrative profits. As a municipal inspector remarked of six of the African general dealers in the Emergency Camp: the ventures "are well stocked and are rapidly outgrowing their small shops."¹¹⁴ While the value of stock carried by these shops rarely if ever exceeded £400 at any one time, sales were extremely high as were profits. On average, Mdingi Ngcobo made around £900 a year in profit.¹¹⁵

The success and "canniness" of the majority of licenced African traders in Mkhumbane would impress and "amaze" municipal officials.¹¹⁶ In analysing the rapid growth of these African traders, one municipal official quoted the anthropologist J E M White:

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107. MNAD; CM/Trading, *passim*.
 108. Interview with Mr B Mqadi, 29 October 1986.
 109. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 6 November 1980.
 110. Interview with Mr C N Shum and MNAD; N 9/App. See for example KCAV; interview with Mr J Mnguni, 19 July 1979.
 111. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 September 1980.
 112. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutho, 21 April 1985.
 113. MNAD; Cope Trading Report.
 114. *Ibid.*
 115. *Ibid.*, Annexure C.
 116. Interview with Ms E Law, 2 April 1982.

Take a Central African Pygmy ... give him the same education as an Oxford graduate and he could do better than the graduate. This is not because Pygmies are by nature more intelligent than Oxford graduates but that man to man, some Pygmies are relatively brighter than some Oxford graduates.¹¹⁷

Indeed, for the legal African traders, the opportunities provided by the municipality would provide many of them with their chance to "prove to the White man that we could do it. We had our own leaders of the city." Although having earlier opposed existing structures of power in the city and municipal attempts to control Mkhumbane, and now being both dependent upon municipal authority and being required to finance higher overheads than those borne by shackshop traders, such traders considered the "investment" worthwhile. Japhtha Mnguni continues:

Without that shop, which was at 'New Look' we would not have been here in Kwa Mashu like this. All this started when he went with the City Council. This is our present for doing those things in Mkhumbane.¹¹⁸

In the same way as the municipality saw to the growth of a legally operating African trading class in the Emergency Camp, it also attempted to provide institutional channels for "discussions" between residents' elected representatives and municipal officials.¹¹⁹ As in all other South African cities, it was these channels of communication which established authority in the city accepted as the virtually exclusive voice of urban Africans.¹²⁰

The operation of the Nogondayo ceased, and the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board was established. As the Emergency Camp was not a formal permanent township or location the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board was not permitted to discuss matters under the auspices of the Joint Locations Advisory Board. The Nogondayo had developed through residents, particularly shack leaders, wishing to entrench their residence in Mkhumbane. The purpose of the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board was to allow for the emergence of local leaders who would disseminate municipal policy among residents and discuss the "various problems which arose with the development of the Emergency Camp".¹²¹ The municipality believed that it was not the function of the Cato Manor Welfare and Development board to discuss broad policy matters, including those related to the future of Mkhumbane or the Emergency Camp: "their

117. MNAD; Cope Trading Report.

118. Interview with Mr J Mnguni, 20 July 1985.

119. Interview with Mrs R Shabane, 18 November 1986.

120. See for example Director of Bantu Administration, Durban, Personal file: Notes on the meeting by a Durban City Council Deputation with the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Pretoria, 3 August 1959. See also interviews with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1985, Ms R Shabane, 18 November 1986, Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1984 and Mr A Nene, 26 January 1984 243. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 5 September 1980.

121. *Ibid.*

function was to look after the concerns of the residents of the Emergency Camp. They were not involved in discussions over Kwa Mashu. That was not their concern. Their constituents were the Emergency Camp residents.¹²²

Conclusion

With the development of the Emergency Camp, the municipality had responded to shantytown residents' demands for better residential facilities and freehold rights in the Mkhumbane area, by expropriating the land and developing a temporary African housing scheme. The basic tenet of municipal policy was to ensure that the temporary residents of the Emergency Camp were "disciplined".¹²³ The Emergency Camp was utilized as the temporary dumping-ground for many of the shantytown residents of the city. It was thus possible to "peg" the growth of new shantytowns in other areas of the city and avoid resultant land devaluations. It was also possible to gather into one area most of those African workers, families and others who were not housed in formal accommodation. In relocation shack dwellers into the Emergency Camp area the municipality not only cleared other shack areas in the city, but used the very task of relocation to sift the African labour force in Durban. The provision of new shack housing came to be one of the ways through which the municipality introduced the new pass and labour bureau legislation. But this was not all.

Through powers vested in all urban authorities, the municipality was not only empowered to acquire ownership of the land and control the shack population. Having acquired ownership, the municipality was able to directly affect the fortunes of both ordinary residents and others having a great degree of control over material and social facilities in the shacklands. This was clearly understood by shackleaders, shacklords, other entrepreneurs and ordinary residents. In the later 1940s, the African shack dwellers of Cato Manor Farm had operated outside of municipal control, had established a residential settlement in defiance of the municipality and had actively participated in a city-wide struggle against established civic power. With the development of the Emergency Camp, many within the shantytowns, the very changed situation was clear to all. Many would seek strategic advantages in co-operating with the municipality. While shacklords managed to resist municipal attempts to restructure the nature of housing provision in Mkhumbane and residents refused to accept any notion of purchasing temporary housing on land owned by the municipality, shackleaders and other entrepreneurs came to be closely identified with the municipality. However, such persons' relationship to both the municipality and the other residents of the shacklands was to be inherently contradictory.

By 1958 the Emergency Camp was overcrowded and riddled with disease. Long before the 1958 Cato Manor Beerhall Riots and the general political crisis which developed during the late 1950s, municipal activities in the African shantytowns of Cato Manor Farm had resulted in a residential quality of life which was worse than that which prevailed in the area prior to the advent of direct municipal authority. Even though the

122. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 5 September 1980.

123. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1984.

municipality had greater control and couched its concern for the area in terms of the appalling health conditions, it consistently exacerbated living conditions in the shacklands.

The nature of municipal intervention also assisted in the residents becoming increasingly politicized. This was to occur in ways which neither the state nor capital could fully handle. During the 1950s, with the increasing authority of the municipality in the shantytowns, the changing class composition of the shack settlements, and the transformation of health and general material conditions of life in the area, many of the essential structures of life in the area changed. As the structures of life in the shantytowns changed, so the perspectives, aims and aspirations of shack residents altered in various contradictory ways. These changes were compounded by the influence which much broader forces exerted in the shantytowns: the manner in which both the state and capital were engaged in transforming the nature of African labour and residence in the city and the growth of more structured and mass-based African political and trade union organization. During the late 1950s and early 1960s the struggle for Mkhumbane would be rejoined but in a changed context.

CHAPTER 10

"WHO COMES TO WHOM? THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND
SHANTYTOWN LEADERSHIP 1953-1958"

The Changing Nature of Shantytown Struggle

With the development of the Cato Manor Emergency Camp, the shack community had lost the struggle to remain free of municipal authority and gain increased security of tenure over the shacklands. It appears that with the development of the Emergency Camp many residents "realized that we had to wake up. Kwa Muhle was upon us ... coming to us."¹ Realizing that shack society faced the more assertive and confident power of the state, residents began to develop strategies through which they might gain increased security. Despite the uncongenial conditions of life in the Emergency Camp, the development of this Emergency Camp was to be partly responsible for the growth of new political strategies among the residents of the shantytowns.

As with the later 1940s, many of the actions of local residents would continue to be sporadic and unorganized. Many such actions had no direct intention other than to "irritate and annoy."² Municipal officials would be infuriated by the way in which untraced persons would sabotage basic infrastructural amenities. Toilets would be smashed up, water taps left deliberately flowing and stormwater drain covers stolen, or household refuse, stones and detritus thrown into drains.³ Similarly, barricades would "suddenly appear" across major roadways within the shack complex.⁴ Another "favourite trick" involved placing bricks in a paper bag on the roads and watching vehicles drive over what appeared to be an empty bag.⁵

Throughout the 1950s, municipal officials would be subject to harassment and ridicule and the occasional stoning.⁶ Likewise drivers of municipal buses and, much later, municipal refuse trucks, some of which were brand new, could expect that, their vehicles could be stoned. Peter Cooke, the municipal official in charge of shack demolition in the area would often be insulted and mocked. Residents shouted his derogatory nickname, or called him "white trash."⁷ Police forays into the shantytowns had for long faced organized resistance. Whenever police vans moved into the shack sprawl the children would raise the call. Shouting

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1. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.
 2. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.
 3. Interview with Mr S Bourquin. While making no reference to sabotage, see for example MNAD; H2/CM, vol 7; Acting City Engineer-City Medical Officer of Health, 8 October 1958.
 4. Interview with Mr J Mnguni, 20 July 1985.
 5. *Ibid.*
 6. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.
 7. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.

"Meleko! Meleko!" the call would be carried on through the shack settlements warning residents to hide any illicit commodities. Residents would also attack the hated police informers who would guide police raids into a particular area.⁸ After police raids into the shantytowns, police guarding the "crocodiles" of suspects or arrested persons which walked under guard back to the Cato Manor police station would be subject to stonings and verbal abuse.⁹ In some cases, residents would attempt to "charge" police escorting the lines of "prisoners" walking through the shantytown back to the police station: "they were wanting to release their friends and go back to the shebeen!"¹⁰ As Dorothy Nyembe remembers, "it was in our bones to stop the boers".¹¹

Such spontaneous and sporadic acts often created further hardships for residents. Barricades would delay the already inadequate bus service. Blocked toilets had detrimental effects on health, sanitation and domestic routines. Verbal abuse hurled at police undertaking liquor raids could often rebound against those residents whose houses were being searched: "it does not take too much to make the police scared. The children would start shouting at the police and then the cops start to break your place down."¹²

These actions were the visible manifestation of an anger and confusion which many residents felt towards the more assertive presence of the police and municipality.¹³ Nevertheless in many cases incidents like those attempts to abuse municipal or police officials had a more clearly developed sense of purpose than was sometimes realized. A resident says that "the tsotsis kept us on the boil."¹⁴ Colin Shum recalls that "on some days you could walk around the area and you could just feel something was wrong. There had been a raid and people had stoned the police, or robbed a bus driver or stoned a corporation truck."¹⁵

As a result of such provocations, which municipal officials referred to as "minor incidents", the level of generalized militance within the shantytowns was often raised in ways which later could lead to more organized resistance and revolt.¹⁶ Such was the case with the 1949 Riots, the attacks on Indian-owned property during late 1953, the beerhall riots of 1959, and the killing of nine policemen in 1960.

Such incidents would continue to occur regularly during the history of the Emergency Camp, but they did not lead to any widespread and organized resistance until much later in the 1950s. Up until this period, in spite of the deteriorating social conditions in the Emergency Camp, there were to be no cases of widespread

8. KCAV, interview with Mrs A Mnguni, 19 July 1979.

9. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

10. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 12 May 1985.

11. *Ibid.* See also MNAD; H2/CM, vol 7; Superintendent, Cato Manor Emergency Camp-Manager, MNAD, 17 December 1957.

12. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 31 June 1985.

13. See, for example, C van Onselen, *Chibaro African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933*, (London, 1976), pp 242-243.

14. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985.

15. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

16. Interview with Mr D McCullouch, 5 April 1982.

rioting where established municipal authority in the area was in any way challenged. For example a resident recalls that passengers travelling on a municipal bus "nearly started to riot and kill the bus driver" after the driver had been robbed of fare money by a well known petty thief. The thief was never reported to the police but there was also not that spontaneous heightened sense of rebellion which was so characteristic of the shack-dwellers' behaviour during the later 1940s.¹⁷

To state that rioting on the scale which occurred during January 1949 can rarely be repeated, or that the increasingly more powerful presence of the municipality made such developments unlikely, is only partially correct. It is significant that despite shack residents resenting most forms of external authority, it was only with the development of the Emergency Camp that a more structured leadership element emerged in the shacklands. Furthermore residents themselves began to gain a clearer sense of the need for internal organization and long-term strategies. For example, after the municipal toilets in the Two Sticks area had been sabotaged, there was no spontaneous outbreak of militant destructiveness. Instead, a group of local women formed under the leadership of Congress Women's Leaguer Dorothy Nyembe. Using the question of toilets as a point of entry into wider issues, Dorothy Nyembe led the deputation to see Mr Loquet, then Superintendent of the Emergency Camp, "to tell him about all the things that the women wanted the municipality to do for us."¹⁸

Right from the start of the Emergency Camp the municipality also faced increasingly more organized and calculated resistance. In 1953 the municipality desired to persuade residents of the Thusini settlement in the Haviland Road area to move into the Emergency Camp. Fearing that forms of forcible harassment like "pulling down doors" would simply result in attacks on municipal officials, municipal officials resorted to "vigorous ... verbal pressure" and "marking of shacks with paint."¹⁹ Residents resisted such attempts at resettlement with a clear response: municipal paint markings were painted over.²⁰

In 1953, Isaac Zwane, a leading member of the Zulu Hlanganani and a local shacklord owning shacks accommodating over a hundred "families", refused to move into the Emergency Camp and led this particular community's struggle against the municipality. Residents refused to move unless everyone was allowed to move together "so as to retain their community relationship." Already confronting the intractable difficulties of restructuring the basis of shack accommodation in the Emergency Camp and desiring to clear shantytowns outside of the Emergency Camp, the municipality agreed to these and similar conditions demanded by other shack communities.²¹

Other acts of defiance included non-payment of rents, for periods of up to six months. African residents claimed that they had paid advance rents to the Indian landowners.²² However such tactics were

17. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 31 June 1985.

18. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

19. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 4; Memorandum, Cato Manor general, 21 October 1953.

20. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

21. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 5; handwritten memorandum, 23 November 1953 and Superintendent, Cato Manor Emergency Camp-Manager, MNAD, 1 April 1954.

22. MNAD; H2/CM, vol 4; Superintendent, Cato Manor Emergency Camp-Manager, MNAD, 8 September 1953 and Superintendents, Cato Manor Emergency Camp- Manager, MNAD, 9 October 1953.

merely either of temporary benefit or were simply resistance to the means whereby shack settlements were reconstituted inside the Emergency Camp. Such tactics provided no clearly valuable long-term strategy for resisting municipal authority and transforming shack life in ways beneficial to residents.

During the course of the development of the Emergency Camp only one clearly constituted organization or grouping would continually refuse to deal with the municipality. From its inception the Zulu Hlanganani persistently fought for the rights of illicit traders to continue their activities in the Emergency Camp. Gaining the assistance of lawyer Rowley Arenstein, whom the Zulu Hlanganani selected "because he had not represented the Indians" at the commission of enquiry into the 1949 Riots, the Zulu Hlanganani was to be remarkably successful in resisting municipal efforts to prosecute illicit traders.²³ As Rowley Arenstein recalls, "it was so funny to see case after case being thrown out of court. The City Council had enormous difficulty in establishing the comparatively simple issue of what illegal trading was."²⁴

The conflict between this organization and the municipality continued through the 1950s. Some strategies of resistance were fairly simple: "you just said that this was not a shop, 'Where are the windows, where are the cash registers, where are the advertisements? Hey?'"²⁵ Acting out the parts of municipal official, shackshop trader and the trader's lawyer, that most artful of dodgers, J J Shabalala, recalls:

... when the City Health I think ... he came charging... 'I must charge, the samp is here, mealie meal is here, while everything is dirt.' The attorney asks [the shackshop trader] 'You rent the house from somebody?' [Shopkeeper nods his head, affirming that he rents the shack, whereupon the attorney asks the shopkeeper] 'You find somebody is loading ...the shelves?' ...There is no shop there. ... You can come and see, there is no name in shop, ... you come and you find the children sleeping right on top of the samp, and then somebody is putting a dish in the same samp and napkins and everything just mixed up. How can you shop there? Somebody is just buying and [storing] everything!²⁶

Other forms of resistance were as complex and effective. One of the Zulu Hlanganani's activities was called the Zulu Hlanganani Buying Club, which would distribute goods to members of the club. Under this legal, but disingenuous guise, individual shopkeepers continued to trade despite continual police and municipal harassment and the protests of some legal African traders in the area.²⁷

The buying club was simply the Zulu Hlanganani's wholesaling operation. Buying in many cases together, individual shopkeepers kept what they referred to as the 'Indidane book'. This was a hard-covered exercise book, "the book of confusion", filled with nonsense written in Zulu.²⁸ The book was however a veritable clay tablet of great importance. Whenever municipal inspectors tried to prosecute shopkeepers for

23. Interview with Mr H C Sibisi, 29 November 1983.

24. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

25. Interview with Mr B Mnqadi, 29 October 1986.

26. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 28 October 1986.

27. MNAD; Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board memorandum, 8 September 1953.

28. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 28 October 1986.

illegal trading, the retort of shopkeepers was simple: "No! No! I am not a skelm. All are my members. It is written so in the Indidane book! 'What is this book?' The inspectors did not know what was happening."²⁹ As J J Shabalala recalls, with the 'Indidane' book illicit individual traders "really wrote ... confusion."³⁰ By the end of 1955 the municipality acknowledged that there were still at least 58 "illegal dealers within the camp."³¹

Although many of the members of the Zulu Hlanganani would become legal traders in the Emergency Camp, others simply extended their own illicit activities. In spite of their public protestations and guile operations were manifestly those of individual traders.³² With the municipality anxious to control the number of licensed trading ventures in the area, avoid "over trading" and reluctant to build further municipal trading blocks, there was probably little option but for illicit traders to totally reject all attempts to eliminate the ventures.³³

However among these illicit traders were those "hotheads" like Isaac Zwane who refused to accept that the municipality had any authority to determine who should be permitted to trade in the shantytown.³⁴ Ruth Shabane remembers Zwane's: "he was the one who said that we should have nothing to do with Kwa Muhle. We should decide these things ourselves. He was hot."³⁵ But even for Zwane non-recognition of municipal authority was not part of any broader strategy of non-collaboration. Both Zwane, and J J Shabalala, were members of the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board.

Residents recall that when Isaac Zwane succeeded in gaining municipal permission for all those living in the shacks which he owned being permitted to re-establish their community within the Emergency Camp, Zwane "was taking his flock away from Egypt."³⁶ Such recollections indicate a change of strategy amongst shack dwellers. In the late 1940s shack residents had striven to remain outside the authority of the municipality by depicting the growing Mkhumbane shack sprawl as the chosen land into which the scorned Africans trying to live in the city could settle and establish a permanent urban residence. Now, with the advent of municipal authority, these same biblical homilies were used to explain the movement from isolated shack areas into the Emergency Camp.

Changing use of old testament images was also apparent among the trading class who would call on people to remember the "bad old days" when "we were in the wilderness."³⁷ Many of these images can be seen as the attempt by a new trading class to justify their increasing wealth by evoking images of a militant communal

29. Interview with Mr J Mnguni, 20 July 1986.

30. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 28 October 1986.

31. MNAD; Cope Trading Report, September 1955.

32. See for example interview with Mr R Arenstein, 24 July 1985.

33. MNAD; Cope Trading Report, September 1955.

34. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1985.

35. Interview with Ms R Shabane, 18 November 1986.

36. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 6 April 1985.

37. Ilanga lase Natal, 21 February 1953.

populism. However, there were many who, whilst still seeing themselves as "the forgotten tribe" and often singing the psalm 'Lord Speak to Us', accepted the reality of municipal power and sought to gain strategic advantages out of the Emergency Camp.³⁸ Such a strategy was to have much in common with the manner in which the ANC attempted to acquire influence in the shantytowns.

The ANC and Shantytown Leadership

Prior to the June 1959 Beerhall riots, the ANC had for long attempted to increase membership and develop a powerful branch structure in Mkhumbane. During the later 1940s and very early 1950s, the ANC had very little popular support or organization in Mkhumbane or anywhere else in the city. This was despite AWG Champion believing that his opponents were encouraging "Congress branches in every hostel and street corner in Durban with a view to organizing factions hostile to me" and optimistic Youth League accounts of their own support.³⁹ The majority of residents in Mkhumbane had for long rejected Champion. However this did not mean that the ANC under the leadership of A J Luthuli and the Congress Youth Leaguers acquired support in the area.

Even prior to his election as Natal leader of the ANC, Luthuli had placed great importance on the organisation of support in Mkhumbane. Stanford Mtolo remembers: "Msizini was there. Congress had them. In Lamont and Chesterville the people were hot. But everyone wanted Mkhumbane."⁴⁰ During the course of the first meeting of the ANC in Durban after Luthuli's election as Natal leader, Luthuli set aside a whole morning during which he "sent" Congress members into the shacklands to organize.⁴¹

Although being constantly "scared of us in Mkhumbane:they remembered the Indian African Riots very well", many ANC leaders believed that there was a political quality within the shack residents.⁴² As a resident remembers, this feeling was not unreserved:

Champion was I think scared, yes actually scared of us. We lived next to him, but we would never listen to him. That was out of the question. Now this was the same with the Youth Leaguers. They were different from Champion of course. But they were different from people who kill 'coolies'. But these people were real leaders and they did not mind being joked at. Once when the congress came to Mkhumbane, [name deleted] walked around as if he was on a tour of inspection. 'Hey, mnumzane, you look like Verwoerd!' They did not really mind.⁴³

38. *Ibid.*, 28 January 1958 and interview with Mrs T Phewa, 6 April 1985.

39. *Bantu World*, 17 May 1952. For optimistic accounts of the growth of the ANC see *The Guardian*, 10 July 1952. For more accurate estimates of ANC power in Durban see CKM; 2:DA 19/1:44, List of Branches, 1949 and *Bantu World* 5 January 1952.

40. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

41. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 11 August 1951.

42. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 7 July 1985.

43. Interview with Mr G Bhengu, 21 February 1982. It is significant that in this account, which may be apocryphal, neither the subservient word 'baas', nor usual respects connoted by the greeting 'u Baba' are used. Instead the more neutral 'mnumzane'.

The reference to Verwoerd almost certainly derives from an incident which residents remember from the time when Verwoerd first visited the shantytowns in the early 1950s. The Minister of Native Affairs had "looked very stern" and had refused to "shake hands" with the members of the CMW&DB who had lined up to greet the Minister. Instead, Verwoerd had bowed.⁴⁴ While perhaps a little harsh but not vindictive, the joke accurately portrayed the very real class differences between many established ANC leaders and the Mkhumbane proletariat. For those listening carefully, such references indicated an independence of spirit which was to cause problems for the ANC.

Leading ANC members believed that the residents could become more closely involved in the organization. Luthuli believed that the militancy of the shack population could strengthen the local ANC.⁴⁵ He constantly impressed upon ANC organizers the need to develop a support basis in the shantytown. Membership could only be gained through the ANC focussing on the crucial day-to-day issues which faced shantytown residents. Having gained support, it was then possible, as Stanford Mtolo recalls, to "rely on the people of Mkhumbane when we needed them" - during the large mass campaigns planned for the later 1950s.⁴⁶

Luthuli was continually visiting the shacklands. Luthuli was also a close friend of Ashmon Nene, a shacklord and, probably, the "Congress stalwart" in the shantytowns.⁴⁷ A "very fierce African nationalist", many viewed Nene as "the power behind [Luthuli's] throne." Whilst Nene himself disavows such a role, it is clear that whenever Luthuli visited Durban, he often stayed with Nene in the Two Sticks area of Mkhumbane.⁴⁸

The ANC which elected Chief Luthuli was, in many important ways, a new organization. As one member recalls, "we took Congress over, it was the Congress Youth League now stepping into the father Congress."⁴⁹ Having a core leadership that was, whilst having taken over the ANC in Natal, often relatively unknown and sometimes rejected, perhaps politically inexperienced and certainly lacking in any really effective subaltern class hardly helped matters.⁵⁰ Furthermore the ANC was continually short of funds and willing, unpaid organizers. Financial and administrative chaos reigned in the offices at Lakhani Chambers.⁵¹ In 1950 the Congress Youth League struggled to provide financial or legal assistance to those Africans who had actively supported the 'Stay Away' call.⁵² During the Defiance Campaign, the ANC was unable to afford to pay the

44. Interview with Mr A Nene, 26 January 1984 and personal communication, Mr C N Shum.

45. Interview with Mr A Nene, 26 January 1984.

46. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

47. *Ibid.*

48. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 22 June 1985.

49. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983. See also interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Ms B Naidoo, n.d.

50. E Feit, *African Opposition in South Africa* (Stanford, 1967).

51. Interviews with Mr R Arenstein, 18 July 1985 and Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985. For similar general analysis see Lodge, *Black Politics*, p 70 and 74.

52. See, for example, *Ilanga lase Natal*, 4 November 1950.

fines of arrested members and relied on the financial assistance of the NIC.⁵³ Financial difficulties would continue to bedevil the organization throughout the 1950s.⁵⁴

Facing such constraints, the ANC's organizing drive in the Mkhumbane shacklands was, as in other areas of the city, almost solely dependent upon the abilities of unpaid members and "volunteers" resident in the shantytown.⁵⁵ Most of the ANC organizers in the shantytown were already well known in the area. Many had established leadership positions in the shack settlements in the later 1940s. Such people were often popular, assertive and charismatic personalities. Even among male residents of Mkhumbane, Dorothy Nyembe is remembered for

Walking around with her raven's [crow] tooth bracelets, Uhuru dresses and a sharp tongue. She was not married and she went for us. She was a teacher turned to volcano. This was what she would do. 'Where are you going, come and join the Congress'. People would laugh, but they were scared. She was the one to listen to.⁵⁶

Others like Ashmon Nene are remembered for "looking and speaking like a king, a priest, in shabby clothes".⁵⁷ Esau Makatini, a shantytown leader of long standing and descendant of the militant le Fleur family, was "the real king, with his stick, and he would just walk around, but when you spoke then it was you who must say something."⁵⁸

By the time of the Defiance Campaign the ANC's organizing drive had yielded certain positive results. Attending the 1952 annual conference of the ANC in Natal were twenty-three delegates from Mkhumbane, which at that time was treated as a single branch. At this time the ANC only had 994 members in the city, of whom 160 lived in the Mkhumbane area.⁵⁹

Immediately after the Defiance Campaign, the ANC began to encourage the growth of separate branches in the Mkhumbane area. During the planning of the Defiance Campaign, many local ANC members, including Luthuli, seriously doubted whether the local ANC was sufficiently powerful to embark on a campaign of defiance.⁶⁰ The ANC's alliance with the Natal Indian Congress was among many Africans in the city. The

53. Interview with Mr A Nene, 26 January 1984. Nene was to lead one of the last 'volunteer' groups during this campaign. During the early part of this campaign those arrested refused on principle to pay fines and preferred imprisonment. This policy was later changed. See also Kuper, *Passive Resistance*, Chapter 5.

54. See for example CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19: 30/13; A N C (Natal) special executive committee meeting, 6 June 1952; 2:DA 19: 30/13; A N C (Natal) executive committee meeting 20 December 1952 and 2:DA 19/1:30/9; A N C (Natal) executive committee meeting 21-22 January 1956.

55. For similar analysis see Lodge, *Black Politics*, p 75.

56. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 14 July 1985. See also *Ilanga lase Natal*, 7 June 1958.

57. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.

58. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 14 July 1985.

59. CKM;reel 3B;2:DA 19:30/13; A N C (Natal), Minutes of Annual Conference, 1-2 November 1952.

60. A J Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, (London, 1982), p 100.

ANC was in considerable disarray and poorly organized.⁶¹ This became particularly evident during the course of the Defiance Campaign.⁶²

The ANC's renewed organizing efforts were heavily influenced by the so called 'M' Plan. This strategy was developed by Mandela in the wake of the ANC's failure to build a mass organization during the Defiance Campaign. However, many leading ANC members in Durban, whilst accepting the need to "decentralize" branches, desired to "adapt" the 'M' Plan to meet local conditions.⁶³ There was a continual tension within the ANC in Durban over the dissolution of existing branches. Although supporting the 'M' Plan, ANC leaders in the city would be ambivalent about the benefits of the consequent division of their support bases into many different branches.⁶⁴

There was however, initially at least, no such tension within the ANC over the formation of smaller branches in the shantytowns of Mkhumbane. At the time of the Defiance Campaign there was only one branch in the area, the Two Sticks branch led by Ashmon Nene and Dorothy Nyembe. Nyembe recalls,

After the Defiance Campaign we had to start moving into all the areas of the slums. We had to start new branches and get people into Congress so that they can fight for Congress in their area branches. It was no good just having members, we needed branches.⁶⁵

Local Congress supporters believed that the Mkhumbane area was ideally suited to such a strategy, which in effect called for the creation of localized "cells" or street committees.⁶⁶ The Mkhumbane shacklands had always been divided into many distinct settlements. In 1960 Colin Shum wrote,

My opinion as a result of very close contact with Cato Manor over a long period, is that the population felt that Cato Manor is a place they have built themselves ... One of the many indications of this is the existence of so many place names which in my opinion seem to indicate an attachment to the area in which they live.⁶⁷

It was these small shack settlements which formed the basis of local leadership power during the later 1940s. Such localized leadership patterns were somewhat fractured by the formation of the Nogandayo, which was a

61. Bantu World, 5 January 1952.

62. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 1 August 1985.

63. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19: 30/13; A N C (Natal), Annual Report, 1952-1953. See also Lodge, Black Politics, p 75-76. Hirson is partially incorrect for stating that the 'M' Plan was only implemented in the Eastern Cape. See B Hirson "The Defiance Campaign, 1952: Social Struggle or Party Strategem?", Searchlight South Africa, no 1, p 101. The 'M' Plan was accepted in Durban but only really implemented in the very late 1950s.

64. See Lodge, Black Politics, p 76.

65. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1984.

66. For the functioning of these cell structures see interviews with Mr A Masango, 30 November 1986 and Mr H Nxasana, 26 May 1986. See also Lodge, Black Politics, pp 75-76.

67. Shum Papers; C N Shum Memorandum submitted to the Defense, 1960.

hastily formed and short-lived grouping of "leading citizens", the nascent trading class, that was neither elected nor based in particular shantytowns in the Mkhumbane area.⁶⁸

With the establishment of the CMWDB in 1953, the municipality divided the shacklands up into various electoral wards. The municipality demarcated electoral wards according to the existing settlement areas within the Emergency Camp. It was this ward system that Nene and others desired to use as the key basis for the growth of the ANC in the shacklands.

In 1954 there were four ANC branches in the Mkhumbane area. Two of these branches, the Draaihoek and New Look branches seemed to be defunct. The only functioning branches were in Ashmon Nene's Two Sticks and in Ridgeview. Among those who attended the ANC's annual conference in Natal in 1954 were approximately ten Mkhumbane residents, some of whom came from Draaihoek and New Look. The organization was even more weakly organized in Mkhumbane than in 1952.⁶⁹

By 1956, the sorry state of the organizational growth of the ANC in Mkhumbane was being recognized. Even the Two Sticks branch, led by Ashmon Nene and Dorothy Nyembe, was in trouble. The branch had few members, and held no regular meetings; when meetings were convened attendance was minimal. Meetings of the Ridgeview branch were poorly attended, and many had failed to renew their membership. As Ashmon Nene commented at the end of one meeting: "all organizers must go around each house getting new members. Present members never attend."⁷⁰

While the ANC was endeavouring to organize in the shantytowns, it was also beginning to acquire the support of an increasing number of the already established local leadership. The political character of the ANC in the shantytowns was in many important ways to be shaped by the attitudes of such people.

The first indication of the changing views of that small entrepreneurial group who constituted the "first leaders" came with the tendency of many who had dallied in the politics of the Bantu National Congress to move, often slowly, into "the Congress."⁷¹ It rapidly became clear to many that the Bantu National Congress was an abortive organization that held no promise of advancing the political future of the entrepreneur class in the shantytowns. Giving a clear indication of their class consciousness and, often, a repudiation of their own backgrounds, some would derogatively refer to the Bantu National Congress as being "for people who lived by their wits", "herbalists", "bush lawyers" and other small time "crooks".⁷² Furthermore, it was clear that the Bantu National Congress lacked any popular support. For those who perceived a future political career through the Bantu National Congress, the behaviour of those hundreds and often thousands who attended Defiance

68. Interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.

69. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19: 20/1-6; A N C (Natal), names and addresses of delegates to the provincial conference. As a result of poor handwriting and poor microfilm copy, it is difficult to estimate exactly how many residents from Mkhumbane attended this conference.

70. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19:30/18, A N C (Natal), minutes of annual conference, 8-9 October 1956.

71. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

72. Interviews with Mr M O D Kunene, 19 July 1985 and Mbutho Papers, interview 5.

Campaign meetings in the city must surely have been salutary. During the course of this campaign, ANC organizers and speakers were "surprised", albeit pleasantly, with the way in which those attending meetings would vigorously support speakers' condemnation of the claims of the Bantu National Congress.⁷³ During the 1950s, it became clear to the African urban elite and their ambitious aspirant colleagues that the state had very little desire to provide such persons with a legal city status different from the African proletariat.⁷⁴ For the already exempted class of Africans and those entrepreneurs and educated Africans living in the city such developments produced a profound disillusionment. Such feelings of rejection became manifested in ambiguous ways.

Along with such feelings came an awareness among African traders in Mkhumbane of the substantial differences between their desire to trade in the shantytowns and support for state apartheid policies *per se*. To such persons the strategic demands of the Zulu Hlangamani for Africans to be given the right to trade in the shacklands was one issue. Accepting the pro-apartheid stance of the Bantu National Congress was quite another issue.⁷⁵

However, ambitious local leaders also faced pressure from other Africans in the city. As workers discussed the new pass laws many would gleefully comment on the diminished legal status of the exempted elite. Champion would be mimicked, as would Congress Youth Leaguers. Oscar Nkwananya, a resident in the Somerset Road Mens' Location, was referred to as the "barrack peacock."⁷⁶ Other Youth Leaguers who, like Oscar Nkwananya, held degrees or other educational qualifications, were castigated as "people with tails to their names."⁷⁷

Such vilification made African leaders in the city conscious of the potential instability of their power base. For the majority of such leaders, including many Congress Youth Leaguers, their initial power came through sports or religious associations in local communities, townships, hostels, or through their ability and willingness to provide professional services to an African population otherwise having pitifully little access to such facilities.⁷⁸ Despite their expanding political horizons and personal authority within city-wide and more nationally based organizations, by the middle 1950s, many leaders became increasingly responsive to the aspirations and feelings of other Africans within the city. Such was particularly the case with shack leaders amidst the shantytowns of the Mkhumbane area. The leadership element within the shantytowns comprised a very small group of illicit and licensed traders, wealthy shack-owners and other entrepreneurs. This small group controlled many crucial amenities in the shantytowns and possessed a material wealth and more free time than that which was available to the vast majority of shack residents.

73. The Guardian, 1 August 1952.
 74. Lodge "We are being punished", p 258.
 75. Interview with Mr R I Arenstein, 22 August 1988.
 76. Ilanga lase Natal, 15 August 1953.
 77. Ibid., 7 October 1950.
 78. See for example Kuper, African Bourgeoisie, p 95-96.

However, despite their increasing wealth and the willingness of the municipality to recognize such persons as local leaders, these shack leaders became increasingly aware of the way in which their actions were criticized by shack residents. In the same way as shack dwellers had criticized local entrepreneurs in the very early 1950s, so those members of the first elected CMWDB were also harshly criticized.⁷⁹ Shantytown residents viewed the reasons why the municipality had established the CMWDB with scorn. Residents believed that "Kwa Muhle wanted to give us another toy telephone", be "newspapers" and "to take the blame."⁸⁰ Residents dismissed the first elected Board as "Bourquin's impimpi".⁸¹ This Board was soon dissolved. Charles Khumalo recalls that "they were rubbish: 'Yes sir, thank you baas. Yes mnumzane.' This was when they went away."⁸²

Shack leaders and licensed traders resented such popular pressure. They believing that, in the words of Congress Majola,

They were the first Africans to lead our people. If it was not for us, then we would not be here today. The traders of Cato Manor were the first to see that for the African to progress we must develop ourselves economically and fight for the same things as all the other races have.⁸³

Furthermore, such people considered themselves the natural leaders of the community. During the 1950s, much to the amusement of many municipal officials, Champion was proclaiming, "I am not a Native".⁸⁴ The attitude of the new trading class was somewhat different. Charles Mbutho commented that "in another country we would be the George Washington's, the Jefferson's and the Abraham Lincoln's".⁸⁵

Faced with such a position many entrepreneurs "left politics" and "looked towards their businesses."⁸⁶ While remaining influential, these people played a diminishing role in the politics of Mkhumbane. They were however becoming increasingly conscious of their class position, opposed to notions of non-racialism, and reluctant to become involved in politics. Listen to W S Manyathi on class consciousness amongst the traders:

Mr Ngobozi [an established African trader] found me ... down here at Cabazini with a wagon and he helped me ... to acquire a store. ... He said 'Do you see?' He was travelling in a

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79. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.
80. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 23 June 1985.
81. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.
82. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 23 June 1985.
83. Interview with Mr C C Majola, 2 March 1983. Although certainly not one of the early shack leaders it is interesting that Mojola, who only really became an established trader in Kwa Mashu, should identify with a member of the earlier history of the nascent trading class.
84. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 14 June 1988. Mr S Bourquin was one of those few municipal officials who had a finer sense of the meaning of Champion's words.
85. Mbutho Papers; C D S Mbutho, "A History of Clermont".
86. Interview with Mr J J Shabalala, 28 November 1986. See also interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Ms B Naidoo, n.d.

Volkswagen, while I was just walking. 'This is the last time I am giving you a lift. Buy yourself a car' And he said 'Truly I am doing it for the last time, could you say that you are my neighbour when you live across there on the other side.?' I bought one and I realized he was right.

On relations between Indians and Africans:

I do not go into that. I talk about matters of trade. ... They quarrel, going back and forth, while I say 'Two Bob, Sixty Cents' [but] even if they love one another, ... Manyathi does not want that.

And on the political role of such an African trader:

'Where will you fetch [Luthuli]?' I asked. 'At the Central Prison.' Well then I left and went around closing stores. With that they said, 'Manyathi, give our children food. Don't join us.' I was busy selling.⁸⁷

However, many of the leaders in the Mkhumbane shacklands saw in the ANC a political home which would sustain their view of a broadly-based African nationalism led by "respectable and educated civic leaders."⁸⁸ Such a view was entirely compatible with many of the aims and aspirations of the existing ANC leaders in the city.⁸⁹ Throughout the 1950s, the ANC was ambivalent about its own precise purpose. To some the organization should develop into a political party, for others the ANC was a civil rights movement; and to many others, the ANC was the organization which best represented the power of mass African nationalism and "liberation."⁹⁰

The ANC was eager to gain the support of traders and other established leaders in Mkhumbane. At the same time it was attempting to build a stronger support base in the shacklands, the ANC also desired to take control of the CMWDB.⁹¹ An increasing number of the entrepreneur class who were members of the CMWDB became either members or supporters of the ANC; among these were Ambrose Afrika, Esau Makatini, Japhta Mnguni, Ashmon Nene, J J Shabalala and Isaac Zwane.⁹² Other Board members were shack residents whose local standing was directly related to their activities in the ANC, such as Dorothy Nyembe and Ruth Shabane. By the mid-1950s "most" of the members of the CMWDB were "in Congress", while by the end

87. KCAV; interview with Mr W S Manyathi, 16 September 1980.

88. Interview with Mr C C Majola, 2 March 1983.

89. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

90. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19/1: 62/5; A N C (Natal) executive committee report, 1954, *Advance*, 10 December 1953. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 1 January 1955 and KCAV; interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 6 June 1979.

91. *Ibid.*, 10 June 1983.

92. I am grateful to Ms R Shabane and Mr J J Shabalala for assistance in this regard. The issue is important but sensitive, with many preferring to disclaim membership of the ANC. For example one interviewee denied membership although had personally registered his attendance at the 1954 provincial conference.

of the decade "all but one [of the Board members] were ANC stooges."⁹³

Although the ANC was never to support a total boycott of those African residential bodies recognized by the municipality, control of the CMWDB was of particular significance to the ANC in Durban. Many believed that it was strategically important for the ANC to use the CMWDB. With such control, it would be possible to develop branches in Mkhumbane, organize around specific local issues and acquire a knowledge of municipal policy which could not be otherwise gained.⁹⁴

Furthermore, the CMWDB was the only established African residential body recognized by the municipality; and it was beyond the influence of the Joint Locations Advisory Board. This latter body, despite many sitting members being ANC members or supporters, was firmly controlled by Champion. Champion was intent upon using this power base to "take the Congress back to him. He was wanting to throw the Congress Youth League back. For Champion we were to be late."⁹⁵

It would be naive to pretend that membership of the CMWDB Board did not allow Board members to further their own entrepreneurial ventures. Many Board members requested that the Board be given increased authority over the allocation of residential and trading sites. At meetings of the CMWDB the claims of shacklords were forcefully pressed, albeit in a disguised fashion. In 1953, the CMWDB requested that the rights of shacklords should be protected: "just Natives resident in the Scheme ... not absentee landlords [sic] should be allowed to operate in the Camp."⁹⁶ Furthermore, such "Native investors should be allowed to put up shacks on a number of sites."⁹⁷ Board members reasoned in this way:

Natives who are unable to support families - widows, old aged and those in ill-health but who have a little capital will be allowed to invest in a form which gives them relatively high returns and which prevents them from becoming a burden on the community as a whole.⁹⁸

In a society becoming less structured on the process of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul' and more based on the increasing accumulation of personal wealth amongst traders, this was clearly an important consideration for established entrepreneurs.

The majority of shacklords in the shacklands made enormous personal profits from rackrenting. Prominent among the shacklords on the CMWDB were Esau Makatini, Ashmon Nene, J Shange and Isaac Zwane. Others acquired trading sites through their membership of the Board.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, the main focus

93. *Ibid* and personal communication, Mr C N Shum.

94. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

95. *Ibid*.

96. According to one informant this broad policy was deliberately to "keep Champion out." Interview with Mr A Nene, 18 January 1984.

97. MNAD; C M W & D B, vol 2; Minutes of a meeting between the Manager, MNAD and the Services Committee, CMWDB, 27 October 1953.

98. Native Administration Committee agenda, 18 November 1953. Emphasis added.

99. See for example MNAD; CMWDB; Board minutes 17 August 1953, 29 September 1955, 16 May 1956 and 24 April 1957.

of CMWDB activity was its quest for increased control over the area, for improved facilities in the Emergency Camp, and the development of strategies to resist removal to Kwa Mashu.

The CMWDB strove for an improvement in shantytown living conditions. Often critical of municipal policy in the Emergency Camp, Board members complained about the small size of individual plots, high rents, the lack of ablution and toilet facilities, the poor road system, a lack of street lighting, and the need for recreational facilities. The Board also requested other facilities, such as swimming pools and tennis courts.¹⁰⁰ In making such requests the CMWDB would continually stress their acceptance of municipal authority, but their desire to assist the municipality in "putting things right." Ruth Shabane continues,

The Board wanted to make things normal. We wanted all our people there in Mkhumbane to live happily and for this we must tell the City Council what to do. When there are no roads, this must be said. Toilets, shops, all these things. Creches, schools. We [the Board] were there to get all these things done. For long we had lived in the wilderness. It was now time to get things happening.¹⁰¹

Residents desired those residential facilities available in other White suburbs. For African shack residents, their sense of what constituted normal city life was based around a set of aspirations never limited by the very material conditions of African life in the city.

There was however far more to requests for specific infrastructural developments. In seeking improvements in living conditions, the Board was attempting to both "make things more nice for us" and to ensure permanent African residence in the area. Dorothy Nyembe continues: "we wanted to get all the things that Kwa Muhle was building in Kwa Mashu and put them in Mkhumbane. Then they would not have to move us to that location."¹⁰² In 1960 at a meeting of the CMWDB, Isaac Zwane asserted that "people today did not want to go to locations, but wanted to reside on land they could hold in freehold tenure."¹⁰³ For the Africans in Cato Manor Farm, that land was Mkhumbane.

This was realized by the municipality. Bourquin remembers that "the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board were really only interested in developing Cato Manor and staying in Cato Manor."¹⁰⁴ As a result, and in any case wishing to reduce municipal expenditure in the Emergency Camp, the municipality ignored the increasingly poor conditions in the Emergency Camp. Requests to improve conditions in the Emergency Camp were either rejected or subject to lengthy bureaucratic delays and, very often, deliberate stalling.¹⁰⁵ Most requests for better facilities in the Emergency Camp were refused "due to the imminence of

100. See also Ilanga lase Natal, 18 September 1954.

101. Interview with Ms R Shabane, 18 November 1985. My emphasis.

102. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 June 1985.

103. MNAD; CMWDB; Board Agenda, 8 December 1960.

104. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 10 September 1980.

105. See for example the continuing debate between the CMWDB and the municipality concerning water standpipes and ambulances.

the move to Kwa Mashu and the present policy of freezing development works [in the Emergency Camp].¹⁰⁶ By 1957 it was clear to many CMWDB members that the municipality was neither interested in providing further, amenities nor in discussing the future of Africans living in the Emergency Camp.

That a CMWDB increasingly controlled by both members and supporters of the ANC was unable to successfully struggle for the municipal development of those essential services in the Mkhumbane area which would have laid the basis for permanent African settlement in the area is completely understandable. By 1953, with the development of the Cato Manor Emergency Camp, the future of the Mkhumbane shack dwellers had already been decided.

Faced with such a situation, the CMWDB became riddled with internal dissension. Dorothy Nyembe had already suggested that the ANC call a boycott of the CMWDB.¹⁰⁷ The call was not supported. However, early in 1958 certain ANC members on the Board formed the Cato Manor Protest Committee and succeeded in ousting Isaac Zwane, himself an ANC supporter, and Zwane's cronies from the Board. Zwane's opponents had however no alternative strategy. Both sides accused the other of "cowtowing" to the municipality. Zwane regained his position as Chairman of the Board in August 1958 and the CMWDB was to continue functioning until the early 1960s.¹⁰⁸

However what was more significant was the effect this exerted on ANC attempts to organize around basic issues of concern to the residents of the Mkhumbane area, who both desired improved living conditions and wanted to remain in Mkhumbane. Structurally the CMWDB was in no position to convince residents of the authority of the CMWDB. Equally as significant however, was the fact that whilst the CMWDB was dominated by ANC supporters who desired leadership roles in the community, such persons were unable to organize popular support for the ANC in the shacklands. The reasons for this are complex.

By the mid-1950s many residents believed that the police and the municipality had gained extensive knowledge of ANC activities in the Emergency Camp. This was not surprising, considering that the ANC operated openly in the shantytowns.¹⁰⁹ The municipality gleaned information from informers who would sit in the local beerhalls and "just listen to the gossip."¹¹⁰ Many residents recall that with the splits in the Zulu Hlanganani, certain traders "went to the police and told them who was Congress" in the shantytowns.¹¹¹

Throughout the 1950s, the municipality had also endeavoured to prohibit ANC meetings in Mkhumbane, while many ANC leaders were to be served with banishment orders.¹¹² In the late 1950s the

106. MNAD; CMWDB; Board minutes, 24 April 1957.

107. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 June 1985.

108. Bourquin Papers; S Bourquin, memorandum on the Cato Manor disturbances of June 1960.

109. KCAV; interview with Mrs A Mnguni, 19 July 1979.

110. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 14 September 1980.

111. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 28 April 1985.

112. See for example Ilanga lase Natal, 3 October 1953.

municipality had prevented certain sitting members of the CMWDB from attending Board meetings.¹¹³

One of the very purposes implicit to the 'M' Plan had been the recognition that the ANC could not expect to enjoy indefinite immunity from such and other state action. With the failure to organize effective branch structures, the inability of the organization to afford the luxury of required numbers of fully paid organizers and the lack of any subaltern class, the ANC began to rely increasingly upon the resources of members and supporters in various specific areas.¹¹⁴

However, many Board members lacked any notion of the need to gain popular support, even in their own ward areas. Residents recall how Board members "talked as if they were very special people."¹¹⁵ Charles Khumalo recalls:

Our block man was a very wealthy man in the area. He was Mr Mhlongo. He was in Congress and very important. There ... swanking around. He was on the Board for us, but we never knew nothing. He would just say to us 'No man, just leave it to me, everything is under control. Just yesterday we spoke about this very matter'.¹¹⁶

Similarly, Board member Shange has an ambiguous recollection of politics during the period, but maintains that "I was a big man."¹¹⁷ Another Board member confesses that the CMWDB promised much but failed.¹¹⁸

Other residents recall that "all the important people would often stand together and talk to themselves. You walked past and greeted them and some started to talk in English."¹¹⁹ Many CMWDB members had no interest in a broader politics that went beyond local shantytown issues. Having accepted the reality of their eventual removal, many shack leaders were engaged in a rather unedifying struggle to acquire trading rights in Kwa Mashu.¹²⁰

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113. Bourquin Papers; Notes on the meeting by a Durban City Council deputation with the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, 3 August 1959. The relevant Board members, all key ANC activists in Mkhumbane were removed by invoking the administratively correct but highly provocative stipulation that Board members would be removed if failing to attend three consecutive Board meetings. The measure had never before being used despite there having been earlier cases of such continued absence.
114. For similar analysis see Feit, *African Opposition*, p.51.
115. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 12 May 1985.
116. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.
117. KCAV; interview with Mr J Shange, 24 July 1979.
118. KCAV; interview with Mr R Ngcobo, 13 September 1980.
119. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 19 July 1985. This is probably a little unfair as many of the Board members could not speak English and translation services were provided for all Board meetings. It does nevertheless reflect a sense of residents' perceived distinctions between Board members and other shack-dwellers.
120. For details see MNAD; NT 7/28, vol 1. the conflict between legal African traders was over the location of various shops, competition, available capital and levels of business expertise. See also MNAD; Cope Trading Report, September 1953.

Shantytown leaders were members of a small but increasingly prosperous trading class. Whilst believing in a common African nationalism, they, like many other trading classes, espoused a gradualist, moderate politics. They also disliked mass action and preferred to focus on the steady accumulation of power. Theirs was not the politics of large-scale and rapid political transformation. Within the context of the Emergency Camp, their ability to gain those infrastructural and legal property rights which would, though a cumulative process, eventually lead to permanent African settlement in Mkhumbane were virtually non-existent. By the later 1950s the disenchantment among the trading class was mitigated by the promise of a more secure life in Kwa Mashu.¹²¹

Failings were also noticeably prevalent within the small ranks of ANC branch organizers in the shantytown. Even Ashmon Nene was criticized by various people for failing to attend branch meetings. The local voluntary organizer for the ANC branch in the New Clare area of the Emergency Camp declared that the local branch was weak but "public meetings are not essential."¹²²

When the ANC first began organizing support in the shantytowns there had been little tension between ANC members in the shacklands and the ANC's Natal executive.¹²³ However, tension was soon to arise. Amidst personality clashes were also policy issues, the authority of the Natal executive, the autonomy of local branches, and that ever-present difficulty of aligning grass-roots concerns with a wider political strategy. Although much of the tension was publically reported, details are sketchy.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, it is clear that the focus of this tension was the growing power of the ANC Women's League in Mkhumbane.

From 1950 the municipality had endeavoured to force African women in the city to undergo medical examinations and carry passes. With the Women's League in Mkhumbane being fortunate in having the services of some remarkable activists who had close relations with various church and womens' groups in the shantytowns, resistance was rapidly organized.¹²⁵ By 1952, recognizing the assertive nature of the womens' protests and fearing a more militant city-wide revolt, the City Council backed down. African women were not subject to medical examinations, and the municipality advised the government that it would be imprudent to attempt to issue African women with passes.¹²⁶

Initially Mkhumbane was the main centre of resistance. By the early 1950s women's organizations had developed in numerous other townships in the city, and the Congress Youth League had co-operated with

121. Mbutho Papers; C D S Mbutho-Chief Commissioner, South African Police, April 1959.

122. KCM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19: 30/18; A N C (Natal), Annual conference held at Nene Hall, Two Sticks, 8-9 October 1956.

123. This conflict is not mentioned in either Lodge, *Black Politics*, or Walker, *Women and Resistance*, both of whom suggest that African politics in Natal remained relatively free of dissent within the ANC after the election of Luthuli.

124. Although many interviewees were intimately involved in the issue, such informants provided no information. Unlike *Ilanga lase Natal*, *The Guardian* is noticeably silent on the issue.

125. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 1 April 1950.

126. Mayors Minutes, 1952-1953.

the ANCWL in holding mass meetings to organize women around the issue.¹²⁷ At least one of these meetings was addressed by Dr Goonan of the Natal Indian Congress.¹²⁸ With the depositing of Champion, who had unsuccessfully tried to involve himself in the anti-women's pass issue and claim responsibility for the municipality backing down,¹²⁹ relations between the ANCWL and the newly elected provincial executive appeared sound. Bertha Mkhize was elected a member of the ANC provincial executive in 1951. Luthuli impressed upon women the need to organize and encouraged the formation of a Housewives League, comprising numerous women's groups.¹³⁰

However tension rapidly developed between the ANCWL and the provincial executive and between various organizers within the ANCWL. In spite of numerous attempts to resolve the issue, in 1956 Bertha Mkhize and Gusta Khuzwayo, one of the more elderly but key ANCWL activists in Mkhumbane, were "kicked out" of the ANC.¹³¹

Within the ANCWL in Mkhumbane were powerful and charismatic activists and organizers. As the organization gathered strength in the area, various organizers began to squabble over the leadership. There was however, a more important divide over policy within the ANCWL. This conflict was between Gusta Khuzwayo and Bertha Mkhize on the one hand and Henrietta Ostrich and Ruth Shabane on the opposing side.¹³²

At the root of the conflict lay the desire of certain ANCWL organizers to uphold an exclusive African and even Zulu populism which had developed in the Mkhumbane area and the local ANCWL during the later 1940s. In the changed political climate of the early 1950s, many of those Congress Youth Leaguers who had risen within the hierarchy of the provincial ANC found such principles unacceptable.¹³³ In many ways the Youth Leaguers had abandoned Africanism. The stressing of an exclusive and independent Africanism threatened relations between the Natal Indian Congress and the ANC. This still very tentative relationship was even more threatened by the manner in which many within the ANCWL, particularly in Mkhumbane, upheld economic boycott strategies which were often, deliberately or otherwise, anti-Indian.¹³⁴

For the provincial executive the conflict was regarded as serious.¹³⁵ The issue raised thorny strategic problems and threatened the Congress Alliance. The conflict was raised certain other as important issues. Here

127. Ilanga lase Natal, 1 April 1950.

128. Ibid, 15 April 1950.

129. Ibid, 22 April 1950.

130. Ibid, 9 June 1951 and 12 September 1953.

131. Ibid, 14 July 1956. This information was supplied to the newspaper by Stephen Dlamini so can be regarded as reliable.

132. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA19/1:30/8; A N C (Natal), Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, 26-27 November 1955.

133. Ilanga lase Natal, 11 August 1956.

134. Ibid See also Edwards "Swing the Assegai", p 36.

135. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19/1:30/8; A N C (Natal), Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, 26-27 November 1955.

was certainly the only really strong bastion of ANC power in an area so valued by the ANC developing in a manner which posed severe problems for the ANC.

Throughout the course of the conflict the strength of the ANCWL in the Mkhumbane area grew. Based around the issues passes, medical examinations, liquor-brewing and conditions of life in the Emergency Camp - increasing numbers of women became involved in the affairs of the local ANCWL or those women's shantytown groupings which associated with the ANCWL.¹³⁶ Such increasing militancy was often despite the ever present dangers which women faced in attending evening meetings. At night the shackland environment was violent and ill-provided with street lighting. Many men also disagreed with women becoming involved in politics. In 1956 one of the local ANCWL branches in the Emergency Camp had no "chairlady" because the woman's "husband had objected."¹³⁷

Support for the ousted Mkhize and Khuzwayo was even forthcoming from within the provincial executive, with Ashmon Nene and Pitness Simelane being key figures. Both were staunch African nationalists. Simelane in particular had been closely involved in the Congress Youth League in the later 1940s. Nene wielded significant authority in the Mkhumbane shacklands by virtue of his personal friendship with Luthuli.¹³⁸ Congress Youth League branches in many areas of Durban publically announced their support for the ousted Mkhize and Khuzwayo. Congress Youth Leaguers had "captured" the "congress for Luthuli".¹³⁹ Nevertheless, the 'Vukayibambe', those localized Youth League bases of the 1940s, still remained active, relatively independent of the ANC. They appeared willing to use the issue as a means to attack the provincial executive, focussing on Luthuli's role within the ANC.¹⁴⁰ As alarming for the provincial executive was the fact that Champion was becoming involved. Despite his long-standing and considerable dislike for the ANCWL and Mkhumbane residents, Champion supported the expelled women.¹⁴¹

The issue also brought to a climax the question of the relative authority which each of the various constituent bodies within a broadly based African nationalist movement could exercise within an organizational structure headed by the provincial executive of the ANC in Natal. With the conflict having raged intermittently for a number of years, all parties realized the dangers inherent in the situation. In January 1958, the Congress Youth League, the reinstated women and the ANC under Luthuli affirmed their desire to "revive" the "spirit of the ANC."¹⁴²

136. Ilanga lase Natal, 25 August 1956 and interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 June 1985.

137. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19:30/18; A N C (Natal) Annual Conference, Nene Hall, 8-9 October 1956 and interview with Ms R Shabane, 18 November 1986.

138. Ilanga lase Natal, 28 July 1956. Nene had been a member of the Provincial Executive since late 1953. In 1953 Simelane was both Assistant Secretary and later Provincial Treasurer and then in 1956, Secretary of the A N C in Natal.

139. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

140. See for example Ilanga lase Natal, 11 August 1956 and 1 September 1956.

141. Ibid, 28 July 1956.

142. Ibid, 18 January 1958.

Yet, apart from the often rather paternalist views which many of the members of ANC Provincial executive held towards the ANCWL, the conflict raised issues which in many ways explain the inadequacies of the ANC's organization and support in Mkhumbane. The conflict had merely assumed its particular form because the ANCWL was the only successful ANC organization in the shantytowns.

By 1958, the ANC had established few local branches in the shacklands. The ANC-dominated CMWDB was not able to negotiate any substantial changes in shantytown living conditions, and had failed to strengthen ANC organization in the area. In many ways the weakness of the ANC in the shantytown are clearly the result of the financial, administrative and other organizational problems which were to persist in limiting the efficiency of the organization.

Yet daily life in the shantytowns did not create the conditions for the development of a politicized shack community. For the proletariat living in the shantytowns, the constraints imposed by the routines of daily life were enormous. The focus of shack residents' struggles was over day-to-day issues, with their militancy not necessarily integrated into any larger political struggle.

However, it was not only that the ANC might have overestimated the political quality of the shack residents. The ANC had specifically set out to organize in the shantytowns around day-to-day issues. However, throughout the 1950s, the ANC was never to direct its attention to the main issue amongst shack dwellers: the desire to be given permanent residence on land in Cato Manor Farm owned either by Indians or the municipality. For the ANC the future of the area was a question causing political embarrassment. Further within the ANC in the area, members and leading residents were often engaged in political in-fighting and were either incapable, unable or unwilling to develop a mass organization in the area.

As important however, during the 1950s, proletarian experience in the shacklands and city itself led to the development of an often ambiguously defined political culture. Sustaining images of class conflict, populism, nationalism and a need for anti-elitism, the shantytown proletariat was often highly critical of the policies and strategies of the ANC. In the main the political culture which developed in the shantytowns was not directly antagonistic towards the ANC. However, there were many contradictory forces which could easily create a disjuncture between the broad policies and strategies of the ANC and SACTU and the needs and aspirations of the shantytown proletariat. When it came to the big campaigns from 1957 onwards, the ANC found itself in an increasingly invidious position. Whilst desiring the organized support of the shantytown residents, the organization had not as yet become firmly entrenched in the area.¹⁴³

Conclusion

From their experiences during the later 1940s, many of the Congress Youth Leaguers who assumed key

143. For a general perspective on the relationship between African political organizations and shantytowns see B Bozzoli, "Class, Community and Ideology in the Evolution of South African Society" in Bozzoli (ed), *Class*, p 27.

leadership roles within the ANC in the 1950s had respected and indeed admired the determination of Mkhumbane residents. Try as it did, until early 1959 the ANC was unable to establish any solid organizational foothold in the shacklands. Within a shantytown community that had always revealed a somewhat disrespectful attitude towards African political organizations, acquiring support was hardly easy.

Support for the ANC was most evident among many of the entrepreneurs of Mkhumbane. Many shack leaders ambitiously sought a political future in the city. Desiring both to increase their own entrepreneurial wealth, shantytown leaders upheld a moderate populism. Yet for such persons the quest for a political home involved ambiguous decisions. Having gained position of leadership during the proletarian populism of the late 1940s, shack leaders had become increasingly wealthy in ways that distinguished them from other Mkhumbane residents. Although having accepted the benefits of industrialization, shack community leaders had attempted to avoid full proletarianization but were nevertheless conscious of the detrimental features of wage labour within the very community which they desired to lead. After years of provocation, many of the Mkhumbane leaders gravitated towards the ANC. Seeing in the re-vitalized ANC a secure political future in an organization which exemplified an African nationalist struggle, such people became the backbone of ANC support in Mkhumbane.

In a political environment so hostile to African political organizations which questioned established civic and national authority, the ANC was remarkably successful in establishing itself as the dominant African political organization in Durban. That the ANC even gained the allegiance if not membership of shack leaders was significant. Amongst the Mkhumbane shack residents, whose support the ANC so desired, even greater successes seemed to be evident. As the 1950s progressed more and more shantytown leaders were either members of or identified with the politics of the ANC.

Yet this support presented a fundamental dilemma to the ANC. During the 1950s the ANC gained support from contradictory sources. This did not appear to be a real issue to an organizational leadership lacking political experience, finances, administrative support and broader popular recognition. However, when the issue of proletarian support for the ANC was raised, the essential weakness of the ANC's support base in Mkhumbane was evident. The Mkhumbane proletariat was both intent upon focussing on day-to-day struggles, and yet was still militant in ways which could easily reject the wider politics embraced by the ANC. During the 1950s Mkhumbane shantytown leaders' affiliation to the ANC was both ambiguous and a source of tension in the shacklands. Similarly, during the 1950s, the nature of day to day life in the shantytowns or proletarian political consciousness was to result in an increased political awareness. However, these proletarian perspectives were neither solely directed towards the struggle for Mkhumbane nor those which could increase ANC membership or political trade unionism.

CHAPTER 11

"THE CONSTRAINTS OF EVERY DAY LIFE: WORKING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND PROLETARIAN POLITICS IN MKHUMBANE, 1950-1958"

Daily Household Routines

The struggle to maintain as secure a life as possible in the face of increasingly difficult circumstance assumed a primary importance for the Mkhumbane proletariat. Having neither security of tenure, suitable residential facilities nor the required material and technological means to improve residential life, residents were compelled to focus directly on the pressing tasks of shack life. As a consequence, daily life became structured around a set of daily routines whereby residents endeavoured both to maintain shack life and gain an increasing measure of social stability within the shantytown. These routines assumed primary importance and produced an social unity based on the commonality of daily experiences. It was these experiences which provided the basis for the many, often contradictory, ideas so vital to both working-class and proletarian culture.

Within these structures of everyday life lay the roots of an emerging sense of working class unity and struggle within the shacklands. The working class of Mkhumbane rapidly realized that their relationships to both others within the shacklands and in the city at large were characterized by an enduring exploitation. It was not just that others in Mkhumbane, the municipality and employers were vindictive or domineering. Tstosi bands were a menace and the shacklords were predatory. Likewise municipal officials and employers of African labour had little regard for the wishes of ordinary shackland residents. But for the working class of Mkhumbane the issues were seen in far more fundamental terms.

Within the proletarian populism of the later 1940s, Mkhumbane residents had attempted to sustain a level of community unity based around the desire to establish an alternate society within the city. The ability of any unwanted external authority to exercise power over the shack residents was to be opposed. Within this shackland area, the residents were determined to establish their claim to ownership of both land and property, but on terms very much of their own making. Their attempts to accomplish these aims had failed. The visible manifestations of this failure were the rise of the new entrepreneurs and the increasing role of the municipality within the shacklands.

However, within a developing working class consciousness, the rising power of entrepreneurs and the municipality were simply some of the indications of more deeper structures of exploitation. Central to this consciousness was an awareness of the very many ways in which working class life in Mkhumbane was linked directly to structures of capital accumulation and power in the city. Mkhumbane was not separate from the city. Further, in many ways both the state, capital and African workers were struggling over their ability to exercise control over the very same issues. On the one hand, the African working class had accepted their permanent involvement within the industrializing city, but sought to gain further advantage within the city. For the state

and capital the issues was viewed in very similar terms: both wanted to restructure African residential and working lives so as to create a new African working class.

Further the manifestations of this struggle were clearly apparent both in the shacklands and the city in general. Within the city, both the state and capital were in the very process of altering conditions of work, pay, residence and legal city status. In Mkhumbane, the municipality had acquired ownership of the land and made it very clear that Africans would not be given future land and housing ownership rights in Mkhumbane. Within the Emergency Camp the municipality had fostered the growth of a trading class. Whereas during the later 1940s housing ownership and tenancy relationships and customer and seller relationships had been highly complex and ambiguous, social relations within the shacklands during the 1950s were certainly more straight forward. Land was owned by the municipality, housing mainly by shacklords and selling conducted by a new entrepreneur class.

As a result, rooted in the very nature of everyday life in the shacklands came a growing sense of working class unity and a desire to both defend and promote the interests of this African working class. However, again from the very nature of everyday life in Mkhumbane came the contradictory forces which both constrained working class perceptions and seemed to impel all shack residents to unite in defense of Mkhumbane.

There were many sturdy shacks in these settlements, but most were haphazardly constructed. Residents recall that builders would often use "as few nails as possible and so the walls would start to move around."¹ Former residents remember seeing the shack builders making deals with itinerant African hawkers, who with their horses and carts would enter the shantytowns and sell to shack-builders the sheet iron and planking, often stolen from construction sites, and dumped debris. James Sithole recalls that "we would look at this and the next moment we would be living in all of that same stuff. It was too terrible."² Most rooms were poorly ventilated, rarely having more than one small window. In some cases shack rooms only had windows which faced into another room.³

As a result of the need to erect dwellings quickly, the low level of expertise, and inadequate building materials, shacks required constant maintenance. Shabalala recalls that "over the weekend you could see all the men getting boys to help them with the rooms. Putting this right, putting this in and digging pits. We needed to keep making the houses right and nice."⁴ The most important tasks were to maintain the earth banking and drainage culverts around the house, replace defective wall or roof material, often rotten or riddled with white ants, and to block gaps between wall panels and between walls and roofs. The earth banking and drainage culverts were particularly vulnerable to erosion during summer rains, and if not effectively maintained could

1. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 21 April 1985.

2. Interview with Mr J Sithole, 29 November 1985.

3. See for example MNAD; H/2 CM, vol 4; diagram of shacks on Sub 101 of MB4 of Cato Manor 812.

4. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985.

threaten the stability of the house itself. Residents were reluctant to cut into long sheets of corrugated iron to create window spaces and would constantly try and block up, either with sacking or newsprint, the gaps between roof and wall paneling. Charles Khumalo remembers the hardship:

When Mr Shum and then Mr Loquet ... came on visits they would tell us that 'This place is too stuffy. You cannot live like this. And look at the smoke! And you smoke too. No!' Mr Shum was right but you see ... you are foolish to cut a nice piece of iron up and if you leave the holes in the iron then the wind comes right in and this is not good, especially if you have babies sleeping.⁵

Residents would also often attempt to effect certain basic modifications to the rooms. Constructing chimneys, placing glass in open windows and raising the door levels so as to prevent rain and mud from seeping into the rooms, homes could be made more habitable.⁶ During Colin Shum's period as superintendent of the Emergency Camp, residents were given supplies of paint which they were encouraged to use in painting shack exteriors. A booklet drawn up by Colin Shum and intended for distribution amongst residents referred to this:

The (Cato Manor Welfare and Development) Committee arranged for lime to paint and make fresh your homes. Everybody must by now have seen the houses painted especially at Draaihoek, Paton Road, Thusini, Mjafete and New Look. All the houses in Umkhumbane will be painted in time. How soon depends on how quickly you make use of the lime and the brushes which have been placed at your disposal.⁷

Residents recall this assistance with unqualified praise. To many residents the provision of paint "served as proof that we were living, that Kwa Muhle was there for us", and that through painting their houses "we could have houses which looked like the European houses in Durban. All painted and nice."⁸ However, because the Native Administration Committee refused to allow expenditure on paint to be charged against the Native Revenue Account, provision of paint and brushes was halted after only a few areas had been supplied.⁹

Along with the tasks of daily or weekly shack maintenance came the need to maintain pit privy latrines. With the poor absorption of the ecca shale ground formation, pit privy latrines were constantly having to be relocated. As Khumalo remembers,

We, the men had to dig lots of holes. Now it is not like on the farms where you can leave your shithouse a long way from the house and it can just stay there. No in Cato Manor these things had to be watched carefully otherwise they would fill up quickly. And it was close to the house because there are lots of people living around it.¹⁰

5. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

6. PNAD, photographic archive.

7. Shum Papers; Notice to the Residents of Mkhumbane, n.d.

8. Interview with Mr M Mcanyana, 19 July 1985.

9. Personal communication, Mr C N Shum.

10. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

As the settlement grew more dense, it became progressively more difficult to locate pit privy latrines at a reasonable distance from the shacks. However, with the paucity of municipal ablution and toilet facilities, the municipality was never able to eradicate pit privies which, because of the overcrowding inside the Emergency Camp, would continue to pose a serious threat to health in the area.

Despite the appalling living conditions in the shantytowns, to the best of their ability residents strove to "make things as comfortable as possible", and sought ways to improve housing conditions.¹¹

The interior fittings in many shack rooms reflected this desire. Floors were invariably made out of compacted mud which was continually polished. The walls would be papered over with newspaper, stuck on with a mixture of flour and water. Furniture might comprise a steel divan, small table, bench, storage space constructed from bricks and wooden planks, and radios or gramophones.¹² Furnishings could be purchased from commercial concerns who, whilst charging exorbitant "easy terms", provided a service which facilitated the rapid establishment of residents' domestic arrangements.¹³ Furniture could also be purchased from the various tinkers and carpenters operating in the area, or be made from off-cuts of wood. Clothing would be hung from rope or wire lines strung between walls. In addition to the normal eating and cooking utensils, space would often be made for "special crockery": "It was important for us to have our china for important occasions. It should be put in a place where people could see this and then they know that we are a proper house." Walls would be adorned with pictures of marriage photographs or the "very popular pictures of us men in our uniform from the war."¹⁴ Mrs Phewa explains the significance of such adornments in a way which expresses the desire for dignity and respectability within what is clearly a working class perspective:

You can have pictures from Drum on the wall. And old calendars. Pictures of ships, and us 'Bantu' ... in the hills, but if you want to be proper you must have your marriage, your children and your daddy during the war. People must see this, you are not tsotsi. And when the man comes in the door he must see it so that he does not go after other women!¹⁵

Residents were antagonistic towards the municipality for refusing to provide improved facilities and highly critical of local African shackowners.

Shacklords would often verbally abuse those complaining about the inadequacy of their accommodation. Often shacklords' denial of responsibility seemed to residents to negate residents' desire to have access to those residential facilities available to White residents of Durban. As Thomas Ndlovu recalls,

When you go to the owner and say 'u Baba, look at this place. Look at the roof, look at the walls. This needs to be repaired. Please could you see to this matter.' Then he just looks at

11. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985. See also interview with Mrs E Africa, 16 May 1979

12. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.

13. See for example *Ilanga lase Natal*, 5 December 1956

14. Interview with Mr C K

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you, puts his hands in his belt like a swank and talks to you like a child, nice and quietly, but he knows that other people are listening. 'Now look Ndlovu, there are many people living here. None of us are special. If you want to go and live in a hotel, then this is what you must do. If you want to stay here, then you must not complain. You are not a White man.'¹⁶

Recollections of shacklord behaviour also reveal class tension in the shantytowns. Shacklords "tell you off if you wear pyjamas and he does not. Or if you have a car, or a radio. 'Do not play that thing too loud.' There would be fights over this but you had to keep quiet." The fact that many of the shack leaders were involved with the ANC did not escape critical comment.¹⁷

For most residents, the basic food staples were cereal products, especially rice and maize meal, legumes, other types of vegetable, fruit, milk and meat and fats. Some of these products were grown in the many small gardens which surrounded some of the houses. Some of the residents had wooden "safes" in which to store perishable goods, but most people purchased perishables on a daily basis.¹⁸ Meat would often be purchased in bulk, cut into long strips, salted and spiced and then hung from the roof inside the shack to dry. Thembankosi Phewa remembers how the meat would be prepared: "Often the meat was not very nice. Tough. Very tough. So you would have to cut it up, hammer it down flat. With a hammer or stone and then put lots of curry into it and then hang it up."¹⁹ Spices could be obtained from any of the general dealers operating in the area or from the spice distributors, known as 'Kwa Curry', who operated from premises located at the corner of Booth and Dunbar Roads.²⁰

Many also kept livestock. In the yards around the shacks, residents would erect coops for poultry, and tether pigs, goats and even cattle. The municipality failed in its efforts to eradicate all poultry and livestock-keeping in the area. Poultry and pigs would continue to wander around the dwellings and rummage in the piles of household waste. Even when the Mkhumbane area was densely populated with shack sprawls cattle-keeping continued. Cattle became reliant on domestic refuse and the waste matter derived from beer brewing. In October 1952 a municipal inspector noted that,

The Acting Manager is correct when he says there are quite a number of livestock in Cato Manor, and it is very interesting to note that whilst they are in a very wonderful condition, very little grazing is available. The answer being of course that they are being fed on 'intsipho' (residue from Kafir beer malt).²¹

Normally only one cooked meal would be prepared and this would be eaten in the evenings. The meal would comprise rice, vegetables or putu, into which would be cut strips of dried meat sufficient for a single meal.

16. Interview with Mr T Ndlovu, 14 January 1986.

17. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 12 May 1985.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 28 April 1985.

20. Interview with Mr C Khumalo 12 May 1985. See also interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Ms B Naidoo, n.d.

21. MNAD; Managers' File, Chief Superintendent - Manager, MNAD, October 1953.

Tembankosi Phewa explains the format: "if you put too much meat in then you have to leave it for tomorrow and then you have to put more curry in because the meat has been inside the room all day."²²

In the mornings people would eat putu, bread and maas, with children often receiving milk. Marshia Mtandi recalls that "sometimes my mother would go down to the shop and buy milk. It was a treat. My mother would stand us in a row and pour a cup, give it to one of us, watch us drink, then when we were finished fill it up and give some milk to the other children. Otherwise we had putu."²³ In order to increase their cash wages, workers were reluctant to accept employers reducing their wages and providing them with midday meals at the factory. As a result, by the early 1950s, few of the major employers were providing workers with daily meals. During the course of a working day, workers would either buy bread and "lemonade" or frequent a local municipal beerhall.²⁴

Water for cooking came mainly from municipal water standpoints located next to the toilet blocks. Many residents also drew water from the contaminated Mkhumbane stream. Others reportedly obtained cooking water from flushing municipal toilets.²⁵ The task of collecting and carrying water for domestic use was more often than not performed by women. For domestic energy most residents used either paraffin primus cookers or wood. Some had cast iron stoves, highly prized items among shack-dwellers. These stoves, costing around £15 each, provided not only cooking heat, but "made the room nice and warm and we could do washing quickly in the evening and then put it around the stove. They were very nice but too expensive."²⁶ In order to avoid purchasing wood, residents would either forage in the surrounding bush, or, as Sydney Nxumalo recalls, "we used to steal it from the factories or from the [municipal] building yard here in Mkhumbane."²⁷ In the main, wood, paraffin and coal were purchased from either the Indian or African-owned trading stores operating in the Emergency Camp.

In the same way that men would be largely responsible for shack maintenance, the task of purchasing, or procuring, and cooking daily meals was largely the responsibility of women. From their control of the household, and with most employed African men working a fifty-five hour week, African women acquired an influence which was to decisively determine the nature of much of working class culture.²⁸

The struggle to acquire sufficient food became structured into a set of daily practices in which women's roles were clearly defined. Charles Khumalo recalls that "if you want mommy to cook for you then you must give her the money so that she can buy while you are working. That is the proper thing that women

22. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 21 April 1985.

23. Interview with Ms M Mtandi, 30 November 1986.

24. Ilanga lase Natal, 24 May 1952.

25. Ibid, 18 September 1953.

26. Interview with Mr M Mcanyana, 12 July 1985, and Ilanga lase Natal, 18 November 1950.

27. Interview with Mr S Nxumalo, 3 April 1982.

28. The battle for a forty-five and forty-hour working week was to wage throughout the 1950s. See Ilanga lase Natal, 19 July 1950.

must do. If you come back and there is no money on Friday then there is trouble.²⁹ Thus, as one woman recalls, women "would always be looking around to find Mr Right". Women would "judge" men on their ability to "earn money" and castigate those who either failed to earn sufficient wages, or "spent all their times in the beerhalls drinking u-Bokweni."³⁰ As Charles Khumalo remembers,

When the man comes home on Fridays he gives most of the money to the wife, who will then cook and wash and look after the house. Then she gives you money for busfare and some beer. But if you stay at Gezindlandla too long then you are for it. That is when you are attacked for spending the money before she has given you what you can have.³¹

Significantly, explicit in women's criticism of their male partners' inability to provide sufficient money were the images of a developing working-class consciousness. These became associated with the need for a "decent" life and images of masculinity and sexuality. Ma Phewa recalls that "you would not be happy if your man was a Jo'burg swank, but he must not be lazy. He must work hard and not be a tsotsi."³² Just as important were those criticisms which implied sexual weakness. As a popular song had it, when a woman married, she should avoid city types who, drunkenly, "go to bed in their boots" nor should she marry "a man from a bantustan."³³ Those who drank freely at the municipal beerhalls were mocked. As Thomas Shabalala recalls, such men would be drowsy, fat and thus "could not get close to a woman ...They could not be dutiful men and do what they had to. Then [women] went looking around for other men!"³⁴ Conflicts over the amount of money which could be allocated to household food expenditure were endemic due to the absolute disparity between wages earned and the costs of basic food. Gladys Dlamini remembers that "there would be terrible fights all over the place when the men come home on Friday drunk with no money - or it had been stolen or gambled. Without that money we could do nothing."³⁵

By 1958 when over half the formally employed African men in the Emergency Camp earned between £5 and £10 a month, the government estimated that the minimum food costs for an African family of five were in the region of £14.³⁶ During the 1950s, the difficulties faced by residents attempting to secure sufficient food were exacerbated by the decline in co-operative ventures, the persistence of black marketeering, the isolation of the shantytowns, and the growth of an African licensed trading class.

29. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 26 July 1985.

30. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

31. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 26 July 1985. See also KCAV; interview with Mr R Ngcobo, 13 September 1979. Gezindlandla was the shack residents' name for the Cato Manor beerhall.

32. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

33. Thorpe Papers; script of the musical "Mkhumbane!", (Gallotone, 1960).

34. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 14 July 1985.

35. Interview with Mrs G Dlamini, 3 April 1982.

36. Horwood, "Urban African Employment", p 79.

By the early 1950s most of the co-operative societies, which many regarded as a real form of socialism had either been transformed into individual trading ventures or disappeared.³⁷ Although residents were experiencing problems in meeting the cost of daily requirements, the co-operatives, which had allowed residents to reduce the costs of food and other necessities by purchasing in bulk, were never to be a real feature of Mkhumbane life during the 1950s. Stanford Mtolo explains: "The feeling was not right. No, they were dead. That was the general feeling. Too far to the shops, who was going to do it. No there were lots of problems."³⁸

With the difficulty of commuting between the shantytowns and the mainly Indian-owned shopping area around Warwick Avenue, where black marketeering or overcharging were prevalent, residents tended to purchase commodities from commercial ventures inside and surrounding the Emergency Camp.³⁹ Vegetables and fruit could be purchased from the many "door to door salesmen" or from roadside vendors operating around the numerous bus stops and meeting-places in the area.⁴⁰ The one effective co-operative society, the Zulu Hlanganani, ran a series stalls at the bus stop near the intersection of Booth and Denis Shepstone Roads. Mabel Dlamini, one of the women's groups conducting business in these stalls, paints the picture:

We would go into town in the middle of the day and buy from the Indian market. Just what we could afford from yesterdays money. Fruit, carrots, tomatoes and things and then sell at Zwane's place. We would be there early in the morning to sell to the people going to work and then later in the day when the buses came back.⁴¹

These stalls were rented by the Zulu Hlanganani to women vendors who were members of the co-operative. In spite of numerous attempts by the municipality, sometimes acting after complaints from licensed African traders, to close the stalls down, they carried on with their operations.

For the most part, domestic essentials were purchased from the various licensed trading concerns in the Emergency Camp. By September 1955, legal African traders were operating eleven general dealers businesses and two butcheries in the Camp. In addition there were still twelve Indian-owned stores operating in the same area. By the late 1950s most of these stores had been expropriated and leased to African traders.⁴² The profit margin of these traders was high. This was particularly so in the African-owned shops. For example,

37. University of York; interview with Mr M B Yengwa by T Lodge, 23 November 1976.

38. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

39. Ilanga lase Natal, 10 May 1952.

40. MNAD; Cope Trading Report.

41. Interview with Mrs M Dlamini, 14 June 1987. Many of these women still belong to what they themselves refer to as the 'Zulu Hlanganani' and have small fruit and vegetable stalls outside Kwa Mashu Station.

42. See for example Native Administration Committee agenda, 19 June 1953 and MNAD; H2/CM; List of [Indian] traders, n.d. and A Leslie, Leon and Wilson-Town Clerk, 4 September 1953 and Daily News, 23 September 1953.

traders insisted on charging the maximum amount permissible on controlled items such as paraffin, even through their Indian counterparts charged less. All traders offered weekly or monthly credit.⁴³

From the experiences derived from the daily routines of purchasing and preparing food came an increasing reflecting over three issues crucial to everyday life. Further growing criticism of traders in general. Also through it seems the very conflict within households over the struggle to purchase food, working men began to develop an increasing desire to gain higher wages. The roots of this militancy came through the way in which women would accuse lowly paid workers of lacking "manliness". As Charles Ndlovu, then employed in a textile firm in the Maydon Wharf area, remembers:

When you come home and you give money to your wife, all you want to do is go to bed. Too much of this [liquor]. But no, all of a sudden you are not inside the blankets, but inside a big fight. 'Who are you! Look at what you bring to me? You are not a real man.' That is when I started to speak to SACTU. We had Congress all around us but I had not listened before this. I joined Congress in ... around 1956.⁴⁴

The growth of working class consciousness in Mkhumbane

Both accepting the reality of industrialization and the role of women within the domestic household, various women's groupings would develop in ways which saw women becoming more influential in issues not simply related to household matters. Various women's groupings had for long existed within the Mkhumbane shantytowns. Many of these associations had started through the impetus provided by the formation of an ANCWL branch in the shantytowns during the later 1940s. The growth of these groups was substantially assisted by the municipal development of the Emergency Camp. Through the allocation of church sites, the activities of welfare institutions, some of which, like the Toc 'H' society, had withdrawn from the area during the 1949 riots, and the municipality's own, newly established, welfare section woman's associations, gained increasing influence.⁴⁵

Some of these women's groups were overtly political, as was the ANCWL branch. Other associations were more closely associated with White welfare organizations. These associations became interested in refuting the notion that African parents "lacked moral fibre", provided no toys for their children and were anti-religious.⁴⁶ Women would stress that African "families" could only develop once "we were all equal in the city" and that the municipality was directly responsible for the conditions in Mkhumbane through both municipal neglect and the beer brewing monopoly.

43. MNAD; Cope Trading Report.

44. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 29 November 1986. Although a member of the African Textile Workers' Union this informant confuses SACTU and the ANC. It is nevertheless clear that the informant is discussing SACTU. See also *Worker Unity*, March 1958.

45. See L K Ladlau, "The Cato Manor Riots", (M A , UND), p 43.

46. See, for example, *Ilanga lase Natal*, 29 March 1958.

Municipal beer brewing came in for particular criticism. Many women's groups asserted that the municipality was deriving money from a monopoly which impoverished and destroyed households; moreover this was a municipality which "wanted us to believe it was helping us." Indeed many woman's groupings placed a central stress on the virtues of teetotalism. As Constance Matiwane recalls,

All your husbands would come home drunk. Then the children see them and everything gets very cross. ... I can remember that it was not nice. ... He got cross and fight and sleep. That was not the way God planned for us to be.⁴⁷

Moves to compel African women to register for work and carry passes came in for particular scorn. As Ruth Shabane recalls, "they told us we were not proper mothers and then they wanted to separate us from our husbands with passes for women."⁴⁸

Nevertheless, whether being self consciously political in outlook, church clubs, sewing clubs or other, often small, groups, the main focus of such associations was directed at attending to specific shantytown issues. Even the local ANCWL branch distributed milk to undernourished children.⁴⁹ The Cato Manor Zenzele Club was closely associated with the Young Christian Women's Association which had erected a "girls' hostel" in the Emergency Camp.⁵⁰ Every Sunday the Zenzele Club would host a "Silver Tea Party" "after church" at the YWCA hostel. At such meetings, which proved to be popular, women would meet and discuss local issues and provide entertainment - treasure hunts, dancing and concerts for local children.⁵¹

Other women's associations would assist welfare organizations in feeding the many children suffering from kwashiorkor. Others would make school uniforms, organize Sunday Schools, as did the 'Band of Hope', or operate creches.⁵² The 'Band of Hope' worked closely with the South African Institute of Race Relations and the American Board Mission, whose church and school in the shantytowns was used as a main venue. Women residents would supervise games and singing sessions for children, take children on various excursions and picnics, and distribute to children with food supplied by the SAJRR.⁵³ Other women formed a creche "where children from mothers who could not stay at home" would be provided with food, basic schooling and entertained during the day. Marshia Mtandi, who both attended creche and the 'Band of Hope' Sunday meetings remembers:

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- 47. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1983.
 - 48. Interview with Mrs R Shabane, 18 November 1986. For similar comments see *Ilanga lase Natal*, 22 October 1949.
 - 49. *Ibid.*, 27 March 1954.
 - 50. KCAV; interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.
 - 51. Interview with Mrs R Shabane, 18 November 1986. For similar comments see *Ilanga lase Natal*, 17 August 1957.
 - 52. KCAV; interviews with Mrs E Africa, 16 May 1979 and Mrs A Mgumi, 21 July 1980.
 - 53. Interview with Ms M Mtandi, 30 November 1986 and KCAV; interview with Mrs A Mgumi, 21 July 1980.

At Benoni section... there was a creche, nursery school and clinic... established by the Red Cross [with] European nurses and our mothers. We used to wear red pinafores, we were even grouped, some of us were called Butterflies [girls?] and Tigers [boys?] They used to give us brown bread, thick slices and jam or kimmer butter [peanut butter] we did not pronounce it properly and white margarine and milk. There were even toys to play with. All that at 2 shillings 6 pence a month.⁵⁴

But there was also a broader focus for women's activities: the problems of teenage delinquency, inadequate schooling, and the status of Africans in the city. During the 1950s the problem of teenage "gangs of tsotsis" became increasingly evident in the shacklands.⁵⁵ Children took to sniffing benzine fumes, pickpocketing in bus queues, petty theft and drunkenness.⁵⁶ More, more and more young girls seemed to be turning to prostitution. In 1950 a group of fourteen-year-old girls from Mkhumbane took a taxi ride to Chesterville and "offered to pay with their bodies."⁵⁷

For women the problems did not arise simply from the tenuous nature of nuclear family life in the shantytowns. A main focus of discussion amongst women's associations was the totally inadequate schooling facilities for Africans, in the city and in the Emergency Camp area in particular. Inadequate schooling, as Constance Matiwane remembers, led directly to "our children not being educated enough to get jobs. We wanted more schools, more jobs and that those jobs must first be given to our children, not to people coming from the farms."⁵⁸

This was a central issue for women in the shantytowns. They opposed passes for women, as they would threaten the basis of family life in the cities. Through their role within the domestic household and the very activities of women's groups within the shacklands women were in fact crucially influential in sustaining notions of a stable, respectable nuclear family life in the developing working class culture of the shacklands.⁵⁹ It was in this context that during the 1950s, with increasing economic hardship and unemployment, women saw in the newly restructured pass laws a possible means whereby further domestic stability could be attained. Despite the iniquities of the pass laws and labour bureau system, the vast majority of African men in Mkhumbane had gained the legal right to remain permanently in the city. For many women this change in the pass laws seemed to offer increased prospects of permanent working-class family life in the city.⁶⁰

54. Interview with Ms M Mtandi, 30 November 1986.

55. Interviews with Mr J Mzimela, 5 May 1986 and personal communication, Mr C N Shum. Joshua Mzimela was one of "Shum's boys": the shantytown youth whom Colin Shum helped to organize into sporting teams.

56. See for example *Ilanga lase Natal*, 3 May 1952 and 27 February 1954.

57. *Ibid.*, 3 June 1950.

58. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 21 June 1985.

59. See, for example, interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1986.

60. Interview with Ms R Shabane, 18 November 1986.

Among the shantytown proletariat the compelling force of populism, anti-elitism and anti-Indianism had for long been accepted. Yet, as the 1949 Riots indicated, such a political consciousness was unorganizable and could rarely be sustained. Yet this was the politics of the rapid violent overthrow and the creation of that social vacuum which could allow shack dwellers to regain and further sustain their own life.⁶¹

During the 1950s many residents attempted to develop a community life not solely rooted in the beerhalls and shebeens or structured around riots, robberies and violence. In many cases these new forms of community life were facilitated through residents using the resources provided by welfare organizations and the municipality.

For African men soccer had for long been a central feature of city leisure activity. In the early 1950s various soccer teams had formed in the shantytowns, and matches were played regularly at the Round Table sports ground close to the beerhall. In 1957 residents formed the Cato Manor Football League. This was independent of the Durban and District African Football Association, an inefficient and often corrupt body racked by internal dissension among its leadership. Among the soccer teams in Mkhumbane were the Shumville Celtics, City Pirates, Cato Manor Assegais, Black Bees and Cato Manor Young Aces.⁶² Matches were extremely popular: at weekends the football grounds were "full of adults."⁶³ During 1957 the Cato Manor School Sports Association attempted to "improve the activities of the Cato Manor community". Among other functions, it arranged for a "picnic" to Nagle Dam where "rock and roll" music was provided. The limits of normality were nevertheless clearly apparent. In advertising this venture, the organizers stressed that persons should bring their own food as, with segregated public facilities, "the picnic place is isolated."⁶⁴

Residents would also arrange excursions to beaches in Durban and, more often, to the "Bantu beaches at Mgababa, boxing tournaments where African professional boxers would train local boxers and music events in the various shack halls.⁶⁵ In spite of lacking any venue with both a stage and piano, these evenings were always fully attended. In the main entertainment was provided by 'jasbaadjie' groups whose isicatamiya and ngoma ebusuku music best represented a form of Christian based African working class music.⁶⁶ Nationally popular African entertainers rarely entered the shack settlements. The only important exception was when the acclaimed 'African Inkspots' performed to a packed audience in the Emergency Camp in 1957.⁶⁷

61. Ilanga lase Natal, 28 May 1949.

62. Ibid, 27 April 1957 and interviews with Mr N Matiwane, 28 June 1986, Mr M Mcanyana, 19 May 1985 and Mr J Mzimela, 5 May 1986. See also T Couzens, "An introduction to the history of football in South Africa", in Bozzoli (ed), Town and Countryside in the Transvaal (Johannesburg, 1983) and Kuper, African Bourgeoisie, Chapter 22.

63. Ilanga lase Natal, 22 March 1958.

64. Ibid, 10 September 1957.

65. KCAV; interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.

66. V Erlmann, "Singing brings joy to the distressed: the social history of Zulu migrant workers' choral competitions", History Workshop conference, University of the Witwatersrand, February 1987.

67. Ilanga lase Natal, 8 June 1957.

It is significant that such changes in the nature of residents' leisure activities gathered increasing momentum during the very social crises of the later 1950s. Amidst the social upheavals of the late 1950s the Cato Manor Women's Society, founded by Mrs A J Luthuli, held a Christmas Party. Commenting on the event, *Ilanga lase Natal* noted that "many used to think that everything in Mkhumbane was bad. Now ... all is clearly not bad."⁶⁸ The images of respectability clearly evident in peoples' recollections of these events are not the same as the notions which pervade the concerts and ballroom dancing functions held in the city centre and so popular amongst many of Durban's African petty bourgeoisie.⁶⁹ Although upholding notions of respectability and decency, here in the shantytowns was a working-class culture.

Yet there was a squalidness and roughness about shack life. Attempts to sustain a dignified life were constrained by the refusal of the municipality to improve facilities in the area, by the financial costs of renting accommodation in Kwa Mashu and by the conditions under which industry and commerce made use of African labour.

Health conditions in the shacklands were appalling prior to the establishment of municipal authority over the Emergency Camp. Over two hundred African children were admitted to the under-staffed King Edward VIII Hospital every month. Of these it was estimated that ninety five percent came from the Mkhumbane area and that fifty percent would die.⁷⁰ The main killers were malaria, malnutrition and gastro-enteritis. In 1950 alone, 1,083 African children in the city died of malnutrition.⁷¹ Reliable estimates maintained that one in every third African child born in Durban would die before the age of one. Conditions for adults were hardly better. African adults aged between twenty and forty-five suffered from those same illnesses evident in White adults aged between fifty and seventy.⁷² With the development of the Emergency Camp, health conditions in the shacklands grew even worse with a growth in the number of reported cases of tuberculosis, malaria fever and constant epidemics of typhoid.⁷³

Africans in the city had for long resisted hospitalization. Even male patients, suffering from tuberculosis and thus hospitalized for long periods escape because of "worry about their wife and children".⁷⁴ For most Africans, medical care came from the outpatients clinic of King Edward VIII Hospital. In 1956, 73,738 people made use of the outpatients facilities at the hospital. In the late 1950s the government doubled the cost of outpatient services in King Edward VIII Hospital from two shillings to four shillings a visit,

68. *Ibid.*, 25 January 1958.

69. See Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, Chapter 11.

70. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 28 July 1951.

71. *Ibid.*, 31 October 1952.

72. *Ibid.*, 1 July 1950.

73. Municipality of Durban; Medical Officer of Health, annual report, 1957-1958.

74. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 16 April 1949. Mr C D S Mbutho's wife was forced to earn money as a fence during Mr Mbutho's long period of convalescence as a T B patient.

maintaining that Africans were using the place to "gossip" or be treated for "needless illnesses." There was a dramatic drop in the number of outpatients.⁷⁵

Not only did the established institutions of civil society dealing with African health view African life as cheap. The state's attitude towards those convicted of serious crimes was ambivalent. Three Africans convicted of stealing money were given eight strokes and additional sentences of between ten and eleven years imprisonment.⁷⁶ Africans convicted of murdering other Africans could often gain lighter sentences. Reductions in sentence were often through courts accepting that poor living conditions were of considerable import as mitigating factors.⁷⁷ Although the legal defence of those convicted of having acted within the mobs which killed policemen in Mkhumbane in 1960 stressed that shack conditions should be accepted as central mitigating circumstances, many of the convicted were hanged.⁷⁸

Not only was crime against White property regarded seriously, White citizens would also press for "cheeky" Africans to be "publically sjambokked."⁷⁹ However, a White South African policeman convicted of killing an African man in the Somtseu Road barracks received a sentence of £50 or two months imprisonment.⁸⁰ Of the many White South African policemen convicted of raping African women, most received sentences of one to two years imprisonment with or without the option of fines.⁸¹

Offences committed in African areas and involving Africans received different punishment. African entrepreneurs convicted of embezzlement or fraudulent schemes in African residential areas, would be given lenient sentences.⁸² African men convicted of raping African women could often be sentenced to only three months imprisonment.⁸³

Attempts to establish a level of normality in the shantytowns were impeded by inadequate health facilities and by civil society's callous attitude towards offences committed by Africans against other Africans. Controlling the nature of African proletarian life in the city involved massive coercion and overt violence. Ranging from pass and liquor raids, labour laws, mass arrests, humiliating medical examinations, to the forced resettlement of Africans, key aspects of proletarian life in the city were overtly criminalized.⁸⁴

75. Ilanga lase Natal, 27 February 1958.

76. Ibid, 11 March 1950.

77. Ibid, 9 April 1955.

78. Magistrate Court Records, Natal, Rex versus E Zondi and Others, 1962 and personal communication, C N Shum.

79. Ilanga lase Natal, 11 March 1950 and interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.

80. Ilanga lase Natal, 13 May 1950.

81. Ibid, 30 September 1950.

82. See, for example, Ibid, 6 May 1950.

83. Ilanga lase Natal, 25 November 1950.

84. For further details see South African Institute of Race Relations, Annual Surveys, 1954-1955 and 1959-1960.

Throughout the 1950s, the shantytowns would be beset daily by murder, rape, stabbings and brutal assaults.⁸⁵ Forged in many ways in the vicissitudes of proletarian life, such actions would perpetuate and legitimate notions of violent conflict. It was one thing to have a soccer team called the City Pirates or the Cato Manor Assegais and quite another to live in an area where robbery and ritual disembowelling became fashionable.⁸⁶

Some of the violence was simply the reaction of Durban's growing reserve army of labour to increasing unemployment. Other crimes were committed by the shantytown's street gangs and tsotsi element.⁸⁷ Other incidents were clearly due to the reality of growing class distinctions in the African city population. Rowdy drunken mobs would invade ballroom dances and disrupt other such occasions.⁸⁸ Daily life in the shantytowns became heavily infused with an acceptance of violence. Violence was often endemic to those Zionist churches and sects that were closely associated with a shantytown working class culture.⁸⁹ In an area where an eight-year-old boy could "chop" his three-year-old sister to death in an argument over "a cup of tea" and a woman could "encourage" a daughter to "stab" another daughter, attempts to sustain a new working-class culture would be somewhat constrained.⁹⁰

There were further structural impediments to the growth of a working-class consciousness which stressed respectability, the dignity of labour, sobriety and community unity in the shantytowns. A central feature of shack life in the area had been the growth of petty commodity entrepreneurship. Over the weekend Mkhumbane would gain the custom of thousands of male hostel residents. Much of this trading was focussed on the sale of alcohol, sex and other services to African men unable to enjoy such forms of leisure in the strictly controlled city barracks and hostels. With the very many shebeens and the less evident drinking dens, the municipal beerhall and within stokvels and the domestic household, alcohol was central to much working class culture. It was in this situation that a vibrant, assertive and often chauvinist male proletarian culture developed.

It was also through the brewing and sale of alcohol that many women gained a livelihood that both gave to women increased status and provided a much needed additional income. Women endeavouring to gain sufficient money to sustain household life would be continually confronted with the issue of alcohol. On the one hand male drinking rituals affronted notions of sobriety and, as Dorothy Nyembe recalls, "made men drunk on beer and not politics."⁹¹ However integral to opposition to the municipal beer monopoly was a desire to

85. Ilanga lase Natal, passim. See particularly the 'Happenings' columns.

86. Ibid, 7 June 1958.

87. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 12 May 1986.

88. See for example Ilanga lase Natal, 17 November 1953.

89. Ibid, 7 June 1958. See also J Kiernan "A Cesspool of Sorcery: How Zionists visualize and respond to the city," Urban Anthropology, vol 13, nos 2-3 (1986) and "The role of the adversary in Zulu Zionist churches", Religion in Southern Africa, vol 8, no 1 (1987).

90. Ilanga lase Natal, 27 April and 31 March 1957.

91. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

acquire an increasing patronage for the brewing activities of shack women. The shebeen and the beerhall were never the sole nexus of a proletarian culture, but all working class notions of decency, sobriety and a respect for the ideology of work were to be distilled through the pervasive influence of the shebeen.⁹²

Through the influence of women's associations, through the use of resources provided by welfare organizations, and through a growing acceptance of the recognition of some strategic advantages in aspects of the new pass laws the nature of community life within the shacklands altered. Created through struggle against both state and capital, being ill-provided with basic residential services, ridden with violence and being in many ways dependant upon the provision of services so inimical to the sustaining of that desired working class consciousness, the shacklands were hardly conducive for the growth of any effective working class political organization.

Despite such constraints, conflict within the shantytowns led residents to become increasingly conscious of the power of proletarian unity. Some of the strategies originated within the shantytowns. However with the main shackland struggles up to the late 1950s, the incentive and specific strategy originated from within the broader campaigns waged by the Congress Alliance. Nevertheless the character of the shackland struggles was both determined and limited by the almost intractable problems of shack life. Within an often introspective shack community, the complexity of the issues which residents confronted seemed in many cases to mitigate against the development of organized struggle within the shacklands and provided both the ANC and SACTU with a relatively weak organized support base in the area.

Confronting the increasing wealth and security of the African traders was difficult. Shack dwellers had little choice but to purchase from the various African and Indian owned stores in the area. With the force of populist unity still strong, during the September 1953 riots in Mkhumbane no African-owned shops were touched. Such a respect for the property of African traders would soon diminish. Thefts from African shops became increasingly prevalent.⁹³ By the late 1950s it was accepted that such traders could be robbed in the same fashion as Indian stores had for long suffered from theft and looting. It is significant that theft from African traders developed despite a shantytown leadership and entrepreneurial element constantly extolling the virtues of a populism which presented the traders' successes as evidence of the power of African unity. Moreover in the shantytowns there had always existed a vaguely defined notion of what constituted legitimate theft.⁹⁴ African shop-keepers were however seen as fair game.

This was clearly recognized by the traders. Most African traders experienced a theft problem and feared that their shops could easily be subjected to the large scale looting which accompanied rioting. African traders thus refused to stock rolls of calico, German print or cheap rayon and linen materials or children's clothing, footwear and other popular items. As one African trader explained, "I don't carry materials because it

92. For greater detail see Edwards, "Shebeen Queens".

93. See for example Ilanga lase Natal, 26 September 1953, 14 April 1956, 3 May 1958 and 31 May 1958.

94. Ibid, 3 May 1958 and interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 28 April 1985.

would be an invitation to robbery - one roll of material costing £10 is light in weight, easily handled and valuable. Compare this with a bag of malt weighing 200 lbs and costing £3.⁹⁵ For such goods the market was securely held by the Indian traders of Mkhumbane.⁹⁶

Despite African traders often calling for a boycott of Indian stores in the Emergency Camp, support was never more than minimal. The increasing wealth of African traders was resented, as was the way in which many traders would "drive around us in flashy cars."⁹⁷ Supporting African traders meant, in many cases, paying prices higher than those charged by Indian traders.⁹⁸ Indeed many residents believed that, as one writer to the Ilanga lase Natal asserted, the Zulu Hlanganani "wants to be the sole milker of desolate people".⁹⁹

Similarly, the issue of transport facilities in the shacklands provoked the anger of residents. The transport issue allowed residents to view shack entrepreneurs in a more critical light. Due however to the constraints imposed by daily life the proletariat was never able to successfully unite over the question of transport. The issue was also to reveal how contradictions between shack conditions and broader political campaigns worked against the ANC.

Taking advantage of the cessation of Indian-owned bus services into the shantytowns of Mkhumbane after the 1949 riots, African entrepreneurs were able to "get one of our most cherished dreams": the formation of African-owned bus companies.¹⁰⁰ In July 1949 six African bus companies applied for licenses to operate on the Booth and Wiggins Road routes to and from the city. In that same month the first African-owned bus to operate was greeted by shouts of "Zulu!" Popular shantytown approval was such that Indian residents "ran away" fearing renewed rioting. The owners of the bus were leading officials of the ANC in Natal.¹⁰¹

Amidst the flurry of applications from many other newly formed African transport ventures, shack residents began to boycott Indian-owned bus services.¹⁰² Fred Ngema, already a wealthy entrepreneur in the Johannesburg area where he owned a fleet of buses, extended his operations to both Clermont and then Mkhumbane. Ngema's bus company was called the Bantu Bus Company. A wealthy Durban mail order herbalist, Israel Alexander, also started the Ebony Bus Company. There was also the Stand For Yourself Bus Company.¹⁰³

Despite the publicity and populist rhetoric which accompanied the appearance of more African-owned bus companies plying the Mkhumbane routes, the failure of these companies was soon evident. As early

95. Quoted in MNAD; Cope Trading Report. Emphasis added.

96. Ibid.

97. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 28 April 1985.

98. MNAD; Cope Trading Report.

99. Ilanga lase Natal, 9 October 1954.

100. Interview with Mr B Mngadi, 29 October 1986.

101. Ilanga lase Natal, 2 July 1949 and 16 July 1949.

102. Ibid and interview with Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1985.

103. See for example Ilanga lase Natal, 22 April 1950 and 17 February 1951 and interview with Mr R. Arenstein, 22 August 1988.

as 1951 the Secretary of the local Road Transportation Board, who had been agreeable to the licensing of African bus companies after the 1949 riots publically commented that these services were a failure.¹⁰⁴ Lacking expertise and capital, and constantly fighting among each other and sabotaging each others' buses, ordinary residents who had invested in such ventures became "cross." Those controlling the operations of one failed bus company were all members of the CMWDB.¹⁰⁵

Africans began to rely more and more on the Indian-owned bus services in the area. Not even the amalgamation of various bus companies would secure the future for the African-owned services.¹⁰⁶ In 1951, of the seventeen African-owned buses operating in the Mkhumbane area only two would usually be operating on any one given day.¹⁰⁷ In 1953 there were only thirty-eight Indian-owned buses and nine African-owned buses operating in the area.¹⁰⁸ Residents referred to the poor transport services in Mkhumbane as "e-Satan."¹⁰⁹ Under enormous pressure from the residents, and despite the objections of Indian and African-owned bus companies, the municipality increased municipal bus operations in the shantytowns. Although the intervention of the municipality did improve the bus service, in order to get to work in time workers would always have to make allowances for the lengthy queues and delays caused by the inadequate bus service.¹¹⁰

Shantytowns in residents were becoming increasingly aware of both their own marginalization in the city and the growing class distinctions within the shantytown community. Such was the harshness of everyday shack life that within the routines of daily life, constraints were such that the level of working class unity and organizational struggle within the community was weak. Despite attempts to sustain a working class consciousness, shack life provided both limitations and for the very many contradictions within such a consciousness. However through changes in the nature of shack life, a changing political climate and the growth of new forms of working class struggles, the nature of working class politics in the shacklands was to alter in important ways.

Imperfect Economies, Proletarianization and New Struggles

During the early 1950s many shantytown residents had supported a call from the African bus owners for a total boycott of Indian-owned transport. Despite many people being willing to "walk to work because there were no buses",¹¹¹ the boycott of Indian bus services quickly collapsed. Residents were both angered at the way in

104. Ilanga lase Natal, 3 March 1951.

105. Ibid, 25 July 1953 and 20 April 1954. For the failure of such companies see interviews with Mr R Arenstein, 22 August 1988 and Mr H C Sibisi, 22 October 1986.

106. Ilanga lase Natal, 24 November 1951.

107. Ibid, 28 July 1951.

108. Ibid, 10 October 1953.

109. Ibid, 15 February 1951.

110. Thorpe Papers; script of the musical "Mkhumbane!", (Gallotone, 1960).

111. Interview with Mr J Hlope, 29 July 1985.

which African bus owners gained permission for fare increases and the continued inadequate operations of such buses. African-owned buses kept to no particular routes timetable. Although bitter, the proletariat was unable to organize effectively around the issue. Furthermore, in 1957 when the ANC called for a boycott of municipal buses throughout the city, the campaign was rejected by shackland residents.¹¹² The issue also aroused deep resentment among the shack residents who believed that the ANC was strongly influenced by a Natal Indian Congress interested only in furthering the interests of Indian bus owners.¹¹³

Nevertheless for the shantytowns proletariat the principle of economic boycott was growing stronger. African eagerness to engage in such activity was clearly reflected in the ranks of the ANC in the early 1950s. In 1953 Luthuli stated publically that the products of firms paying African workers poor wages should be boycotted.¹¹⁴ This was accepted by the annual conference of the ANC in Queenstown in 1954.¹¹⁵

To many shack residents, such a policy had much in common with shantytown struggles during the late 1940s. As with the late 1940s, shack residents' strategies in the 1950s aimed to compel all employers to ensure that Africans were both sufficiently educated and allowed access to increasingly semi-skilled work. Accepting the power of industrialization shack residents desired to gain increasing status and remuneration from within that very process.¹¹⁶

During the 1950s, the ANC was never to accept fully the principle of "Africanization" which was so forcefully endorsed by both the remaining CYL groupings in Durban, the ANCWL branches in Mkhumbane, and other shack residents. Within these aspirations for a greater share of the wealth created by industrialization was an ethnic consciousness which reflected not only a desire for an economic base for African nationalism but also an assertive racism.¹¹⁷ As Charles Khumalo recalls

We wanted to get all Indians and bosses to put us in the places where we could get money. Not at the bottom. 'John, bamba, now fuck off' This we had done for a long time. You know ... when you go to a shop there were Indians shouting at you 'come and buy this! Free socks!'. But no money! When you went to work for mlungu, there kaffirs are kaffirs. If you are matric then you can start sweeping the floors.¹¹⁸

Experiences in the factories and trading areas of the city did often produce a racism alongside a developing working class assertiveness. Among the "hot" Mkhumbane proletariat, such expressions encompassed an anti-Indian feeling. Not only were the Indian petty bourgeoisie in control of many trading ventures in the shantytown area, but the shacklands were often still owned by Indian.

112. *Ibid.*

113. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 2 March 1957.

114. *Ibid.*, 2 September 1953.

115. *Advance*, 10 December 1953.

116. See interviews with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986, Mr C Khumalo, 3 June 1987 and Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984.

117. See for example *Ilanga lase Natal*, 27 June 1953 and 11 August 1956.

118. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DR 19:30/13; ANC (Natal), executive committee meeting, 6 June 1954.

Within the ANC leadership in the city there was considerable concern over the manner in which campaigns focussing on economic issues could produce a heightened anti-Indianism and class conflict within the African population. The minutes of the executive committee meeting of the ANC (Natal) in June 1954 reflect this concern:

The Boycott: This resolution was discussed at length, and the dangers that some people might exploit this against the Indians, and that some traders might try to use it to boost their own businesses were expressed. It was resolved that this resolution has to be carried out but our allies the Indian congress should be fully consulted, and any action should be taken after full discussions with them.

In 1954, just months after the promulgation of the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act of 1953 which outlawed all strikes by African workers, African workers at the United Tobacco factory in Durban went on strike and were dismissed and prosecuted. Agreeing to a request from the Tobacco Workers' Union, the ANC led a call for a boycott of all United Tobacco Company products. The response from the shack dwellers was immediate and successful. The boycott was implemented: customers "shouted at shop keepers who had those cigarettes on their shelves."¹¹⁹

In 1959, a potato boycott was initiated by the Congress Alliance in protest against the working conditions of African farm labourers. During this campaign "Congress volunteers" would search people alighting from buses at the bus ranks in Mkhumbane, and "throw any potatoes away." Other groups of ANC activists and gangs of youths, would "conduct houses to house searches to look for potatoes." As Stanford Mtolo recalls, "during this campaign no-one in Mkhumbane and Chesterville ate potatoes."¹²⁰ Although the boycott was both successful and had the potential to act as a issue around which the ANC could acquire increasing support in the shantytowns, the boycott was soon called off. Residents believed that "they [the ANC] were too afraid of getting the shop keepers into trouble."¹²¹ Such comments are probably a little unfair. They nevertheless do reveal a willingness to criticize the ANC's stand on economic issues regarded as important proletariat.

During the 1950s, responding to the increasingly evident class divisions within the shack community and changes within the local economy, new strategies and perceptions developed among the working class in the shacklands. For the shantytowns proletariat during the later 1940s and early 1950s a key strategy had been the attempt to avoid full proletarianization. Along with poor wages, the casual and unskilled nature of wage labour, and the process of job hopping, came a disdain for full and continuous employment and a desire to become involved in petty entrepreneurial ventures. The vast majority of shack leaders who arose during the latter 1940s had consistently attempted, often successfully, to avoid full proletarianization through their control of various

119. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 26 July 1985. Luckhardt and Walls Organize, pp 274 and 340 and interview with Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984.

120. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

121. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 3 June 1985. See also Ilanga lase Natal, 11 August 1956.

resources within the shacklands. Such persons had absolutely no desire to become involved in wage labour. Why did Japhta Mnguni start running a shackshop? : "because of bad wages."¹²²

Such strategies of escaping from full wage employment and the discipline of industrial production processes were intrinsic to the shacklands proletariat. Immediately after the 1949 Riots there was a "lull in politics" as "even ordinary labourers" desired to open trading ventures.¹²³ Indeed, although in formal wage labour, many among the shackland proletariat wanted "nothing to do with the boss."¹²⁴

By the late 1950s it became steadily more difficult for the Mkhumbane proletariat to become involved in such ventures. The 'fertilizer' had run out. With declining wages and increasing household expenses, the money that could be redistributed within the local economy was declining.¹²⁵ A legal African trading class dominated trading in the shantytowns. Competition within this imperfect economy was increasing. Legal traders clashed amongst themselves and with those illicit traders who were still operating. Similarly competition between shebeen queens was rife and often vicious, with some informing police of competitors' operations.¹²⁶ The internal redistributive economy was also subject to increasing competition from the municipal beerhall in the Emergency Camp and the ravages of municipal and police raiding which climaxed during the political crises and shack demolitions of the late 1950s. Fines and the confiscation or destruction of commodities seriously undermined this economy. The hundreds of thousands of gallons of liquor destroyed during raiding and the high sentences meted out to those convicted of illegal brewing placed severe constraints against attempts to sustain such brewing. Fines of around £60 or sixty days imprisonment were common for possessing gavine.¹²⁷ For possessing large quantities of dagga, fines of around £300 or alternative prison sentences of three years were common.¹²⁸

Principal power was not passively accepted by the shantytown community. Dagga dealers became strolling minstrels, concealing the new "King Size zols" in their guitars.¹²⁹ Shimeyane or other illicit spirits, including 'White mans' liquor', would be drunk from china tea cups. Joshua Mzimela recalls:

When you had friends and you wanted to drink gavine, then you sit on the stools outside the room and you put the gavine into a teapot. Everyone has their own cups and saucers and you all sit there drinking. When the police come they do not kick things around and break things because they see you are doing things properly.¹³⁰

122. KCAV; interview with Mr J Mnguni, 22 July 1980.

123. Ilanga lase Natal, 18 June 1949.

124. Ibid., 17 October 1953.

125. Interview with Mr S Shabalala, 21 June 1985.

126. Edwards, "Shebeen Queens", p 86.

127. Ilanga lase Natal, 4 April 1953.

128. Ibid., 9 February 1957.

129. Ibid., 9 January 1957.

130. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

Despite such tactics, there was nevertheless a realization of the crippling effects of detection and conviction.

Writing to Ilanga lase Natal during the early 1950s, when the possibilities for Africans to escape full proletarianization were clearly all but gone, an aspirant trader vented his anger and explained his diminishing chances of avoiding full wage labour. Stressing the difficulties of gaining trading licenses and the dangers befalling those selling illicit liquor, the writer maintained that there was no option but to gamble on horse racing and sell 'imbazo' sorghum beer in municipal beerhalls.¹³¹

It was indeed true that by the late 1950s, the African proletariat living in the shantytowns had become more interested in the potential wealth which could be gained through gambling on horses. Thousands of "ordinary" Africans flocked to the Greyville race course.¹³² In 1955, over twenty thousand Africans attended race meetings in the city. Betting was becoming a new feature of African proletarian life. An editorial in Ilanga lase Natal commented thus:

The ordinary person who tries to save voluntarily would be thankful and consider it a blessing if some major scheme were designed to force him to save and still leave him capable of meeting his obligations. Not so with the mass of Durban's African punters. In buses, tea rooms, shebeens, beerhalls and street corners they had been grumbling because over the last three weeks rains have compelled turf clubs to cancel races. This they could not bear ... To hear them complain one would think every punter had a sure thing and would have made a fortune ...¹³³

Among the proletariat there were other strategies for accumulating money. Banking institutions would advertise and gain increased African patronage with adverts such as that by Barclays Bank which depicted a shack resident saving after having his house burnt down.¹³⁴

By the late 1950s the weakness of attempts to avoid full wage labour through investments in the imperfect internal shack economy were clearly apparent. For the shantytown proletariat faced with increasing material hardships and the imminence of removal to Kwa Mashu, stokvels would often be the site of massive brawling and stabbings. In 1957 municipal police operating in the Mkhumbane area reported that "of late, many fights take place in stokvels."¹³⁵ Charles Khumalo explains: "Always the fights and the poking. 'I gave you this last month, now you must pay me this. Look you have not spent anything yet. Who do you think I am, Oppenheimer hey?' It was all about money that no-one had. Everybody was cross."¹³⁶ During the same period brawling developed as people started to reclaim unpaid debts.

131. Ilanga lase Natal, 17 October 1953.

132. Ilanga lase Natal, 2 July 1955. See for example Ilanga lase Natal, 7 April 1956 and interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 19 May 1985.

133. Ibid, 27 November 1954.

134. Ibid, 5 January 1957.

135. Ibid, 22 June 1957.

136. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 14 July 1985.

Many residents had for long seen investment in shack housing as being an important way of both investing money and allowing for later prosperity through expanded shack renting. Now in many ways such options had been foreclosed by the growth of established shacklords after the 1949 riots and the late acquisition of the Mkhumbane area by the municipality. Nevertheless, many ordinary residents did own pieces of shacks, having added to shack buildings during the 1950s. Others owned shacks purchased through municipal loans. With the municipality refusing to pay any compensation to shack owners when the shack population was resettled to Kwa Mashu, many attempted to break down their shacks. As Charles Khumalo recalls, they "wanted to take their walls and windows away to Malagazi, Inanda and other places. Big fights. 'This is not your wall ...'."¹³⁷ Although having failed to secure land and housing ownership in the Mkhumbane shacklands, the African proletariat was never to forsake the desire to gain permanent land tenure in the city as a means of acquiring increased material and political power.

By the late 1950s, it was apparent that long cherished means of avoiding full proletarianization were no longer efficacious. Yet the defects of such strategies, which had derived from residential as opposed to factory floor life, led the growing popularity of new strategies of struggle outside the shacklands. The failure to gain secure permanent residential rights in Mkhumbane, the growing sense of class distinctions within the shacklands, and the changing nature of the internal shack economy, came at the same time as a growing sense of working class consciousness within the shacklands and the growing importance of new forms of struggle.

Trade Unionism

Just as the municipality and police clamped down on illicit petty entrepreneurship in Mkhumbane, so the state and capital acted to compel increasing acceptance of the rigours of full formal wage employment. The creation of a new working class was to be accomplished through actions within residential areas, within the labour market and in industrial and commercial concerns. During the 1950s both the state and capital sought ways of both ensuring a sufficient reserve army of labour and ensuring that African workers became involved in longer periods of continuous employment.

In 1949 the newly elected Nationalist government debarred the vast majority of African urban wage labour from any form of unemployment insurance as a means of compelling African workers to remain in continuous employment.¹³⁸ As one worker remembered,

Now there was no more getting drunk and sleeping in the afternoon. You must work or leave. So you have to work. You cannot sit at Ordnance Road getting money for not working any longer. It was hard. If you go to Dalton [beerhall] for lunch, then you can get kicked out and you cannot live.¹³⁹

137. Interview with Mr O Kunene, 26 July 1985 and Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

138. Ilanga lase Natal, 18 June 1949.

139. The author would prefer this testimony to remain anonymous due to the similarity of this testimony and later events within this informant's own life. For the popularity of lunch time beer drinking see Edwards "Recollections", p 79.

The ethic of productivity was forcefully impressed upon the African working class.

The process of 'job hopping' became progressively more difficult. In 1952 section 29 of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act was changed to broaden the range of African workers who could be considered 'idle and undesirable'. Africans who failed to accept three offers of employment, those who failed to remain in any new job for less than a month, and those who were frequently dismissed for misconduct were liable to be expelled from the city. Such workers would thus forfeit their cherished right to permanent residence in the city.¹⁴⁰

During the 1950s Africans and employers became more conscious of the growing reserve army of labour in the city and the eagerness of Africans to gain more permanent employment.¹⁴¹ As a result the power of employers in the labour market and the production process increased. As SACTU member Harold Nxasana remembers,

[At a textile firm wages were not that] bad. But I can tell you a funny thing. Now we are working on a production system. For instance the minimum blankets, say you are supposed to make twenty five blankets a day. They were calculated in such a way that those twenty five blankets are making you a day wage. Now whenever there was a wage increase, Mr Schult [the supervisor] increases the number of blankets-making it very difficult for you to reach that minimum. And in some cases he will increase the quality of the yarn so that the yarn makes it not easy for you to actually cover the score.¹⁴²

Within the African working class living in the Mkhumbane shantytowns the growing facts of their virtually complete subjection to the discipline of formal employment rapidly became evident.

Shantytown life was both harsh and brutal. In this setting life the established working class began to portray itself as more respectable and claimed unto itself a moral high ground over lumpen elements. Here are the signs of growing divisions within the proletariat. Workers had new songs about "courage", "strength" and "the way we were working": all of which indicated an acceptance of the ideology of work.¹⁴³ Some such songs came through increased involvement in SACTU affiliated unions. Others arose from within the shantytowns.

In the shacklands there were new images of working-class consciousness. Alongside songs about male proletarian unity against "boss boys", the municipality and "clever Africans" there were others that expressed different sentiments.¹⁴⁴ Some of the *jasbaadjie* songs popular told, in a derogatory fashion, of "the drunks who can only sleep on the road at Kwa Banki." In this song both drunkenness and homelessness are counterposed against the "people who can buy their own liquor and hold their liquor and can get home to their

140. Hindson, *Pass Controls*, p 69.

141. See, for example, Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1953-1954.

142. Interview with Mr H Nxasana, 26 May 1986.

143. Interview with Mr M Mthethwe, 14 January 1986 and Mr C Ndlovu, 29 November 1986.

144. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 27 July 1957 and interview with Mr T Phewa, 12 May 1985. For reports of murders on buses see the 'Happenings' column of the *Ilanga lase Natal*.

beds."¹⁴⁵ Sensitive to and adept at overturning aspects of a dominant ideology, another song, apparently to the tune of a Sunlight Soap advertisement heard of Radio Bantu, told of how "sweating was there to make us clean."¹⁴⁶

A working-class shantytown resident became angered by the increasing incidence of theft in the shacklands. Such activities were those of "tsotsis", the "won't works" and the work of others who, somewhat pompously, were referred to as "malcontents."¹⁴⁷ This anger was particularly visible at bus ranks where the police were unable to prevent the long queues of "helpless workers" from the ravages of pickpocketers and those having a tendency for more forceful means of expropriation.¹⁴⁸

Although rooted in the 1950s such often lyrical reflections need not necessarily reveal a working class militance however. What does reveal the importance of such commentary is the way in which African workers began to both accept the virtual inevitability of their subjection to full capitalist wage employment and their growing desire to struggle against this very process from within the production process.

Among the proletariat there had always been various tactics used to obtain employment. Taking advantage of kinship ties or a factory induna favouring the employment of those from his own rural district, were two such methods in Durban. To avoid the indignity of medical inspections many work-seekers developed strategies to circumvent harsh, corrupt inspecting doctors. As Harold Nxasana remembers,

You used to go to Kwa Muhle to get a 'special': that is the labour seekers' permit. You have got to see a doctor, a very old man. I am sure they were pensioned doctors and you had to strip off and go there naked. They wanted you to show your private parts and you had to pull the skin back because they said they wanted to prove that you were not infected with VD. ... I am told the needles were very long. Then they would ask you to pass water... If your urine happened to be yellowish they will say you have VD. As a result you have to drink lots of water.¹⁴⁹

Others believing that "the doctors were there to stop us getting work" went directly to places of employment, secured work, and then registered.¹⁵⁰ Obtaining employment was one issue; gaining strength within the capitalist wage market was very different.

By the early 1950s, the barter markets which had operated in the city had closed down. As those areas of the city in which an African proletariat traded became more and more structured around money, so African workers asserted their desire to be paid solely in money. Employers agreed and by the early 1950s few

145. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 19 May 1985.

146. Interview with Mr M Mthethwe, 14 January 1986.

147. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 29 November 1986.

148. See for example *Ilanga lase Natal*, 27 July 1957.

149. Interview with Mr H Nxasana, 26 May 1986.

150. Interview with Mr N Matiwane, 26 July 1986.

paid wages in cash and kind.¹⁵¹ Such victories, though did not necessarily improve the material position of workers. As Thomas Ndlovu recalls,

When the companies started paying money only. That's all. No samp and beans for the rooms [employer barrack] No sugar. Nothing. Just money every week. But when we went to buy with that money there was less than before. In the old days if we wanted a shirt, then we could take some maize and talk to the aunties at Dalton [Road] Now we had to buy the shirt.¹⁵²

Similarly, the manner in which an African proletariat having gained the legal right to permanent urban residence gleefully mocked the African educated elite did reveal a class consciousness. However a, possibly often vindictive, awareness of the socially levelling nature of the new pass laws does not lead directly to increased working class strength. This was so clearly evident within the shacklands. During the period when an African working class was accepting the rigours of full permanent wage labour, the established African traders increased their authority and wealth, becoming employers in their own right.

During the 1950s, confronting both a state determined to further restrict the power of African workers and local employers who, unlike major employers in other urban centres, desired the prohibition of all forms of African worker representation including internal works committees was exceedingly difficult.¹⁵³ This new form of struggle was nevertheless precisely what the songs created during the 'One Pound a Day' campaign and the *jasbaadjie* songs "I won't work for a penny. No way! No way!" and "chickens are for farmers. I want money! I want money!" were all about.¹⁵⁴ The growing level of African working-class militancy in the shantytowns and the increasing level of conflict between African workers and employers was based around on trade union organization. Within the shantytowns an important level of working class consciousness could be sustained. However, residential areas provided little scope for organized working class conflict.

During the later 1940s, the level of unionization among the Mkhumbane shantytown population was low. African unions in the broad alliance of the SATLC were often either small or inoperative. The effectiveness of the numerous independent African unions of the period was slight, with many unions being mere figureheads used by ambitious African entrepreneurs for purposes of self gain. Others were riddled with internal conflicts among leadership.

But there was more. During the late 1940s an African proletariat living in Mkhumbane believed, as did many of their compatriots living elsewhere in the city, in another form of worker power. Notions of worker dignity, sobriety and an acceptance of the industrialization process became suffused within a populist desire to establish an industry and commerce owned and operated by Africans. It was significant that during the 1950s

151. Broome Commission; evidence of the African Bakeries and Confection Workers Union and the Baumanville Womens' Association.

152. Interview with Mr T Ndlovu, 14 January 1986.

153. Industrial Employers Association (Natal Section), Annual Report, 1952-1953.

154. Interview with Mr A Masango, 30 November 1986 and Mr M Kunene, 3 November 1986.

such ideas were proposed by neither members of the African petty bourgeoisie nor by the African working class. By the 1950s, as with the co-operatives, such notions were defunct. Stanford Mtolo remembers:

They were the same as the co-operatives. They did just not work. They were very important during the years after the war. Very good ideas. There was this chap Mr Victor Maillie. He was involved. So were the Youth League. But nothing happened like this in the years of Congress [after A J Luthuli assumed power] ... Why? I just think that it was not possible.¹⁵⁵

During the later 1940s many worker organizations had been either general workers' unions or unions in a nominal sense only. The latter were often operated virtually single handed characters who saw in unionism a chance for entrepreneurial gain. However in 1952 the unpopularity of such forms of unionism amongst workers was indicated with the formation of a new African Municipal workers' Union.

Throughout the 1940s Sydney Myeza had advertised himself as the secretary of the African Municipal Workers' Union. Under Myeza who was rather a maverick figure being involved in trade unionism, co-operatives and other entrepreneurial ventures, this union was in essence a business venture. Africans would seek Myeza's advice, for which Myeza would claim a part of any money resulting from his successful negotiation with management on the worker's behalf. The new African Municipal Workers' Union was an industrial union in the real sense. Although Myeza was to complain about the establishment of this new union, Myeza's claim to trade union leadership rapidly waned.¹⁵⁶

Throughout the 1950s various organizations and persons were to develop general workers' unions. Champion was forever attempting to resurrect the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union, and was even prepared to use municipal animosity towards SACTU to achieve his aims. But workers criticized Champion, and his attempts at gaining increasing power through trade union leadership failed.¹⁵⁷

The utility of general workers' unions was also accepted by SACTU but in rather different terms to those understood by persons like Champion. In order to organize workers and then, after 1958, as a response to the massive rush of workers eager to join SACTU, the union federation started general workers' unions. In these unions workers would normally be issued with membership cards clearly indicating in which industry they were employed; and, "whenever there were enough workers from one industry in the general union, we would start an industrial union for them."¹⁵⁸ Indeed as Billy Nair recalls "for SACTU industrial unions were accepted as a strategic principle ... as being the best way in which workers could start organizational strength in the factories."¹⁵⁹

155. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

156. Although extremely powerful, the South African Railways and Harbours Union was mostly concentrated in the Somtseu Road barracks and the various male hostels in the Point area. 300. Ilanga lase Natal, 19 May 1958. For another different attempt to start such a union see Ilanga lase Natal, 26 September 1953.

157. Ilanga lase Natal, 19 May 1958. For another different attempt to start such a union see Ilanga lase Natal, 26 September 1953.

158. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 18 July 1985. See also Feit, Workers, p 54.

159. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

During the early 1950s there appeared to be an increasing interest amongst African workers in the benefits of industrial trade unionism. In Mkhumbane the strongest unions were the independent African Bakery and Confection Workers' Union and the African Textile Workers' Union and Tobacco Workers Union both of whom were affiliates of unions belonging to the SATLC. All these unions held regular meetings in the city and, reportedly, the African Bakers and Confectioners Workers' Union had established "branches" in Mkhumbane during the early 1950s.¹⁶⁰ All such unions were directly focussed around conditions at the workplace. The main issues taken up concerned employers' failure to pay according to statutory wage determination levels, the length of the working week factory conditions, and the general working environment.¹⁶¹

Many union organizers were either members of the ANC people like Stephen Dlamini and Moses Mabhida of the African Textile Workers' Union, Pious Mei of African Tobacco Workers' Union and Stanford Mtolo of the African Bakery and Confection Workers' Union. But generally unions had little involvement in the ANC campaigns of the early 1950s.¹⁶² The only exception was Jacob 'The Leopard' Nyaose, an effective organizer with the African Bakery and Confection Workers' Union; he was anti-White and made 'no bones about it to workers'.¹⁶³ The majority appear to have focussed specifically on immediate shop floor issues. Many leading African trade unionists wanted to re-establish the May Day celebrations so that 'workers must unite and be as one', but little was achieved on this score.¹⁶⁴ This was partly due to union leaders fearing police action against attempts to hold May Day meetings.¹⁶⁵

There was a more fundamental reason why many African unionists desired to separate political involvement and union organizing. Within the Durban and District local branch of the SATLC there was a conflict over the question of the role of White unions in White political nationalism.¹⁶⁶ For such strategic reasons both Stephen Dlamini and Moses Mabhida voted against the principle of a political role for trade unions.¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless among many trade unionists in either independent unions or those affiliated to union as which belonged to SATLC there was an increasing sense of the need to assist the growth of an African

160. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

161. See for example Ilanga lase Natal, 22 April 1950, 6 May 1950, 3 January 1952, 7 June 1952, 18 April 1953, 13 June 1953 and 20 June 1953.

162. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983. From the middle 1950s the A N C (Natal) had a "trade unions" sub-committee within the provincial executive committee. See for example CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19/1: 30/8; ANC (Natal), executive committee meeting, 26-27 November 1955.

163. Ibid.

164. Ilanga lase Natal, 8 May 1954.

165. Ibid., 13 May 1950. This was understandable as after the January 1949 Riots, the municipality successfully prohibited most African meetings in the city.

166. SAT&LC; AH 646, Da4.4; Durban Local executive committee meeting, 8 May 1952, Durban and District Local, annual meeting, 24 July 1952 and Durban and District annual general meeting, 1955.

167. Interview with Mr B Nair, 27 June 1985.

working-class militancy through focussing on both factory floor and political issues. Related to this was an increasing impatience with both the seemingly endless conflict in SATLC and the inability of this union federation to provide any clear assistance in the formation of new African unions.¹⁶⁸

However, even after the establishment of SACTU, the elected local committee in Durban was unable to provide much assistance in ensuring growing union membership in SACTU-affiliated unions.¹⁶⁹ Despite having clear connections to broader political organizations within the Congress Alliance, SACTU was primarily a trade union organization.¹⁷⁰ However the organization was continually short of funds. The federation was always unable to afford the luxury of those numbers of organizers which even the efficient daily operating of existing unions required.¹⁷¹ Prior to the 1959 beerhall riots in Mkhumbane and the gathering political militancy of the very late 1950s, SACTU campaigns to increase union membership were largely failures which often rebounded against the organization. Up until the later 1950s, Africans joined unions for reasons and in ways that were never fully consolidated or capitalized on by SACTU itself.

The most common reason for joining SACTU-affiliated unions arose from personal experiences in the shantytowns. It rapidly became apparent that the various contradictory forces so ingrained in shackland life provided little scope for the assertion of African working-class power. However, suffering increased problems in providing sufficient money for household budgetary needs, stung by both parents in the rural areas and shack women consequently criticizing workers for their lack of manliness and seeing the failure of various other long used strategies or resistance unionization "came" to workers.¹⁷²

In specific factories unionization depended less upon large-scale campaigning and was more focussed around less evident features of working life. With workers within a specific plant often having originated from the same rural area, through kinship networks within factories and through the authority of specific indunas, workers could be more easily organized than through large-scale campaigning. Although referring to organizing activities conducted during the 1940s, M B Yengwa's account is in no real way different to the means of organizing conducted during the later 1950s. On his first day as a union organizer, Yengwa is taken by Mr Mthembu, an established union official to a specific workplace:

His task was to introduce me to the workers as their new organizer and it was he who taught me the ropes. Carrying our little leather bags of the type used by school boys we set out to the Marine Hotel. Baba Mthembu gave a low whistle and called softly and rhythmically 'We Zaba-nja-na'

168. SATLC; AH646, Dd 4.17; Report by Joint General Secretary, 9 March 1952 and Secretary, Durban and District Local-General Secretary, 14 February 1954, *Ilanga lase Natal*, 8 May 1954, 5 June 1954, 3 July 1954 and 24 July 1954 and J Lewis, *Industrialization*, chapter 8.

169. Feit, *Workers*, p 54.

170. Lodge, *African Politics*, p 191.

171. Feit, *Workers*, pp 52 and 77-79.

172. See, for example, interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985 and Mr A Masango, 30 November 1986.

Recognizing Mthembu, the gate attendant opens the gate and shows the two to the "boss boy" Mkhize. Mthembu speaks only to Mkhize, first offering greetings and then explaining the reason for the visit:

Mkhize, this is Yengwa. My young man. The new organizer. he is not Sishi who is out to deceive people and break away from the union and form another one led by himself. Can you call all your men to come and renew their tickets and join the union

When the men have congregated in the quarters for lunch, Mthembu introduces Yengwa and concludes :

I felt I should let you know his face so that you may know who he is. ... Now I leave Yengwa to work with you. Trust him. He is from the same district as mine, the son of Mtonzima ... Now anyone who wants to renew their tickets come forward. Anyone who is new and is willing to join the union, let him join.

Workers then started questioning Yengwa, with one of the newly recruited workers in the hotel saying:

We are all for this Nyonyan [union]. People were true when they said 'The inheritance of fools is always usurped from them by the cunning. How will this Nyonyan benefit me? Will it help me and my children when I am sick and unemployed. I ask you Mthembu and you young man ... by the way I have forgotten your name.

After also having asked whether the "King", the Zulu Paramount Chief, and the hotel bosses had agreed to the union, Mthembu replies in ways which both stress worker struggle, the gains of the union and the need for courage:

Now look here, the hotel industry does not die. There will always be bosses ... and workers who are exploited. Before the union [workers] were working long hours without week breaks or year breaks. ...Have you ever heard of an enemy giving permission for his adversaries to join forces together against him. ... [And, the rural place of origin of the questioner] is very far removed from the Zulu Royalty. [But] as a matter of fact I went to see ...Mshiyene ka Dinizulu. When I told him I was an organizer he was very happy and commended me for helping the workers.¹⁷³

Within such rituals, the sanction of local authority, rural affinities and kinship bonds and through the stressing of unionism within a broader context lay the core basis of most of the unionization of African workers from within the work environment during the 1950s.¹⁷⁴

Large-scale organizing drives were also conducted. By the late 1950s SACTU officials were sharing public platforms with speakers from other organizations within the Congress Alliance. Many of these meetings were

173. Interview with Mr M B Yengwa by Ms B Naidoo, n.d. See also interview with Mr H Nxasana, 27 May 1986.

174. See, for example, *Worker Unity*, March 1958 and interview with Mr H Matiwane, 26 July 1986.

well attended and very many speakers would exhort workers to join SACTU-affiliated unions. Yet, up until late 1958 and possibly even after the beerhall riots of June 1959, attempts to increase membership produced few concrete results.¹⁷⁵

A glimmer of success appeared possible with the beginning of the 'One Pound a Day' campaign early in 1957. In Mkhumbane the campaign aroused great enthusiasm. Thomas Ndlovu remembers,

All over the buses and at the rank in Mkhumbane there were these people with the little posters about workers wanting one pound a day from the companies. Everyone was saying it. Now you greet someone. Not just 'How are you', but the [clenched] fist ... and 'One Pound a Day!' And 'comrades', But we said this jokingly. 'We were Russians ... communists!' It was a good time.¹⁷⁶

Brutus Mthethwe, a railway worker in the Bell Street compound, but with a wife and child in the shacklands, remembers:

My union card ... SACTU was always on the table on top of my dcompass. My wife would be very proud. She would show it to everyone, 'Look, this is what my husband is doing.' It was very important this union thing. This was when people would go around the streets in Mkhumbane shouting 'Vukani! Vukani!' and holding their union card up.¹⁷⁷

Although the campaign was successful in bringing increasing numbers of workers into SACTU-affiliated trade unions, such unions were still small and as yet not established in several key areas within the local industrial economy.¹⁷⁸ By their own acknowledgement workers were still reliant upon guidance and "education" from the small number of experienced local officials.¹⁷⁹ The organization itself provided little real training for new organizers, and authority in the union structures came to rest in the hands of a few key officials who were unable to maintain routine contact with all unionized factories, leaving day-to-day issues to untrained shop stewards.¹⁸⁰ Not only was there little contact between the local SACTU committee and the executive based in Johannesburg, but also a lack of real contact between local officials and workers.¹⁸¹ This was unfortunate because many key SACTU officials were both outstanding organizers and electrifying speakers: converting, through their translations "even the most liberal speech from us in Congress of Democrats into pure revolution."¹⁸²

175. Feit, *Workers*, p 54.

176. Interview with Mr T Ndlovu, 14 January 1986.

177. Interview with Mr B Mthethwe, 14 January 1986.

178. R I Lambert, "Trade Union developments during the 1950s", paper presented to the conference 'South Africa during the 1950s', University of Oxford, October 1987.

179. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983 and Mr A Masango, 30 November 1986.

180. See for example interview with Mr H Nxasana, 27 May 1986.

181. Feit, *Workers*, p 53.

182. Interview with Mr D Claude, 18 September 1986.

The form of this 'revolution' was a matter of debate both within local SACTU committees and the Congress Alliance itself.¹⁸³ In SACTU there was division over the strategic benefits of 'Stay at Home' campaigns, with some believing that the strategy not only came "from Johannesburg" but was fundamentally not a working class tactic.¹⁸⁴ Rather unionists should concentrate upon building solid working class organization in the workplace: "getting involved in residential areas was another matter, but we first had to get power in the factories, and then sit-ins, strikes were really out of the question - both illegal and we were not that strong anyway. The stay-away idea does not further the aims of the working class."¹⁸⁵ Within the SACTU leadership in Natal there was also a continuing but seemingly amicable, set of differences over the question of socialism, which had become highlighted through the Freedom Charter.

This became one of the issues discussed between SACTU and the ANC. Within the ANC in Natal there were divergent notions of politics and the role of organized labour in the Congress Alliance. Some, such as George Mbele and Asmon Nene, became "very cross about the clenched fist."¹⁸⁶ Harold Nxasana recalls:

I remember at one stage being told or advised by George Mbele ... telling us that you mustn't always use the slogan raising our fist saying that [then] you soon forget the national slogan. This [the clenched fist] is the SACTU slogan which mustn't be seen as more important than the [thumb up] national slogan of congress.¹⁸⁷

The attitude of A J Luthuli towards African trade unionism was certainly less confrontational but often ambiguous and ultimately supportive of the authority of the ANC over the specific working class strategies demanded by many leading SACTU officials in Durban. Although having substantial support among union rank-and-file union members, and the almost undivided loyalty of SACTU officials, Luthuli's main concern was the growth of a broadly based African nationalism.¹⁸⁸ Although he had for long favoured African trade unions, Luthuli viewed trade unionism as merely one means whereby Africans could become politicized. For Luthuli, accepting the obvious need for African trade unionism, did not imply personal adherence to any class-based theoretical formulation; nor should trade unions assume any dominant position within the Congress Alliance.¹⁸⁹

Before 1959 the major campaigns in which SACTU had co-operated in the Congress Alliance in order to gain more members, were a failure. The 'Stay Away' campaign planned for 26 June 1957, and called

183. This issue is not mentioned in works by Lambert, Lodge or Luckhardt and Wall.

184. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 1 August 1985. Albeit from a differing perspective, a similar attitude is expressed in Hirson, "South Africa: ten years of the Stay-at-Home", *International Socialist*, 1961.

185. Interview with Mr H Nxasana, 27 May 1986.

186. This was confirmed by Ashmon Nene. See interview with Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984.

187. Interview with Mr H Nxasana, 27 May 1986. See also interview with Mr D Claude, 18 September 1986.

188. Lodge, *Black Politics*, p 68-69.

189. Luckhardt and Wall, *Organize*, pp 159-161, and Feit, *Workers*, pp 107-109.

around the issue of wages, one such failure. There was no stay-away. Even in Mkhumbane the attempt to organize such a stay-away was dismissed. The campaign was only supported by various ANCWL branches who desired to lead a mass march into the city. Having neither support from the majority of women nor from men, the women "decided to march through the streets of Cato Manor."¹⁹⁰ It was the same with the 1958 political 'Stay Away'. Support was weak during the first day of the proposed three-day campaign that was actually called off by the ANC after the first day. Luthuli admitted that the campaign had been a "flop". There is doubt whether any official call for a stay-away was ever issued in Durban.¹⁹¹ Confusion appeared to reign supreme.

The successes of African unions during the 1950s are difficult to estimate. SACTU was to gain strength only during the period from 1959 through to the early 1960s. Despite weak organizational support and the vagaries of day-to-day struggles to gain union membership, within particular industrial sectors substantial gains were achieved. In many cases workers won reduced working hours, improved conditions of work, higher wages and even union recognition.¹⁹² The foundations of working class power in the factories had probably been laid. Nevertheless, although wage bargaining would still remain centred around the factory floor, by the late 1950s there was a broader argument in favour of increased wages for African wages that was only partially due to campaigns such as the 'One Pound a Day' strategy and increased African assertiveness in factories. Wage increases cannot merely be viewed as SACTU victories.¹⁹³

From the late 1940s onwards both the state and capital had sought to eradicate Durban shantytowns in ways which would correlate closely to the way in which local employers desired to restructure the African labour market. With the building of Kwa Mashu it became apparent to the majority of employers that the costs of accommodation in the new township required substantial wage increases. Wage increases, demands for higher productivity, and the growing number of semi-skilled jobs made available to African labour having acquired permanent residence in the city came at the same time as wage demands and increasing unionization amongst African workers. Workplace struggles would continue, but for the majority of shack residents the final struggle over the future of Mkhumbane was about to begin.

Conclusion

The particular constraints of daily life within the shacklands produced both a population whose political

190. Ilanga lase Natal, 6 July 1957. The planned march through the city was also a complete failure. The march did not take place through lack of any support. Daily News, 27 June 1957.

191. New Age, 24 April 1958.

192. See E Webster, "Stay-aways and the black working class since the Second World War", University of the Witwatersrand, Institute for African Studies seminar paper, April 1979, R Lambert, "Black resistance in South Africa: an assessment of the political strike campaigns", University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies seminar paper, January 1979 and Luckhardt and Wall, Organize, p 440.

193. For such a perspective see Lambert, "Trade Unions".

strength was often overestimated and various contradictory elements within a proletarian consciousness. In various ways however, through the struggles over daily life, by the time of the June 1959 beerhall riots in Mkhumbane, there was a growing feeling amongst African workers living in the area of working class strength. Sustained in many ways through the various women's organizations and associations in the area, a new working class consciousness was to develop in the area and gradually extend an often previously myopic horizon to areas of struggle which lay beyond the shacklands themselves.

In many ways this new class awareness was prompted by the manner in which the changing nature of shack life made certain long accepted struggles against aspects of city life untenable. In other ways, but still within the shacklands, the increasing class divisions within the shack community became more evident. More visible trading class had emerged from the proletarian populism of the later 1940s. Shack leaders of the 1940s had remained in authority and had gained increasing wealth. Such class developments had led to the virtual collapse of the shackland's internal economy. The alliances between the ANC and shack leaders was clearly evident, as was the difficulty in sustaining a working-class unity through waging battles within the shantytowns over access to material wealth and political power. Accepting the nature of the industrializing economy, workers gained a deeper appreciation of the need for industrial trade unionism. The growth of such unionism and the general political climate of the late 1950s was however to be dramatically altered by the shantytown revolts of 1959 and 1960.

CHAPTER 12

*A NICE LITTLE HOUSE DOWN MASHU WAY?
STATE VIOLENCE, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND
THE POLITICS OF A SHANTYTOWN REBELLION, 1959-1960

Shackland Social Ties

The population of Mkhumbane had emerged in a period which saw many fundamental and dramatic changes in African life in the city. The rapid expansion of local economic activity, declining African rural production and changes in the nature of White agriculture had led to a growth in the African population of Durban.

Integral to the nature of the migratory labour system were the close social bonds within kinship affiliations which now extended from countryside to city and between migrants and specific rural areas. These bonds developed partly through the geographically uneven character of rural decline and transformation and through the increasing dependence of rural Africans on urban wage employment. In the industrializing cities, the bonds of kinship and those other bonds which sustained regional, age-group and even ethnic commonality and unity became increasingly important.¹

In many ways the utility of such social bonds would increase with the emergence very creation of a permanently urbanized African working class.² Nevertheless, with the development of an Mkhumbane shack population asserting the right to remain permanently in the city, the force of many such long-established links became muted against the nature of household struggle in the city itself. By the late 1950s, from within the crises over personal relations came a degree of political militancy that was to transform the nature of shackland struggle.

Among shack dwellers relations between rural areas and the city would often act as socially constraining forces. In seeking legitimacy, S S Bhengu, the leader of the Bantu National Congress, announced that the organization had the support of many hundred of chiefs from all over Natal and Zululand.³ During the Defiance Campaign, the municipality, which had always maintained close contact with the Zulu paramountcy and rural chiefs, gained the support of many chiefs who called on Africans in the city to desist from militant action.⁴ Newly installed as chief, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi seeks and gains from clan members living in the city money for his "feet": a car valued at just over one thousand pounds.⁵ In the campaigns and shack struggles of

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1. P Mayer, (ed), Black villagers in an Industrial Society, (Cape Town, 1980).
 2. Cooper, Struggle, p 37.
 3. The Guardian, 27 June 1952.
 4. MNAD; Managers' file; Chief Superintendent-Manager, MNAD, n.d.
 5. Ilanga lase Natal, 31 July 1954.

the 1950s, many rural chiefs came to Durban, stayed in the male barracks and locations, and attempted to influence political activity. During the Defiance Campaign many chiefs were against mass struggle.⁶ However, by the late 1950s, many chiefs, themselves now being increasingly more politicized through the Territorial Authorities legislation, almost certainly influenced by Luthuli's mass support in Durban appeared to have journeyed to Durban.⁷ As Stanford Mtolo recalls,

The chiefs came to Durban to look and see what was happening. Everyone was talking about Congress then and we were in the farms- the reserves. But they came to Durban and spoke to people and they supported us and so we were lucky because we knew we had their backing.⁸

The relations between city and countryside also sustained an important degree of support between those remaining in the countryside and those in the cities. In 1953 many people who had been involved in a "faction fight" in the Greytown area entered Mkhumbane. Municipal inspectors failed to expel these immigrants: "except for an old man and a youth, investigation has revealed that the family heads concerned were working in Durban."⁹

Affiliation to the region of origin remained strong. Among an African proletariat who "looked at politics through soccer coloured eyes", even the three main soccer teams in the Durban area gained their players and supporters from people coming from very different rural areas.¹⁰ As with all beerhalls in the city, the drinking area at the Cato Manor beerhall was designated with different benches and sitting areas being exclusive to persons coming from a particular magisterial or chiefly district. Such groupings not only served to enhance general commonality between persons of a particular area but performed the role of an informal labour bureau. As Charles Ndlovu recalls: "if you heard that Dusty Smith needed so many people or that there were so many ships in the harbour today, they you tell this to your people."¹¹ Among the weekend visitors to the shantytowns were many togt labourers: the 'nyati' migrants, many of whom would come from the northern districts of Zululand. A strong undercurrent of the frequent, drunken battles between 'nyati' and shack residents was the competition between migrants and permanent African city labour for employment.¹² The role of such support groupings gained increasing importance during the social upheavals of the later 1950s. As Charles Khumalo remembers: "a lot of the people in Mkhumbane were having too many troubles. So they

6. MNAD; Managers file, 'Chiefs in Durban', 1959-1964. I am grateful to Mr D McCullough for allowing access to this documentation.

7. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 12 January 1952.

10. *Ibid.*, 15 April 1953.

11. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 29 November 1983.

12. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.

must stay together. This is why Draaihoek is like it [was]. Stick together and then you can know that that person is your brother.¹³

Kinship ties were often indistinguishable from ties of regional commonality and sustained similar influences in the shantytowns. It was often the case that new entrants to the city would only arrive once male relatives had secured full wage employment. Shabalala's sister came to live with him in Mkhumbane "when I was working with the Railways and had rooms at Ridge View."¹⁴ Kunene came to live in Mkhumbane "when my brother got me a place to work - at the same place as he was induna."¹⁵ Shack residents were often called upon to support elderly or other residents who moved into the settlement. Matiwane's recently widowed sister "came down to Mkhumbane and I had to help her find something to do. She got a job with the mama who was married to our brother."¹⁶

Within these kinship relations, paternal authority in the countryside could often exercise a considerable degree of power in upholding values which often assumed a moderating dimension. Kunene came to Durban in the 1940s "with my wife staying on the farm." He soon however acquired a "girlfriend" with whom he lived in a shack in Mkhumbane: "when they find out my father sends my brother to talk to me." Not only was the institution of marriage regarded highly, "but when you do not send money home and you become a swank."¹⁷ Similarly, the use of alcohol was frowned upon. When Thomas Ndlovu was fired for drunkenness, his brothers, already resident in Mkhumbane "come and give it to me."¹⁸

In many ways the influences which such notions entered with the ties of kinship would provoke the growth of forms of urban struggles which had, by the early 1950s, been rarely understood by the shackland working-class. A resident of Mkhumbane who, during the later 1940s, belonged to one of the independent African trade unions and was later to become "a volunteer for SACTU", recalls,

Lots of people would come to SACTU through their fathers. Their fathers' voice had spoken. 'How can you live like this. Look at you. What do you eat? No! We can see you are just drinking. How do you think you look to the maidens here? All you can do is sleep. Do you see this? [a plucked chicken] This is you.' These were people who would come to SACTU. Instead of sending photographs of themselves in the city all dressed up smartly and pretending to be happy back to the city they came to SACTU. They knew those photographs were all rubbish.¹⁹

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13. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.
 14. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 28 July 1985.
 15. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 26 July 1985.
 16. Interview with Mr T Matiwane, 21 April 1982.
 17. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 26 July 1985.
 18. Interview with Mr T Ndlovu, 14 January 1986.
 19. When meeting with Mr F T R Dlamini, ex-ANC (Natal) Executive Committee member and SACTU official during 1986, Mr Dlamini was accompanied by an associate who was either a member or an official of SACTU in Durban. Notes of the interview do not record this informant's name. Mr Dlamini was assassinated the following day and all attempts to trace his associate have failed. The informant's reference to photographs relates to the way in which African men in the city would pay have studio shots of themselves in smart clothes against lavish scenic backgrounds to send to relatives in the rural areas. *See Ilanga lase Natal*, 15 September 1956 and also *A Fugard, Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, (Johannesburg, 1975).

Such reflections on the development of unionization working-class consciousness are significant. Here was paternal authority invoking a respect for hard work, sobriety and personal dignity in ways that, would often see the growth of working-class strategies of struggle not previously embraced.²⁰

Interleaved with the social bonds that linked countryside and city and the ties of kinship were the bonds which drew residents of particular shantytown settlements together. Beneath the all too obvious common affinity to "Mkhumbane our home" was a sense of unity within localized shack settlements. Such affinities often assumed a greater importance than the ties of kinship and region.

Shack areas acquired names derived from the way in which settlements developed. The first people to settle in the New Clare and Benoni areas came from New Clare and Benoni on the Witwatersrand. All the shack dwellers in the Jeepcoat area initially paid their rents to the Indian landowner who first developed shacks there: the "man always was to be seen in a jeepcoat." The Newtown area was first occupied by persons from demolished shack areas on the Bluff. Other areas assumed the name of a shack leader. The area into which persons led by Mathonsi, one of the first shack leaders became known as Mathonsi.

Strong kinship relations bound residents together. There was a defensive, tightly knit and often introspective sense of commonality. Whilst desiring to control the authority of the municipality and sounding a warning of an impending police raid were ingrained with residents' behaviour, unity within shack settlements embodied far more. Walking unlit streets at night was hazardous, so drinking parties of men from an area would visit various shebeens together "to let everyone get home safely."²¹ The commonality was however never merely social, but was imbued in residents' perspectives by the very nature of shack life.

Rooms in a shack cluster were separated by thin walls, perhaps made for corrugated iron, wooden planks, flattened drums or wattle and daub. These walls provided little privacy. Arguments or more violent disputes "reached everybody's ears and the next moment you walk out the next morning and everybody knows."²²

Conflict was often endemic to such shack clusters. As Joshua Mzimela recalls:

When there was a party in one room someone would pick up a spoon and bang to the music on the walls. Then your neighbours start banging on the wall also, but to tell you to stop. Then you shout back and tell them to bang in tune to the nice music.²³

Apart from time rumpus, conflict could easily develop out of routine chores: As Charles Khumalo remembers,

To make your room your own and to make it pretty, you can stick pieces of newspaper and magazines on the wall. Wallpaper! This you stick to the walls with a mixture of mealie meal

20. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985 and interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.

21. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.

22. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

23. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 123 May 1985.

and water. If you do this then it is a bit quieter, but then the cockroaches come and start eating the wallpaper. So no trouble, you must spray the room. And then there are shouts from next door. 'Take your cockroaches away. Those are your ones. This I know.' Then you must spray all over the kill your own animals!"²⁴

Reasons residents would strive for a measure of privacy within housing structures and shack settlements which defied most attempts to escape from the vicissitudes of shack life. As Charles Khumalo recalls, "when you moved into your house, you would see where the other people had their things. If the bed was in this place, then you put your bed in the other corner otherwise the noise of love goes everywhere."²⁵

The failure of attempts to sustain a level of personal privacy merely confirms the close interdependence which existed within shantytown clusters and specific shack areas. Shack rooms would often be left unlocked "so that we could come from school, get something to eat and then do the washing, while my mother was away. If she was in town then we had to go to auntie next door."²⁶ Doors could be left open and, as Mrs Phewa remembers, washing left outside because "we always knew who was not living there. And if I was away then someone would always shout at anyone who they did not know who came looking around. In this way nobody could steal."²⁷

Such a settlement provided not only the structures of defence and social unity but also support. When unemployed "the first place you went" was to "your mayor" or the local shebeen queen, licensed trader or other entrepreneur. When a resident organized a stokvel, others from the same area would be expected to participate: "then if you wanted a stokvel there was trouble if they did not go and spend the same amount of money or more."²⁸

The social ties which developed between particular rural areas and the shacklands, and through kinship links were important. There were also close social bonds between residents of particular shack areas. Apart from the Draaihoek area where, through the dominance of Mpondo women, the relationship between countryside and city and kinship became intertwined with the growth of a localized shack community, the need to sustain a day-to-day unity among shack settlements assumed primary importance over those bonds which drew shack residents to the countryside.

A Very Personal Crisis

In the shacklands personal bonds were powerful; but also vulnerable to changes in shack life and to the

24. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

25. *Ibid.*

26. Interview with Ms M Mtandi, 30 November 1986.

27. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

28. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

attempts by state and capital to transform the nature of African life in the city.²⁹ With the shortage of hostel and barrack accommodation, peoples' preference for shack life or such persons' illegal status in the city, the shantytowns provided a home for many single women, many with young children, and men. In addition a substantial number of male homosexuals lived in the shack settlement known to residents as the 'Place of Darkness'.

The majority of shack residents lived within nuclear families. In the shantytowns the ideology of the nuclear-family was dominant. Ministers of religion operating in the area extolled the virtues of a settled nuclear family life.³⁰ Even among the shebeen queens, it was rare for 'mama' to live singly.³¹ The virtues of the nuclear-family were also apparent in the 'Place of Darkness'. Mrs Phewa, a close associate of many living in this area, remembers that

On Saturdays men in this place would get married. One dresses up in a long dress, stockings, high heels ..., and 'she' marries the man and they live together like man and wife. And I would teach the 'women' to do make up, sewing and cooking. Then they let it be known that the 'woman' is having children - 'she' puts a pillow on the stomach. Then the child dies and there is a funeral, with a baby doll in a little coffin to be buried.³²

Despite the influence of the ideology of nuclear relationships, the nuclear-family structure in the shantytown was both skewed by and essentially founded upon two particular features of life in the area.

During the period, African women were unable to secure any substantial access to formal employment and were to remain dependent upon incomes derived from petty commodity production, and those small earnings which could be gained through casual washing or other forms of domestic labour. Apart from such earnings, women were dependent upon wages earned by formally employed men. Furthermore, the legal status of African women in the city was largely based upon their either being dependent relatives or the spouse of men entitled to permanent city residence. With the main burden of household duties falling on shack women, African women in the shantytowns would constantly struggle both for and from within nuclear household structures.³³

Furthermore, approximately half of the nuclear couples resident in the shantytown were not formally married under either customary or Christian rites. As Colin Shum recalls,

An issue which used to shock many municipal officials was that, I would say about half the married families living in Cato Manor were not married at all. They were literally shacking

29. This aspect of the history of African struggle during the later 1950s has been given scant attention in recent works, which prefer to focus more directly on more overtly class and political issues and organizations.

30. Interview with Father St George, 10 September 1985.

31. Edwards, "Shebeen Queens".

32. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

33. This issue is not mentioned in Walker, *Women*.

up. Otherwise they were just the same as the married blokes - children and everything. But they were not married. And this was to cause many problems later on.³⁴

As Kunene recalls, these relationships were very much a part of that process which saw individual men and women becoming increasingly settled in the city:

When you leave the farm your father says 'No town women. They are dirty, you must leave them alone. But when you are here, it is not like on the mines where men love each other. This is Durban and there are lots of women. So you build a shack in Mkhumbane, buy all the pots and pans and things for her and after work you do not stay in the compound, but go straight to Mkhumbane.³⁵

While many such relations were to become permanent, there was an element of flexibility in them. Often the men were already married, with their wives remaining in the rural areas.³⁶ The tendency of women to seek the attention of more wealthy or secure men seems to have led some men to refer to the position of unmarried nuclear relationships with the word "flatirt", which must surely be an attempt to convey the meanings of both 'flatter' and 'flirt'.³⁷

By the late 1950s, tensions within nuclear relations became increasingly more evident. These tensions were primarily not solely due to the difficulties which either partner experienced in aligning personal needs, the expenses required for household maintenance and increasing material impoverishment. Whilst deeply rooted in the material conditions of everyday life, conflict became increasingly focussed around the issue of power and gender relations within the shacklands, and residents' responses to the efforts of the state and capital to alter the fundamental basis of African life.

Women gained a degree of authority through their household activities. This influence was increased through womens' central role within the shantytown community. This status went not only to shebeen queens and other women involved in legal trading ventures, but also to teachers, social workers and petty traders.³⁸

Nevertheless, the shacklands was still very much a male dominated society. The key leadership grouping almost entirely comprised men. For even the shebeen queens, who would often be associated with the main shack leaders, their standing within the leadership element was ambiguous, with the establishment of a shebeen being dependent upon the sanction and continued support of local shacklords and leaders. For shebeen queens, continued prosperity was closely related to loyalty and subservience to local shack leaders who would be "touched" with free drink and other services, platonic and sexual.³⁹ Even those popular jokes which

34. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1986. See also interview with Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980.

35. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.

36. MRR; file 323, vol 1; memorandum on the legal status of African married women in Durban, 1959.

37. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Edwards, "Shebeen Queens".

"told of how if a man's wife moved during love then the man would send her back to her parents for teaching and demand a cow as a fine; these were the old people not used to the new ways of the city" reflected less on the changing times than on the rigidity of established notions of power and gender relations.⁴⁰ Such a situation was probably inevitable. Shack life was centrally based around those wages earned by an almost exclusively male working class in a city where, with a history of migratory labour patterns and the then still very recent dramatic changes in male-female ratios, proletarian culture was still male-oriented.⁴¹

The position was resented by many women in the shantytowns. Through various womens' associations and the ANCWL they were relatively well organized. By the late 1950s, women began to grow increasingly "impatient" with the failure of "our men to see what was happening to us. We did not think they really were interested. This was when Kwa Muthle wanted to give us passes and take us to [Kwa Mashu]."⁴²

A somewhat prescient indication of the nature of womens' future struggles occurred in December 1955. Led by the ANCWL a "large deputation" of women, many of whom lived in Mkhumbane, marched to the municipal Native Administration Department to protest against municipal attempts to issue letters of privilege to African women. As municipal officials refused to discuss the issue, the women marched to the nearby Victoria Street beerhall. The women referred to themselves as "the untouchables"; both scorned by their men and determined to resist any attempt to compel women to carry passes. Those drinking in the beerhall fled and councillor Nicholson, stated that the issue of letters of privilege would be "dropped."⁴³ Letters of privilege were to be abandoned, passes issued, and women forced to register as work-seekers with the local labour bureaus.

With the impending removals to Kwa Mashu, it became evident that all adult male residents of the Mkhumbane shantytowns who qualified for permanent urban residence were eligible for relocation to the 'married' section of Kwa Mashu. However, all such persons desiring to live in this section of the township had to be legally married under either Christian or customary rites.

While the municipality was to both encourage and later compel unmarried couples living in the shantytowns to marry, it still remained possible for men to choose single male hostel accommodation and thus desert their partners.⁴⁴ For women partners the problem was compounded by the fact that many men pursuing extramarital relationships in the shantytowns were also married to women who lived outside the city. Such men could elect to bring their wives to the city and disregard the future of their shantytown partner.⁴⁵

Furthermore, it was clear that all forms of unlicensed entrepreneurship would be prohibited in Kwa Mashu. This threatened to destroy a crucial basis of household life among the shantytown-dwellers. Charles

- 40. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.
- 41. M Friedman, "Gender, geography and urban forms: a case study of Durban", (MA thesis, UND, 1987).
- 42. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 28 April 1985.
- 43. Ilanga lase Natal, 17 December 1955.
- 44. MRB; file 323, vol 1; B Huntley, African women and Kwa Mashu, June 1959.
- 45. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutsho, 21 April 1982.

Khumalo recalls that his "wife started brewing in the late 1950s. Now in [Kwa] Mashu all that must stop. So we had to come and live here but not get the money we used to make and then pay for these houses. It was too much."⁴⁶ The restrictions on petty commodity activity in the new residential area thus caused increasing problems for the nuclear household and posed a threat to the status and influence of women.

The status of women was directly threatened by municipal attempts to compel African women in the city to and carry a form of pass. During the early 1950s such attempts had been resisted and the municipality, fearing widespread militancy, had backed down and let the matter rest. However, with the removals to Kwa Mashu the municipality again endeavoured to exercise administrative control over African women. For African women in the shantytowns such controls threatened the basis of their residential life in the city. With the introduction of passes women's security in the city would not be solely dependant upon women living in nuclear relationships with men having permanent city residential rights. African women correctly saw that the new pass laws could result in women being endorsed out of the city irrespective of their domestic arrangements, with men having the right to live in the city.⁴⁷ Women saw that pass laws could threaten the weak security offered by nuclear-family life.

Such attempts to restructure African city life produced complex dilemmas for African couples living in the shacklands. During the late 1950s, there was a spate of marriages in Mkhumbane. Thomas Shabalala recalls how

You had to get married otherwise Kwa Muhle would not let you go to Kwa Mashu. Every Saturday all you could see were people getting married quickly. Then they hold up this paper which says that they are now married and say 'This is my house. I am there.'⁴⁸

Many attempted to resist removal to Kwa Mashu by saying that they were not married. Municipal officials would then, without any vested authority, "marry people". 'S B' Bourquin remembers:

I recall one instance which I personally witnessed but there were many like it. Some person said that he and his woman friend would not go to Kwa Mashu because they were not married. By this time of course all their belongings were already on the truck which was waiting to go to Kwa Mashu. So, in this case Mr Peter Cooke ...solved the issue quickly. 'Give me your hand' and then to the woman 'give me your hand' which he placed on top of the man's hand. Then he firmly placed his hand over both their's and said 'Now you are married get on the truck!' It happened often.⁴⁹

These reluctant spouses were resettled in temporary accommodation in Kwa Mashu and given one month to formalize their marriage. If still recalcitrant, the municipality would relocate the male to a hostel and endeavour to expel the woman from Durban.⁵⁰

46. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

47. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

48. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985. See also Edwards, *Sibisi*. Sibisi was one of these marriage officers.

49. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

50. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, African women and pass laws, August 1958.

Attempts to alter the basis of personal relationships which had developed in the shantytown often ended tragically. In many cases, women, either having been rejected by their male partner or having lived alone in the shantytowns, committed suicide, perhaps by dousing themselves with paraffin and setting themselves alight.⁵¹ There were clashes between women over "the same boyfriend", clashes between "farm wives who had heard about Kwa Mashu and came to collect their man and go with him to the location", and cases of men being stabbed to death after fighting "with his girlfriend's ex-boyfriend."⁵² In Shumville a man assaulted his "girlfriend" who ran to the Mkhumbane river and drowned "when the boyfriend persisted in beating her up."⁵³

During the late 1950s the authority of the ever-present izisangoma in Mkhumbane increased dramatically. In July 1958 hundreds of izisangoma gathered in the Two Sticks settlement to celebrate, in a somewhat macabre fashion, their rising status. The women slaughtered three cattle in praise of the goddess "Unomkhumbulwane". A fully-trained school teacher and school principal left the profession and "has opted to become an izisangoma."⁵⁴ Men and women would seek advice from the women spirit mediums on why their partners or children were "bewitched."⁵⁵

Along with the increasing power of the spirit mediums came a series of new developments in the shacklands. In an unprecedented fashion, during the later 1950s many men and women were being stabbed, beheaded or otherwise killed in what were clearly ritual murders.⁵⁶ There were reported cases of "mad" women wandering the streets.⁵⁷ A woman claimed to have given birth to a "pig", and inside the animal was a baby girl.⁵⁸ Men would roam the shacklands "telling everyone that he was the new Messiah."⁵⁹

Rumours abounded. It was said that Kwa Mashu was deliberately built on a "swamp" so that when fully settled the land would subside taking all residents to their deaths.⁶⁰ Similarly the "serpents" living in the Kwa Mashu area would "eat us."⁶¹ Rumours provided solace: a "crocodile [submarine] had been seen off the Durban coast ... Some Africans who had gone for military training have landed. They are liberation fighters."⁶² Amidst the uncertainties of the period, the sufferings of children became enveloped in rumour. Superstition

51. Ilanga lase Natal, 1 September 1956, 19 January 1957, 3 May 1958 and 21 July 1958.

52. Ibid, 12 July 1958.

53. Ibid.

54. Ibid, 24 July 1958.

55. Ibid, 12 July 1958.

56. Ibid.

57. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

58. Ilanga lase Natal, 15 September 1956.

59. Ibid, 1 September 1956 and interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

60. New Age, 27 February 1958.

61. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985 and KCAV; interview with Mr B Mngqadi, 11 August 1980.

62. Ilanga lase Natal, 7 September 1958.

came to the aid of those seeking reasons for the collapse of domestic life. Children were dying or went missing because a rabid pet "baboon" had escaped and was prowling the streets of Mkhumbane, when children saw the animal they died immediately. The animal had been "sighted" five times.⁶³

Children were suffered from the domestic upheavals of the late 1950s. In 1957 it was estimated that over a third of all children living in the Mkhumbane area were illegitimate.⁶⁴ Women evicted from the shack settlement and separated from their male partner who had been relocated to Kwa Mashu, would queue outside the Grey Street Women's Hostel with their children looking for accommodation. Others wandered the streets destitute, with many having abandoned their children. One African woman was reported to have encouraged her one daughter to fatally stab her younger sister.⁶⁵ Other couples, unable to afford upbringing cost in the township also abandoned children. After the Raincoat shack settlement, which adjoined the Mkhumbane area, was cleared, municipal inspectors found many abandoned "babies."⁶⁶

It was during the period of social upheaval in the shantytowns and the impending removal to Kwa Mashu that many male residents became increasingly critical of women. Having, in most cases, acquired the legal right to remain in the city, but faced with the difficulty of sustaining the nuclear-family in either Mkhumbane or Kwa Mashu, men's was directed to those very women partners who had, along with their menfolk, struggled for the very right to remain permanently in the city.

This revealed both the dominant masculine ideology of the shantytowns and, often, a misogynist attitude: "why should we have been bothered with those women, they were nothing."⁶⁷ African women in the city became referred to as "Durban Dust" which men should leave well alone. African men in Durban should recognize the attributes of rural women who would be more suitable as "city wives".⁶⁸ Paternal advice from the countryside acquired a new logic amongst the permanently urbanized men in Durban. Various persons, including Joseph Mazibuko writing to Ilanga lase Natal, suggested that when African women whom African city men "keep" request money, "simply chase her away or rather go back to your compound or barracks. These women do not love you but your pay packets."⁶⁹

A glimpse at the nature of this male consciousness is provided by the way in which various persons commented on the various African beauty competitions which thrived during the later years of the 1950s. It is interesting that such competitions developed and became a popular element of male consciousness in the city at precisely the time when relations between African men and women were undergoing dramatic changes. It was suggested that organizers of these competitions should offer greater prize money, select competitors as opposed

63. Ibid, 7 June 1958.

64. Ibid, 18 May 1957.

65. Ibid, 27 April 1957.

66. Ibid, 5 July 1958.

67. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1982.

68. Ilanga lase Natal, 23 February 1957.

69. Ibid.

to allowing anyone to enter, and ensure that competitors both live in Durban and be "unmarried". Beauty queens could be better viewed if they wore bathing costumes and not long dresses.⁷⁰ Sexism, parochialism and male assertiveness were reflected in another comment: a writer to Ilanga lase Natal criticized "our beauties" saying that "[t]here is nothing as annoying [sic] as a pregnant woman especially if you have not planned a future with her."⁷¹

Increasing reflections of such an attitude became more and more evident within local society. "Trained beauticians" offered their services to help women "who want to be nice to be looked at."⁷² Adverts in popular newspapers showed new styles in hair and clothes fashion, with 'Reckitts Blue' being promoted as the way of preventing womens' clothes from looking "dull."⁷³

Such indications of a rising male chauvinism were often the result of changing conditions in the labour market. During the 1950s representative bodies of local industry and commerce were publically expressing the belief that economic growth, rising wages and productivity could only be secured through the stabilization of an African working class. The residential township of Kwa Mashu was developed to create such a working-class. Having been requested to raise wages so that their African employees could afford the costs of township life, many employers attempted to compel many permanently urbanized workers to revert to being migrant labourers. This was clearly stated by one employer: "send your families away and stay in the compound provided by the Company for bachelors."⁷⁴ Employers were supported in this by the local Native Commissioner.

By the late 1950s many Mkhumbane residents began to leave the area and settle in the new fast-growing shack settlements such as Malakazi. Either for relocation to Kwa Mashu or unable to pay the increased living costs in Kwa Mashu, many African shack families moved from Mkhumbane to other areas. As New Age reported: "For some time the Native Commissioner had been trying to get these workers to break down their shacks ..., remove their families and remain in the area as migrant workers."⁷⁵

For many men the position was difficult. For example a man who had been working in Durban since 1943 tried unsuccessfully to obtain accommodation for himself and his family. As he was only earning £2.9.11 per week "he was told that accommodation was available but that he was not earning enough."⁷⁶ The dilemma for women was just as great. One woman, Mrs Tenjwayo, expressed her frustration in a way which reveals clearly those images of respectability, decency and a desire for permanent city housing:

70. Ibid., 14 September 1957.

71. Ibid., 27 April 1957.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., 21 August 1957.

74. New Age, 27 February 1958.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

She and her husband had worked hard when they first arrived in the area [in 1943] and had built their home, and endeavoured to give their children some education so that they could earn a better wage than her husband and lead a better life than she and her husband had to lead.⁷⁷

For men and women living in the shantytowns, the nuclear family household was the basis of security in the city. By the late 1950s, with the attempts of both the state and capital to restructure African life in the city, personal relations between men and woman in the shacklands were riddled with conflict. Such processes threatened the very basis of the admittedly tenuous household security which shack dwellers had struggled to maintain in the shantytowns. This conflict within the domestic household between men and women was to lead to the increasing politicization of the residents of Mkhumbane.

The ANC and new organizational power in Mkhumbane

The removals to Kwa Mashu began in mid-1958. For a short while the removals were not opposed by residents.⁷⁸ However, in August 1958, the municipality endeavoured to destroy the shack settlement of Thusini, which lay outside the Emergency Camp, and relocate all residents eligible to remain in the city. In this area, which was home of many who had lived there for years, resistance was peaceful but effective. Many residents simply moved and re-erected their shacks. Others sought the legal assistance of Rowley Arenstein and gained an interdict preventing the municipality from demolishing their shacks.⁷⁹

The impending removals had produced confusion among many residents. Negotiation was out of the question. Despondent about gaining any relief from the municipality only 600 people attended a meeting held in the Emergency Camp during late 1958 when municipal officials simply explained that all removals would continue.⁸⁰ By November 1958, the municipality had obtained the legal power to ignore any attempts to halt shack demolition and resettlement programmes through residents gaining court interdicts.⁸¹

Unable to offer any coherent strategy, the CMWDB became rent with internal bickering. This led to the formation of the Cato Manor Protest Committee, led by a number of ANC "stalwarts", who, for a while, ousted the chairman of the Board, the sometime ANC supporter Isaac Zwane.⁸² Each side in the dispute accused the other of "kowtowing" to the municipality.⁸³ Even Luthuli was unable to offer any clear strategy,

77. Ibid.

78. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 5 September 1980 and Maasdorp and Humphreys From Shantytown to Township, p 62.

79. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 13 November 1985.

80. Bourquin papers; file 5; minutes of the public meeting held at Cato Manor, 21 September 1958.

81. Government Gazette, proclamation 268 of 1958, 7 November 1958.

82. Interview with Ms R Shabane, 18 November 1986.

83. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, memorandum on the Cato Manor disturbances of June 1959.

simply suggesting that residents resist relocation and thereby compel the municipality to consider forced removal.⁸⁴ Luthuli saw in forced removals a possible stimulus towards the politicization of the shacklands, leading to a growth in ANC support.

The struggle with the municipality changed dramatically early in 1959 when the municipality attempted to clear the Draaihoek, or, as it later became known, the Mnyasana, shack settlement.⁸⁵ While being a part of Mkhumbane, the area was however outside the Emergency Camp. Social conditions at Draaihoek had always been pitiful. Throughout the 1950s there had been numerous requests from municipal officials and the CMWDB for the area to be incorporated into the Emergency Camp and provided with ablution and sanitation facilities. These requests had been rejected by the municipality on financial grounds.⁸⁶

The Draaihoek area was home to a large number of Mpondo women. Having been "screened" by municipal pass inspectors, most were declared illegal residents.⁸⁷ The illicit beer-brewing and other entrepreneurial activities of these women constituted not only the basis of their own livelihood, but the key nexus for various Mpondo social networks and associations in the city. These associations attempted to sustain links between Mpondo male workers in both the city, the surrounding sugar cane plantations and the countryside. Furthermore, by 1958 a strong ANCWL branch had already been established in the Draaihoek area.⁸⁸ Marginalized, politically active and desperate to remain in the city but having neither the opportunity nor the means to gain housing in Kwa Mashu, the women of Draaihoek took to the streets. Accompanied by many other women from Mkhumbane, they surrounded the offices of the municipal Native Administration Department and demanded to see the Director, Bourquin.

Having been informed that Bourquin was otherwise indisposed, the women sat in front of the Kwa Muhle offices for the next two days. As with the resistance to shack demolitions in the Cato Manor Farm area during the later 1940s when the CPSA provided material support, so the ANC provided food, blankets and basic assistance.⁸⁹ After eventually obtaining an interview with Bourquin the women responded to official insistence that shack demolitions would continue, by physically attacking Bourquin. They also refused to accept the venue suggested by municipal officials for further talks.⁹⁰ Officials had suggested that a further meeting be convened at the 'Thokoza' womens' hostel, which symbolised the destruction of family life.⁹¹

84. Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, p 56.

85. Bourquin papers; B Huntley, memorandum on shack demolitions and removals, January 1960.

86. MNAD; H2/ CM, vol 6; City and Water Engineer- Manager, MNAD, 4 August 1957.

87. PNAB slide archive.

88. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

89. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, memorandum relative to the events arising out of the clearance of shacks at Mnyasana, 4 March 1959.

90. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 5 September 1980.

91. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, memorandum relative to the events arising out of the clearance of shacks at Mnyasana, 4 March 1959.

When finally meeting Durban's mayor, women maintained that as a result of removals "every house has been destroyed and we have nowhere to stay. Children are being left in the open, and one's things have been ruined."⁹² However it was not just the means of removals which annoyed women, but the policy itself. Stressing the respectable nature of shack-residents' lives, a woman from Draaihoek told the mayor "We have a grievance. The Director [municipal Bantu Administration Department] is killing us and our children. We lived here for a long time. We kept ourselves decently and gave no trouble. ... We have nowhere to go."⁹³ The women of Draaihoek began to re-erect their homes. The municipality, believing the situation to be "highly inflammable", called a temporary halt to all removals.⁹⁴

With the struggles of the women of Draaihoek a series of important developments occurred in the shacklands. These changes were to have an enormous effect on political activity in Mkhumbane, as well as increasing the membership of the ANC and SACTU in the shantytowns. As Curnick Ndlovu, then a SACTU organizer living in Mkhumbane, remembers, "from that time onwards things moved very fast."⁹⁵

Even by this late stage many of the residents appeared to be oblivious of municipal plans for destroying shack society. Dorothy Nyembe confirms this:

There were people in Cato Manor who would not listen to us. When we say they are going into a location they do not believe us. They would not say anything. They did not know what was going on. It is not nice to say this but amongst my people in Mkhumbane some were very stupid.⁹⁶

As the problems of day-to-day life increased and personal relations became more strained, the ability to gain a full understanding of the impending destruction of Mkhumbane and the broader political issues at stake became more difficult for shack-dwellers. During the course of the meeting between Mkhumbane women and the mayor, Gertrude Kweyama, a leading ANCWL member reflected many residents' ignorance of municipal policy:

I do not believe that there is any document in Pretoria saying what must be done in Cato Manor, other than a directive that we must pay £1 per month. Our agreement with the Government is that as long as we pay £1 and behave ourselves we shall stay for ever in Cato Manor.⁹⁷

With the struggles of the Draaihoek women, came a dramatic increase in womens' support for the ANCWL organization in the shantytowns. As Dorothy Nyembe recalls, women did not necessarily become members but

92. *Ibid.*

93. *Ibid.*

94. *Ibid.*

95. Personal communication with Mr Curnick Ndlovu.

96. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

97. Interview with Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984 and MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, memorandum relative to the events arising out of the clearance of shacks at Mnyasana, 4 March 1959.

"followed us."⁹⁸ Womens' politics became centred around meetings in various shack settlements and larger mass meetings which were usually held either at 'Nene Hail' in Two Sticks or on the sportsfields near the beerhall. Organized by the Womens' League, such meetings attracted increasing support.

Shebeen queens, most of whom had either deliberately avoided or been disinterested in what one shebeen queen refers to as "this thing with politics", gravitated towards the womens' League. In these meetings shebeen queens expressed the desire to "burn the beerhall down and kill all of our men who drank u-Bokweni."⁹⁹ Many women spoke of their desire "to carry on living with their men", while other women "wanted to prove to Kwa Muhle that we were proper people. They should not throw us into the locations. What we were doing in Mkhumbane was good. Not too much drink and we were listening to the law."¹⁰⁰ Others called for the transformation of shack society. Mrs Phewa remembers that many women wanted "Kwa Muhle to put a location there in Mkhumbane. Take the tsotsis and all this drink away and let proper people live in peace. That was all we wanted".¹⁰¹ Yet within potentially contradictory desires for increased illicit trading profit, various kinds of permanent residence in Mkhumbane and a concern over the need to sustain a respectable lifestyle lay the roots of a basic unity amongst the increasingly more militant shantytown women.

Unity was gained through womens' rejection of municipal power. Women became outraged by the municipality's attempts to destroy the shack settlements and convince shack-residents of the benefits of a future life in Kwa Mashu. Through pamphlets and public statements, the municipality maintained that Kwa Mashu "opens the road to progress and a happy home life."¹⁰² To women it was clear that the municipality was "not wanting to listen to us."¹⁰³ Having rejected shack-dwellers' demands for property rights in the city the municipality was attempting to convince them that the non-freehold housing in Kwa Mashu would offer Africans that respectable city life for which many yearned.

ANC leaflets expressed peoples' desires to challenge the power of the municipality.¹⁰⁴ The pamphlets revealed an increasing awareness of the inter-connections between African employment, wages, housing and the destruction of shantytown society. A pamphlet distributed by the "women of Cato Manor" maintained that,

Here women is the problems [sic]. It is Bourquin and his stooges who are wanting to kill us of Mkhumbane! Why must we move to the location!? That is where they will lock us up. That place is the Bantustan that will be giving us nothing but wants us to pay for this. We the women know this Bourquin who takes our money in beer and gives us houses. It is this devil

98. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

99. Informant to remain anonymous.

100. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1982.

101. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

102. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 2; pamphlet, n.d. This pamphlet was distributed in Mkhumbane during late 1959 and 1959.

103. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

104. Document in authors' possession.

who will not listen to us when we say we want this land in Mkhumbane for us. It is him that makes our men stand for passes. It is him who hates the women. It is him that takes our children away. This man says we must be the slaves from the location! We the women must stop this Satan.¹⁰⁵

The precise origins of this handwritten pamphlet are unknown. It is significant in that it reveals a sense of the ambiguities in womens' understanding of the period than do other pamphlets distributed by the ANCWL. ANCWL flyers would often proclaim "abolish all pass laws! Stop the racists!" and "join the Congress!".¹⁰⁶

For many Mkhumbane women the issue was not the rejection of pass laws in their entirety, nor absolute questioning of the need for improved housing facilities. Having accepted the limited gains which appeared to have been secured through new pass laws which offered the prospects of permanent city residence, women became increasingly aware of and embittered with the very means whereby such legislative powers were being utilized to restructure family life in ways not of their own choosing. A growing awareness of the purpose of the destruction of shantytowns and removals to Kwa Mashu became moulded into a desire to cripple municipal power.

Women's unity in the shacklands was built through their common criticism of African men. As Constance Matiwane remembers, for many women the very dominant male proletarian culture was seen as "weaknesses that we could see in our men. They did not seem to be as worried about Kwa Mashu as us. Things were the same to them, and they would just leave us out in the cold. This was the time when we had to teach."¹⁰⁷ Out of concern for the maintenance of nuclear family structures, problems of meeting household budgets, or the desire to profit from the illicit sale of liquor to men, came vociferous criticism of African men in Mkhumbane. Although reflecting different interests, such antagonisms were, seemingly, always couched in terms which emphasized a respect for mens' importance within the shacklands but womens' desires to "educate our men in what was wrong."¹⁰⁸

From these two unifying features within womens' discussions during the later 1950s came a desire to initiate a boycott of all municipal beerhalls and those municipal-owned trading facilities operated by Africans within beerhall facilities.¹⁰⁹ Such a boycott would serve the interests of shebeen queens, traders and other less established petty entrepreneurs in Mkhumbane, restrict workers' ability to "drink money before they can come home and feed us and their children" and break the financial basis of municipal power over urban Africans. Mkhumbane could thus be saved. Mabel Dlamini reflects on the thinking:

If we do not give money to Kwa Muhle then they cannot bring us here to Kwa Mashu. This is the whole thing. Then we can all stay in Cato Manor. All the money can come to us and

105. *Ibid.*

106. *Ibid.*

107. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1982.

108. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

109. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

nothing to u-Bokweni. It was through this thing that [Kwa] Mashu can be stopped. If we can stop our men from drinking u-Bokweni. This was the thing to chase men from the beerhalls. Chase! ... we can beat them. We can. ... and hit them. We must get them out.¹¹⁰

The notion of a boycott of municipal beerhalls had a long history in Mkhumbane. From the beerhall boycotts of the later 1940s through the 1950s various shack residents had always been calling for such action.¹¹¹ From the early 1950s many leading members of the ANC in Durban many had pushed for a boycott of all municipal facilities. Nevertheless, the specific call early in 1959 for a boycott of amenities in municipal beerhalls and eating houses came from women's associations and meetings in the Mkhumbane shantytowns.

The ANC responded rapidly and eagerly to this suggested strategy. The ANC was conscious of its failure to effectively organize in Mkhumbane or develop any coherent policy towards future African residence in Mkhumbane. But there were many local leaders who were deeply sympathetic towards the plight of the shantytown residents. Francis Dlamini remembers:

We in the Congress had wanted Mkhumbane for a long time. But when the removals came we knew that we were very, very sorry for them. It was really too late by this time. But these people were strong. When people started to stay away from the beerhalls we nearly won, you know that? It was close! Bourquin even came to us [the ANC] and asked us to stop it. It was that close. This was all started by those people in Cato Manor.¹¹²

From 1959 the relationship between the ANC and SACTU became highly ambiguous as increasing numbers of shantytown residents came to both the ANC and SACTU.

During the earlier 1950s the ANC had failed to gain any substantial membership or even widespread support from the shantytown residents. Prior to 1959 the only really strong foothold which the ANC had acquired in Mkhumbane had been as a result of the ANCWL. Yet by the late 1950s, the ANC had successfully reigned the authority of the ANCWL in ways which gave to the ANC provincial executive increasing control over policy and strategy. However, although control seemed assured, membership levels and support for the ANC seemed to be dropping throughout the country.¹¹³

The relationship between the residents of Mkhumbane and the ANC and SACTU is probably one of the ironies in the history of African politics in Durban. During the late 1950s, the ANC desired to increase organizational membership, assist in the further politicization of Africans in Durban and gain a disciplined support base which could be relied on to rally around the major campaigns which the ANC desired to initiate. Yet the ANC leadership of the later 1950s seems to have been at a loss to plan further large-scale campaigns. Here in the suggested boycott strategy lay the possible means to further increase mass politicization amongst Africans in Mkhumbane and elsewhere in the city. A boycott of municipal facilities might not only assist the

110. Interview with Mrs M Dlamini, 2 February 1982.

111. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

112. Personal communication with Mr F T R Dlamini.

113. B Turok, 'South Africa: the search for a strategy', *Socialist Register*, (London, 1973), p 333.

Mkhumbane residents, but it also represented an attack on one of the foundations of urban apartheid. Local issues and broad political mobilisation could be inter-linked. The ANC began planning for a boycott which they hoped to initiate in June 1959 as part of a wider protests.¹¹⁴

But the boycott was initiated by Mkhumbane residents, some of whom had previously rejected the ANC's leadership and principles; or their preference for focussing on wider political issues in ways which were often not completely in alignment with proletarian aspirations. Furthermore many who supported the boycott had no desire to become involved in politics, but desired an exclusivity of trade within Mkhumbane. The idea of a boycott occurring in 1959 did not attract any adverse comment from within the shantytowns. The NIC was not using the ANC as the means to further the future of Indian traders and transport-owners who could gain from such a boycott. Furthermore, although responsibility for planning the boycott had been assumed by the ANC, this was accepted without question. The reasons for this change in attitude are complex.

By late 1958 the failure of the CMWDB was evident. Residents even commented harshly on many of the supposed ANC supporters who were members of the CMWDB. Local leaders could not be relied on.¹¹⁵ But there was more involved. During the early months of 1959 many shack residents became members of the ANC. With the collapse of local leadership, the immediacy of the threat to shack life, and for men, probably womens' harsh comments on the nature of mens' interest in defending the shantytowns, came an interest in wider political issues. Virtually by default the ANC had succeeded in politicizing shantytown residents into supporting in the ANC.

Responding to the increased level of support from within Mkhumbane, during the early part of 1959 the ANC was to be remarkably successful in forming many branch committees in Mkhumbane along the lines set out in the 'M' plan. In some places these new organizational structures even extended to demarcations within specific shack settlements.¹¹⁶ Here was the basis of a political structure for long desired by the ANC. In these structures residents found a new political home and an enthusiasm for wider political issues which could relate specifically to their own residential aspirations and that belief in social levelling and fierce independence which for long had frustrated the ANC leadership in Durban. For example in Nkosi Road, there was a local residents' branch of the ANC. A resident recalls,

Nkosi Road was our branch. We were all volunteers. All of us were in the Congress fold. When we meet every Saturday afternoon we are there to talk about our liberation, which means all of us. This is what being in Congress was for. You must speak to be heard. And all of us came to the meetings and told what we felt. It was the first time this had happened.¹¹⁷

114. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 12 June 1983.

115. *Ibid.*

116. Informant to remain anonymous.

117. *Ibid.*

Residents responded to calls made by the leaders of the ANC in Durban.¹¹⁸ From 1959 the ANC managed to gain increased organizational support which gave branches greater responsibility.

With this increasing support the ANC planned the municipal boycott as part of an organized and disciplined campaign of resistance that was to commence in June 1959. During the early part of 1959 the municipality became aware of planned campaign. However, by June 1959 the relationship between the shantytown residents and the ANC, and the increasing conflict between Mkhumbane residents and the municipality had altered in ways which mitigated against organized resistance.¹¹⁹ The ANC and SACTU were to gain much from the degree to which the personal crises which residents of the shacklands experienced over the prospect of removal to Kwa Mashu, but these organizations were never ever in a position to prevent the destruction of Mkhumbane.

The end of Mkhumbane

Towards the end of May 1959 the municipality became increasingly concerned with health and sanitation conditions in the Cato Manor Emergency Camp. Aside from a general decline in health conditions caused by municipal neglect, a growing number of children were dying from dysentery, and a typhoid epidemic was sweeping through the shacklands.¹²⁰ Refusing to spend municipal funds in the area and having been refused government funding to improve shack life until removals could be restarted,¹²¹ the municipality directed their frustration against illicit liquor brewing activities.

Municipal workers moved into the Emergency Camp and first started clearing all the piles of refuse which had accumulated through the absence of any proper municipal refuse removal service. Residents often assisted in the burning of rubbish.¹²² However squads of municipal workers accompanied by 'blackjacks' soon swooped down on illicit liquor activities.

Hopes for a disciplined boycott of municipal services and amenities was out of the question. To shackland residents it again appeared as if the municipality was blaming shantytown residents for those very conditions of appalling residential life which had been exacerbated by the municipality and using a concern for health conditions as a pretext to destroy the shacklands own internal economy. One woman maintained that "the Europeans have taken our beer and made their own. We dare not drink our beer because we are arrested in our own homes". Others noted that their livelihoods were being destroyed through municipal raiding.¹²³ In this situation the initiative was assumed by shebeen queens.

118. Interview with Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984.

119. Personal communication with Mr Curnick Ndlovu.

120. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin ; memorandum on the Cato Manor disturbances of June 1959.

121. MNAD; H2/Gen, vol 2; Secretary for Native Affairs- Town Clerk, 4 August 1958.

122. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 5 September 1980.

123. Daily News, 18 June 1959.

On the 17 June 1959 a large group of shebeen queens invaded the Cato Manor beerhalls, chased out the male drinkers and proceeded to destroy property. Later that same day a much larger group of women formed outside the beerhall and nearby bus stop warning any men who tried to enter that they would be 'dealt with'. A police baton charge failed to disperse the women who left the area later that same night on their own accord.¹²⁴

By midday the following day the beerhall had again been surrounded by women. In spite of a strong police presence the women refused to disperse and rejected the call of the now discredited chairman of the CMWDB, Isaac Zwane for the women to elect a deputation to discuss the issue with municipal officials.¹²⁵

From within this group were Dorothy Nyembe, other ANCWL members and many ANCWL members. Nyembe, Ruth Shabane and Forence Mkhize managed to organize a core group of women who then proceeded to march to the Victoria Street beerhall and then later to beerhalls as far afield as Mobeni. A participant recalls:

Everywhere we went, we would tell the men not ever again to go near the beerhalls or to drink u-Bokweni. This was the drink of Satan. All this drinking must stop. We must stop Kwa Muhle from taking us to Kwa Mashu. We knew what was killing us, it is Kwa Muhle and how they wanted to put us apart.¹²⁶

From within an environment created by shebeen queen revolt came feelings which asserted very different values. During the course of a later mass meeting addressed by municipal officials, women complained about the destruction of family life, the ways in which influx control and the pass laws threatened family life, and their desire to live peacefully with the municipality. And yet here was the contradiction. For many women a desire to sustain a new working-class life lay uneasily with their own need for material security that was dependent upon illicit liquor brewing. Many women admitted to being involved in the production and sale of liquor and explained that this was a means of work and provided for family needs.¹²⁷

Confronted by police cordons, shooting, and municipal raiding residents quickly called for the 'liberation of Mkhumbane'.¹²⁸ Roadblocks consisting of oil drums, which had previously been used for the distillation of illicit liquor, and piles of waste matter were placed in Booth Road at the entrance to the Emergency Camp. All vehicles coming into the Mkhumbane area were stopped, searched and sometimes set alight.¹²⁹ Crowds of women, accompanied by male shack residents, burnt the municipal offices and the municipal 'Blackjack' security guards' barracks in the Emergency Camp, destroyed the premises of private

124. MRR; file 323, vol 1; W E Drew, memorandum, June 1959.

125. Natal Mercury, 19 June 1959.

126. Informant to remain anonymous.

127. Natal Mercury, 19 June 1959.

128. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 19 May 1985.

129. Daily News, 19 June 1959.

welfare organizations; and looted and torched Indian and African-owned trading premises.¹³⁰ Amidst shouts of "Afrika! Afrika!" crowds celebrated the collapse of burning buildings. On the evening of the 18 June the electricity lines into the Emergency Camp were cut by shack residents. Later that same night many men launched a series of assaults on the beerhall, these were repulsed by police gunfire.

But liberation was never complete. By the morning workers were queuing for the few buses still willing to operate in the area, and the police presence was ever more evident.¹³¹ The municipality closed beerhalls and police patrolled the streets of the city. The beerhalls were soon open, although attracting few patrons and large numbers of women picketers.¹³² Many women and ANC leaders in the city were arrested.

The beer boycott had spread throughout the city and there seemed to be the possibility of a city-wide insurrection. African men and women were marching around city streets, the Mobezi beerhall was deserted and the large Victoria Street beerhall had sold only half a gallon of beer in one day.¹³³ Residents of Clermont began boycotting the municipal bus services. Recently settled residents of Kwa Mashu protested about municipal rentals and other charges levied in the township.¹³⁴ Over twenty thousand people attended the 'Freedom Day' rally organized by the Congress Alliance and held in Durban on the 27 June 1959.¹³⁵ Indeed it was from June 1959 that both the ANC and SACTU began to gain an increasing number of supporters. When joining the ANC, workers would be encouraged to join SACTU which formed both general workers' unions and then later industrial unions for their new membership.

Stanford Mtolo remembers:

It was from the boycott of u-Bokweni that Congress got power. It was then that the ANC was in the driving seat. We knew we could do anything. The women ... then the men of Mkhumbane had shown us what they were ready for. That is when Congress really became alive. You should have seen it, Lakhani Chambers was alight!¹³⁶

This politicization would continue throughout the early 1960s despite the banning of the ANC.

However by later 1959 the fate of Mkhumbane had finally been settled. Although the residents and ex-residents of Mkhumbane were to actively participate in city-wide political struggles during the early 1960s, Mkhumbane had never been liberated, let alone secured for permanent African ownership. Conflict between the municipality, the police and, after the declaration of a State of Emergency, the military and shack residents would continue, with nine liquor raiding policemen being killed in Mkhumbane in early 1960. Soon after the

130. Natal Mercury, 19 June 1959.

131. Ibid, 20 June 1959.

132. Bourquin papers, S Bourquin, memorandum on Cato Manor disturbances in June 1959.

133. Magistrate's court archives; Regina vs E Zondi and others.

134. Natal Mercury, 22 June 1959.

135. New Age, 28 July 1959.

136. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 12 June 1984.

beerhall riots of June 1959 removals to Kwa Mashu re-commenced. From crises in domestic life had come a particular level of politicization that whilst not having the ability to secure future life in Mkhumbane, would remain with those who would be granted the right to live in Kwa Mashu.

CONCLUSION

During the later 1940s both the state and capital became concerned about their inability to control the process of African proletarianization in Durban. The African proletariat was becoming more politically assertive. Along with a proletarian populism came struggles in which Africans tried to gain material and political advantage in an industrializing city that they were determined to make their home. Alongside city-wide conflicts came the development of the Mkhumbane shantytown society. Not only did this area constitute an ever present health threat. It was clearly apparent that the very growth of Mkhumbane was a form of resistance and assertion on the part of Africans in the city. Furthermore, the Mkhumbane shacklands became the central arena for an alternate African proletarian culture. This political culture was inimical to the interests of both the state and capital.

The state and capital were aware of the pressing nature of these issues, but this did not produce immediate consensus on how the situation could be transformed. Issues such as proletarianization, the conditions of waged employment, working-class housing and characteristics of the local industrial and commercial economy led to tensions within the state and capital over key features of the new broad policy which parties accepted as being essential.

As this new policy developed it became clear that both state and capital were attempting to restructure African working-class life and wage labour in Durban in ways which were directly linked to a projected path of economic growth. The class differentiation already apparent within the African proletariat could be sharpened, but in ways according with the interests of the state and capital. The local African labour force could be divided into migrant workers employed in more casualized and unskilled capacities whilst workers permanently resident in the city would move into more semi-skilled employment. Along with increased productivity would come higher African wages. A refashioned African working class living in the city would thus be able to afford the costs of new improved township housing. Furthermore increased African wages would result in those increased levels of consumer spending which local capital saw as the key to future economic growth.

As against the demands of the African proletariat to acquire the right to own land in the city, township housing would be on a non-freehold basis. Although the proletariat would be housed in the city, these townships should be built in areas on the periphery of Durban and adjacent to African reserve areas. As city residence rather than employment in Durban was and is the basis for political power in South African cities, the question of future African political power in Durban could thus easily be swept away through excising African residential areas from the city and their incorporation into African homelands.

However the linkages perceived by the state and capital between restructuring African labour and residence in Durban and future economic growth was often contradictory. Durban's industrial and commercial economy was not to grow significantly until later in the 1960s. Although the new pass law and labour bureau system was designed to both restrict African entry to the city and further enhance class distinctions among the

city's African labour force, local economic conditions and characteristics within the local labour market exerted a determining influence over the success of restructuring policies.

Yet through their very attempts to change the nature of African proletarianization, African waged employment in Durban and the destruction of shackland life and the removal of shack-residents to Kwa Mashu and then Umlazi, came changes in the nature of African politics in the city. Resistance to established authority and struggles for future gain became inter-linked in new and important ways. Although the African shantytown residents believed that through the riots of 1949 they had managed to gain control over shackland society, the weakness of the militant proletarian populism of the later 1940s was soon apparent. The municipality was easily able to acquire authority in the shacklands. Similarly, militant co-operatives waned while all attempts to alter African access to increased commercial and political power never made any substantial progress. The city had not been taken. But from the decline of proletarian populism came the emergence of a new trading class in the shacklands of Mkhumbane. Acquiring increased material wealth and politically ambitious, it was these entrepreneurs who were often the militant populist leaders of the later 1940s. Aligning themselves with the ANC, they acquired growing political power in Mkhumbane.






With the establishment of this trading class and changes over African access to the city and wage labour, changes developed in shack life. The already fragile shantytown economy was strained to breaking point. As access to profits derived from petty commodity production and exchange in Mkhumbane declined, so divisions emerged within the Mkhumbane proletariat. Within the Mkhumbane working class came a new interest in forms of trade unionism and a quest for a refashioned working class consciousness. These struggles took the working class out of merely a focus on residential life in into city politics but in ways different from the proletarian politics of the later 1940s. But these changes were in many ways limited by both the constraints of life in the shantytown, the perceived burdens of future life in Kwa Mashu and thus a need to resist all attempts to destroy Mkhumbane. Future struggles and present resistance were linked in contradictory ways.

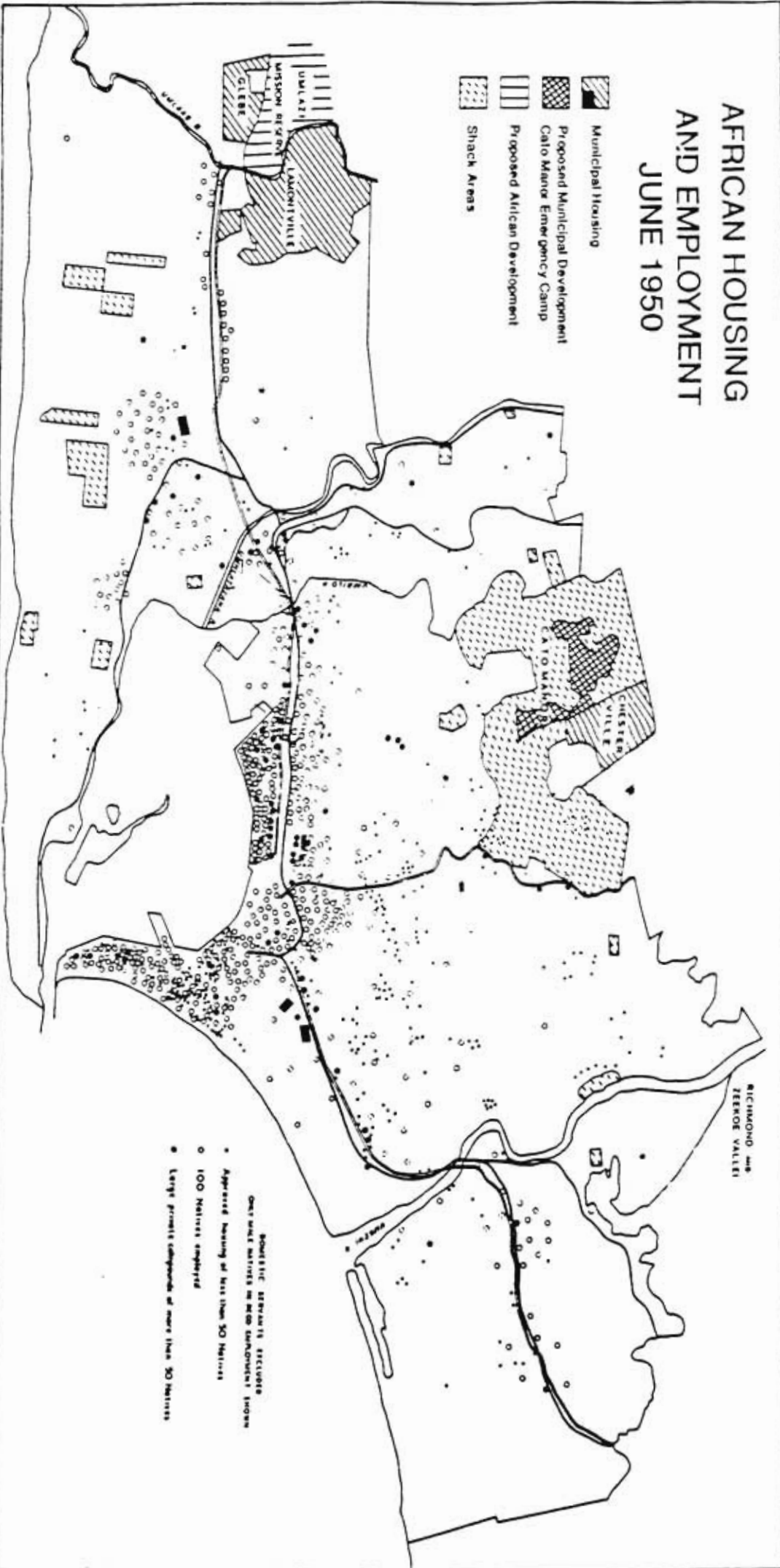
These complexities increased with the removal to Kwa Mashu. During the course of removals and resettlement shack residents went into the ANC and SACTU, both of which were to secure an increasing membership within Kwa Mashu. As the relocation of shack-dwellers to Kwa Mashu was to alter struggles between capital, the state and labour, so politics in Kwa Mashu altered. From the late 1950s onwards, township politics was to be fashioned by the various contradictory relationships between political and trade union bodies and residents, an ever more established trading class gaining increased influence within officially recognized local power structures and other forms of civic politics and the ambiguities within proletarian and working class perceptions of city life and struggle.

Maps

1. Durban, 1950
2. African Housing and Employment, June 1950
3. Industrial Durban, circa 1950
4. Pattern of Bantu New Towns and Related Industrial Areas, June 1966.

AFRICAN HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT JUNE 1950

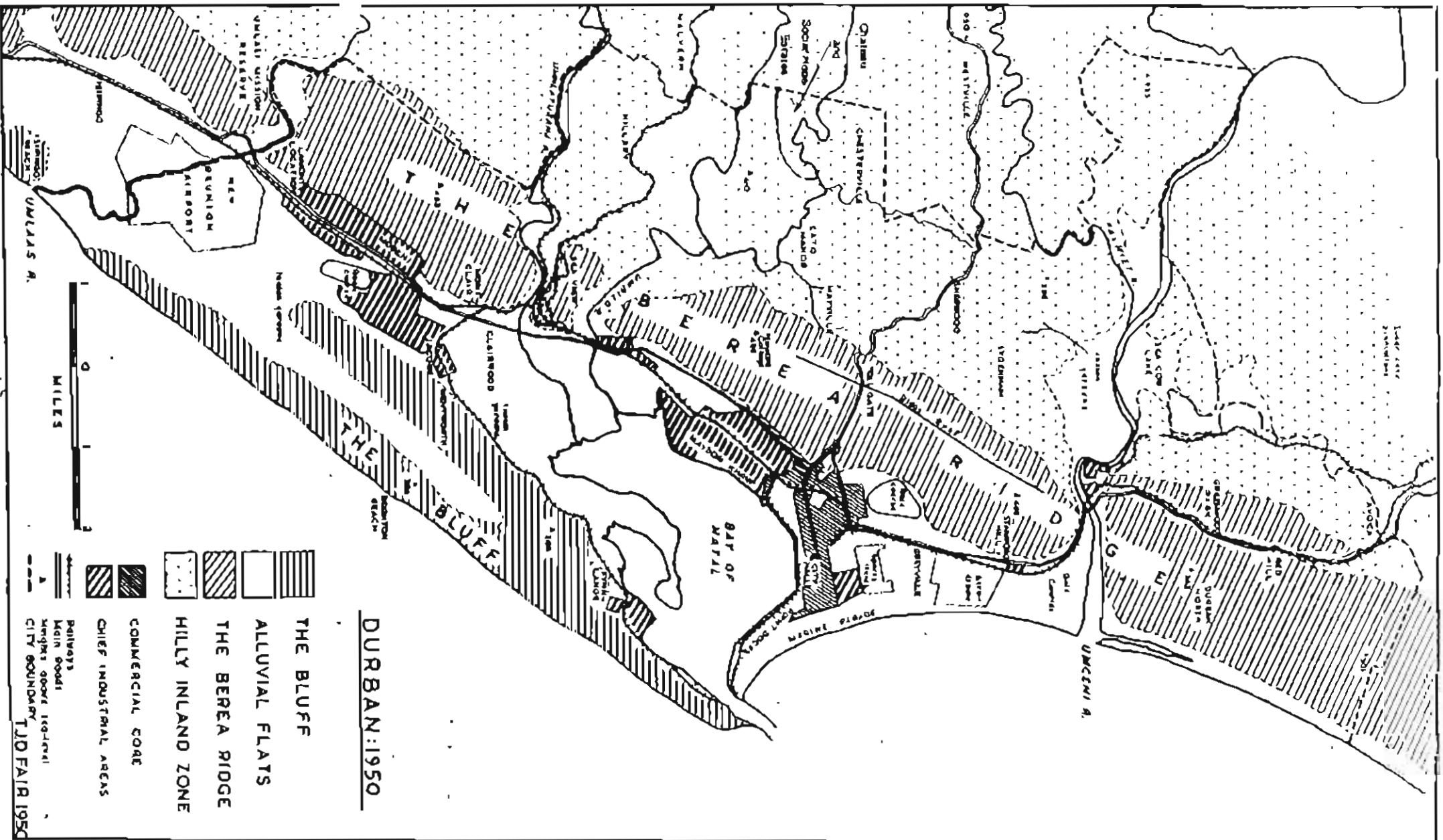
-  Municipal Housing
-  Proposed Municipal Development
-  Cato Manor Emergency Camp
-  Proposed African Development
-  Shack Areas













DOMESTIC SERVANTS EXCLUDED
ONLY WHITE NATIVES IN BROWN ENCLOSURES! INQEN

- Approved housing of less than 50 houses
- 100 Natives employed
- Large private compounds of more than 50 houses

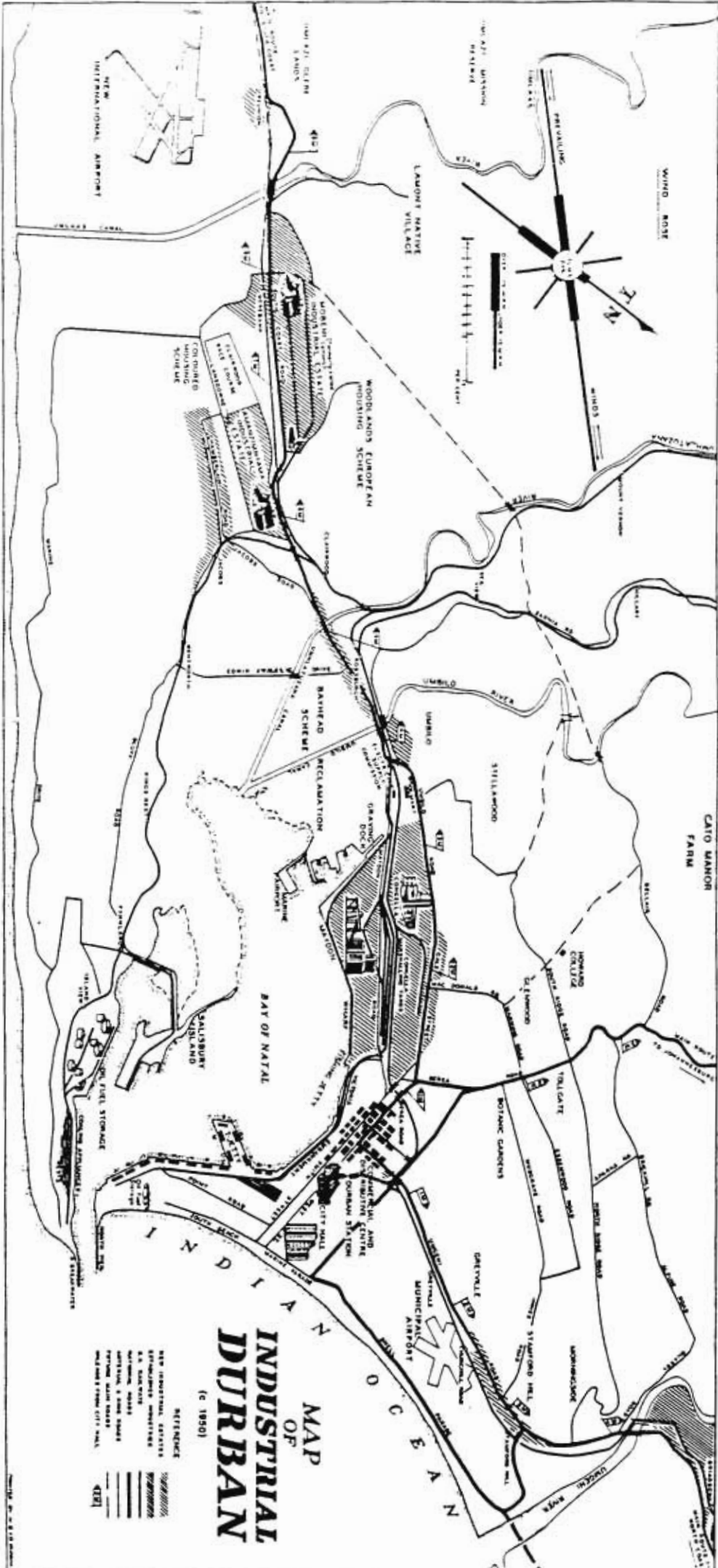
RICHMOND and
ZEMBE VALLEY



DURBAN:1950

-  THE BLUFF
-  ALLUVIAL FLATS
-  THE BEREA RIDGE
-  HILLY INLAND ZONE
-  COMMERCIAL COAR
-  CHIEF INDUSTRIAL AREAS
-  RAILWAYS
-  MAIN ROADS
-  KING'S ROADS
-  CITY BOUNDARY

TJO FAIR 1950



MAP OF INDUSTRIAL DURBAN

(c 1950)

- REFERENCE
- INDUSTRIAL ZONES
 - RESIDENTIAL ZONES
 - PARKS
 - RAILWAYS
 - ROADS
 - WATERWAYS
 - INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS
 - RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS
 - PUBLIC BUILDINGS
 - RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS
 - EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS
 - RECREATIONAL BUILDINGS
 - INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE
 - RESIDENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE
 - PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE
 - RECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
 - EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE
 - RECREATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

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E Law, Durban,	2 April 1982
C Matiwane, Durban,	21 June 1985
N Matiwane, Durban,	1 July 1985 7 July 1985
M Mcanyama, Kwa Mashu,	19 May 1985 12 July 1985
D McCullouch, Durban,	2 April 1982 3 April 1982 5 April 1982
J Mnguni, Kwa Mashu,	20 July 1985
B Mqadi, Kwa Mashu,	29 October 1986
M Mtandi, Durban,	30 November 1986
B Mthethwe, KwaMbonambi,	14 January 1986
M Mthethwe, KwaMbonambi,	14 January 1986
S S L Mtole, Kwa Mashu,	10 June 1983 12 June 1983
J Mzimela, Kwa Mashu,	21 April 1985 28 April 1985 5 May 1985 12 May 1985 19 May 1985 26 May 1985
B Nair, Durban,	27 June 1985
C Ndlovu, Durban,	23 October 1983
C Ndlovu, Umlazi,	29 November 1986
T Ndlovu, Kwa Mbonambi,	14 January 1986

A Nene, Inanda,	26 January 1984 29 January 1984
Z Nkosi, Kwa Mashu,	13 July 1980
S Nxumalo, Durban,	3 April 1982
T Phewa, Kwa Mashu,	21 April 1985 28 April 1985 12 May 1985 31 June 1985 18 November 1986
T Phewa, Kwa Mashu,	23 June 1985 7 July 1985
T Roche, Durban,	22 April 1982 23 April 1982
Fr St George, Durban,	10 September 1985
S Selby, Durban,	12 August 1980 19 August 1980
J J Shabalala, Durban, Umlazi,	27 November 1986 29 November 1986 30 November 1986
T Shabalala, Kwa Mashu,	21 June 1985 31 June 1985 7 July 1985 14 July 1985 28 July 1985
J Shange, Kwa Mashu,	21 July 1985
C N Shum, Durban,	20 June 1985 22 June 1985
H Sibisi, Patane,	12 July 1985 11 November 1985
H Strachan, Durban,	10 June 1982
A Vilakazi, Durban,	19 August 1985
R G Willson, Durban,	15 December 1980 7 February 1981

4. Tapes and transcripts of interviews conducted by V Erlman and I L Edwards, interpreted by S Gumede and transcribed by C S Ndlovu

M Kunene, F Mlombo and T Phewa, Kwa Mashu, 6 April 1986

5. Tapes and transcripts of interviews conducted by T Zwane assisted by I L Edwards and transcribed by V Khoza
- H Dlomo, Kwa Mashu, 23 June 1988
 T Dlamini, Kwa Mashu, 20 July 1988
 H T Madubane, Kwa Mashu, 15 June 1988
 M Mashaba, Kwa Mashu, n.d
 N Majozi, Kwa Mashu, 19 July 1988
 S Mtolo, Kwa Mashu, 6 June 1988
 M Miya, Kwa Mashu, 23 August 1988
 N Ndlovana, Kwa Mashu, 2 August 1988
 W Ndlovu, Kwa Mashu, 1 July 1988
 E Ntanzi, Kwa Mashu, 12 June 1988
 E Sithole, Kwa Mashu, 2 September 1988
 H S Zwane, Kwa Mashu, 4 June 1988
6. Transcript of an interview conducted by B Hirson
- M B Yengwa, London, 8 April 1986
7. Transcript of an interview conducted by B Naidoo
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