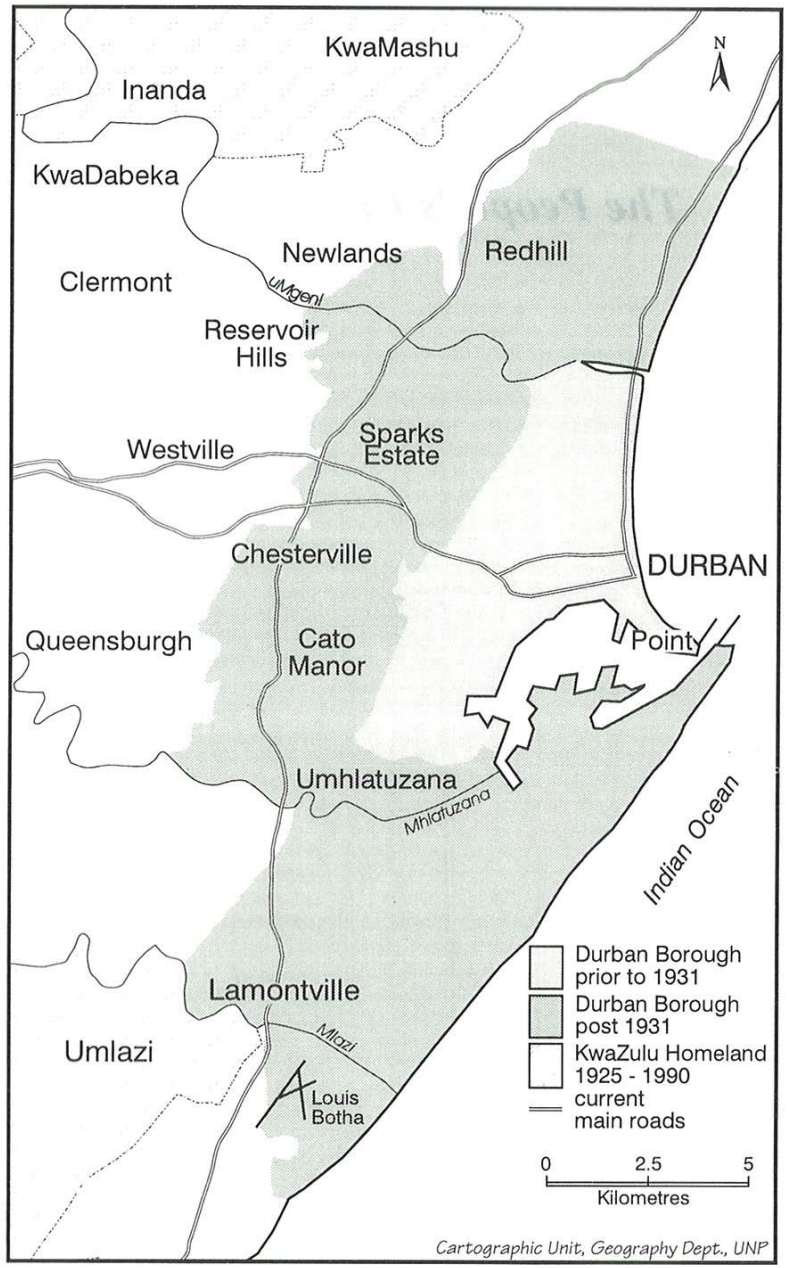

The greater Durban area

The People's City

African Life in Twentieth-Century Durban

Edited by

Paul Maylam and Iain Edwards

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Preface

The field of urban history has engendered two fundamentally differing written historiographic styles and traditions. The one is antiquarian, in South Africa generally Eurocentric, concerned mainly with the lifestyle and culture of the urban élite. The other is analytical and critical, with an emphasis on urban policy and management, the impact of that policy on non-élite communities, and the ways in which ordinary people and their leaders struggled against and sought to cope with the hardships of city life.

There are books on the history of Durban written in the first tradition, but none in the second. This book is an attempt to fill that gap. It tries to capture something of the experience and culture of those people and communities who were consigned, by decades of urban segregation and apartheid, to occupy the marginal, peripheral, undesirable spaces of Durban. The essays explore the tribulations and struggles of workers, the emergence and growth of particular communities, and the texture of everyday life and culture in one of sub-Saharan Africa's most important port cities.

It is perhaps somewhat surprising that the first book to focus on the history of African life in Durban should only be appearing in 1996. It is surprising because much has been written on this subject during the past twenty years, appearing mainly in article and thesis form. Such work tends to reach only a narrower academic audience. We hope that this book, which is testimony to these research endeavours, will disseminate to a wider readership some of the findings of this recent research.

One scholar who did much to pioneer a critical approach to the history of Durban was Professor Maynard Swanson, known to his friends as 'Bill'. We are sad to report his death, late in 1995, during the preparation of this book. Bill was the first historian to look critically at the evolution of racial segregation in Durban. His work revealed the miserable early history of the Durban municipality's African administration. He argued that Durban was a pioneer in developing a self-financing system for segregation and controlling its African population. It is most significant that Durban was not only one of the first South African cities to move towards urban apartheid practice, but also one of the last to move into the post-apartheid order, establishing a transitional local council long after most other municipalities.

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Introduction

The Struggle for Space in Twentieth-Century Durban

PAUL MAYLAM

In 1974, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first arrival of white settlers at Port Natal, the Durban municipality produced a glossy book giving a photographic portrayal of the history and life of the city.[1] The content of the photographs betrayed the book's eurocentric bias. The lens had been focused overwhelmingly on the modern infrastructure and the bright city lights: railways and freeways, ships and harbours, sunny beaches and picturesque gardens, cricket pitches and racecourses. Towards the end of the collection there were two other pictures of note. One showed bare-breasted African women participating in *ngoma* dancing – 'a big tourist attraction'. The other depicted an African family, seemingly enjoying a life of contentment and tranquillity, in the well-kept garden of their 'Bantu home at KwaMashu, the big Non-white township'. One should not perhaps attach too much significance to this book, which was no more than a glossy, glorified anniversary brochure. But it does reveal something of perceptions in South Africa. *Ngoma* dancers were, for instance, portrayed as a source of entertainment for tourists – and as no more than that. And the bland depiction of family life in KwaMashu masked the harsh reality of living in an apartheid township.

One of the functions of apartheid was to make the daily existence of the underclasses, outside the workplace, as invisible as possible to the dominant classes. The refinement of urban apartheid over the period 1950–1980 maximised this invisibility, serving to 'immunise' the dominant classes from the visual and political impact of the townships. But this invisibility extended beyond the realm of day-to-day living. It was also manifested in the popular media and in local history texts. In these there was a dominant perception that the lives of the underclasses, very largely black, were not worthy of consideration or study except insofar as their lives impinged upon or constituted a problem for the dominant classes. There was little attempt to probe or examine the life and culture of the underclasses from the inside.

An alternative, corrective approach to the study of urban social history has been developed in more recent years. Specifically for the social history of Durban we owe a great debt to two pioneering scholars, Maynard Swanson and David Hemson. In 1964 Swanson produced a Harvard Ph.D. thesis, which

examined the evolution of municipal race policy in Durban through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Swanson's major contribution was to document the emergence of the so-called 'Durban system' of African administration, and to show how this system became a model for subsequent urban apartheid practice at a national level.[2] Hemson's doctoral thesis, submitted at the University of Warwick in 1979, focused more specifically on the dock-workers of Durban. Written from a Marxist perspective, Hemson's work included fascinating detail not only on the dock-workers, but also on the general social history of Durban's African working class.[3] In the past few years a great deal more work has been done on the social history of Africans in Durban by a variety of scholars, many of whom have contributed to this collection. Almost all of these scholars have been building on the foundations laid by Swanson and Hemson. One of the aims of this collection is to bring together some of this more recent work. Its focus is on the history of the African experience in Durban, which simply reflects the emphasis of the recent work. It is recognised that there is a need to break free from restrictive racial categories in writing the social history of Durban.

Almost all the essays in this collection implicitly consider the organisation and occupation of urban space – living space, cultural space, political space, and space for pursuing material ends. In twentieth-century Durban, opportunities for the exploitation of such space have existed, to a greater or lesser degree and at various times, for individuals and groups outside the dominant classes. A major concern of this collection is to examine, first, the way in which space has been created and utilised by Africans in Durban, and second, the way in which space has gradually been closed off during the course of the twentieth century. Such an examination requires an understanding of the political economy of Durban: How has the city's material base developed and changed over time? How has local state power intruded into the lives of Africans in Durban? How has central state power encroached upon the autonomy of the local state? What have been the main forces responsible for the shutting down of space? But this is also a story about the people who have striven to take advantage of these open spaces and have, in many cases, resisted the shutting down – shack-dwellers, liquor-dealers, ricksha-pullers, factory-workers, trade-unionists, petty entrepreneurs, musicians. Their lifestyle, their aspirations, and their struggles are documented as part of an effort to produce an alternative 'people's history of Durban'.

Access to various forms of urban space in Durban has been determined by a number of factors – the nature of the city's economy, regional demographic patterns, local state policy, and the exercise of central state power. How did these factors come into play at the beginning of the twentieth century?

At the turn of the century, Durban's economy centred on the harbour. Its industrial base was minuscule; and the town depended heavily on the through trade to the Rand. One feature of Durban's economic growth in the twentieth century has been its tendency to accelerate during war-time. Durban's commerce and industry expanded considerably during the South African War; new employment opportunities were created, particularly in the transport and industrial sectors. The First World War provided a further stimulus, especially to the engineering industry which was required to service the growing volume of war-time shipping. During the years 1916–19 Durban became more committed to following the path of secondary industrialisation. But the manufacturing sector remained small in scale, and it continued to be concentrated in the central business district and Point area.[4]

In the early years of the twentieth century, Durban's population level was relatively low. In 1900 the total population of the town was about 55 700, of whom 14 600 were African. By 1921 the total had risen to 90 500, of whom 28 400 were African.[5] The African section of Durban's population was predominantly male: the male to female ratio was 6,6 to 1 in 1921.[6] And the majority of Africans fell into four main employment categories: togt or casual day labourers, washermen, ricksha-pullers, and monthly contract workers (many of whom were domestic workers, mainly male).[7] Labour was thus largely a matter of servicing the commercial and domestic sectors.

This relatively small population experienced minimal intrusion into their daily lives by the local state in the early years of the century. For instance, the task of 'administering' Africans, for some bizarre reason, came under the umbrella of the town's abattoir committee. Gradually, though, the municipality was to establish an administrative structure that would intervene more and more in the lives of the town's African population. The structure was built on the revenue derived from the municipal beer monopoly. It took shape with the creation of a municipal Native Affairs Department in 1916. This was the emerging 'Durban system', which has been thoroughly documented by Swanson and Hemson.[8]

The central state impinged even less than the local state upon people's lives in these early years of the century. The first major central state intervention in the urban sphere was legislated for in the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. But the immediate impact of this on Durban was minimal. Some of its provisions, for the establishment of native revenue accounts and beer monopolies for instance, had already been implemented in Durban. Other provisions, such as those recommending the building of segregated townships and the creation of native advisory boards, were ignored by the Durban municipality until the late 1920s. This was a measure of the municipal autonomy that existed at that time.

The low level of industrialisation and the undeveloped local state structure, left open various forms of space in Durban in the first two or three decades of the twentieth century. First, there was physical space. Large areas of land were unoccupied or unutilised. In later years infrastructural, industrial and residential growth was to place a great premium on land, especially flat land, in the greater

Durban area. But until the 1930s there was open space. This enabled Indian market gardeners, for instance, to engage in cultivation not far from the city centre. In 1932 the boundaries of Durban were enlarged so as to incorporate in the borough the so-called added areas (South Coast Junction, Umhlatuzana, Mayville, Sydenham and Greenwood Park). These areas, covering about 35 000 acres, had previously fallen under the limited administrative purview of 'local administration and health boards'. In these largely uncontrolled living zones, the emergence of informal Indian and African settlements had created opportunities for petty commodity production – opportunities exploited by 'illicit' liquor producers among others.

The availability of physical space, and the relative absence of tight administrative regimentation, meant that 'residential space' for Africans was also largely uncontrolled in the first three decades of the century. Virtually the only 'formal' type of accommodation available for Africans at this time was that which housed single male migrant workers. In 1914 one-quarter of the city's African population of about 20 000 lived in 'barracks', run by the municipality. Others lived in private industrial or commercial compounds, meeting the needs of employers who liked to have their workers living close at hand. The first formal accommodation for African families – Baumannville, a small location comprising about one hundred and twenty so-called 'cottages' – was only built in 1916. At this time, as Paul la Hausse shows in his essay, the majority of Africans in Durban occupied 'the "living hell" of backyards, sheds, stables and other informal accommodation'.[9] Before the late 1920s there was no real attempt to impose any kind of racial residential segregation in Durban. This gave scope for petty rentiers, white and Indian, to let out rooms and 'backyard premises' to African tenants.

Just as living space was relatively uncontrolled in early twentieth-century Durban, so were there opportunities for Africans to take advantage of space for pursuing material ends. This was true both for workers, who were able to enjoy relative freedom from the tight discipline and control that characterised the workplace in a more developed industrial society, and for non-workers who could exploit a variety of informal sector opportunities.

Frederick Cooper has highlighted the independence enjoyed by casual labourers. Because they worked on a daily basis, the sanction of dismissal did not bind them; and because of their links with nearby farming communities they were less dependent on wage labour than fully proletarianised workers.[10] Cooper's conclusions were largely based on a study of dock-workers in Mombasa. His findings are borne out by Hemson's work on Durban's dock-workers. Hemson shows how casual togt labourers predominated at the docks. In the nineteenth century they enjoyed considerable freedom, working daily contracts and able to command relatively high wages. Moreover they lived where they liked, occupying backyard premises in the town, or constructing shacks in the dock area. From the 1870s, steps were taken to

exercise greater control over togt labourers in Durban. Monthly contracts and a registration system were introduced. Shacks in the dock area were demolished, and 'barracks' were constructed to house dock-workers. Control was intensified as the togt regulations were tightened in 1904. But Hemson shows how dock-workers still managed to sustain their capacity for independence and resistance to control. In 1904, for instance, hundreds of dock-workers took advantage of the security derived from their rural bases, and returned home rather than pay increased registration fees.[11]

So the presence of large numbers of casual workers continued to have contradictory implications for the local state and the dominant classes in Durban. On the one hand, many employers preferred the greater flexibility of labour supply that came with the togt system. This was particularly the case at the docks, where the demand for labour could fluctuate significantly in the short-term according to the changing levels of shipping activity. On the other hand, the relative freedom and independence of the togt workers enlarged the task of controlling the port's African population. The size of this task was considerable, given the high proportion of the African population registered as casual workers. Between 1923 and 1927, for instance, the proportion of casual workers was always at least 50 per cent of the estimated total African population of Durban.[12]

During the first three decades of the twentieth century there also existed in Durban considerable space for those Africans who obtained a living outside of wage employment. The informal sector seems to have flourished at this time. In part, this informal sector was a rural-urban phenomenon. La Hausse has observed how, in the early 1900s, African traders from rural areas entered Durban on five-day passes to hawk 'fowls, eggs, sticks, assegais, dagga, herbs and skins'.[13] Or women would bring in large quantities of beer (*utshwala*) from the country to sell in the town.[14]

At the heart of informal sector activity was the production and sale of liquor by petty entrepreneurs. La Hausse's research has captured the essential features of this trade, and has provided us with vivid details. He shows how, in the first few years of the century, the informal sector was allowed to operate with very few restrictions. For instance, 'In 1905 the streets of Durban were dense with privately licensed "native eating houses" providing food for labourers in the town as well as another outlet for beer and popular social discourse.'[15] While some of the beer was brought in from the countryside, much of it was produced in the town – according to one contemporary witness quoted by La Hausse, 'in kitchens, bathrooms, open dusty yards, behind sanitary conveniences, and in fact in any recess, shanty or space'.[16] By about 1908 there were liquor dealers, 'including African women and "low-class whites" in over 100 houses and dens selling both beer and more potent alcohol'.[17] The establishment of the municipal beer monopoly may have contained the 'illicit' liquor trade, but it certainly did not eliminate it. Tighter police control seems only to have had the

effect of pushing the trade out into the peri-urban areas. By the 1920s the main source of this liquor supply was the shebeens in Mayville, Greenwood Park, Sydenham and other peri-urban areas.[18]

For several years these peri-urban areas, which came to be heavily populated, with dense shack settlements, remained the most uncontrolled forms of space where Africans could pursue material ends. Already by the 1920s such space nearer the urban centre was being closed down by the combined forces of state legislation, infrastructural development, capitalist expansion, and proletarianisation. In 1905, for instance, Durban's first municipal eating-house was opened.[19] As such institutions expanded under the control of the local state, so the scope for maintaining private eating-houses narrowed.

More important was the local state's assault on the private production and sale of liquor. In 1908 the Natal legislature passed the Native Beer Act. The Durban corporation proceeded immediately to take advantage of the measure to establish a municipal monopoly on the manufacture and sale of beer to Africans. This had two important consequences. First, the monopoly at once criminalised all petty producers and turned them into 'illicit liquor-dealers' and police targets. Second, the monopoly generated, for the municipality, considerable revenue which, in turn, was to fund the development of the local state's apparatus of control. Beer profits made possible the establishment in 1916 of a municipal Native Affairs Department, headed by a professional manager and manned by supervisory, technical and clerical staff.[20] Municipal by-laws, passed in the same year, tightened the prospective exercise of administrative control over Durban's African population. Stricter procedures were laid down for worker registration and service contracts. A 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew was imposed on Africans.[21] All these measures restricted African mobility and represented a further closing down of space.

The process of industrialisation was not far advanced in Durban by the late 1920s, apart from some expansion during and immediately after the First World War and during the mid-1920s. But it was occurring at a pace sufficient to have made it a proletarianising force, limiting certain opportunities for independent economic activity on the part of Africans. This can be illustrated by two examples. Early in the century Africans, mainly men, had provided a washing service, operating on the banks of the Umgeni River or in backyards.[22] Transport was another service sphere in which opportunities existed for petty African entrepreneurs. This space was exploited by the ricksha-pullers. The pullers were able to hire rickshas from the ricksha companies and operate as semi-independent entrepreneurs, somewhere mid-stream between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. As Ros Posel shows, rickshas were a major form of public transport in the early part of the century.[23] However, by the 1920s they were under pressure. Their deteriorating position was brought out in the 1926 Mayor's Minute:

> There is an indication in certain directions of Native employment that work which previously was largely in their hands is becoming lost to them. They are finding the competitive locomotion of motor buses gradually overtaking the rickshas; a similar state of affairs exists among Native wash-boys. Only six Natives were registered for the year in this class of work. At one time the washing of the Borough was almost wholly undertaken by Natives and improved methods of domestic washing are chiefly responsible for the disappearance of the Native washboy.[24]

Industrialisation, proletarianisation and the strengthening of the local state apparatus may, by the third decade of the twentieth century, have had the effect of limiting access to certain kinds of space. However, the social and political history of Durban in the 1920s and 1930s throws into relief an African population that was far from being browbeaten, passive or docile. Rather can one find evidence of organisation and action, energy and initiative. Some spaces may have been closed down, but others were being opened up.

Two kinds of space were being exploited more visibly by Africans in Durban from the 1920s. The first was political. Large numbers of Africans organised and protested in opposition to the tighter regulation of their lives by the local state. African workers increasingly came to engage in struggles around workplace issues. The second kind of space was that which allowed for small-scale accumulation on the part of an emerging African élite with upward aspirations. These two processes of struggle and accumulation, normally in opposition to each other, were not entirely disconnected in Durban at this time. Both were made possible because the degree of state control exercised locally and centrally, although becoming tighter, was still limited. The local state was developing its administrative machinery, but it was still unable to shape Durban according to the desired mould. And the central state, the 1923 Act notwithstanding, still intervened minimally in municipal affairs. There thus existed for Africans scope for political organisation and petty accumulation. The connection between the two is illustrated by their dual, if ambiguous, embodiment in the person of Allison Wessels George Champion.

Petty trading was one means of small-scale accumulation. In 1924 there were reported to be 220 African traders operating in Durban. Of these 67 were styled as 'tableholders', 64 as meatsellers, and 50 as 'snuffsellers'. Others sold clothes, wood or fruit, or plied their trades as tailors, cobblers or saddlers. These were mainly individual entrepreneurs who ran their businesses in the municipal eating-houses.[25] These operations were relatively formal. Others, as La Hausse has shown,

> carved out an even more tenuous economic existence for themselves through a network of informal and illegal activities such as prostitution, beer-brewing, dagga-selling, the unlicensed hawking of second-hand clothes and medicines. For some, economic subsistence was squeezed out

> of the newly-proletarianised through forms of racketeering such as rigged gambling games or the sale of love-potions with the help of female accomplices. Economic marginality defined a way of life which few of these individuals could hope to transcend. Together with the unemployed and unemployable they lived on the outer, and frequently criminal, fringes of the urban social order.[26]

Small-scale enterprise was also encouraged and sponsored by the Catholic Church in the greater Durban area. In 1927, for instance, the Catholic Thrift Club was set up at St Paul's Native Mission in Durban. The club ran a tea-room in Umgeni Road along co-operative lines.[27] At this time, the Catholic Church was generally concerned with encouraging self-advancement and the self-help ethic among Africans. This was partly to counter the developing proletarian consciousness and organisation that seemed to be embodied in the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in the late 1920s. Towards this end, the Church also helped to establish 'people's banks' for Africans. One such bank was formed in Greyville, another at the Mariannhill mission station in 1927. The purpose of these banks was both to encourage Africans to save, and to provide credit for potential entrepreneurs or peasant farmers.[28]

It is perhaps ironical that while the Catholic Church was promoting petty accumulation to counter the ICU, the leading ICU figure in Durban, Champion, stood out as one of the foremost among Durban's African petty entrepreneurs. Champion played a prominent leadership role in black politics in Durban from the 1920s. But, as Shula Marks has shown, Champion's position was 'replete with ambiguities'.[29] He claimed to be acting for the working class, but in many respects his own outlook and activities were conservative. He was certainly far from being the revolutionary that some of his reactionary opponents made him out to be.

Champion believed that black advancement could be achieved partly through fostering an attitude of self-reliance and encouraging thrift and accumulation. In the early 1930s he proposed the establishment of a bank for blacks. This could make capital available to finance black businesses. He had thought up the scheme while working for the Colonial Banking and Trust Company: it was then that he had 'found out the way the Europeans got rich and help their poor fellows'.[30] He was particularly eager to promote trading among Africans, wanting to 'smash' Indian domination of the African trade.[31] Champion himself possessed this entrepreneurial drive, and over the years owned a number of small businesses: a butchery in Roodepoort in the early 1920s; a large store in Durban in the 1930s; a tearoom, a store and a butchery in Inanda; a co-operative boot-repairing and tailoring business in which he was the sole partner; his own newspaper; a dance and meeting-hall which he ran for profit; and a small sugar plantation.[32]

Champion had not only an instinct for business, but also an interest in acquiring property. As Swanson's essay shows, Champion was a key figure in the founding of Clermont township near Pinetown in the 1930s. A group of white speculators and officials, in league with Champion, purchased some mission-owned land and sold it off in plots to African purchasers. Clermont thus originated as one of the few African freehold townships in the greater Durban area, not unlike the private freehold townships that emerged in western Johannesburg in the early 1900s.

While the 1913 Land Act prohibited African land purchase in white rural areas, and the 1923 Urban Areas Act denied Africans the right to freehold title in municipal townships, it was only with the passing of the Native Laws Amendment Act in 1937 that Africans were barred from buying landed property in urban areas outside the reserves. So before 1937 there was some limited scope for the purchase of property by Africans in the greater Durban area. Clermont was one example of this. There was another closer to the centre of Durban: Chateau and Good Hope Estates, adjoining Cato Manor. The land, covering about ninety-two acres, was originally bought by Mrs J Casteleijn in 1929. She sold about half this area to an Indian, Latiff Osman, who in turn subdivided it and sold the plots to Africans. The other half, Chateau Estate, was subdivided by Casteleijn herself, who also sold quarter-acre plots to Africans at a rate of £25 per plot. Most of the buyers were clergy, schoolteachers, shopkeepers or semi-skilled employees; two of the plots were bought by John Dube.[33] Opportunities for small-scale entrepreneurship, and vacant, purchasable land, represented certain kinds of space open to a minority of Africans in Durban, at least until the late 1930s. Another kind of space that remained relatively open at this time was the political terrain. In the past fifteen years or so the study of African opposition and struggle in Durban has been considerably advanced. Probably the most pioneering work has been Hemson's research on Durban's dock-workers. But others have made important contributions.[34]

African struggles in Durban can be placed into two main categories: those centred in the work-place, and those arising out of wider urban, community issues. It would be a mistake, however, to draw too sharp a distinction between worker action and popular protest. As we shall see, populist leaders like Champion might take up specifically worker causes; and workers became involved in wider urban issues.

One of the earliest intense phases of African opposition and protest occurred during the years 1918–20. The struggles of these years largely centred on worker issues and were dominated by workers. Events in Durban followed a similar pattern to those in Johannesburg and Cape Town during the same period. The material circumstances of workers had deteriorated drastically during the First World War, as wages had lagged far behind rising prices. From 1918 workers around the country began to express their discontent.

In Durban diverse groups of workers organised and acted. In 1918 the ricksha-pullers went on strike in protest against an increase in the rents for their

vehicles charged by the ricksha companies.[35] In June a deputation of togt workers went to the municipal Native Affairs Department to demand a virtual doubling of togt wages. In July John Dube, as President of the Natal Native Congress, called a meeting, attended by about eight hundred workers, to demand wage increases. In August coaling workers, employed at the docks on a monthly basis, came out on strike. The next year more coaling workers resorted to strike action, to be followed in November by municipal togt workers. African members of the local police force demanded a wage increase. In 1920 about a thousand dock workers went on strike.[36]

Generally employers refused to yield to the demands of strikers. Ringleaders were victimised; and a number of coaling workers were brought to court and fined. However, by 1920 wages were being raised.[37] Both employers and the municipal authorities had, in the short term, wanted to avoid giving the appearance of yielding to worker pressure. In the longer term they were forced to make concessions in the face of vehement demands and militant action by workers.

Hemson documents further strikes in Durban in the years 1925–27. Again dock-workers were in the forefront of the resistance.[38] But the second half of the 1920s and the early 1930s represented a rather different phase in the history of African opposition and protest in Durban. As already noted, the phase following the First World War had predominantly involved workers acting upon worker issues. From the mid-1920s a more broad-based popular opposition developed in protest against measures imposed by the local or central state, affecting the wider African community in Durban.

At the forefront of this popular opposition was the Durban branch of the ICU, headed by Champion. Champion assumed the leadership of the Durban branch in 1925, and over the next few years placed himself in the vanguard of a set of challenges launched against Durban's local power structure. Initially most of these challenges were legal actions brought by the ICU against the Durban corporation. And many of them were successful. A court decision brought an end to 'dipping', a humiliating procedure that required African workers, like cattle, to pass through disinfectant tanks. By 1926 about thirty-five thousand Africans were annually being subjected to this indignity. The Supreme Court decision to abolish compulsory 'dipping' was just one of a number of legal victories secured by the Durban ICU in 1926 and 1927. Other victories included the lifting of the nightly curfew for Africans, the exemption of African women from carrying night passes, and the decision to take away from the police the power of arbitrary arrest over Africans.[39]

These legal challenges represented a particular form of space being exploited by a small leadership group in the ICU centred around Champion. These challenges preceded – and may even have provided some necessary impetus to – a mass-based form of popular protest that gathered rapid momentum in Durban in 1929 and 1930. This protest gained its most visible expression in two

events, the 1929 beerhall boycott and the 1930 'Dingane's Day' pass-burning campaign. Both events have now been well documented, particularly by Hemson and La Hausse.[40] It is necessary here, therefore, only to highlight certain aspects of these episodes.

In Durban in the late 1920s, a change in the character of opposition and protest was occurring that was both similar to and simultaneous with a transition observed by William Beinart and Colin Bundy in their work on the Independent ICU in East London.[41] In both cases there was a move away from a formal, 'bureaucratic' organisational style of opposition towards more popular, militant forms of protest. Central to this transition was the more vehement articulation of worker grievances and the growing participation of workers themselves in urban struggles. As Hemson has shown, the 1929 Durban beerhall boycott originated among dock-workers.[42] It was not instigated, as has often been thought, by Champion and the ICU. Indeed, Champion's role in the 1929 protests was decidedly ambiguous. Certainly he assumed a prominent leadership position in the boycott. But Hemson suggests this was opportunism on Champion's part;[43] and La Hausse argues that Champion was equivocal about the use of radical tactics and eventually came to be carried along on a tide of militant popular protest.[44]

What is striking about the 1929 boycott is that there was a remarkable degree of mass participation and solidarity. Meetings called to oppose the beer monopoly in 1928 and 1929 attracted crowds of up to five or six thousand, made up largely of dock-workers, domestic workers, messengers and lumpenproletarians.[45] Municipal beer sales plummeted, seriously threatening the financial basis of the native revenue account. Also significant, as it was in East London, was the growing role played by women in the beer protests. Informal brewing and the shebeen trade provided a major source of income and independence for African women in Durban. It was not surprising, therefore, that women should have joined the struggle against the monopoly and played a major role in sustaining the boycott.[46]

Beinart and Bundy show how elements of Xhosa nationalism and 'traditionalism' blended into urban struggles in East London.[47] This trend was paralleled in Durban in 1930. A meeting between Champion and the Zulu paramount, King Solomon, in that year, suggested a possible alignment between two rather different constituencies.[48] This had been preceded by a number of ICU meetings in Durban at the end of May. According to the police observer at these meetings, they were attended by chiefs 'from all parts of the country'.[49] This convergence of rural 'traditionalism' and urban popular protest was also noticeable during the anti-pass campaign in December of that year. On 'Dingane's Day' thousands of Africans gathered in central Durban. The main purpose of the meeting was the destruction of passes. It is interesting though, as La Hausse has observed, how speakers at the meeting used the rhetoric of 'traditionalism' and appealed to a heroic past to praise Solomon and earlier Zulu kings.[50]

The years 1929–30 marked a high point of popular struggle in Durban. This is not to say that there was no organisation or protest in Durban in the 1930s. The Communist Party remained active in the city in the early 1930s, concentrating on organising the dock-workers.[51] After his return to Durban in 1934 from banishment, Champion organised ICU meetings. One was attended by a crowd of two thousand, but at others attendance was generally sparse.[52] In the late 1930s, further meetings were held under various banners, including that of the ICU, but they lacked the militancy, vibrancy and mass participation that characterised popular protest in 1929 and 1930.[53]

The slowing down of opposition and protest in Durban in the 1930s mirrored national trends in black politics, as this was also a period of stagnation for the ANC. Why was there this lull in Durban in the 1930s? Was it a case of political space being closed down by state repression? In 1930 political space was still sufficiently open for six thousand people to be able to meet near the Durban city centre and for speakers to deliver fiery anti-white rhetoric: one speaker, Ngonyama, said that Africans 'should cut the throats of the government, as had been done in Russia'.[54]

Why did this militant trend not continue in Durban in the 1930s? This question is not easily answered. One can hardly explain it in terms of increasing state repression, because the level of such repression was in fact very limited. It is true that there was a massive reinforcement of police strength in Durban late in 1929, followed by a crackdown on illicit liquor-dealers and tax defaulters.[55] But this could not have prevented a continuing upsurge of protest in 1930. It is also true that Champion was banished from Durban in 1930 under the Riotous Assemblies Act (interestingly, not because of his role in the beerhall boycott, but rather because of his 'flirtation' with Solomon).[56] Nor, though, does this explain the subsequent lull. To attach too much significance to Champion's absence from Durban is to overstress his leadership role in fomenting protest in the late 1920s and to underplay the mass-based, spontaneous character of that protest.

Another possible explanation of this lull might be found in the attempts of the local state to defuse African militancy by pursuing an ameliorative policy. Following the 1929 beerhall boycott and riots Justice de Waal conducted an enquiry into the events. While his report absolved the Durban municipal authorities of any blame, it did call for steps to be taken to improve the social conditions of Durban's African population. So, in 1930, a white Native Welfare Officer was appointed to the municipal Native Administration Department. One of his tasks was to organise facilities for African recreation, sport and entertainment. Film shows were provided for hostel-dwellers; occasional sports galas were held; and over fifty African soccer clubs were operating in the Durban area by 1937. The value of these leisure activities was clearly spelt out by the Native Welfare Officer himself in 1931: 'This interest on the part of Europeans would certainly limit the spread of vicious and evil influences, and the native community of Durban could be moulded into a law abiding and contented section of the community of the Borough.'[57]

Another move that followed the De Waal report, and was also aimed at defusing African discontent, was the creation of advisory boards. The 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act had made provision for such boards to be established. But Durban only set up its first advisory board in late 1929. The Durban Native Advisory Board comprised ten Africans (representing the ICU, the Natal Native Congress and the various hostels) and four white town councillors, one of whom filled the chair. It was nothing more than an advisory body, which had no powers; and generally its 'advice' was ignored by the city council. Moreover the advisory boards (others were set up in the 1930s) tended to articulate the interests of the African aspirant entrepreneurial class, having little to say on behalf of workers.[58]

One obviously cannot accept that Africans were lulled into relative inertia in the early 1930s by film shows and soccer games. Indeed, there is no ready explanation for this lull in political activity as there was still much space open for the expression of opposition and resistance. The degree to which the politics of protest was suppressed either by the local or central state was small compared to the juggernaut policy that came later in the century.

Closely connected to the struggle for political space was a struggle for cultural space. Veit Erlmann's essay shows how black musical performance in Durban before 1920 reflected the cultural dominance of the African petty bourgeoisie. But from the 1920s he notes the emergence of 'vibrant working-class cultural formations'. This working-class culture was centred in the clubs, beerhalls, shebeens and dance-halls that lay not far from the city centre in the vicinity of Greyville and Cartwright's Flats. The municipal beerhalls, although somewhat restricted, served as important venues for working-class cultural expression. And, as Erlmann shows, 'They were complemented by numerous less auspicious halls, backrooms, and sheds that workers managed to transform into relatively uncontrolled spaces.' Moreover, such was the organisation of residential space in Durban at this time that both the African petty bourgeoisie and working class lived close to the cultural nexus, where 'dance halls, churches, and soccer fields provided a fertile ground for the fusion of élite culture and working-class dance and music'.

However, as Erlmann goes on to show, even this cultural space was contested. It has been mentioned above how, in the aftermath of the 1929 riots, the Durban local state increasingly came to use recreation as an instrument of social control. Thus an attempt was made in the 1930s to transform *ngoma* dancing into 'a harmless form of energy release, confined to and supervised in certain spaces at certain times'. But the attempt was not entirely successful, as *ngoma* performances continued to express an oppositional cultural form.[59]

If the space for political protest and cultural expression was still relatively unrestricted, this was becoming less so in the case of living space in Durban in

the 1930s. In 1932 the borough boundaries were considerably expanded by the incorporation of peri-urban areas which had previously been subject to minimal administrative control by local health boards. This incorporation of peri-urban space had the effect of bringing thousands of Africans and Indians into the ambit of municipal control. As the city's industrial, infrastructural, and administrative nexus was expanded outwards, so were the lives of those peri-urban dwellers to be increasingly impinged upon.

In the meantime, those members of the underclasses living in more central areas were already coming to be restricted in their access to physical space. The 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act had provided for the establishment of segregated townships for Africans in urban areas. It was not a compulsory provision, and the Durban corporation was slow to implement segregation or to build townships. But from the early 1930s, the corporation began to move in this direction. Local ratepayers' associations, predominantly white, were demanding that their areas be segregated. In 1931 Durban's Chief Constable, Whitsitt, complained that Africans of the 'won't work, illicit liquor selling class' were being 'harboured' on private premises, mainly Indian-owned, throughout the borough. So during the early 1930s specific parts of Durban were proclaimed segregated areas under the 1923 Act; and in 1937 the whole of Durban was proclaimed. The basic objective of the proclamations was clearly stated by Whitsitt: 'The whole idea of having an area proclaimed is to get rid of the Native inhabitants with the exception of domestic servants.'[60]

These proclamations were an early manifestation of the Durban municipality's eagerness for urban segregation, foreshadowing the city council's later enthusiasm for group areas legislation. The enforcement of segregation in the 1930s might have been even more vigorous had it not been for one condition laid down in the 1923 Act: before a segregation proclamation could be implemented, alternative accommodation had to be made available for those people evicted from the proclaimed area.

This condition placed the onus on the Durban corporation to provide more accommodation for Africans. It thus partly explains the limited expansion of African housing in Durban in the 1930s. It was in this context that Lamont township, to the south of Durban, was constructed and opened for occupation in 1934. But, as Louise Torr's essay shows, Lamont was not built merely to facilitate segregation in central residential areas. Local liberals, voicing their views through the Durban Joint Council, had been urging that 'a native village' be established. But, more importantly, the militant popular protest of 1929–30 had 'alerted the local authorities to the dangers of a frustrated aspirant African petty bourgeois class identifying increasingly with the working class'. The 1929 De Waal report had specifically called for the building of a township to accommodate the 'better class native'.[61]

As Torr's essay also goes on to show, the ideal of a 'model village' for the 'better class native' hardly matched the harsh reality of living conditions in

Lamont. The township was tightly controlled by its white superintendent; the difficult topography and inadequate drainage posed serious problems; the houses were small and facilities poor; and the distance of Lamont from the city centre both imposed high transport costs on residents and limited informal sector opportunities.[62] Moreover, the construction of Lamont did not typify Durban's housing policy in the 1930s. The emphasis was still mainly on the provision of single-quarters for migrant workers. In 1930 there were, in addition to private industrial and commercial compounds, four municipal hostels accommodating almost eight thousand African men, and one holding about three hundred women.[63] In the late 1930s, the corporation embarked on a building programme to expand the provision of single-quarter accommodation.

The provision of two different types of municipal accommodation for Africans in Durban – family housing in townships, and single-quarters for migrants – reflected the attempt to maintain a system of what Doug Hindson calls 'differentiated labour-power'.[64] This differentiation between stabilised and migrant labour began to sharpen in Durban from the 1930s. Until the 1920s Durban's African labour force had remained predominantly male and migrant. Even domestic service had been largely a male preserve. During the 1930s more and more permanently urbanised Africans settled in the Durban area. And the sex composition of the city's African population changed, as the ratio of men to women decreased from 6,6 to 1 in 1921 to 3,4 to 1 in 1936.[65]

While the African population of Durban was undergoing certain changes in composition, it was also growing in numbers in the 1930s and, more especially, in the 1940s. Two major factors spurred the African influx into Durban in these years. The first was accelerating impoverishment in the vast rural hinterland of Durban. As Simkins has shown, the reserve economies in South Africa were able to maintain a fragile productive base from the 1920s until the 1950s, but this was only because massive outmigration from the reserves alleviated overpopulation.[66] The counterpoise to rural outmigration was, of course, urban immigration. Furthermore, African tenants on white-owned land in Natal were increasingly being forced off this land as white farmers, aided by state legislation, found it more profitable to put their land to productive use than to derive various forms of rent from tenants. It was these evicted tenants, along with inhabitants from the reserves, who flocked to cities like Durban in the 1930s and 1940s.

The second factor was the further development of a manufacturing sector in Durban. Evidence of some manufacturing growth during and immediately after the First World War has already been adduced. A more dramatic growth was to occur in the 1930s and 1940s. The rateable value of Durban's industrial area more than doubled between 1925/26 and 1935/36, from £859 500 to more than £1 740 000. The number of manufacturing establishments in the Durban/Pinetown region rose from 565 in 1929/30 to 1 161 in 1949/50.[67] Most of this growth occurred in a few sectors: metal and engineering; construction;

chemicals; and clothing and textiles. A Dunlop factory, the subject of Ari Sitas's essay, was established in Durban in 1934. The Second World War provided a major stimulus to Durban's manufacturing sector. The metal and engineering industries assumed special importance during wartime. And demand for locally produced clothing increased as the war drastically curtailed imports. Between 1925 and 1954 total employment in the clothing and textile industry in greater Durban increased more than tenfold.[68]

The combination of rural outmigration and manufacturing development produced a significant growth in the African population of Durban in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1949 the estimated size of Durban's African population was almost three and a half times what it had been in 1932:

Table 1 Estimates of Durban's African Population

1932	43 750
1936	63 547
1940	69 993
1943	73 284
1946	104 155
1949	150 000

Source: Various municipal and government sources; see note 69.

As the African population level was rising, so was the male to female ratio changing. Between 1936 and 1946, Durban's female African population doubled from over 14 200 to over 28 500. Over the same period, the ratio of African males to African females declined from 3,46 to 1 to 2,65 to 1.[70] Also significant was the rapidly growing presence in Durban of Africans under the age of eighteen. Between 1936 and 1943/44 this figure rose almost fourfold, from over 4 000 to over 15 000.[71]

This growing presence of African women and children in Durban in the 1930s and 1940s is an indication of the increasing stabilisation of the city's African population. This trend seems to have been closely related to the rapid development of the city's manufacturing sector. Between 1934 and 1946 the number of Africans employed in industry in Durban rose by 162 per cent, from just over 12 000 to over 31 400.[72] Manufacturing employers, concerned to raise the skill level of their workers, preferred stabilised labour to migrancy with its accompanying high labour turnover. Thus the 1948 Broome Report noted that some of Durban's leading industrialists and the railway administration, among others, were promoting labour stabilisation by paying workers increments for continuous service and making provision for leave.[73]

Notwithstanding this trend towards stabilisation, the proportion of African migrants to permanent city-dwellers still remained very high in Durban in the mid-1940s. According to an official government estimate for the year 1946, of

the 104 100 or so Africans living in Durban, about 77 500 were migrants, and a mere 26 600 permanently urbanised.[74] It certainly seems to have been the case that Durban's relative proximity to reserve areas meant that many Africans maintained rural links. But this very proximity also makes the rigid classification of people into migrant or non-migrant categories highly problematic. Many Africans, for instance, appear to have commuted on a weekly basis between Durban and the rural areas. Whether such people were classified as migrant or non-migrant is not clear. However, a definite trend towards stabilisation is apparent, and this became more pronounced in the late 1940s and early 1950s. One unofficial estimate reckoned that about 50 per cent of Durban's African population were living permanently in the city by 1953. It also seems that during this period a growing number of migrants were staying in Durban for longer periods, and that urban income was increasingly being used to supplement the meagre subsistence of impoverished rural households.[75]

What were the spatial implications of both this African population growth in Durban and increasing stabilisation? We have seen how in the early 1930s the local state tried to exercise greater control over its African population through various mechanisms. First, the Durban corporation took advantage of legislation that limited the entry of Africans into urban areas. Second, it strove towards a greater regulation of living space by proclaiming certain central areas of Durban to be segregated, and by providing more, albeit insufficient, formal municipally controlled accommodation. And third, the corporation adopted a more benevolent paternalist approach with a view to defusing black popular discontent. These strategies were an attempt on the part of the local state to deny Africans easy access to certain forms of space: physical space, especially in more central areas, and political and cultural space. Reduced access to central areas of the city served both to limit economic opportunities and to close off living space. The provision of supervised recreation and entertainment facilities was designed to counter black political mobilisation and to check autonomous cultural activity and vitality.

However, by the 1940s it was becoming clear that few, if any, of these local-state strategies were succeeding in Durban. The tightening of influx control mechanisms had failed to halt the massive African influx into the city. While some physical space had been closed down there were still many vacant areas which were rapidly being taken over and occupied by Africans. The Durban corporation had not been prepared to make the necessary investment in a housing programme which might have brought a higher proportion of the African population under more controlled living conditions. The attempt to defuse political discontent may have been partly successful during the 1930s, when there was a lull in African political activity in Durban. But this lull was short-lived, and from the late 1930s through the 1940s, there was an upsurge in worker organisation and action in Durban.

The failure of the Durban corporation to keep pace with African urbanisation in the provision of accommodation is borne out by the figures. Of the 63 547 Africans estimated to be living in Durban in 1936 only about 8 900 were housed in municipal accommodation. And of these the vast majority, about 7 800, lived in single-quarter hostels, leaving only 1 100 in family housing.[76] During the late 1930s and 1940s the corporation embarked on a housing programme which more than doubled the municipal accommodation available to Africans. In 1948 there were about 23 800 Africans living in municipal accommodation. Of these, about 14 000 were living in hostels, and the remaining 9 800 in family housing. The considerable growth in the latter figure since 1936 had been largely due to the building of Chesterville in the mid-1940s.[77] Approximately another 40 000 Africans were housed either in private compounds for commercial, industrial or government workers (about 19 000), or in rooms provided by employers of domestic workers (about 21 000).[78]

These figures suggest that around 1948 there were in Durban at least 45 000 Africans who were not living in municipal accommodation, compounds or quarters for domestic workers. These were the inhabitants of the mushrooming shack settlements. Reports of more and more shacks being built in and around Durban had been coming in since the early 1930s. In 1939 there were estimated to be about 1 000 shacks in the city. By 1946 there were about 5 000 known African-occupied shacks.[79]

These shack settlements grew up, to varying degrees, in different parts of the greater Durban area. Some emerged beyond the city's boundaries, in places like Glen Anil and Newlands to the north of Durban. Many shack-dwellers were drawn to the southern industrial area of the city. In one case, 'at Jacobs Road, what appeared to be a large stack of loose bricks, stores for ultimate use in building construction, was found, on closer examination, to consist of some 23 cubicles housing 70 natives'. Some shack-builders dared to venture close to some of Durban's most venerated areas; in 1949, shacks were even found near the Botanic Gardens and on land opposite the Country Club. But the vast majority of shacks were concentrated in the Cato Manor district. Here the growth was dramatic during the 1940s. In 1943 an estimated 15 000 Africans were living in the Cato Manor shantytown; by the end of 1950 this figure had risen to about 50 000.[80]

The expansion of shack settlement in the 1940s represented a failure of control on the part of the Durban local state. It was a case of economic imperatives clashing with the local state's desire to control its African population. The latter imperative gave way. As T.J. Chester, the manager of Durban's Native Administration Department, commented in 1943, 'We wanted their labour, and either we had to sabotage our war effort by turning them out of town, or tolerate them where they were at Cato Manor. We took the lesser of the two evils.'[81] The outcome was that Africans were able to occupy a sizeable portion of Durban's physical space in an area that was within easy commuting distance of both the southern industrial district and the central business and residential network. And in so doing the inhabitants of Cato Manor created for themselves new economic, social and political spaces.

Shack settlements like Cato Manor were less subject to control by the local or central state apparatus. In 1943, for instance, the local Commissioner of Police (SAP) complained to the Minister of Justice that it would be impossible to carry through the latter's order to enforce the pass laws in Cato Manor.[82] As Cato Manor became more and more densely populated, so it became less accessible to the police. Internal, unofficial authority structures emerged in Cato Manor. In one particular shack community a self-appointed headman exercised administrative authority by letting sites, collecting rents, and taking on responsibility for the maintenance of order.[83]

The belief of Cato Manor inhabitants in their autonomy and independence was most strongly evident after the 1949 Durban riots. As Iain Edwards has shown, Africans assumed that as a result of the riots they had 'won the battle of Cato Manor'. This new assertiveness is further brought out by Edwards: 'Shantytown leaders formed a civilian guard to protect the newly won space and defiantly called upon both police and City Council to admit that the area was now finally out of their control and to leave the settlements alone.'[84] In 1960 Champion delivered an address on Cato Manor. He described it as 'the place in Durban where families breathe the air of freedom'.[85] Certainly some oral testimonies given by former Cato Manor residents confirm that many perceived life in the shantytown to have been better than the drab, regulated existence in townships like KwaMashu and Umlazi to which shack-dwellers were relocated. However, one should also avoid romanticising the history of Cato Manor. There can be little doubt that the material conditions, in terms of almost non-existent sanitation, health and water facilities, must have been appalling in the settlement.

Cato Manor not only symbolised the occupation of urban physical space, it also represented the opening of economic and political space. There existed many economic opportunities to supply basic commodities and services to the settlement's rapidly growing population. These opportunities were exploited by petty entrepreneurs and by operators in the informal sector. Such activities took various forms. Some were conducted in an individualist style; others were organised on a co-operative basis. Most fell outside the realm of any legally defined, officially recognised form of enterprise.

The provision of accommodation itself offered opportunities for the more individualist petty accumulators. Most of the land in Cato Manor was owned by Indians. Some of these landlords were substantial property-owners, but they generally rented out only the shack sites. There thus emerged in the 1940s a sub-rentier class of African shacklords. Some of these enlarged their shacks so that a single shack might comprise fifteen to twenty rooms, each of which could be sub-let. In 1950 one such shacklord paid an Indian thirty shillings a month

for land on which he had erected seventeen shelters, sixteen of which were sub-let at rents of £1 a month.[86] Other evidence shows that by the early 1950s shack-renting could yield monthly profits of between £30 and £50.[87] Also profitable was the whole business of shack-building. While most occupiers built their own shacks, there was a growing class of skilled African shack-builders working on contract.[88]

A whole range of petty entrepreneurs engaged in the supply of commodities and services to the Cato Manor community. They included unlicensed traders, hawkers, painters, and backyard motor mechanics.[89] Special opportunities for unlicensed African traders existed in the aftermath of the 1949 riots which had the effect of virtually destroying Indian trading in Cato Manor. Much of this small-scale trading by Africans, although unlicensed, was generally 'above board', involving the sale of food and other commodities at road-side stalls or 'shackshops'. Other activities verged from the unlicensed towards the illicit. Iain Edwards has noted how Cato Manor 'became the centre of a middleman operation whereby stolen goods were transferred from the thief to their eventual market in the city itself'.[90] Cato Manor was part of a dagga-dealing network which originated in northern Zululand and Pondoland.[91] And then, of course, there was the biggest business of all – concocting liquor and running shebeens.

In Cato Manor and elsewhere in Durban a co-operative movement took root in the second half of the 1940s. We have already seen how fledgling co-operative organisations, encouraged and promoted by the Catholic Church, got off the ground in Durban in the late 1920s. From about 1946 the movement seems to have gained new momentum. Co-operatives took various forms. They could function as communal buying clubs whose members sought benefits as consumers. Or they could serve as informal wholesale organisations in which members sought to make profits as middlemen. Or else the co-operatives could operate as small-scale banks or loan clubs.[92] Edwards has stressed the significance of the co-operative movement at this time:

> 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 coherent support base, the cooperative societies were to develop on and sustain a growing militancy which was intended to provide ordinary Africans with the confidence, skills and a belief in their economic power to transform their position in society.[93]

The co-operatives seemed thus to represent a peculiar convergence or blending of entrepreneurship, consumerism, and militancy.

The African influx into Durban in the 1930s and 1940s was accompanied not only by the occupation of physical space and the exploitation, by some, of economic openings, but also by the carving out and penetration of political space for the expression of protest against various forms of oppression. Much of this protest was organised by workers around work-place issues. As Vishnu Padayachee, Shahid Vawda and Paul Tichmann have shown, from the mid-1930s 'many new trades unions were formed in Durban by Black workers (mainly African and Indian) either along racially divided or non-racial lines'.[94] Numerous strikes occurred in Durban during the years 1937–50. About seventy-five strikes in this period have been listed by Padayachee et al; and most of these, about forty-six, occurred between 1937 and 1942.[95] Among the more significant actions were the strikes by about four hundred Indian and African workers at the Falkirk iron foundry in 1937, and the strike by black workers at Dunlop from late 1942 to early 1943.[96]

This worker organisation and action forms the subject of Tim Nuttall's essay in this collection. He documents a wave of strikes that occurred in 1937; these represented the efforts of workers to reverse the wage cuts of the early 1930s. Wage demands, brought on by the pressure of war-time inflation on real wages, also lay behind the strikes of 1941–42. Dock-workers, whose bargaining position had been strengthened by the increase of traffic during the war, were in the forefront of this action. The driving force behind the dock-workers was a remarkable leader, Zulu Phungula, a migrant togt worker from the Ixopo district.[97]

Iain Edwards' research highlights the less obvious forms of mobilisation occurring outside the realm of formal trade-union or political organisation from the 1940s. Edwards' work brings out the paradoxical state of African politics in Durban in the late 1940s. On the one hand, the better-known organisations, like the ANC, the Youth League and the Communist Party, were generally weak and lacking in influence in Durban at this time. The ANC's Durban branch, which had only 140 members in 1949, had become very much Champion's personal 'fief'.[98] On the other hand, Edwards also observes the growth of 'a new militant assertiveness' among the African proletariat in Durban after the Second World War. This 'assertiveness' was embodied in 'the shantytown movements, millenarian sects and co-operatives which were to be the organisational bases of proletarian power'.[99] One such movement was the Natal African Tenants and Peasants Association. The association was established in the mid-1940s under the leadership of Sydney Myeza. It served to 'unite various shantytown communities' and provided them with an organisational base.[100]

Edwards also suggests that this new 'militant assertiveness' marked the breakdown of the populist unity that had once been embodied in the by now defunct ICU. As this unity fractured more along class lines, the proletariat developed increasingly critical and resentful attitudes towards the African élite – the small-scale entrepreneurs, the shacklords, the advisory board members.[101] Some members of the élite in turn made attempts to organise themselves. In the late 1940s the Bantu National Congress was formed, 'a pro-apartheid and anti-Indian body which pictured itself as being the successor

to the tradition of politics started by Dr J.L. Dube'. This movement gained little support and was short-lived. Another élite grouping formed themselves into a literary and cultural club, based at the Bantu Social Centre, in an effort to distance themselves both from political militancy and from the working class itself.[102]

In the 1950s the struggle for space in Durban was to become more and more an uphill battle. Industrial expansion, the formalisation and entrenchment of residential segregation, and an assault on informal settlements, were the main forces that served to close down spaces that had once been accessible to the underclasses in the more central areas of Durban. Private industrial or commercial compounds, often centrally located, came to be closed down from the 1950s as owners needed the space to expand their plants.

More significant, in terms of the regulation of space, was the Group Areas Act of 1950. This is often seen as a key component of apartheid social engineering. It is also viewed as the handiwork of a Nationalist government foisting segregationism on all municipalities, whether they supported the group areas principle or not. The Durban City Council was not controlled by the National Party in the 1950s, but it would be a serious mistake to assume that the Durban municipality was therefore an opponent of the Group Areas Act. Indeed the measure rather endorsed and formalised much of the segregationist thinking and practice that had deep roots in Durban's history. Racial segregation had been very much on the agenda of Durban's dominant class in the early twentieth century. It gained increasing white support and a degree of implementation in the 1930s. In the 1940s many whites agitated against 'Indian penetration'. In 1943 the city council's Post-War Development Committee, believing that it was in the interests of each racial group to be housed in separate areas, recommended that a system of racial zoning be introduced in Durban. Indeed a detailed zoning plan was produced, a plan which is remarkable for the way in which it prefigured the eventual group areas map of Durban. So when the Group Areas Act was passed it met with an enthusiastic response from Durban's authorities. In November 1950 the city council appointed a technical sub-committee to consider the racial zoning of the city according to the group areas principle. The sub-committee reported firmly in favour of racial residential segregation, the necessity for this arising 'primarily from the desire of persons of the same group to live in the same neighbourhood'.[103]

The combined impact of the Group Areas Act, the state's assault on 'illegal squatting', and urban relocation, devastated the lives of thousands of Durban's residents from the 1950s. About 80 000 Indians were forced to move from their homes, often in stable, long-established communities, as a result of group areas proclamations issued between 1958 and 1963. During the same period 120 000 Africans were removed from the Cato Manor shack settlement under the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act. From 1959 Durban's oldest African township, Baumannville, was gradually closed down, involving the removal of

about 120 families. It was also during the late 1950s and early 1960s that over 8 000 African migrant workers were relocated from Durban's central hostels in Bell Street, Ordnance Road and Somtseu Road. All were moved to hostels in the new township of KwaMashu.[104]

The removals involved vast numbers of people and represented a devastating assault on the underclasses. Until this time there had still been people able to resist the forces of proletarianisation: among them one could include market gardeners, and the petty entrepreneurs or informal sector operators in Cato Manor and elsewhere. Their precarious access to physical space and markets was largely destroyed by the removals. The new townships, the reception depots for relocated communities, were situated far from central Durban. Access to informal sector markets was largely closed down, by distance and by the raised transport costs that township residents would now have to bear. Moreover, these peripheral townships lacked any proper urban infrastructure. Educational, recreational and health services were sparse, making for a bleak, alienating, deprived daily existence.

During the 1960s it appeared that the efforts of the central and local state to regulate access to physical space, and to close down political space, were becoming increasingly successful. The racial geography of Durban was gaining definition along group areas lines. The political militancy and cultural resilience of the underclasses was seemingly cowed. The post-Sharpeville decade of repression provided the appearance of quiescence and gave confidence to apartheid-planners that their social engineering could work. But the 1960s were to represent only an intermediate lull between the struggles of the 1950s and a renewed surge of militancy in the 1970s.

Spatial restructuring had not gone ahead without resistance in the 1950s. During this decade the black underclasses of Durban organised and acted in various ways. They engaged in overt forms of political action, such as the 1952 defiance campaign, even though the level of participation in this campaign in Durban was relatively small compared to some other parts of the country.[105] Members of the underclasses also organised and acted as workers. The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was active in Durban during the 1950s.[106]

Opposition and resistance could also be community-based, directed primarily against spatial restructuring and relocation. A number of organisations, including black neighbourhood ratepayers' associations, voiced their opposition to group areas. In June 1958 the Minister of the Interior issued Durban's first group areas proclamation. Mobilisation against the proclamation was led by Indian residents, who held three mass protest meetings within three weeks of the proclamation. At the largest meeting, on 26 June, ten thousand Indians gathered at Curries Fountain. But this campaign seems never to have risen above the level of verbal protest. There was no attempt at action or defiance.[107] In this respect it differed significantly from the resistance offered by the residents of Cato Manor against their forced relocation.

In March 1958 the Durban corporation began the removal of Cato Manor's inhabitants to KwaMashu. In June 1959 rioting broke out in Cato Manor. The resistance was initiated by women, particularly the liquor-brewers whose very livelihood was threatened by the destruction of Cato Manor. The women vented their anger by attacking the municipal beerhall in Cato Manor, overturning vats and destroying equipment. For two weeks Cato Manor was the scene of overt resistance, expressed in demonstrations and clashes with police. And again, at the end of March in the following year in the immediate aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre, Cato Manor residents were once more at the forefront of resistance in Durban. On 31 March and 1 April 1960, a large crowd tried to march from Cato Manor into central Durban. Most were blocked by police cordons, but about a thousand people managed to march through the city to the central gaol where they demanded the release of ANC detainees. For some days the authorities and employers were ill at ease as workers and activists tried to confront the local state by organising a general strike in the city.[108]

In 1959 and 1960 African protest and resistance in Durban reached a high level of militancy. Such a pitch of activity was not to be attained again in the city for another thirteen years. The year 1973 brought the Durban strikes. They began in January at the Coronation Brick and Tile factory, where workers demanded an increase in the minimum weekly wage rate from R8.97 to R20. The entire African work-force of two thousand came out. They were followed later in the month by about seven thousand workers at the Frame Group of textile factories where wages were among the lowest paid by industrial employers in Durban, being approximately 20 per cent lower than those paid in manufacturing as a whole. The Frame management refused to negotiate and called in the police. Eventually workers returned to work under the threat of dismissal.

The Durban strikes seem to have been characterised by spontaneous mass action. No formal leadership or organisational structures emerged, except in the case of the textile industry where a trade union actively negotiated on behalf of the workers. For the most part leadership and organisation were structured informally. The strikes were not particularly significant in terms of immediate gains won by workers. Indeed, the few wage increases that were conceded tended to be small. Rather were the strikes significant as a catalyst for further action and organisation. Strike activity spread around the city, so that by the end of 1973 about a hundred thousand workers in Durban had gone on strike; and Durban continued to be the centre of industrial militancy until 1976. In the longer term the strikes gave an enormous impetus to the dramatic nationwide growth of the black labour movement in the 1970s.[109]

During the 1980s Durban became ever more a site of popular struggle. Perhaps the most dramatic manifestation of this struggle was the appropriation of living space. It is estimated that between 1973 and 1988 the population of greater Durban more than trebled. This estimated population was about 3,5 million in 1988. Almost half of this population, about 1,7 million people, were reckoned to be living in shack settlements in the outlying regions of greater Durban. The settlements mushroomed on land falling under the KwaZulu government which permitted such informal settlement to occur largely unimpeded. The rapid growth of the settlements is usually put down to the impoverished state of rural areas in KwaZulu, to evictions from white-owned farms in Natal, and to the abolition of influx control in 1986. Against this, however, it should be noted that one survey revealed that 46 per cent of shack-dwellers had been born in the greater Durban area.

The same survey showed that most shack-dwellers had jobs and that destitution was not the norm. But the overriding picture of life in the settlements was a grim one. The basic urban infrastructure of roads, sanitation, water and lighting was almost entirely absent. Health and educational services barely existed. Unemployment was rife. The massive growth of these settlements was in many ways a repetition of the scenario of the 1940s and 1950s, albeit on a very much larger scale.[110]

The struggle for living space was not confined to the peripheral zones of greater Durban. In some central residential areas of the city, particularly in the high density zones where apartment blocks predominate, there was growing defiance of the Group Areas Act. So-called 'grey areas' emerged where blacks occupied flats in areas that were demarcated as white group areas. This trend can perhaps be seen as part of a larger struggle to make Durban a non-racial city. The 1989 defiance campaign, organised by the mass democratic movement to protest against the tricameral elections, highlighted the discriminatory basis that ordered the provision of services and facilities in Durban. Hospital segregation was targeted when a number of blacks presented themselves for treatment at the city's 'whites only' Addington Hospital on one day in August. And three days before the tricameral elections about five thousand picnicked and swam at Addington Beach which the city council still maintained as a segregated white preserve.

During the second half of the 1980s, greater Durban increasingly became an arena of violent conflict. Occasionally this would flare up into a major explosion, as occurred in Inanda in August 1985.[111] For the most part, though, the violence simmered, with political killings occurring with frightening regularity. The 1984–87 township uprising accentuated the division between those aligned with the Congress tradition of mass struggle and defiance and those who supported Chief Buthelezi's Inkatha organisation with its narrowly ethnic support base and its strategy of working within and through apartheid institutions. The conflict, in which thousands of people were killed, was more complex than a straightforward clash between contrasting political ideologies and strategies. It also has to be viewed within the context of the changing political economy of Durban. Large areas on the periphery of the city came to be colonised by shack-dwellers. These settlements grew in something of a

power vacuum, where no clear-cut authority structures existed. In this vacuum there emerged informal power structures which strove to impose their will on particular communities. In some cases power was assumed by warlords aligned to Inkatha. These, the most notorious of whom was Tshabalala of Lindelani, exercised a quasi-feudal sway over their communities, exacting a variety of dues and obligations from squatters in return for residence 'rights'. This autocratic, intimidatory and often violent 'warlordism' must be contrasted with efforts to establish a more participatory style of informal local government in the shape of street committees. These were set up around the country during the township uprising of the mid-1980s. They represented an attempt by those supporting popular mass struggle to introduce a measure of democracy and discipline to specific urban communities. The street committees emerged as a counter to the official black local authorities, which lacked any popular legitimacy, and to the authoritarian warlords.

Today, Durban, in terms of population size, is reckoned to be the second fastest growing city in the world behind Mexico City. This growth is placing enormous strain on both the city's economy and its infrastructure, neither of which is keeping pace with population growth. In this situation the struggle for space takes on new proportions. As this book tries to show, much of the history of Durban in the twentieth century has been about the contesting of space. The local state consistently tried to control space in the service of the city's predominantly white middle class. Residential space has been manipulated through various mechanisms with a view to banishing the black underclasses to the city's periphery and so insulating and immunising whites from the supposed dangers that accompanied the black urban presence. The closing down of physical space for the underclasses also served to limit their access to other forms of space, economic, cultural and political.

However, this regulation and manipulation of space has rarely proceeded smoothly in Durban. It came up against the resilience of those determined to retain the spaces that they carved for themselves. In the history of twentieth-century Durban there are certain episodes and images that best capture this resilience. One thinks of the ricksha-pullers, struggling to remain part of the city's transport infrastructure and resisting exploitation and exclusion in 1918 and 1930. Musicians and entertainers giving vibrant expression to an emergent working-class culture in the shebeens and dance-halls. Migrant hostel-dwellers initiating and sustaining the 1929 boycott of the municipal beerhalls. Johannes Nkosi leading the pass-burning campaign of 1930. Workers rallying behind Zulu Phungula's strike campaigns in the 1940s. Women brewers defending their livelihood and territory in Cato Manor in 1959. The spontaneous upsurge of worker militancy in Durban in 1973. In the post-apartheid era these are the events and personalities that will move to the forefront of Durban's collective historical memory.

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Part One

City Life

NOTE

In 1983 this essay was presented as a paper to the Conference on 'Working Life in Durban' held at the University of Natal, Durban. In a number of respects it reflects some of the early preoccupations and shortcomings of revisionist urban social historians in South Africa. It also clearly betrays its origins in the specifically English debates about culture and history animated by theorists such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, and by historians such as E.P. Thompson, George Rudé and Gareth Stedman Jones – debates which were beginning to be appropriated and refashioned in the local context particularly by the History Workshop at the University of the Witwatersrand. It thus benefited from Charles van Onselen's then partially-published pioneering social and economic history of the Witwatersrand. It also sought to build upon an existing historiography concerned with local administration (Bill Swanson and Paul Maylam) and African worker struggles (David Hemson). Yet it was written without the benefit of subsequent local studies (there one thinks, for example, of the work of Keletso Atkins, Bill Freund, Veit Erlmann, Iain Edwards, amongst others). Arguably, then, in its concern with the question of culture – a rather unpopular field for a number of revisionists at that time – this essay represents a bridge (albeit rather shaky and inelegant) between earlier historical work and more recent literature preoccupied with questions of culture and identity. Apart from some minor corrections this essay, therefore, has been left in its original form as a reflection of a particular historiographical moment, and in the hope that it does not remain entirely hostage to the conditions of its production.

The Struggle for the City

Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902–1936

PAUL LA HAUSSE

> The 40 000 Natives are boycotting the municipal beer, but no one takes the trouble of finding out their real motive. It is their natural beverage . . . they have not suddenly become tectotallers. They have a reason for boycotting their customary beer.
>
> J. Mapumulo, September 1929.

> . . . this question of Kaffir beer is one of the most pressing questions with which the Natives are concerned in this country. Much of the trouble . . . in our administration is due to this question . . . the existing provisions in regard to Native beer . . . are quite unworkable and are imposing such a strain on the Natives and on the Government – the administration of justice and the policing of this country – that a change is becoming imperative in the public interest.
>
> J.C. Smuts, September 1937.

In 1908 the Natal Legislative Assembly passed legislation which made provision for the establishment by towns in the colony of a municipal beer monopoly. The Durban Town Council, which had been the prime mover in the process towards the establishment of monopoly legislation, implemented the provisions of the Native Beer Act in 1909. The legal consumption of *utshwala*[1] – 'the national drink of the native' – by African workers in the town was confined to the 'healthy and wholesome' atmosphere of Durban's municipal beerhalls. Upon the municipal beer monopoly rested the elaboration of the 'Durban system': a system of 'native administration' which became a model for ruling-class domination and exploitation of African popular classes in urban centres throughout South Africa. It was a form of urban control which stirred interest as far afield as Uganda and the Sudan,[2] and anticipated the later national expression of Stallardist doctrine, formally articulated by the Transvaal Local Government Commission in 1922.[3]

A major concern of this essay is to point to the particularity of the struggle over the supply of alcohol in general, and *utshwala* in particular, between emergent African urban classes and the dominant classes. This should not be

seen as a disembodied appeal to 'colonise' South Africa's past, but rather as an attempt to emphasise the importance of a regional historiography. But more than this, what follows below is an examination of one particular aspect of an emergent African urban culture: popular beer drinking and brewing. The struggles between Durban's white rulers and the African population over the production and consumption of this 'traditional' bitter, pink brew were central in the transformation of social relations in the port town between 1902 and 1936.

The presence of Africans in urban areas has posed particular problems for capital in South Africa. The productive capacity of African rural economies and social systems was maintained through the policy of segregation and hence ensured that these societies provided part of the means of the reproduction of labour. However there is a danger in analysing the cost of the reproduction of African labour-power in South Africa solely in terms of the reserves and African agriculture. After the discovery of minerals had generated an industrial revolution in South Africa in the late nineteenth century, it became increasingly clear that the African work-force would have to be reproduced not only in the reserves but also under urban conditions. While the African labourer migrated between town and countryside, the provision of material supports for the reproduction of labour-power in urban centres could safely be maintained at a minimum. Despite the rigorous enforcement of migrancy, a characteristic of Durban's labour-coercive economy, the growing permanence of Africans in towns after 1900 impelled 'native administration' and local capital to extend the provision of social services for Africans. Housing, educational facilities, health and welfare services and sanitation, in other words the social costs of African labour in towns, were generally considered unprofitable and costly.[4] White property-owners, fearing a downward pressure on profit maximisation, resisted subsidising African social services. At least until the 1930s the state had neither the machinery nor the funds to finance worker accommodation and services efficiently.[5] In the light of these contradictions, the provision of social services tended to be thrown back upon the dominated classes in towns: revenue derived from fines and worker registration and pass fees was ploughed back into areas such as African housing and health services. Not surprisingly then, the provision of worker accommodation and services in South African towns, before the emergence of a more centralised and coherent state urban policy after 1936, was frequently scanty and reflected regional diversity.

The political implications of inadequate housing and social services for a growing population of urban Africans were clear. The constant attempt to keep the social costs of African labour low was allied to the need to establish repressive conditions under which the resistance of African popular classes to this forced reduction in living standards could be contained. South African towns, particularly the larger ones, have frequently witnessed surges of popular militancy and consciousness, breaking through the repressive conditions of the urban environment, when endemic contradictions have given way to full-blown crises. Durban itself experienced one such surge of popular militancy in 1929 when drought and grinding poverty in Natal's countryside combined with starvation-wages and repressive living and working conditions in the town to produce unevenly organised and 'spontaneous' resistance to the corporation's particular form of urban control based upon the beer monopoly.[6]

The reasons for the widespread attention[7] which the Durban system attracted during the first three decades of the century are best understood in terms of the absence of a coherent state urban policy. While local government in Johannesburg had been grappling with the problem of financing accommodation for large sections of its African population, the local state in Durban had implemented a monopoly on the production of beer. The massive revenue derived from this provided the *material* platform for a singularly repressive system of control of Africans in 'the most British' and arguably the most violent town in South Africa.[8] Act No. 23 of 1908 laid down that revenue accruing from the municipal beerhalls was to be channeled into the Native Administration Fund (in 1923 to become the Native Revenue Account) for the purpose of defraying expenses in connection with the administration of the act, and for 'native welfare' or 'any other object in the interests of the natives residing or resorting to a borough or township'.[9] The surface altruism of the act rapidly proved to be thin. Between 1909 and 1930, revenue from the monopoly was ploughed into the maintenance and establishment of barracks, beerhalls, hostels and breweries, as well as subsidising the cost of policing the town.[10] It is significant that, with the exception of the two years after the 1929 beer boycott, Durban remained the only town in South Africa with a self-supporting Native Revenue Account.[11] Until 1930, when fierce opposition to the monopoly system undermined both its ideological and economic basis, Durban was viewed as a crucible in which an efficient national system of 'native administration' could, at least partially, be forged. All that appeared necessary in order to institute such a system was the reworking of a 'traditional' cultural practice: beer brewing. This, it was hoped, would produce the elixir. In the case of Durban, a study of the struggle by the rulers of the town to marginalise a pre-industrial cultural institution in order to institute a beer monopoly, suggests that the terrain on which this struggle took place was by no means uncontested.

'Culture' provides subordinate classes with, amongst other things, a means of survival through the organisation of daily life. As Genovese has noted: 'The way a people cooks its food and the kinds of food it cooks reveal a good deal about its spirit.'[12] Raymond Williams has defined culture as 'the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life'.[13] While the expansiveness of this definition of culture provides a useful rejoinder to those who use the term to refer to literary and artistic products, it is too broad to be of analytical use. 'Culture' is more usefully understood as the means whereby social groups

'handle' the lived experience of their material conditions of existence to produce an expression and representation of these conditions in a variety of attitudes, values, symbols and practices.[14] However, in any society those classes which rule subaltern groups attempt to achieve what Gramsci has called 'hegemony'. This term refers to the process whereby one concept of reality is diffused throughout society over all social classes. It involves the organisation of the 'spontaneous' consent of subordinate classes by the ruling classes, and is combined with other measures that foster forms of consciousness which accept a position of subordination.[15] Hegemony refers to the way in which these subordinate classes assimilate this dominant ideology as 'common sense'.[16] In capitalist society, however, there is no unambiguous correspondence between the diffusion of hegemony throughout society and the way in which the dominant culture is assimilated as 'common sense' by subordinate classes. Rather, hegemony is an arena of cultural struggle with its own highly complex internal structures which have to be continually reviewed, recreated and defended.[17]

The contradictions between popular conceptions of the world and the dominant culture – between ideas borrowed from ruling ideologies and those spontaneously generated through the experience of subordinate classes of shared material conditions of existence – are manifested in these popular conceptions themselves. The ideas, symbols, practices and attitudes which are an expression of punishing material conditions provide a means whereby popular classes handle these conditions. However this popular culture, while often characterised by acquiescence, can assume a potentially oppositional character,[18] often depending on conscious leadership and organisation. Similarly, the culture of dominated classes in capitalist society is central either to the passivity or to the militancy of these classes.[19] Finally, the ways in which subordinate groups go about organising daily life in order to make living conditions more habitable are not necessarily functional to the needs of capital. A work force which drinks 'poisonous concoctions' is clearly a threat to capital seeking optimum productivity. When the 'healthy outlet of native energies', provided by informal *ngoma* dances assumes the character of marching groups of African beerhall pickets, the meaning of 'traditional' dances, in the eyes of authority, becomes significantly altered. Ruling classes have an unambiguous *stake* in the forms of popular culture, and thus popular culture becomes a crucial area of struggle between the dominant and dominated classes. As Johnson has noted:

> Working class culture is *the form in which labour is reproduced* . . . reproduction . . . is always a *contested transformation*, working class culture is formed in the struggle between capital's demand for particular forms of labour power and the search for a secure location within this relation of dependency.[20]

Forms of popular culture are thus crucial to the process of reproduction.

The genesis of capitalism creates conditions of existence that are lived and experienced along class lines and thus the *potential* for the emergence of 'class culture' exists. However, it is extremely doubtful if one can even begin to talk about self-conscious class-based cultures in Durban during the period under discussion. Indeed, what we find is that the culture and political expression of subordinate classes is more often than not fused in popular alliances between workers, teachers, clerics, petty traders, aspirant petty bourgeois and petty bourgeois elements as well as a persistently visible lumpenproletariat. Further undermining the notion of a specifically urban class culture is the fact that the lived experience of 'urban life' for the majority of Africans in Durban was to a large degree tempered by the resilience of the rural connections of the newly urbanised. In short, what is being viewed is a process of 'classes-in-the-making', precisely because we are examining social relations in a not-fully-formed capitalist society,[21] despite the signs of increasing social stratification within Durban's popular classes having become clear by 1936.

Capital had a stake in the culture of the popular classes because the constitution of a new social order around capital required a more or less continuous 'process of re-education'. Thus the transformation of 'traditional' ways of life were at the heart of this process. 'Popular culture is neither, in a "pure" sense, the popular traditions of resistance to these processes; nor is it the forms which are superimposed on and over them. It is the ground on which the transformations are worked.'[22] This ground is contested. 'Culture' is thus best understood not so much as 'ways of life' but 'ways of struggle'. The struggle over the introduction of a municipal beer monopoly in Durban in 1909, and the system of urban control which was its outgrowth, rested upon the reworking and active marginalisation of a cultural practice which was an integral part of those rural societies from which Durban's African population, usually temporarily, departed in order to seek wage labour in the town.

The production and consumption of *utshwala* in the countryside in Natal in the nineteenth century appears, in a variety of ways, to have symbolised the independence of sections of an African peasantry. Beer-brewing by Natal's rural African population came to be viewed with increasing antagonism by the colonial state, and also by white farmers, who ascribed to this activity the ability of Africans to subsist without having to enter service on white-owned farms. Natal's Acting Secretary for Native Affairs noted in 1876 that there was 'no necessity sufficiently pressing to induce (Africans) to labour continuously. At African homesteads grain sufficed both for food and the brewing of a coarse kind of beer' which was 'consumed in large quantities'.[23] By the late 1870s the connection between labour shortage and African beer production and consumption was becoming clear. If beer production was symbolic of the independence of Natal's peasantry, then popular drunkenness – the subject of numerous debates and investigations[24] – was the form in which this fact was most clearly apprehended by white settlers.

Law No. 18 of 1863, which prohibited the sale of intoxicating liquor to Africans, proved ineffective. The production of illicit *isitshimiyane*, a brew similar to *utshwala* but which was more potent being made from the treacle obtainable in sugar-growing regions, was viewed with alarm by resident magistrates in Natal.[25] The consumption of spirits by a people 'not always content with enormous quantities of utyala' was noted as early as 1876. Perhaps the most telling observation came from W. J. Dunbar Moodie, who noted the 'craving for strong drink' amongst Africans and suggested that 'the growing wealth and change of habit of the Natives' was the cause of this.[26]

The genesis of the conflict between the various competing landed interests in the countryside of Natal has been broadly sketched by Colin Bundy and Henry Slater.[27] Bundy regarded the Natives' Land Act of 1913 – with its provisions against African land purchase, rent-squatting and sharecropping – as the political affirmation of the economic shift away from forms of surplus extraction inimical to commercial farming. The process whereby the political and economic domination of white commercial farmers came about was gradual and uneven. The independence of African rural producers and their resilience in the face of attempts to enforce proletarianisation finds some confirmation in the perennial complaints of white farmers about 'labour shortages'. Beer-brewing, large beer-drinking gatherings, and the apparent increase in drunkenness among and spirit consumption by Africans, were viewed as integral to these 'labour shortages'. While Bundy's periodisation of the rise and fall of Natal's peasantry is open to criticism, his assertion that the political economy of Natal underwent far-reaching changes after 1890, and especially after 1893 (when 'responsible government' was granted to Natal) appears largely valid.[28] The fact that political power shifted to commercial farming interests and their allies finds some degree of corroboration in the amount of energy with which the 'liquor question' was debated after the 1890s. Furthermore, a spate of laws were passed in order to further regulate the liquor supplies to Africans in the colony.[29] By 1891 the consumption of *utshwala* was reported to have 'very considerably increased'. This was attributed to the 'accumulation of wealth by Natives', facilitated by the 'increase of the cultivated area of land through the use of ploughs'. This clearly pointed to increasing crop production.

Attempts were made in the 1890s to tax *amabele* (sorghum) – from which beer was made – or at least to enforce limits on its production.[30] The connections between increased drinking of sorghum beer and 'light taxation, increase of mabele crops, higher wages, peace and plenty, and less difficulty in earning money' were clearly articulated by white settlers in the 1890s. Popular drunkenness was the obverse of labour shortage. As J. S. Marwick noted:

> These beer-drinkings are a curse to the country. Little children have as great a craving for the drink as the grown-up people. Women neglect their ordinary duties and leave their huts, to go routing about the country to these beer-drinkings, and they even use the drink to wean their children . . . beer-drinkings are . . . got up for the purposes of immorality.[31]

Beer-drinking gatherings continued despite attempts in 1894 by the Natal Farmers' Conference to compel the government to proscribe this communal recreation.[32] In Natal's Legislative Assembly it was pointed out that

> these beer gatherings deprive the Colony of its labour supply, for so long as [they] continue so long will the idler go from one beer gathering to another . . . Tomorrow they turn up late, totally unfit to do their work.[33]

The building of the long road to agrarian capitalism in South Africa called for the general 're-education' of popular classes. In Natal, Africans had to be taught 'fresh views', 'new habits' and the importance of 'artificial wants'.[34] Most importantly, they had to be 'taught' sobriety. In Natal's towns, particularly in Durban – the largest and most important urban centre in the colony – the need to instil these 'lessons' was of equal importance. By the turn of the century, however, the port town of Durban seemed to embody the signal failure of this process of re-education.

Despite the general economic development of Natal between 1876 and 1900, Durban in 1904 was still essentially a non-industrial urban setting: an important port town dominated by merchant and smaller commercial capital in the form of shop-keepers, traders, commercial firms, and various stevedoring and shipping companies. Early industries in the town were mainly concerned with supplying the needs of a predominantly agrarian colony. This dependence on agriculture in the countryside, however, began to wane as economic activity based on inland commerce became increasingly important. Wagon-making and wool-washing concerns, as well as foundries and machine shops, tended to concentrate in Durban. Industrial brokers and shipping offices migrated to the port town.[35] In response to the particular needs of capital, Durban's African population, which in 1904 officially numbered 18 929, engaged in four main types of labour. These were: togt, or day labour (largely comprising dock workers), washermen, ricksha pullers, and monthly contract labour, many of whom were domestic workers.

In 1873 Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary for Native Affairs, acknowledged the existence of day labour by introducing the 'togt labour system'; a cohesive corpus of rules and regulations aimed at removing the 'unnecessary uncertainty in the supply of daily labour – except at exorbitant wages'.[36] The problem of a potentially dangerous reserve army of labour with the 'unwholesome liberty' of the togt worker who had the capacity to push wages upwards and resist the control of both the borough police and an armoury of municipal

by-laws,[37] remained a perennial barb in the flesh of 'native administration'. Despite the provision of barrack accommodation for togt workers, by 1900 there were only 250 men, at any one time, in barracks capable of housing at least 450. By 1904 the vast majority of togt workers, numbering some 7 500, 'lodged wherever they could, in anyone's back-yard or with a friend'.[38] Even after the passing of the Togt Labour Amendment Act in 1902, which made residence in barracks or licensed accommodation compulsory and raised the togt fee to five shillings, the contradictions in the system were still apparent.[39] While hoping to force Africans to live in municipal barracks, the authorities could do little to force Africans out of backyards, rented rooms and 'dens of vice' into bleak barracks. The failure of Durban's white rulers to establish a uniform urban 'native policy' is partly explicable in terms of the strength of African labour's bargaining power within the wage relationship.[40] However white property-owners in the town were divided over what should comprise the most appropriate conditions for the reproduction of African labour-power: whether Africans should be housed in barracks, or in a 'native village' on the outskirts of town.

The relative disunity of the discourse of Durban's white bourgeoisie was thrown into sharp relief in 1904 when the issue of housing the work-force was hotly debated. Two broad groups with opposing positions emerged: those supporting barrack accommodation; and those in favour of a location for Durban's African population. Durban's 'native affairs bureaucracy' tended to favour the removal of Africans to the peri-urban areas: this, it was claimed, would facilitate greater police control and continuous settled wage labour.[41] Opposing this strategy were those merchants and professionals who called for barrack accommodation and, by extension, the continued migrancy of the African work-force. Barracks were viewed as being capable of providing *cheap* African housing amenable to policing and close to the point of production – a prerequisite for stevedoring companies. The location scheme was never realised, despite the passing of the Native Location Act in 1904 which made provision for its establishment. These conflicts emphasised the gap between the abstract necessities and concrete possibilities of the local state in Durban[42] – a gap which only showed signs of closing after the introduction of a municipal beer monopoly in 1909.

The togt system never directly affected more than a third of Durban's African work-force. Reading the inscriptions carved by Durban's popular classes in the niches of a developing labour-coercive economy, one discerns the hand of the togt worker as only part of a more general text bearing the script of the ricksha-puller, the marginalised peasant, lumpen elements who formed themselves into *amalaita* gangs, prostitutes,[43] domestic workers living in backyards and shacks, traders in *dagga*, animal skins and herbs, washermen and washerwomen and most importantly, beer-brewers. White fears of possible violent outbreaks on the part of these newly urbanised people were frequently articulated by town councillors. As one of these, R. Jameson, noted:

> [the] want of a system of rule, control and provision for the Native is one which ought not to be tolerated one hour longer . . . he lives under insanitary conditions [and] is almost out of control . . . there are five or six thousand men right in the middle of the town exposed to temptations of various sorts in the shape of drink. What would be thought of us if there was a serious riot in the middle of the large towns?[44]

Between 1900 and 1910 *amalaitas* were particularly noticeable, having as their object the 'terrorising of the police and the defiance of authority'. The gangs represented one of the more discernible responses of young migrants to urban life and were viewed by whites as part of a swelling body of criminal elements within the town. Vagrancy convictions increased steadily after 1902, and it did not pass observers by that 'the Native Convict' was viewed by his own people 'more in the light of Hero than Criminal'. Integrally related to this criminalisation of Africans was the question of the supply and consumption of alcohol by popular classes within the town.

In many senses, alcohol in the form of *utshwala* symbolised the continuity between town and countryside. Prior to 1909, Africans working in Durban obtained alcohol from two main sources. Firstly, from the brewers in Durban itself, who either sold their product from rooms scattered throughout the town, or from the main market where it was freely sold. Secondly, large quantities were brought in from the countryside by African women whose stay in Durban was covered by a five-day pass. One magistrate reported that young African women were constantly conveying large quantities of beer, by rail, to Durban over weekends. His report is illuminating:

> Some sixty to seventy large gourds, calabashes and paraffin tins, full of Kafir beer, surrounded by . . . chattering Native girls, (and women aged between 12 and 30) occupied a great deal of the station platform [Isipingo]. When the train departed for Durban, it carried away 168 vessels containing beer – this beer was destined for brothers, sweethearts and . . . fathers, at work in Durban who defrayed the expenses, ie. 6d per beer vessel, and 1/– each way for train fares. They all stated they were spending the weekend in Durban with their relatives and friends, sleeping in Native quarters, ricksha sheds etc.[45]

An estimated seven to eight thousand vessels of beer found their way into Durban between January and October 1906. Much of the beer was sold at the *ematsheni* – 'the place of the stones' – large boulders situated close to Durban's station. Fifty years later Durban's beerhalls were still referred to as the *ematsheni*.[46]

Van Onselen has, along with other historians, noted how, through distillation, agricultural surplus has been converted into spirits – a practice which

provided 'one of the clearest visible links between a declining agriculturally based feudal regime, and a modern industrial capitalist order'.[47] The large-scale importation of sorghum and maize beer from Natal's countryside into Durban seems to suggest a certain resilience on the part of African rural producers to the incursions of white capitalist agriculture in Natal. The transportation of beer to Durban was at once a response to market forces and part of a process of affirming kinship ties, pointing to the continuities between town and countryside as well as to the subtle reworking of a pre-industrial cultural institution in the urban context. It is clear that some of the African women who entered Durban to sell or supply beer remained in the town outside of wage relations and brewed or supplied beer in the hundreds of 'dens of vice', whether they were ricksha-sheds, backyards or rooms rented by Indian landlords in the town.

Despite the sustained attacks on African family life, there may have been up to 200 African families living in Durban in 1904.[48] The presence of African women in Durban attracted a great deal of attention from local authority precisely because women symbolised African permanence in the town. Those women who did not take up domestic employment or acquire washing licences frequently moved into the informal brewing trade. In 1906 the Chief Constable noted:

> This borough is at present infested by a large floating population of Native females, and who are living in many instances with Europeans and with Kafirs . . . principally through the manufacture and sale of Native beer . . . it is very desirable that the borough should be rid of these persons.[49]

Over one weekend in November 1906, 350 women and children applied for five-day passes.

The consumption of alcohol by Africans in Durban outside of working hours beyond police control, acted in many ways against a well-coerced and efficient supply of labour for the urban economy. Further, allied to this problem was the fact that *women* were involved in the supply of alcohol, a suggestion that the terms under which Africans were to live in the town might be determined, not by property-owners themselves, but by popular classes 'free of any kind of restraint or control'. Even during the Bambatha rebellion the 'greatest enemy' facing Durban's white rulers remained that of 'drink'.

Alcohol was the thread which held together the environment of the insanitary shacks, sheds and backyards, where women sold beer or more potent alcohol such as methylated spirits and *isitshimiyane*[50] to African workers, temporarily free from the discipline of the work-place. In districts such as Congella, for example, 'disturbances, dancing and noises' commencing on Saturday and continuing 'far into Sunday nights', were reported, as was the presence of 'women of questionable character' and widespread beer drinking.[51]

Simultaneously with the general attempt to control and expel women from Durban, an offensive against the emergence of African traders was made. In 1904 approximately seventy men in Durban were earning one pound a day selling hop beer, representing the more visible aspect of a much wider enterprise. In 1905 the streets of Durban were dense with privately licensed 'native eating houses'[52] providing food for labourers in the town as well as another outlet for beer and popular social discourse.

Moves to control scattered African traders and unlicensed eating-houses were made in 1905 when the Durban municipality established a committee under Robert Jameson with a view to setting up municipal eating-houses. By taking over the premises of the Queen Street Market, where large quantities of beer were being sold by African petty traders, the municipality aimed to 'deal more effectively with the hop beer traffic', rid the borough of 'a most objectionable and discreditable' state of affairs, and also show meaningful financial returns.[53] African traders were quick to respond to this threat. In a petition to the Town Council, 940 Africans made an appeal that the market should not be closed on the grounds that it served the African population as an orderly enterprise separate from residential areas and only sold produce from Natal.[54] The municipality did not close the market, but did open Durban's first municipal eating-house in May 1905.

Up until 1906 local authority had been fairly permissive of Africans drinking their 'national beverage', sorghum or maize beer. However, the growth of the *hop* beer traffic[55] caused heightened concern. On the Witwatersrand, Africans had legal access to spirituous liquor until 1900, but this should be understood in terms of the configuration of various forms of capital and regional class struggle. In Durban the attempts to control the African population's access to *utshwala*, and the great apprehension with which the presence of strong alcohol, whether it was adulterated hop beer, methylated spirits, Natal rum or *isitshimiyane*, was greeted by the town's 'native administration' and employers of labour, suggests different conditions of proletarianisation called for by capital in a non-industrial urban centre. In Durban the notion of the non-permanence of Africans in the town and the need to enforce migrancy shifted white perceptions of the potential ravages of strong alcohol. The consumption of potent alcohol by Africans contradicted the cheap reproduction of labour in so far as this practice was not *regenerative* in capital's terms and further, it could be a means of creating an uncontrolled and potentially dangerous marginalised lumpenproletariat in a 'European town'. Chief Constable Alexander noted: 'We must at all costs keep (Africans) from strong drink, and as much as possible from the evil designs of the lower class of the community.'[56] The threat of strong drink, containing more than 2 per cent alcohol by volume, called into question the very definition of *utshwala*. As one member in the Natal Legislative Assembly claimed, 'there is no definition of Kafir beer – they may put in a little whisky and call it Kafir beer'.[57]

The post-Bambatha-rebellion period in Durban was marked by a large African floating population and extensive unemployment. Of the over 100 eating-houses, 45 sold hop beer besides the single municipal eating-house where 52 large barrels of beer were supplied to between 2 000 and 3 000 Africans per day. The total number of casks in use was estimated at 300.[58] Besides this, there were illicit dealers including African women and 'low-class whites' in over 100 houses and dens selling both beer and more potent alcohol. At least nine organised gangs, including at least six *amalaita* gangs, were allied to this traffic. White officialdom desperately considered strategies for ensuring that Africans should 'spend the time harmlessly'.[59]

From the inception of the municipal eating-house, the municipality was in fact contravening various laws, including that which decreed *utshwala* to be an intoxicating, and hence illicit, liquor. This inconsistency emerged when, in March 1907, two hop beer traders at the municipal eating-house were arrested and convicted for contravening the liquor law. Magoyela and Kuzwayo apparently sold beer with an alcohol content of 5 per cent, which was 3 per cent more than the 'legal' maximum.[60] The upshot of these convictions was an interdict upon the municipality to enforce Section 2 of Act 36, in short, to enforce prohibition. The response of the town council was to introduce Bill No. 17 of 1907 into Natal's Legislative Assembly; this aimed at legalising the sale of beer *only* in municipal eating-houses. This bill was rejected[61] amid the protests of 69 African beer-traders. As if to exacerbate these contradictions, in January 1908 a Native High Court ruling deemed *utshwala* not to be an intoxicating liquor within the meaning of the law.[62] Thus the municipality found itself enmeshed in a set of contradictions partly of its own making. It had lost the powers of arrest and prosecution of beer-sellers through the Natal government's recent actions; and it was illegal in terms of a council resolution of 1896, made in accordance with the 1896 Liquor Act, for private parties to license the beer trade.[63]

Taking advantage of these contradictions, Durban's African beer brewers resumed their trade on an unprecedented scale. At least 76 places were known to be the strongholds of over 318 brewers, but at times the number of shebeens was estimated to be as high as 200.[64] It appears that women were the principal brewers, doing the manual labour for a 'male retainer' and preparing drink 'much stronger than that specially provided at the kraals'. At well-known places, such as Mtshikiana's in Old Dutch Road, beer was available at any time, day or night. Customers, if too drunk to leave, could stay and sleep off the effects of the alcohol. The beer was produced, according to one witness, 'in kitchens, bathrooms, open dusty yards, behind sanitary conveniences, and in fact in any recess, shanty or space'.[65] By September at least 112 'dens', employing over 200 individuals, were producing an estimated 4 000 gallons of beer between Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning.

Against this background, legislation – the Native Beer Act (No. 23) of 1908 – was finally enacted, enabling the establishment of a municipal beer monopoly in Durban.[66] The institution of a beer monopoly was not the outcome of a carefully planned strategy on the part of the local state. Rather it was the specific form in which the subordination of Africans in Durban was realised, an outcome of a period of heightened struggle over what constituted the most appropriate configuration of social relations in Durban. Alcohol, and beer in particular, represented one area of common accord between various property owners in Durban: its uncontrolled consumption was not compatible with the cheap reproduction of labour. The earlier dissension over the form in which African labour was to be reproduced, whether workers should be housed in barracks or in a location, was papered over by the institution of the monopoly. Furthermore, the municipal monopoly on beer production undermined the livelihood of a growing section of African beer-traders who were reaping large profits from beer sales, a point which 'native administration' had accounted for when establishing a municipal eating-house four years earlier. African traders petitioned the town council, but in vain.[67] Further grounds for the expulsion of African women from Durban were also established through the monopoly; thus African permanence in the town was dealt an additional blow. Sections of white commercial capital might have viewed the legislation of 1908 as cause for concern if they had been deeply involved in that area of consumption which the monopoly excised and appropriated. However this was not the case; those commercial interests which were hit by the monopoly were either African petty traders, 'low-class foreigners' or Indians.[68]

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In its broadest meaning the beer monopoly was the institutional product of concerted attempts to rework a 'traditional' cultural practice, within a more general struggle to ensure white hegemony in Durban, where an annual flow of 80 000 Africans threatened to appropriate the streets, backyards and perhaps the town itself. As a form of urban control the beer monopoly suggested a more sophisticated form of coercion. Workers were not compelled to drink beer and so the system was essentially 'voluntary'. The first few years of the monopoly saw substantial revenue flowing into the coffers of the Native Beer Administration Fund:

1909 – £ 4 502	1911 – £20 370
1910 – £14 116	1912 – £24 201[69]

According to official figures African drunkenness had dramatically decreased. In 1907 the percentage of African drunkenness to the total African population was 5,1 per cent, by 1916 it had dropped to 1,6 per cent.[70] Since the local state morally justified the monopoly in terms of its efficacy in curbing

African drunkenness, these figures were of crucial ideological importance. One temperance movement member, and critic of the system, was not far off the mark when he claimed that the 'motive for [monopoly] may at the outset be laudable' but the 'financial interests and profits will in the long run outweigh every other consideration'.[71] As Durban's first four beerhalls generated massive revenue, the imperative to defend the system against outside criticisms, and to proscribe the illicit consumption of alcohol by Africans in and around the town, increased. It was claimed that the 'trial' system of municipal brewing provided 'the native with his traditional beverage under healthy and wholesome conditions'. This type of statement tended to belie the continued consumption of alcohol in shebeens, particularly on the outskirts of the town. If the monopoly represented a successful form of 'social control', at the same time its establishment generated new contradictions, new problems of 'social control'.[72]

Durban's Native Affairs Committee clearly saw the monopoly as providing a healthy form of 'leisure' for African workers. In 1914 it was claimed that:

> The problem is essentially one of the *control of leisure*. [The] Committee is satisfied that the endeavours of the Council to provide a solution in this direction in so far as the native population . . . is concerned, are bearing fruit.[73]

However, the shebeen remained a firm feature of the town's landscape. The contradiction in the system manifested itself in terms of labour productivity and the continuing 'debilitation' of the workforce.

Large employers of labour complained that their workers, if they reached the workplace at all, started their labours in a drunken state.[74] Being sensitive to the needs of local capital, although not admitting to the existence of this state of affairs, police detectives and officials of the municipal Native Affairs Department (NAD) maintained a careful watch on the beerhalls and rigorously enforced the already thorough set of regulations governing the sale of beer at the *ematsheni*. The real forces at work, however, were indicated by another report which claimed that

> one of Mr Thompson's [an employee of a stevedoring company] Indunas named Udugwana, stationed at the Bluff spoke to me and said that it would be very difficult for him to keep his gang together because if they were refused a second drink they would go out beyond the Umgeni River where there are several natives brewing.[75]

Municipal officials acknowledged that the African labourer was increasingly tempted to 'forsake the atmosphere of compounds and abandon himself to drink' which was 'readily obtained from the illicit manufacturer' on the outskirts of the town. In peri-urban areas such as Sydenham, Greenwood Park and Merebank, a network of beer-brewers supplied African workers, opposed to both the times during and conditions under which municipal beer had to be consumed, with illicit brews.[76] The Chief Magistrate of Durban reported that in Merebank, Indian rack-renters gave premises to African beer-brewers who attracted the 'riff-raff of Durban'. The scale of the trade was apparently so great that it provided the sole means of subsistence for these people.[77] When drunken workers were arrested by the borough police they invariably claimed that they had obtained their drink from the beerhalls.

The administration of beerhalls was tightened up, and the plans for the production of a non-alcoholic drink which would (hopefully) keep the workforce under control, remove the negative aspects of alcohol consumption, and still generate massive revenue, were shelved.[78] A large-scale brewing plant was built in 1913 at a cost of £14 000 to the Native Administration Fund and a further 'eating-house' (beerhall), costing £8 000 was established in 1914. The operation of the municipal barracks and the beerhall, in conjunction with strict policing, provided important mechanisms for the enforcement of a time-discipline appropriate to a labour-coercive economy. The problems of disciplining labourers, the majority of whom continued to affirm ties of various kinds with the countryside, were pointed out by J.S. Marwick, the first professional manager of the NAD. He claimed that Africans should be taught the 'habit of voluntary industry'. The establishment of the Depot Road (Somtseu) 'location' in 1916 at a cost of £17 000 derived from beer revenue, was viewed in much the same way. The Mayor of Durban claimed that the 'location' would 'teach habits of cleanliness, give a stimulus to the observance of punctuality and good order'.[79]

This vision was in stark contrast to the 'living hell' of backyards, sheds, stables and other informal accommodation where the majority of Africans lived. Privately licensed barracks, as well as many unlicensed ones, provided living quarters for both 'respectable' and 'undesirable and dangerous' elements. Teachers and clerks lived with ricksha-pullers and women beer-brewers, the latter being described as 'raw native girls' who remained permanently in the borough amongst a total African population of 21 000.[80] It was in these areas that *amalaitas* lived, drank illicit beer and smoked *dagga* along with two-thirds of Durban's popular classes.[81] Although the municipal beer brewery was producing about 321 500 gallons of beer per annum by 1915, the shebeen was by no means eclipsed as the most discernible of urban African social institutions. African women continued to enter the towns, and while there was a very limited number of formal job outlets, clothes washing being one example, many remained in the town and brewed beer. Raids by police on all-male barracks, as well as ricksha sheds and outhouses, revealed the extent to which women with 'no visible means of subsistence' made a living from beer-brewing. African women wearing 'European clothes' were labelled

'prostitutes', viewed as unproductive units of labour and part of that element of the 'undesirable classes' whose expulsion from the borough was viewed by local authority as essential to the overall cheap reproduction of African labour.[82]

The recognition of the growing permanence of Africans in the town, and fears that if these people were not efficiently housed in the highly controlled environment of municipal barracks they could start 'getting out of hand', encouraged the authorities to provide more accommodation.[83] By 1916, thirty-six cottages had been erected on Eastern Vlei for married *Kholwa* (Christian) Africans of 'approved good character'. The cost of this sub-economic housing scheme was borne by beer revenue. Both the Depot Road location and the Native Women's Hostel, established in 1911, were further extended after 1916. The passing of stringent Native Affairs by-laws in 1916 enforced a curfew and laid down strict procedures for work registration and pass-bearing.

These by-laws and the coercion and division of popular classes on gender and class lines, were aimed at supplying employers with a submissive and low-paid work force. In 1917 revenue from beer sales amounted to £28 089. The beer monopoly carried on its back the maintenance and extension of the infrastructure of the 'Durban system' itself and the erection of worker housing. Where Africans were not accommodated in municipal barracks or hostels, a police force, subsidised by beer revenue, provided for their coercion and control. For the year 1916/17 Durban derived an astonishing £41 677 in revenue from Africans in the town, by far the highest income accruing to any of South Africa's 217 local authorities.[84]

After 1918, accelerated migration of Africans to Durban resulted in a large increase in the permanent African population, which by 1921 had risen to 29 011. With increasing impoverishment in rural areas larger numbers of African families settled in the town or on its outskirts on a permanent basis. In peri-urban areas the population was described by C.F. Layman, manager of the NAD, as comprising 'persons of unspeakably bad character, having no visible means of subsistence'.[85] The strikes which swept Durban during this period provide some index of the extent of rural impoverishment.[86]

In 1921 the Native Affairs Commission noted the 'rapid growth of industrial cities' and the failure of local authorities to provide for the housing and control of African workers.[87] The attempts by the central state to formulate a uniform national urban policy came to an uneven resolution in the passing of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. There are strong indications that Durban's experience served as a lever to remove many of the original 'liberal segregationist' features of the Urban Areas Bill.[88] This emerges clearly from the findings of the Select Committee on Native Affairs which was appointed in 1923. In evidence before the committee, Layman claimed that the Durban system provided the most effective means of ejecting undesirables from urban centres through strict registration procedures and restrictions on the supply

of beer to Africans. Furthermore, he claimed that the 'whole of Native housing' (valued at £152 480), was 'borne out of the beer fund'.[89] The 'Stallardism' which the final act enshrined had been a characteristic feature of Durban's 'native policy' for over two decades. Following the Durban system, the act allowed for the establishment of municipal beer monopolies on a national scale, the proceeds of which were to go towards the administration of locations and building of houses for Africans.

A local state apparatus, to be known as the Native Affairs Department, which would carry through the control and management of Africans in towns, was also provided for by the act.[90] Modelled on Durban's Native Beer Administration Fund, a Native Revenue Account was set up into which monies extracted from Africans (beer revenue, fines, rents) would be paid. It was several years before Durban took advantage of other provisions of the act, since the key features were already operative in the town. The importance of the Durban system in the shaping of the 1923 Act was not missed by the local state: in 1923 it was claimed that 'the Government pays the town a compliment by formulating its Native policy – along lines closely resembling what is now known as the "Durban system"'.[91]

* * * * * *

Early formal expressions of popular resistance to the monopolisation of beer production in Durban reflected the lived experience of the majority of Africans in Durban. While the experience of urban living conditions by Africans became increasingly sustained over time, it cannot be said, except of a small section of the population, that town life constituted the bedrock of African popular experience. For this reason, expressions of popular opposition to official marginalisation and appropriation of the 'traditional' social practice of brewing tended to be couched in contradictory and 'backward-looking' terms. For example, when Durban's large and sophisticated beer brewery was established in 1913 a dramatic decrease in the consumption of municipal beer was noted. Initially the beer brewed at the plant was 'so bad as to be undrinkable', primarily because of faulty brewing procedure. Beer revenue for the year following the introduction of the plant plummeted from £25 033 in 1913 to £18 656 in 1914. The municipal NAD claimed that 'Natives seem to have an aversion to the production of Native Beer by machinery . . . certain rumours have raised the superstitious prejudice of the Natives . . . which has led to lessened consumption.'[92] This eschewing of unpalatable beer in favour of the shebeen suggests a popular response rooted in a 'traditional' or 'inherent' way of viewing the world, contradictory and compounded of folklore and day-to-day popular experience.

The first formal expression of opposition to the monopoly emanated from the ranks of the African branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Alliance

(WCTU) in 1914. In a petition, signed by four thousand African women in Natal, 'procured through native effort entirely', calls for abolition of the monopoly were made. The women, led by Mrs Ncamu, stated that families in the countryside were living in a 'grievous condition' because husbands and sons working in Durban were spending their wages on beer and failed to remit adequate sums to their families. The break-up of families, abandonment of wives and children, the 'forming of the beer-drinking habit' and the purchase by African workers of 'luxury' items were seen to be the product of the beer monopoly.[93] Clearly these protests encompassed the wider and more important reality of town and countryside. The women's protest spoke of rural impoverishment and proletarianisation on the land. However, what differentiated these protests from the 'spontaneous boycott' of 'foul beer' in 1913 was the more formal character of the WCTU petition. Couched in terms of contemporary dominant mission ideology and articulated by predominantly *kholwa* women, this petition combined 'backward looking' rural opposition to processes of rural proletarianisation with a rejection of a particular form of urban control. The connections drawn between the municipal monopoly and the undermining of part of Africans' means of subsistence represented the most progressive element of this protest. Whether such connections could provide the basis for more effective forms of opposition to the Durban system was to depend upon the economic, political, cultural and ideological state of struggle between rulers and ruled in the town.

Between 1915 and 1918 there were intermittent calls for the dismantling of the beer monopoly. In 1915 a meeting of Africans from mission reserves connected with the American Zulu Mission was held in Durban to protest at increasing drunkenness, especially amongst African youths. A resolution was passed calling for the repeal of the monopoly. Again it was suggested that 'wages do not reach the old people at home'.[94] In 1918 these voices of protest, linking the beer monopoly to impoverishment, were heard at the annual Natal Missionary Conference. Natal's Chief Native Commissioner was personally informed at a meeting of Africans in Durban of their desire to see beerhalls permanently closed. Despite growing criticisms of the Durban system, particularly by Durban's educated *kholwa* élite in conjunction with mission bodies, the defence of the system by its functionaries was remorseless. Elsewhere in South Africa, temperance and prohibitionist sentiment effectively precluded the possibility of a beer monopoly. Liberal segregationist ideology perhaps found its clearest articulation through Natal's mission bodies and carried in its wake an aspirant rural- and urban-based African petty bourgeoisie, nurtured in a milieu which imbued them with a sense of optimism about 'progress' and 'individual improvement'. This vision frequently expressed itself in terms of the feared disintegration of 'traditional' social relations in the countryside – hence the frequent references to the essential 'foreignness' of the 'beer-drinking habit' amongst Africans. By the 1920s, however, this view of

the world was becoming increasingly untenable in the face of urban and rural social conflict.

The material basis of the beer monopoly was by no means lost on Durban's local African élite. As Skweleti Nyongwana, member of the Durban Native Council, claimed in 1916,

> the municipal brewery should be floated into a company in which the natives could take up shares . . . Today the natives do not control the profits. The natives would like the money from their beer house(s) to be used for the building of . . . his own cottage(s).[95]

It was only a decade later that the tensions within Durban's African petty bourgeoisie in relation to the Durban system were to be cast in clearer terms by the heightened militancy of Durban's popular classes as a whole. Although it was claimed that it was 'against Africans' whole tradition and habit of mind to be merchants', by 1924 over 240 officially recognised traders were operating at the various beerhalls in Durban. It was noted that a 'permanent town Native element' was emerging and distinct social categories were discernible within the African population, including 'the trader', 'the labourer', 'the married African' and 'the educated African'.[96] It was in this context that Clements Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) attempted to organise. In late 1925, A.W.G. Champion, former police informer and mine clerk, replaced A.P. Maduna as provincial secretary of the Union and also took over the leadership of the Durban branch. Under Champion the ICU in Durban embarked on a programme aimed at challenging a range of municipal by-laws in court – particularly the procedure of 'deverminisation', or dipping of African workers.[97]

In 1925 the hut tax in Natal was increased and a general tax of £1 was levied in terms of the Native Taxation and Development Act. Extensive police raids in Durban resulted in numerous arrests for evasion of tax payment. In an atmosphere of increasing militancy and opposition to the web of penal sanctions woven through the Durban system, the Durban branch of J.T. Gumede's section of the Natal Congress movement – the Natal African Congress (NAC) – 'resolved to *boycott* the Durban Corporation beer canteens'.[98]

A specific cultural practice does not possess a fixed and unchanging meaning. The emergence after 1926 of the popular belief that if it was criminal for Africans to brew beer, then it was 'equally criminal' for the local state to do so, depended not on the abstract meaning of beer-brewing but rather, for example, on the ability of conscious political leadership to 'extract' and articulate certain elements of an emerging urban culture with the lived material reality of Africans living in a labour-coercive environment.[99] The emergence of more clearly oppositional elements in this culture, in which the shebeen

occupied a central position, can be seen in the heightened intensity of struggles in town and countryside.

In rural Natal impoverishment, starvation, drought, farm evictions, as well as low wages, were part of the daily experiences of thousands of Africans. ICU organisers in rural areas were greeted with a feverish millenarianism which hailed them as 'American Negroes who had come to deliver (Africans) from slavery'.[100] This jagged process of proletarianisation is seen in the larger numbers of African women migrating to Durban. During six months in 1926 5 819 women were expelled in terms of vagrancy by-laws. The illicit brewing trade, both in Durban itself and in the expanding 'black belt' surrounding the town, showed few signs of diminishing. During six months in 1928, 2 792 prosecutions for possession of *isitshimiyane* were made. Of 1 645 arrests of Africans for drunkenness in Durban in the same year, 60 per cent were effected between Saturday evening and Sunday morning.[101] The source of supply was the shebeens in Mayville, Greenwood Park, Sydenham and other 'peri-urban' areas where many thousands of Africans lived in a maze of shacks and tenements, many of which were owned by Indians. Large numbers of African women had become 'permanent urban dwellers' and authorities found that their removal was an 'impossible task'.[102] In response to weekly 'drunken orgies', the local authority closed yeast factories in terms of Liquor Act No. 70 of 1928.[103] While municipal beer revenue averaged annually over £50 000, the noticeable effect which the 1926 boycott resolution had on beer consumption could justifiably be interpreted by the local state as signalling the beginnings of organised opposition to the material platform of urban 'native administration'. In the face of this resilient, but by no means overtly political, 'shebeen culture' and increasing popular drunkenness, the ideological underpinnings of the Durban system underwent some transformation. C.F. Layman admitted the 'civic value' of the system was '*not so much the particular reduction of arrests for drunkenness* but the general betterment of the Native in relation to his presence in the Borough'.[104]

By 1929, of an approximate seventy-six thousand urban Africans in Natal, nearly one-half were to be found in Durban, where a 'steady concentration of the masses presaged a clash' between the rulers and ruled of the town.[105] In an apparent attempt to 'lessen the itishimiyana evil' in Sydenham, a 'peri-urban' area administered by a Local Administration and Health Board, an application for the erection of a beerhall was made in 1928. Suggesting the extent to which popular consciousness was opposed to the beer monopoly, Champion, now leader of the secessionist ICU *yase* Natal, told a meeting of five thousand Africans in Durban that 'Native beer was their national beverage which they should be allowed to make themselves'.[106] Shortly afterwards a document entitled the 'General Opinion of the People' was given to H.S. Fynn, Durban's Native Commissioner, giving assent to the erection of the beerhall, provided that home-brewing be permitted 'when the time comes to build homes'. Little

attention was paid to this resolution, and in March 1929 the central government granted permission for the erection of the beerhall. In effect the establishment of a beerhall enforced prohibition in an area where shebeens had previously proliferated amongst a population of up to fifteen thousand, some of whom 'had been there for twenty years' and were likely 'to be there for twenty years longer'.

Generally municipal beer was regarded by Africans as being more expensive than domestically prepared *utshwala*. Furthermore it frequently did not taste the same as a 'traditional brew' and it had to be consumed in a 'cage'.[107] During a period in which grinding poverty and below-subsistence wages in both rural and urban areas of Natal were an integral part of daily popular experience, all such 'commonsensical' notions could be expected to become accentuated.[108] Indeed, the demand by African women in particular, that beer-brewing be instituted as a 'national traditional right', precisely because it provided a crucial supplement to starvation wages, was to characterise the period 1929–30.[109] The extent to which these demands could be welded into more coherent opposition to the system of exploitation which the monopoly supported, partially depended on the leadership of the ICU *yase* Natal, the NAC, and later, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). The establishment of Sydenham's beerhall, in the context of a long history of struggle over alcohol production and consumption, was to become the axis of the growth of popular resistance to a wider system of local oppression which was to be found in Durban. The cultural resilience of Durban's dominated classes provided the essential context for this opposition which at certain points appeared to carry, like flecks of foam, the leadership of the ICU *yase* Natal and the local Congress movement.

Numerous meetings in Sydenham in March 1929, organised by the ICU *yase* Natal, suggested the level of grass-roots mobilisation around the beerhall issue.[110] On successive Sundays in May, bodies of Africans numbering between three and eight hundred marched from the ICU Hall in Prince Edward Street out to Sydenham where mass meetings were held with the inhabitants of the area, described by Commandant Baston of the SAP as 'inveterate shimiaan drinkers' of 'criminal habits'. A witness of one of these marches described it in the following terms:

> They were an organised body . . . headed by a brass band preceded by a Native in Highland costume . . . They had a Union Jack and a red flag with a hammer and sickle on it . . . Many of them were dressed in uniform and carried sticks in military positions.[111]

In a sense this description captures the predominant character of the period of militant opposition to the 'Durban system'. The protagonists – the ICU 'Unity League' amongst others – appear at once to be a model of military discipline as well as a parody of military drill, a drawing together and articulation of a whole

range of ideological elements to form a subversive whole.[112] Champion's speeches and written protests directed at the beer monopoly were to embody the essential inchoateness of this popular discourse. In one such protest he stated that the ICU *yase* Natal objected to 'our people' being 'taught by Europeans to drink Kaffir Beer' and 'obtaining money from the Natives who will not resist such a temptation'.[113] On 5 May an Anti-Kaffir Beer Manufacturing League (AKBML) was formed. Its stated aim was to protest against the manufacturing of beer by the local authority 'for the purpose of obtaining monies from the poorly-paid Natives without complying with the legal requirements of the Act [of] 1923'.[114] Once again the connection between beer revenue and inadequate housing was made.

By the end of May 1929 the opposition to the Sydenham beerhall and popular resistance to the Durban system became fused in a militant popular movement directed against every aspect of daily oppression experienced by Africans in Durban. The beerhall provided the most vivid symbol of worsening local conditions. The formation of the AKBML coincided with sporadic outbursts of violence at Durban's Point barracks.

Workers who had been brewing *mahewu* (fermented porridge) were prevented from doing so by the overseer at the barracks. Mahommed, an Indian trader in the vicinity, assisted the white official in overturning barrels of the nutritious beverage. What began as a boycott of the traders' store, instigated by a togt worker, Mcijelwa Mnomezulu, rapidly turned into a boycott of municipal beerhalls. Fearing such a boycott, T.J. Chester of the NAD confiscated Mnomezulu's togt badge. Mnomezulu later claimed that other workers in the barracks 'said they would bring the matter up before Mr Champion [since] it was considered to be a matter which affected them all'.[115] Champion hesitated in the face of unanticipated militancy. Togt workers called for a strike in protest against the confiscation of Mnomezulu's badge and discussed the possibility of a systematic boycott of beerhalls. The uneasy leader of the ICU expressed indifference to both issues. However by 13 June the AKBML, initially established to mobilise against the establishment of the Sydenham beerhall, resolved to boycott Durban's beerhalls and called for 'general sympathy [to] go throughout the town'.

The togt workers, in particular, indicated a capacity for militancy which, at a leadership level, tended to be supplanted by equivocation; when pushed Champion claimed that 'his Union did not advocate extreme measures'. In any event, it appears that at this time workers in Durban joined *en bloc* the only organisation which could have any claim to be mass-based – the ICU *yase* Natal. The AKBML distributed thousands of pamphlets in which Africans were urged 'to part company with Kaffir beer [since they] do not know what benefit they derive from it except to build compounds and barracks which are full of bad laws and disagreeable control'. While T.J. Chester met with a 'truculent' deputation of togt workers, thousand-strong pickets at Durban's beerhalls

clashed with the borough police. Responding to this popular anger, J.T. Gumede, president of the radicalised congress movement, addressed a meeting of six thousand Africans, organised by the ICU *yase* Natal, on 16 June 1929.[116] He congratulated those present on closing the beerhalls and called for Africans in Durban to 'come together as much as possible' and join all existing organisations. Although he projected the vision of a non-racial socialist society, the 'Native Republic' slogan showed no signs of being fully incorporated into the discourse of the ICU *yase* Natal's leaders, as Champion's speech indicated.[117]

The uniform picketing of Durban's beerhalls precipitated the destruction of all stocks of *utshwala* by the NAD. By 17 June the sporadic clashes between beerhall pickets and the borough police became increasingly violent. The leader of the ICU *yase* Natal pleaded with a thousand armed workers at the Point to stop the violence, stating that 'your grievances will be considered by the proper authorities'. The rank and file, however, left a vacillating leadership behind. White 'vigilantes' laid siege to the ICU Hall, and by evening close on two thousand white civilians, from 'every class', and three hundred and fifty policemen faced six thousand stick-wielding African workers. These Africans had poured from every quarter of the town to relieve the beleaguered men, women and children in the hall, and in the ensuing clashes one hundred and twenty people were injured and eight mortally wounded, including six Africans.

The riots bear many resemblances to Rudé's characterisation of 'spontaneous' social protest in the transitional period between pre-industrial and industrial society.[118] This can be seen, for example, in the assertion of beer-brewing as a 'traditional right', especially by African women: the white man could have his whisky, but the African had a right to prepare his 'national beverage'. The corollary of this was that municipal beer was bad; it contained chemicals which 'burned the insides' of the drinker. The beer monopoly as a symbol of daily oppression, and the production of 'bad beer', became unified within popular discourse and served as an important means of underpinning and sustaining a profoundly effective boycott of beerhalls.[119]

A commission of enquiry into the circumstances surrounding the riots of June 1929 was presided over by Justice de Waal in July 1929. While the commission came out strongly against the violence of white civilians, the grievances of workers were held to be 'utterly devoid of any substance' and Champion was regarded as the prime mover behind the riots. As Champion himself, whilst giving evidence, moved further into the discourse of Durban's white rulers, so the underlying determinants of the disturbances were obscured from view: the potency of beer as a symbol and economic practice; the utter absence of any formal means of expressing grievances; inadequate housing; and, with the onset of depression, unemployment and ultra-low wages. As

Bennet Gwabini a Johannesburg-based ICU activist noted, 'Kaffir beer is not the only cause of the people causing this hubbub'.[120]

The Durban system received excessive praise from De Waal. Municipal barracks and hostels were clean and healthy, and 'all in all' De Waal said, 'the housing facilities in force at Durban . . . are a model which might well be emulated by other large urban centres'. An independent observer of African living conditions emerged with a very different understanding: African housing was squalid and inadequate; thousands of applications for only a hundred municipal houses had been made. Given the tenuous position of the Native Revenue Account owing to the boycott, the local government refused to face the capital expenditure involved in further housing programmes. Referring to beer profits, Margery Perham observed:

> These profits must have been enormous . . . the Native pays out of his wretched wages . . . if you say that it amounts to subsidizing the employer and allowing him to pay inadequate wages, the answer is that all whites are directly or indirectly employers . . . a general rise of wages . . . would cripple [white] South Africa.[121]

It was 'strongly recommended' that the Durban system undergo no alterations. Since 1909 the net revenue from beer profits had amounted to £551 121 of which only £7 681 had been spent on 'native welfare'. However as a purely 'goodwill gesture' a Native Advisory Board (NAB) was established in 1930, and a promise that the long-mooted 'Umlazi Native Village scheme' would soon be realised was forthcoming from the local state.

The years 1929 to 1931 were a period of profound politicisation of Durban's African population. The changing nature of the ICU *yase* Natal and the Natal Congress, the role of the CPSA, the fluidity of the rank and file in all African organisations, the linkages between local and national struggles, and the death of Johannes Nkosi, local secretary of the CPSA, is a story which cannot be told here.[122] However a few elements of this process should be mentioned.

In June 1929 the chief magistrate expressed increasingly widespread official fears that 'the grievance regarding Kaffir beer regulation is one of several which afford the reception of [Communist] ideas'.[123] In an atmosphere of continued mass meetings, police raids on shebeens, and an unyielding boycott, co-ordinated by veteran member of the ICU Women's Auxiliary, MaDhlamini, and her committee, the central government intervened on the side of the local administration in a dramatic and repressive fashion. In order to suppress mounting popular disaffection in Durban, the Minister of Justice deployed seven hundred members of the Mobile Squadron to Durban in order to conduct pass raids and check poll-tax receipts.

If beer drinking was 'voluntary' then payment of taxes was not. Apart from arresting several thousand workers, the Squadron made extensive sorties into

Cato Manor, Sydenham, Puntan's Hill and Mayville – the 'happy hunting grounds' of the *isitshimiyane* brewers. Many thousands of gallons of alcohol were destroyed. In an unprecedented move the Minister of Native Affairs issued a proclamation warning Africans 'against the continuance of the boycott', hinting that perhaps the patronage of beerhalls was not as voluntary as supposed.[124]

An important underlying reason for the establishment of the NAB can be found in the official desire to fracture the alliances between a section of Durban's African élite, permanent town-dwellers, migrant workers and marginalised elements of the African population. Upon these popular alliances depended the strength of the boycott. The co-option of a frustrated African petty bourgeoisie in order to defuse urban militancy, and to secure those conditions necessary for the cheap reproduction of labour-power, was to take place at the expense of Durban's dominated classes as a whole. Initially a blanket rise in all municipal rents was envisaged by the NAD in order to offset the effects of the boycott, which continued 'to the detriment of the Native Revenue Account'. During the period June 1929 to July 1930 the revenue from the sale of beer fell to £5 107; the estimates for the same period were put at £52 000.[125] Although initially apprehensive about voting against the continuation of the boycott, the members of the NAB, prompted by J.R. Msimang, a Natal Native Congress (NNC) representative, finally passed a motion calling for an end to the boycott.[126] It clearly had little effect, emanating as it did from the conservative NNC and expressed in an institution which was regarded with 'grave doubts' by the majority of Africans in Durban.[127] The resolve of Africans to continue the boycott is suggested by a report which stated that

> the beer-halls are still as deserted as they were month ago . . . Natives . . . are now being forced to resort to isitshimiyana [in] shebeens outside the Borough . . . another remarkable feature [is] that although the group responsible for the boycott cannot have more than two or three hundred members, it is influencing . . . 40 000 Natives in the Durban area.[128]

The boycott generated an acute financial crisis for the local administration. It severely undermined the economic basis of the Durban system and presaged the significant erosion of the autonomy of urban control in Durban. By 1936 sales of municipal beer were still 50 per cent below those of pre-boycott days.[129]

After 1930 in the wake of unrest and economic depression, the municipality, in conjunction with local capital, embarked on a concerted programme to refine certain aspects of urban administration. The first stage of this project was to enforce the segregatory provisions of the 1930 Natives (Urban Areas) Amendment Act. Furthermore municipal by-laws aimed at tightening the curfew on Africans, and controlling dance-halls and meetings, were re-enforced after a period of dormancy. Partially linked to this enforcement of

measures designed to control the movement of Africans into the town as well as within its boundaries, was the attempt by liberal organisations – such as the Joint Council of Europeans and Natives – to control and moralise, in a 'correct way', all forms of popular recreation.[130]

Apart from anything else, the boycott of Durban's beerhalls, the main venues for legally sanctioned popular recreation, had pointed to a range of cultural practices which were expressed beyond the confines of the 'cage'. Liberal-sponsored voluntary associations such as the Bantu Social Centre, established in 1933, were posited as alternatives to the mass political mobilisation of previous years. Certain sections of Durban's African petty bourgeoisie responded to these initiatives, and associations such as the Wayfarers, Pathfinders and Bantu Boys' League were established along the 'moral Christian lines' suggested by the Revd J.D. Taylor of the American Board Mission, amongst others. In 1930 the Town Council established the post of Native Welfare Officer. This employee, in conjunction with the newly founded Bantu Recreational Grounds Association, attempted to establish some kind of hegemony over 'dangerously' autonomous sporting bodies such as the Durban and District African Football Association. Extensive attention was directed towards the control of *ngoma* dances and dance halls. The latter, which were described by one erstwhile cleric as 'dubious haunts of terpsichorean and alcoholic bliss',[131] provided the venues for vibrant concerts given by popular entertainers such as the Dem Darkies, the Mad Boys and the Evening Birds.

Space does not allow for a discussion of how these attempts to prescribe and modify popular recreational forms were resisted and accommodated by Africans. What can be safely asserted, however, is that the struggles for and over popular cultural forms and practices were uneven and contradictory. When Gilbert Coka complained in the 1930s that the 'African intelligentsia' had become 'wedded to the billiard tables' he was drawing out one thread of this process.[132] Another one was supplied by Durban's illicit beer-brewers, ensconced within the city, waging a continual battle against the South African Police, affirming 'culture' as a site of struggle.

NOTES

1. *Utshwala*, often previously known as 'Kaffir beer', is a drink which in the early 1980s accounted for 82 per cent of alcoholic consumption in South Africa. *Sunday Tribune*, 13 September 1981. Large-scale capitalist brewing of *utshwala* undoubtedly affected its ingredients. However, this popular drink is generally of low alcoholic content – less than 4 per cent alcohol by weight – and made from sorghum, millet or other grain.
2. The Deputy Principal Medical Officer of the Uganda Protectorate conducted an extensive enquiry into the Durban system. See *Report on the Enquiry into the Durban System of Control of Native Beer*, 1921. The Sudan administration expressed similar interest during the same period.

3. See Report of the Local Government Commission, 1921 (T.P. 1–22). The Stallard Commission claimed that Africans were 'temporary sojourners' in white urban areas, the prime purpose of whose presence was 'to minister to the needs of the white man'.
4. For a very useful periodisation of state urban policy see Robin Bloch and Peter Wilkinson, 'Urban Control and Popular Struggle: A Survey of State Urban Policy 1920–1970', *Africa Perspective*, 20, 1982. For a useful case study see Gerald Kraak, 'Financing of African Worker Accommodation in Cape Town', Saldru Working Paper No. 35, Cape Town, 1981.
5. Bloch and Wilkinson, 'Urban Control', p. 17.
6. See Paul la Hausse, 'Drinking in a Cage: The Durban System and the 1929 Riots', *Africa Perspective*, 20, 1982.
7. Scores of towns requested information concerning the workings of the Durban system and numerous delegations visited Durban to be given guided tours of barracks and beerhalls and the brewery. See Durban Town Clerk's Files [TCF], Kaffir Beer. The Johannesburg municipality sent a deputation to Durban in 1916 in order to examine the possibility of implementing the system on the Reef. See Report of Deputation sent to Durban by the Municipal Council of Johannesburg to enquire into the System of Housing Natives and the Sale of Kaffir Beer to Natives, 1916.
8. Between 1926 and 1933, Durban reported the highest number of African convictions for public violence compared to other urban centres. See *Report on the Statistics of Crime for the years 1926–1935*. Office of Census and Statistics. There are no statistics prior to 1926.
9. *Natal Government Gazette*, 10 October 1908, p. 999.
10. An examination of the *Mayor's Minutes* for these years illustrates clearly how slender was expenditure on 'native welfare' (schools, hospitals, recreation, etc.).
11. See *Durban Housing Survey*, Natal Regional Survey, Report No. 2 (Pietermaritzburg, 1952), pp. 303–4. A total of £250 had to be made up by white taxpayers when the NRA showed a deficit in the early 1930s.
12. E. Genovese, 'Class, Culture and Historical Process', *Dialectical Anthropology*, 1 (1) 1975, p. 71.
13. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London, 1965), p. 63.
14. Space does not allow for a meaningful entry into the 'culturalism' debate. For the parameters of the debate see Raphael Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London, 1981), pp. 375–408. The two poles of the debate are to be found in the essays by Richard Johnson and E.P. Thompson. Stuart Hall provides a valuable 'middle path'. E.P. Thompson provides a more clearly enunciated definition of culture than those provided in his earlier works, such as *The Poverty of Theory* (London, 1978). Broadly, Thompson uses the concept experience – a 'junction concept' which facilitates the movement from the level of social being or 'lived experience' (structured and determined by the mode of production) to social consciousness or 'perceived experience'. In the latter realm, cultural forms puncture the dominant ideology and provide the subjective conditions for class struggle. For criticisms of this position see Perry Anderson, *Arguments within English Marxism* (London, 1980), pp. 201–37.
15. Stuart Hall, B.G. Lumley and Gregor McLennan, 'Politics and Ideology: Gramsci' in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *On Ideology* (London, 1978), p. 49.

16. The at times hieroglyphic usage of language by Gramsci can be confusing. 'Common sense', 'folklore' or 'lived culture' collectively refer to the incoherent and at times contradictory set of assumptions and beliefs held by the mass of the population at any one time. 'Common sense' however can form the basis for the expression of a counter-hegemonic ideology or 'philosophy' by subordinate groups, hence the stake which the ruling classes have in the form of 'lived culture'. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from One Prison Notebook* (London, 1971), pp. 419–25.
17. Belinda Bozzoli. 'History, Experience and Culture' in B. Bozzoli (ed.), *Town and Countryside in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 18.
18. Raymond Williams makes a useful distinction between 'alternative' and 'oppositional' cultures. The latter are more rapidly marginalised or incorporated by the dominant culture. See Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London, 1980), pp. 40–2.
19. Eddie Koch, '"Without Visible Means of Subsistence": Slumyard Culture in Johannesburg 1918–1940' in Bozzoli, *Town and Countryside*, p. 155.
20. R. Johnson, 'Three Problematics: Elements of a Theory of Working Class Culture' in J. Clarke, C. Critcher and R. Johnson (eds), *Working Class Culture* (London, 1979), p. 237.
21. For some useful observations on this point see Bozzoli, 'History, Experience and Culture', pp. 36–42.
22. Stuart Hall, 'Notes on Deconstructing "The Popular"', in Samuel, *People's History*, p. 228.
23. Government House, Vol. 1555, J. Ayliff, Acting SNA to Governor of Natal, 31 May 1876.
24. See, for example, *Correspondence re increased drunkenness among the Native population*, Natal Legislative Council, No. 17, Separate Publication, 1877.
25. In the Umvoti district it was reported that the diet of Africans appeared to be 'principally shimian and mussels'. *Correspondence re increased drunkenness*, Acting R.M. Umvoti to SNA, 11 September 1876.
26. *Correspondence re increased drunkenness*, R.M., Klip River to SNA, 9 September 1876.
27. Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (London, 1979), pp. 165–96. Henry Slater, 'The Changing Pattern of Economic Relationships in Rural Natal, 1838–1914', *ICS Collected Seminar Papers*, 3, 16, London, 1973.
28. Bundy, *Rise and Fall*, p. 184.
29. Act No. 38 of 1896, Act No. 35 of 1899 and Act No. 44 of 1906 prohibited the supply to Africans of intoxicating liquor, including *utshwala* and even thick sour milk (*mahewu*). However Law 18 of 1888 legalised the sale of beer by licence holders – a recognition of the *de facto* production of beer by Africans.
30. *Report of the Select Committee on the Supply of Liquor to Natives*, No. 13, 1891, p. 615. This tax was not implemented; instead a poll tax was imposed, over a decade later.
31. Government House, Vol. 1545. Deputation to the government to discuss matters concerning the labour question, 12 December 1895.
32. Colonial Secretary's Office, Vol. 1394, 1895/2074. Extract from Memoranda of Resolutions passed at meeting of the Natal Farmers' Conference, 22 March 1894.
33. *Debates of Natal Legislative Assembly*, Vol. 25, 1897, p. 135. Other members claimed that when a good crop of *amabele* was produced the consequences were disastrous. Some also advocated caution in dealing with the liquor question because too enthusiastic control could result in rebellion.
34. Government House, Vol. 1555, Acing SNA to Governor of Natal, 1876.

35. See N. Hurwitz, *Agriculture in Natal 1860–1950*, Natal Regional Survey, Vol. 12 (Cape Town, 1957), pp. 10–11; M. W. Swanson, 'The Rise of Multiracial Durban: Urban History and Race Policy in South Africa 1830–1930' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1964), pp. 269–72; M. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban: Part I* (Pietermaritzburg, 1961), p. 59.
36. Quoted in Durban Superintendent Police Report Book (PRB) No. 6, 6 March 1901. The introduction of the system was in direct response to the needs of merchant capital. See *South African Native Affairs Commission 1903–05 (SANAC), Minutes of Evidence*, Vol. III, p. 655: R. C. Alexander's evidence.
37. The Identification of Native Servants Amendment Act of 1901 aimed at controlling 'able-bodied young savages' in the town. R. C. Alexander claimed that an African could 'not go an inch without that pass'. A penal code provided against disorderliness, provocative language and 'indecent' conduct. In terms of these regulations 8 000 out of 20 000 African workers were arrested per annum. 'proportionately more than any part of the world'. See *SANAC*, Vol. III, p. 645.
38. *SANAC*, Vol. III, pp. 640–1.
39. The Togt Fund, established under the Togt Regulations of 1874, received all monies derived from the togt workers registration fee as well as fines accruing from the transgression of the regulations. This provided the finances for Durban's native administration prior to Act No. 27 of 1908. The amendment of 1902 coincided with the erection of additional barracks at the Point capable of housing between 1 600 and 2 000 men. *SANAC*, Vol. III, p. 640.
40. The Chief Constable, R. C. Alexander, expressing the frustrated vision of Durban's rulers, claimed that 'the wages [Africans] receive is altogether out of proportion to their wants and far in excess for the work they perform'. PRB no. 6, 28 January 1901.
41. Swanson, 'Multiracial Durban', ch. 9. Also D. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers: Dock-workers of Durban' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1979), pp. 100–17; P. la Hausse, 'Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Struggle in Durban: The Origins of the Beer Hall in South Africa, 1902–1908', unpublished Africa seminar paper, UCT, 1983.
42. The concept *local state* awaits adequate conceptualisation. For the moment it might be asserted that 'the municipality is a branch of the state and thus assists in the reproduction of all those conditions necessary for the accumulation of capital in general'.
43. By 1903 Durban was being described as a 'Modern Babylon with 200 houses of ill fame'. PRB no. 7, 4 November 1903. This state of affairs was encouraged by the influx of lumpen-refugees from the Reef during the Anglo-Boer War. Many white men were reportedly living with African women 'bringing disgrace on our own people', as R. C. Alexander put it. PRB no. 7, 3 July 1905.
44. Durban Corporation Letterbook (DCL) No. 548, R. C. Jameson MLC and Chairman of Durban Town Council's Sanitary Committee before the First Municipal Conference, Pietermaritzburg, 22 September 1904.
45. SNA, 1/1/351, 1906/294, Magistrate, Umlazi to Under-SNA.
46. Interview with S. B. Bourquin, retired manager of Durban's NAD, Durban, 23 January 1982.
47. See Charles van Onselen, 'Randlords and Rotgut, 1886–1903', *History Workshop*, 2, 1975, pp. 34–6. Also R. E. F. Smith, 'Drink in Old Russia', in E. J. Hobsbawm (ed.), *Peasants in History* (London, 1980), pp. 42–54.
48. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', p. 58. DCL no. 580, Chief Constable to Town Clerk, 14 December 1908.

49. See PRB no. 7, 4 July 1906 and also PRB no. 7, 3 July 1906.
50. *Isitshimiyane* is a highly intoxicating drink made from fermented treacle. Its production was less conspicuous because it could be prepared relatively rapidly. In terms of Act No. 27 of 1906 its sale and consumption were prohibited.
51. DCL no. 563, Inspector of Nuisances to Town Clerk, 12 November 1906.
52. Of 139 eating-houses over 100 catered for Africans and were run mostly by 'non-Britishers'. A racial breakdown of Durban's storekeepers showed the following: British – 1403, Indian – 432, Greeks and foreigners – 216, Chinese – 32. DCL no. 555, Inspector of Licences to Town Clerk, 4 December 1905.
53. DCL no. 547, Report of Councillor Jameson, 13 February 1905.
54. DCL no. 547, Petition by 940 Africans against the abolition of the Market, 6 March 1905.
55. Hop beer as opposed to 'native beer' was regarded as particularly intoxicating. It had a high sugar content (facilitating fermentation) and was often fortified with spirits.
56. PRB no. 7, 30 November 1906.
57. *Debates of the NLA*, 2 August 1906.
58. PRB no. 7, 30 November 1906.
59. PRB no. 7, 30 November 1906. For a useful examination of leisure time and social change see E. Yeo and S. Yeo, 'Ways of Seeing: Control and Leisure versus Class and Struggle' in E. Yeo and S. Yeo (eds), *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590–1914* (Sussex, 1981), pp. 128–54.
60. This fairly arbitrary figure was arrived at on the basis of the Beer Act of 1901 which placed a customs and excise duty on all liquor having an alcohol content greater than 2 per cent.
61. See *Debates of NLA*, 20 August 1907. Also SNA 1/1/375, 2447/1907, Chief Magistrate to SNA, 28 September 1907.
62. SNA 1/1/390, 178/1908, Judge President to Minister of Native Affairs, 17 January 1908.
63. See Swanson, 'Multiracial Durban', p. 426.
64. DCL no. 574, Chief Constable to Town Clerk, 15 April 1908.
65. DCL no. 575, A. Currie and six others to Mayor, 12 May 1908. Rooms were often rented from Indian landlords at monthly rents of fifteen to twenty shillings suggesting the profits to be made from brewing. As many as thirteen individuals could be involved in one operation.
66. For the passage of this legislation see *Debates NLA*, 8 and 9 September 1908. Any local authority in Natal could opt for a municipal monopoly on beer. Pietermaritzburg soon joined Durban in instituting a monopoly.
67. See DCL no. 579, Aron Mbhambo and J. M. Shezi to Mayor, 7 December 1908. Mbhambo was secretary of an organisation representing the traders. See also DCL no. 580, Petition of 116 African traders to Mayor, 13 January 1909. They complained that they would lose large investments in the purchase of *amabele* and mealies.
68. See n. 54 above.
69. *Mayor's Minute* (1909–1914) and TCF Kaffir Beer.
70. *Report of the Select Committee on the Working of Transvaal Liquor Laws (Rooth Report)* SC 2–18. Evidence of Chief Constable Donovan, p. 197.
71. *Izwe la Kiti*, 22 October 1913. T. L. Schreiner, vice-president of the South African Temperance Alliance (SATA). This was the first of many temperance criticisms of the Durban system. See also A. J. Cook, *The Durban System: Building Locations on Kaffir Beer* (Cape Town, 1921).

72. For the dangers of a loose usage of the concept 'social control' see Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Class Expression versus Social Control? A Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of "Leisure"', *History Workshop*, 4, 1977.
73. TCF Kaffir Beer, Vol. 48, File No. 91. Report of the Native Affairs Police and Fire Brigade Committee *re* Native Beer, 16 September 1914.
74. TCF Native Beer, Drunkenness reports, etc, Vol. 48, File No. 91, Overseer, Point Barracks to NAD, 27 July 1915.
75. TCF, Vol. 48, File 91, H. F. Rachmann to Municipal NAD, 27 July 1915.
76. In response to accusations that the beerhalls were the source of drunkenness, the hours of sale at the beerhalls were shortened to seven and a half hours a day. On Sundays the beerhalls were closed. The consumption of beer in municipal beerhalls became known as 'drinking in a cage'. See J. D. Rheinallt Jones and A. Saffery, 'Social and Economic Conditions of Native Life in South Africa', *Bantu Studies*, 8 (1), 1936. For a description of the stark character and strict supervision of beerhalls see TCF Native Beer, Vol. 48, File No. 91, W. Wanless to TC, 3 September 1915.
77. Durban Magistrates Correspondence (DMC) Vol. 494, D/280/1914, CM to CNC, 5 May 1914. Reports that beer was being brought into Durban by rail did not cease after 1909. See for example, PRB no. 7, 1 July 1910.
78. See TCF Native Beer Vol. 48, File No. 91, R. Jameson to O. Overbeck 19 August 1915. A similar plan was outlined by another writer, see J. M. Orpen, *Natives Drink and Labour* (East London, 1913).
79. *Mayor's Minute*, 1915. In 1911 a location 'for Natives of every description employed in the town' was planned. The requisite financing for this plan, however, had to await the sufficient accumulation of revenue in the Beer Fund. Space for 625 men was provided initially.
80. For descriptions of the value and extent of informal African residence in the town see TCF Native Affairs in the Borough Vol. 103, File 467. Probably two-thirds of the African population lived in backyards (especially domestic servants), employers' barracks or in quarters obtained from Indian rack-renters.
81. By 1914 dagga had been declared a prohibited drug. The 'national smoke' of Africans was widely enjoyed and a large group of petty traders depended upon it for their livelihood. See DCL no. 625, Police report *re* smoking of Insangu and *Mayor's Minute*, 1914.
82. For a description of one police raid which revealed the extent to which African women were staying in the town see DCL no. 647. Representation made by the Togt labourers of Durban in Chief Magistrates court room, 13 October 1913. By 1916 an estimated 2 500 African women lived in the town.
83. Minutes of Native Affairs Police and Fire Brigade Committee (NAPFBC), 23 January 1917.
84. *Report of the Department of Native Affairs for the Years 1913–1918* (UG 7–19).
85. In 1919 a very conservative estimate put the number of families living in the town and in peri-urban areas at 350, TCF Native Locations, Vol. 36, File 49, Layman to TC, 12 September 1919.
86. See Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', pp. 161–91. During one strike an African witness claimed that 'families were leaving the kraals through starvation', see Minutes NAPFBC, Book 2, 1 December 1919.
87. *Report of the Native Affairs Commission for the Year 1921* (UG 15–22), p. 25.
88. See T. R. H. Davenport, 'The Beginnings of Urban Segregation in South Africa, the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 and its Background', occasional paper No. 15, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, 1971. See also Paul Maylam, 'Aspects of African Urbanisation in the Durban Area before 1940', History Workshop on Natal 1930 – 1960, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1980.

89. See *Select Committee on Native Affairs 1922* (SC 3–23), pp. 129–48.
90. On the basis of beer profits, a Municipal Native Affairs Department was established in 1916 with J. S. Marwick as its first professional Manager.
91. *Mayor's Minute*, 1923, p. 12.
92. See DMC Vol. 499, D4/174/1914, H. Robb (C10) to CM, 17 February 1914; and DCL no. 652, Municipal NAD to TC, 3 February 1914.
93. TCF Native Beer Vol. 48, File no 91, Statement of a deputation of the Native Branch of the WCTU, 14 September 1914. John Dube, editor of *Ilanga lase Natal*, claimed that complaints about the beer monopoly should be taken 'by our educated people'. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 5 September 1913.
94. Minutes NAPFBC, 26 July 1915.
95. Report of the Deputation sent to Durban by the Municipal Council of Johannesburg, p. 24. Nyongwana was Editor of *Ilanga lase Natal* at this time.
96. See TCF Native Affairs in the Borough Vol. 63, File 467, Evidence submitted by the Town Council to the NEC, 18 March 1931.
97. With the aid of a firm of solicitors, Cowley and Cowley, by-laws dealing with the character column on passes, curfew laws, the management of African trade, and the control of meetings were challenged in court. By 1926, 35 000 workers were passing through Durban's deverminising station. The Supreme Court later ruled the process illegal.
98. TCF Native Affairs in the Borough, Vol. 48, File 467, Resolutions of mass meeting of the Durban Branch of the ANC, 23 June 1926. J. T. Gumede, together with John Dube, founded the Natal Native Congress (NNC) in 1901. In the mid-1920s the two had a fall-out over Dube's desire to keep the NNC independent of the national ANC, and Gumede formed the Natal African Congress (NAC) in 1926. This resolution thus stemmed from the NAC not the NNC, the latter comprising a very small group of educated men, most of whom were property-owners.
99. See *Report of the Select Committee on the Liquor Bill* (SC 7–26), pp. 398–9 for an examination of the variety of attitudes underlying the boycott resolution of 1926.
100. For a description of the reception of ICU organisers see Gilbert Coka, 'The Story of Gilbert Coka of the Zulu Tribe of Natal, South Africa' in M. Perham (ed.), *Ten Africans* (London, 1935), pp. 293–7. Also Helen Bradford, 'Strikes in the Natal Midlands: Landlords, Labour Tenants and the ICU', *Africa Perspective*, 22, 1983.
101. TCF Kaffir Beer Vol. 17, File 19:2, CC to TC, 16 February 1929, and *Natal Advertiser*, 4 February 1929. The figures for 1926 and 1927 were 984 and 890 respectively.
102. See Central Archives Depot (CAD), Native Economic Commission (NEC), Minutes of Evidence, pp. 6174–6. Evidence of H. C. Lugg.
103. Yeast was an essential fermenting agency for brewers. Increased drunkenness was blamed on the facility with which yeast could be obtained.
104. TCF Kaffir Beer Vol. 17, File 91:2, Layman to TC, 14 February 1929.
105. This 'clash', because of 'the increasing difference of opinion among Europeans and Natives', was predicted as early as 1926. See *Mayor's Minute* (1926).
106. Champion, after being suspended by Kadalie as Provincial Secretary of the ICU in 1928, broke away from the national body and formed the ICU *yase* Natal. For Champion's speech see Native Riots Commission (NRC), Minutes of Evidence, pp. 4–5. Evidence of H. S. Fynn. John Dube was shouted down at the same gathering.
107. The aged nationalist, Selby Msimang, still held firmly to the belief that municipal beer was not 'proper *utshwala*'. See interview with Selby Msimang, Edendale, 4 December 1981.

108. From the few available figures, African wages in Durban had barely risen and in a number of instances, remained the same or actually dropped over a period of twenty years. See Evidence of Durban's Native Administration Committee to the NEC, 31 March 1931, p. 14.
109. The ICU *yase* Natal sent a petition signed by 500 people to the Minister of Native Affairs in 1925 calling for home-brewing by women as an alternative to 'starvation at their kraals'. NRC, Minutes of Evidence, p. 344. Evidence of Champion. At a national level the Location Advisory Board's Congress passed a resolution in 1928 opposing the municipalisation of beer.
110. Peter Wickens claimed that Champion 'was casting around for a suitable grievance to exploit in the interests of reviving the ICU's following in Durban'. P. Wickens, *The Industrial and Commercial Workers Union of Africa* (Cape Town, 1978), p. 191. Hereafter cited as *The ICU of Africa*. Hemson claimed that the 'precise origins of the workers' struggle against the beer-halls are obscure'. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', p. 208. Both observations tend to overlook the context provided by cultural struggles. Leadership and organisations tend to be an expression of the potentialities established by this context.
111. NRC Minutes of Evidence, p. 24. Evidence of C. W. Lewis.
112. The ICU Unity League (also called the Red-Coated Brigade, the ICU Volunteers or the 'Mob Crowd') comprised about 200 ICU members who dressed in a particular way, often wearing red jackets and riding breeches and carrying sticks and clubs. They were responsible for carrying out 'natural justice' and recruiting members for the ICU *yase* Natal. 'Official' membership figures of the ICU *yase* Natal are highly problematic. Champion claimed that the membership of the ICU in Durban up to 1928 was 56 000; another estimate put this figure at 37 000. See Wickens, *The ICU of Africa*, p. 151; NRC Minutes of evidence, pp. 307–8, evidence of R. H. Arnold (CID). For a useful examination of how 'the masses' use the 'idioms of the masters' and simultaneously express spontaneity and creativity, see T. O. Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa 1890–1970* (London, 1976).
113. Secretary of Justice Files (SJ), Enquiry Durban Native Riots, Exhibits. Ref. K2281, Champion to Secretary, Sydenham Local Administration and Health Board, 4 May 1929. At another stage Champion claimed that the monopoly was an inappropriate way of 'maintaining Western civilization in this land'.
114. SJ Enquiry Durban Native Riots Ref. K2281, Document entitled Anti-Kaffir Beer League, 5 May 1929. Although ICU *yase* Natal leaders such as Champion and J. M. Ngcobo were involved in the League's formation, the residents of Sydenham who were calling for home-brewing clearly supplied the essential context for its existence.
115. This account, and that which follows, has been taken from various archival material including SJ Files Ref. K2281, NRC Minutes of Evidence and Durban Town Clerk Files. For secondary sources see J. H. Simons and R. E. Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850–1950* (London, 1969); Edward Roux, *Time Longer than Rope* (Wisconsin, 1978); Wickens, *The ICU of Africa*.
116. J. T. Gumede had travelled to Russia in 1928 and returned heralding the Soviet Union as the 'new Jerusalem'. He spoke out for a more radical Congress policy and it was under his leadership that the 'Native Republic' programme/slogan emerged. See M. Legassick, 'Class and Nationalism in South African Protest: The South African Communist Party and the "Native Republic", 1928–1934', unpublished paper, Syracuse University, 1973.

117. Champion claimed that wages were 'good', but that the ICU was 'taking up the burden of the togt boys' – and are willing to die with them'. Champion spoke at length on the beer issue, stating that 'Beer is sin when you buy it' and further that the ICU *yase* Natal had 'also decided to take part in the beer-drinking problem'. See SJ Files Enquiry Durban Native Riots Ref. K2281. Detective Constable A. Hobbs CID to Officer in Charge CID, 20 June 1929.
118. See G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History* (London, 1981), pp.5–8. Gramsci's discussion of 'spontaneous movements' is highly illuminating in relation to the riots of 1929. Of such movements he has said: 'Elements of "conscious leadership" cannot be checked, have left no reliable document . . . in such cases there exist multiple elements of "conscious leadership", but no one of them is predominant or transcends the level of a given social stratum's . . . "common sense".' See *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp.196–7.
119. In August 1928 the returns from beer were £4 671; in August 1929 they were under £2. Native Administration Committee Report Book, October 1929.
120. NRC Minutes of Evidence, pp.435–6. Gwabini was Administrative Secretary of the ICU in Johannesburg.
121. M. Perham, *African Apprenticeship* (New York, 1974), pp.194–5.
122. Immediately prior to the pass-burning campaign in Durban in December 1930, Nkosi demanded that anyone patronising beerhalls be killed. See TCF Durban Native Riots – 1929, Vol.57, File 323, Layman to TC, 13 November 1930.
123. Durban Magistrates Records File 1/9/2/1, CM to Secretary for Justice, 19 June 1929.
124. Minutes of the Native Administration Committee, Book 3, 19 November 1929.
125. *Mayor's Minute*, (1930).
126. Minutes of the NAB, 16 April 1930. J.R. Msimang 'stood condemned in the eyes of his own people' after forwarding this motion.
127. TCF Native Advisory Board Vol.57, File 323 A, Champion to TC, 16 January 1930.
128. *Natal Mercury*, 28 August 1930.
129. TCF Native Locations, Box 18, File 49, Report by Inspector of Native Urban Locations – Durban, August 1936.
130. For a discussion of the liberal reform movement on the Rand see Tim Couzens, '"Moralizing Leisure Time": The Transatlantic Connection and Black Johannesburg, 1918–1935' in Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone, (eds), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa* (London, 1982), pp.315–37.
131. *Natal Mercury*, 28 August 1930.
132. Coka, 'Story of Gilbert Coka', p.318.

But Hope does not Kill

Black Popular Music in Durban, 1913–1939

VEIT ERLMANN

The cities of Africa are arguably among the most powerful and restless motors of modern African musical development. The continent's major urban agglomerations, Kinshasa, Johannesburg, Douala, Ibadan, Accra, and others, generated such exhilarating musical styles as *Kongo jazz*, *kwela*, *soucous*, *makossa*, *juju*, and *highlife*. African cities have also produced many of the world's leading black entertainers, among them Miriam Makeba from Johannesburg, Fela Anikulapo Kuti from Lagos, and Manu Dibango from Douala. With well over three million inhabitants, Thekwini, as the sea-port city of Durban is known to its Zulu-speaking inhabitants, still ranks low on the list of African megalopolises. But despite its limited geopolitical role, Durban harbours a complex network of rich, intersecting black musical traditions that deserve closer scholarly examination. This essay will unfold those pages of Durban's musical chronicle that were written by black musicians and artists. In doing so it will take the reader along the more inconspicuous and dusty alleys of South Africa's black musical history – the dance clubs, factory compounds, union halls, and dance arenas – that South African musicologists have ignored in their search for the scant traces of the country's European heritage.

On a more theoretical level, this essay is concerned with the social, cultural and political factors that influenced the evolution of black popular performance in Durban. It is argued that in the decades between the turn of the century and the Second World War, Durban's black musical history was marked by a great diversity of performance traditions, but that urban growth, industrial expansion and socio-economic class differentiation failed to divide these traditions along class lines. Instead, a deep-reaching osmosis of expressive forms, including performance styles, seems to have characterised early black popular music in the port town, and this renders the determination of homogeneous class cultures and performance idioms in class terms difficult for at least three reasons.

First, industrialisation in Durban proceeded at a much slower pace than at other urban centres in South Africa and, with an elaborate system of organised migrant labour effectively blocking permanent black urbanisation, Durban's black population maintained stronger links with the rural hinterland. Teachers, ministers and traders, but also stevedores, shop assistants and domestic

servants, to varying degrees and in different ways, depended on a rural support base for their reproduction. Thus people who might otherwise have experienced quite diverse work situations, living conditions and patterns of cultural reproduction in town were bound together by common cultural roots in pre-industrial Zulu society.

Second, until the Second World War, Durban's black population was small in relation to the vast army of black workers toiling in the mines and secondary industries around Johannesburg. Until 1939, Durban's black élite never numbered more than a few thousand people, while the harbour and railway workers, traditionally one of the strongest sectors of Durban's black industrial proletariat, were still counted at no more than thirty thousand employed in 1935. In addition, this black urban population was fragmented into small occupational groups whose members rarely, if at all, perceived themselves as components of social classes. Whereas the upper strata of the city's black community had been shaped by several decades of exposure to and absorption of a uniform western mission culture, the social and cultural fragmentation of the city's labouring masses clearly militated against the evolution of a homogeneous working-class culture.

Third, none of the many group cultures evolving in Durban was in itself sealed off from the surrounding cultures. For instance, in terms of the ethnic differentiation of performance styles, it is inaccurate to speak of a homogeneous Zulu musical culture. Zulu-speaking Africans throughout Natal have always perceived finer regional and stylistic shades in their music than the commonplace label 'Zulu music' would imply. For not only did Zululand traditions and South Coast idioms differ, but in time each of these became infused with non-Zulu elements such as Bhaca dancing and the Sotho *isiRashiya* concertina style.

Furthermore, between the wars the boundaries between Durban's black strata were blurred, not only by the shared experience of degradation and intensive ethnic exchange, but by the fact that Durban's intermediate classes lived on the margins of abject poverty. In contradistinction to the huge numbers of black miners cooped up in the compounds on the Witwatersrand, dock workers in Durban's harbour area, the Point, lived within walking distance of the city centre where dance-halls, churches, and soccer fields provided a fertile ground for the fusion of élite culture and working-class dance and music. Thus, the popularity of Reuben Caluza's 'ragtime', the hymnodial roots of *isicathamiya* male choirs, and the hammering out of *isicathulo* boot dancing between docks and missions, were the result of this intensive contact.

At the same time, cultural communication within Durban's black community was guided by at least two broader mechanisms in the dialectic of power relations. As a result of mounting political repression, urban segregation and oppressive labour legislation, the position of the city's black intermediate classes became an increasingly precarious one. To secure their privileges, black

intellectuals and large landowners played the role of self-appointed spokesmen of their communities. While offering to act as a check on black popular militancy, to conciliate the white bourgeoisie, they negotiated minor concessions for the labouring poor. But to speak for the black majority also meant to speak in their own language. The political hegemony of Durban's black leaders, therefore, always involved an integration of both mission, rural and urban working-class cultural elements.

Firstly, the integration of workers, domestic servants and stevedores into Durban's labour market was uneven and therefore provoked heterogeneous responses to proletarianisation. At the very least, working-class cultures in the city constantly oscillated between two poles. Those workers who were more securely incorporated into the urban work-force identified with, and at least partially accepted, western cultural models, whilst the more vulnerable sectors, the unemployed and day-labourers, rallied around the symbols of the countryside. Thus working-class cultures in Durban differed markedly in their susceptibility to élite cultural hegemony as well as in the depth of their anchorage in vigorous, autonomous rural cultures.

A further line of argument being pursued in this essay is that as a result of the blurred class and cultural contours among Durban's black population, and often as an impediment to the formation of distinct class cultures, the persistence of ethnicity and ethnic cultural traditions remained determinant factors in urban cultural development. But neither of these was an unshakeable constant; ethnic boundaries and traditions were continually being negotiated in the social process and their continuous redefinition was contingent on the position of social actors as well as on the historical moment. Portrayals of Zulu rural customs by urban, mission-educated vaudeville troupes in 1904 differed significantly from those in 1936. In addition, at each stage the interpretation of the ethnic heritage by élite audiences and by migrant workers proceeded from different angles. Similarly, the reception of images of black identity and modernity, that were being spread among black South Africans by minstrel and vaudeville shows, produced differing South African versions of the 'coon' among literate performers and early protagonists of migrants' *isikhunzi* music.

But for all the ambiguity of urban class relations and the opalescence of ethnic traditions and cultural dynamics, the period between 1913 and 1939 affords unique insights into the making of Durban's early black musical history. In terms of periodisation, the decades between 1913 and 1939 stand out as one of the most turbulent phases in the annals of Durban's black population, marked as it was by an unprecedented acceleration of urban growth and a dense sequence of milestone dates in the political history of African resistance.

The 'pre-history' of popular performance in Durban's middle classes is inextricably wedded to the rise of land-owning peasant communities of *amakholwa* (believers) in Natal in the mid-nineteenth century. Yet for most of

these Christian farming communities, identification with Victorian, Christian cultural models had never been easy. Prosperous African farmers who had grown up with a firm belief in the superiority of individual property rights and hard work over traditional communal land-tenure found it increasingly difficult to reconcile these essentials of Victorian ideology with a social reality in which these very rights came under massive pressure from white settlers who wanted to expand their political and cultural hegemony. It was the white settlers' hostility to a successful and independent Christian black peasantry, which – as Shula Marks argued – 'made it far more difficult for Natal *kholwa* to model themselves on an idealised perception of imperial middle-class society in the way that the African intelligentsia in Kimberley . . . were able to do'.[1] Nothing perhaps conveys better the contrast between white settler exclusivism and African identification with Victorian ideology, or the resultant cultural crisis in Natal's black élite, than the words of Johannes Khumalo, spoken in 1863 at Edendale in protest against the exclusion of Africans from civil law:

> We have left the black race and have clung to the white. We imitate them in everything we can . . . Look round you. You have an English house, English tables, chairs . . . everything round us is English but one, and that is the law.[2]

For Zulu-speakers, until the turn of the century, the prevailing category of music that symbolised the identification with Victorian values was *imusic*. It was the least politically overt musical category and as such included predominantly western classical music, hymns, English ballads and part songs such as 'The Lass of Richmond Hill', and Anglo-American ballads such as 'They Grew in Beauty Side by Side' and 'The Little Brown Jug'.[3] *Imusic* constituted the bulk of the repertoire of most mission-based Durban choirs of the period, among them the popular Thulasizwe Choir under J.P. Mahlobo and the Flying Birds under Littin Mthethwa. Ultimately, the genre as well as names like the Motor Car Choir, Steam Roller Choir, and Electric Light Choir, signalled confidence in 'progress' and 'improvement', keywords of the educated black élite.

Although *imusic* was essentially grounded in European and American music, it was not simply a black imitation of metropolitan élite culture. On the other hand, *imusic* equally lacked the qualities that were needed to satisfactorily express the growing resistance to declining black political autonomy and deteriorating class privileges towards the turn of the century. It is for these reasons, that it is not possible to speak of an 'élite' culture – in the sense that Karin Barber has given to the term – in the upper strata of Natal's black society at the turn of the century.[4] Although the landowners of Edendale may have been conversant with the full repertoire of metropolitan culture, they were at the same time groping towards alternative forms of cultural and political

expression. By the turn of the century, various forms of Ethiopianism, Afro-American ideas of self-advancement, and embryonic African nationalism, had become powerful alternatives to colonial ideology and major forces in the intellectual climate of Natal's *amakholwa* communities. It is its role as a defence against white exclusivism and racism that accounts for the early impact of Afro-American music and minstrelsy, together with a variety of other forms of musical comedy and black humour, on the evolution of black popular music in South Africa, particularly in Natal and Durban.

Durban audiences had first gained experience of Afro-American culture through the visits of Orpheus McAdoo and his Jubilee Singers between 1891 and 1898.[5] McAdoo's concerts of jubilee hymns and his minstrel shows were the first representation of black life and living conditions in the United States. *Amakholwa* audiences throughout Natal acclaimed these descendants of former slaves as their 'music heroes', and by the turn of the century, minstrelsy had reached even the remotest rural areas in Natal and elsewhere in southern Africa. Mission-school graduates formed minstrel troupes modelled on McAdoo's company and the numerous white blackface troupes.[6]

Admiration for Afro-American values ran particularly high at Ohlange, a private college outside Durban, founded in 1901 by future ANC president John L. Dube as a counterpart to Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute in the United States. Musical performance formed an integral part of Ohlange's educational programme, and some of Durban's finest choirs emerged from the school overlooking the hills of Inanda. Apart from a brass band conducted by Clement Tshabalala, one of Ohlange's first boarders, the school boasted the Nightingales Choir conducted by Isaiah Ngidi and the G.T.V. Dum Choir under Walter Dimba, a future official of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU). The regular Ohlange Choir was under the baton of Charles Dube and Ngazana Luthuli. In addition, 'coon' groups like the Highland Coons under D.H. Opperman and the Inanda Native Singers under Alfred J. Ncamu were particularly active in performing minstrel songs and other Afro-American-derived material. The latter group's repertoire included such Stephen Foster classics as 'Old Folks at Home', 'Gentle Annie', 'Some Folks Say That a Preacher Won't Steal', C.A. White's 'I'se Gwine Back to Dixie', and 'coon' songs like 'Who Stole My Chicken Away' and 'Oh, Gloriam'.[7] Fashionable wedding parties of mission converts were treated to solo performances of minstrel songs like 'Good Old Jeff' and Henry C. Work's 'The Kingdom Is Coming', while church and mission-school choirs tried their hands at J. Bland's 'Golden Slippers', the Haverly's Minstrels' tune 'Irene, Goodnight' and vaudeville, music-hall comic ballads like 'Cock of the North' and 'Hold Your Hand Out Naughty Boy'. Until at least 1915, ragged minstrel outfits and burnt-cork faces were regular sights at mission-school concerts,[8] and *amathombo* bone clappers became integrated into the repertory of Zulu traditional musical instruments.[9] As late as 1918, scenes like the following,

reported from a rural mission night-school in Umzumbe, south of Durban, were not uncommon:

> One of the items was a march across the platform of all the urchins with a bone clapper, at the head of the line . . . and to the astonishment of all, one of the most heathenish boys stood up and sang 'Tipperary', keeping time to his singing by the twirling of an invisible mustache.[10]

Apart from 'Tipperary', bone clappers, and such perfectly innocent items as 'Good Old Jeff', minstrel shows also included more sensitive items. One of the English 'coon' songs that was remembered by Hiver Hyvas veteran, and Mariannhill graduate, Robert T. Mazibuko, as a popular tune in Durban before the First World War, ran as follows:

> Coon, coon, coon.
> I wish my colour would fade.
> I wish I were a white man
> Instead of a nigger coon.[11]

A song such as this illustrates the ambiguity inherent in the use of images of Afro-Americans mediated by white stereotypes. A symbol for the successful and self-conscious urban black and, as such, abused by white racists, the 'coon' could also be a positive hero for blacks. Thus it is debatable, as David Coplan posits, whether 'few black South Africans could understand the crude sexual or racist lyrics' and hence whether the appeal of 'coon songs' was not in what they said, but in the rhythm and swing in which they said it.[12] Although the racist mockery of a song like 'Coon, Coon, Coon' was certainly not exceptional, the translation of many original English 'coon' songs into Zulu probably toned down some of the shriller racist undertones.[13] An all-time favourite of black South Africans for the better part of the late nineteenth century and well into the 1920s, Foster's 'Oh Susanna', with its mildly derisive portrayal of the ignorant country bumpkin and of courtly love, was probably understood more as a mockery of rural blacks than of blacks as such:[14]

> I came from Alabama wid my banjo on my knee,
> I'm g'wan to Louisiana
> My true love for to see.
> It rain'd all night the day I left,
> The weather it was dry,
> The sun so hot I frose to death,
> Susanna don't you cry.
> Oh, Susanna, oh!
> Don't you cry for me,
> I've come from Alabama,
> Wid my banjo on my knee.

> I jumped aboard de telegraph
> And trabbelled down de riber,
> De Lectrie fluid magnified,
> And killed five hundred Nigger.
> De bullgine bust, de horse run off,
> I really thought I'd die.
> I shut my eyes to hold my breath,
> Susanna, don't you cry.
> Oh, Susanna, oh . . .

From these and other examples of American minstrel songs, such as Stephen Foster's 'Some Folks Say That a Preacher Won't Steal' of 1855, it seems clear that in the hands of early black South African performers, the characters of the minstrel stage became central tools of black intra-communal criticism. Minstrel humour closed the ranks of the black community and ultimately helped to restore racial confidence. Thus it is a perfect illustration of the effects of minstrel performances that, as early as 1904, the Inanda Native Singers persuaded doubtful concert-goers who 'did not think there [was] anything worth seeing which could be done by Blacks', of the viability of black values.[15]

The legacy of the minstrel theatre is even more clearly mirrored in the rise, in and around Durban, of two genres of stage performance, musical comedy and drama. Immediately after the war, students at Mariannhill Monastery outside Durban, began experimenting with one-act dramatisations of folk tales and social topics. Inspired by playlets written by Father Bernhard Huss on biblical themes and school life, the students staged sketches such as *The Egg Thief* and *The Inspector*. Most of the plays have survived in the Dramatisation Book, a collection of manuscripts which was compiled after 1919, possibly by Benedict Vilakazi's sister, and which is presently kept in the archives of the Mariannhill Monastery. Others, such as the immensely popular pantomime, *The Barber Shop of Olden Times*, were possibly indebted to early American minstrel skits such as Dan Emmett's playlet *German Farmer* or *The Barber Shop in an Uproar*.[16]

The plays were staged in the hall of Baumannville location as part of classical concerts and, like Dube's Ohlange Brass Band and Mthethwa's Zulu Union Choir, enjoyed the financial support of the Durban Town Council.[17] The municipal interest in African recreation came in response to the rapid transformation of Durban's black urban population and the emergence of forms of urban culture that were potentially oppositional to white rule. It was inspired by the reform initiatives of the American Board of Missions' priest Ray E. Phillips in Johannesburg that were aimed at 'moralizing the leisure time of natives'.[18] In Durban, it was Phillips' ABM colleagues, James Dexter Taylor and J. McCord, and the Catholic priest, Bernhard Huss, who spearheaded this movement towards social control by using drama as a means of defusing black

militancy. Indeed, for Mariannhill graduate and poet laureate Benedict Vilakazi, 'the birth of a *Zulu Drama*' was directly linked to the 'ebb of the political upheaval of 1920'.[19]

Leaving aside the sheer naïvety of these precursors of modern black South African theatre, their importance lies in the 'rapid dramatic effect with which the movement and change of scene' were realised on stage and in 'their later effect on the minds of students'.[20] One such student was Nimrod Makhanya, one of the earliest black musical comedians in South Africa. Nimrod Makhanya was born in the Transvaal, the son of Jan Makhanya and Kate Manye, an extraordinarily musical woman who had travelled to England as a member of the South African Choir in 1891. From 1920, Nimrod attended St. Francis College at Mariannhill and later the Ohlange Institute where he came under the influence of Reuben T. Caluza, the leading composer of the time. In 1930, Makhanya formed the Bantu Glee Singers, a highly popular variety troupe modelled on Caluza's Double Quartet which recorded more than forty records for His Master's Voice in Johannesburg in 1932 and undertook extensive tours of the country until well into the 1950s.[21]

Makhanya shared with his teacher, Caluza, a remarkable talent for dramatic effects and comedy. Rooted as they were in Afro-American minstrel theatre and British music-hall skits of the Harry Lauder kind, Makhanya's sketches portrayed social misfits and the 'evils' of 'detribalisation' and proletarianisation. One of these, and among his best known comical numbers, was 'Ndiyi Traveller' (HMV GU 78), a song about the vagrant George, composed around 1926:

> Ladies and Gentlemen in this hall . . .
> Boys and Girls everywhere . . .
> I can see you don't know me.
> From this day on you will know me.
> I am George . . . myself!
> I am big George, son of Maqanda.
> I am like this because I am a drunkard.
> Down at Durban they know me.
> At Cape Town they know me.
> In Basutoland they yearn for George.
> In Pondoland they yearn for brother George.
> At Eshowe also they yearn for George.
> It is I who say so
> Because I am drunk.
> I am neither a minister nor a teacher.
> I am just a 'thing that drinks'![22]

Makhanya's appearances as the ragged, ne'er-do-well George set the standard for what was to grow into one of the greatest fruits of Zulu musical creativity: musical comedy. The line that links Caluza, Makhanya and other Zulu-speaking comedians such as Ndaba Majola, Victor Mkhize and Petros Qwabe, forms part of one of the proudest traditions in South African performing arts, and – to vary the words of Lawrence Levine – no inquiry into the consciousness and inner resources of black South Africans can ignore the content and structure of black humour.[23]

Among the numerous functions of black laughter, the one that seems to have been most pervasive under the conditions of racial oppression in South Africa, is the provision of some measure of control over the seemingly inescapable tyranny of racism. The most frequently applied method was not so much the classical technique of role inversion, but the evocation of black solidarity through intra-communal criticism. Certainly, a song such as 'Ndiyi Traveller' served to distance the mission-educated élite from the 'uncultured' urban labourers and therefore legitimised leadership claims. But the laughter about George was also a laughter of recognition: blacks knew that in the final analysis the vagrants and unemployed were part of their own community. Seen from the bottom end of the social ladder, however, the victims of black laughter were often those who had carved out a niche for themselves in the upper echelons of society, the preachers and policemen, the clerks and *indunas*, rather than the Georges, whose social mobility was in a more downward direction. For instance, an early recorded version of the well-known work song 'Nyikithi' is more than a satire on the black assistants of labour repression:

> All together now!
> Hiya! Hold together!
> Whom do we address?
> We address the policeman
> The one who fears the handcuffs!
> O! Heave, hold!
> Lift, up together!
> If it sticks, try water.[24]

Songs such as this provide clues to the perspective on black solidarity from below. 'Nyikithi' reminded black policemen – a privileged social position at the time – that they, too, were black and, like migrant workers, victims of racial oppression.

Around the First World War, as the tensions within the black community and opposition to white society increased, black pride and intra-communal criticism as the central motives of black popular entertainment were carried over into ragtime, the genre that was to dominate Durban's black musical world for much of the 1920s and 1930s. The evolution of ragtime, or *iRagtime* as it became

known to Zulu-speaking South Africans, is closely linked with the career of Reuben Tholakele Caluza (1895–1969).[25] Born into a well-established *kholwa* family at Edendale, Reuben's early years were marked by the traumatic transformation of that once prosperous peasant community into a rural slum. As a pupil at Dube's Ohlange Institute, Caluza was in touch with African nationalist ideas, and with what Durban audiences perceived as 'ragtime' – the minstrel tunes, sheet music and gramophone records of music-hall songs of British provenance that were readily available in Durban's music shops and were eagerly absorbed by black performers. Thus Caluza formed his own fully fledged blackface minstrel troupe, called 'Coons', that had regular appearances at Durban's New Location. As for Dube's Ohlange Choir, it was perfectly in tune with the most recent trends when it performed Tin Pan Alley composer Paul Wenrich's 'Moonlight Bay' in Durban's New Location Hall in 1916. J. Gumede's Georgedale Choir even took things somewhat further and presented 'Ragtime Crazy' in the sanctified environment of the Methodist Church in Grey Street.[26]

As a result of the growing interest in syncopated music, from around 1916 Caluza composed a number of songs exploiting the harmonic and rhythmic precepts of British 'music-hall' songs. The most famous of these was 'Ixeghwana or Ricksha Song' (Old Man or Ricksha Song) (HMV GU 5) composed in 1917:

> I saw an old grey-bearded man.
> He had covered himself with a blanket,
> his feet were white, too.
> My ricksha with big horns and white legs,
> jumping around and looking for passengers.
> 'Oh ricksha Sir, boss, miss.
> [in *fanakalo*] I you take round the town.'
>
> (transl. Nana Jali)

Ricksha-pullers had long been one of the strongest and most militant sectors of Durban's black working class, with their own distinctive dress and street cries. Thus it was small wonder that songs from the milieu of the ricksha-pullers had always been a component of Durban's black popular culture. Performances of 'Ixeghwana' brought out the ricksha-pullers in full force, and during one of the strikes of Durban's ricksha men, Caluza's composition even surfaced as a protest song. In a sense, as P. Kirby pointed out, the words of 'Ixeghwana', with the sprinkle of *fanakalo* words among them, could indeed be seen as 'a criticism of the European attitude to the African'.[27] But such criticism of white racism was far less relevant to Caluza's audiences than may appear at first sight. What made Caluza's 'Ixeghwana' so popular among all strata of Durban's black population, were two things. Firstly, the song formulated a critique of those members of the black community who had sacrificed their cultural roots for the benefit of only a fleeting acceptance in white society, and who by speaking *fanakalo*, that most supreme form of canonised racial stereotypes, accepted the ultimate white insult to Africans and their language. Secondly, 'Ixeghwana' was the first composition by a black South African composer that merged topical lyrics in the vernacular with ragtime, the most polished form of musical entertainment of the time.

Caluza's music further demonstrates how ragtime songs blended with the cultural symbols fostered within the emerging black nationalist movements in South Africa. Syncopated music was seen by South African blacks not as being derogatory and racially biased, but rather as an expression of racial pride. Through the Ohlange Choir and its ragtime performances, wrote R.R.R. Dhlomo, 'many have felt proud of being black: many have shed tears because of patriotic resurgence'.[28] In his later recordings of the more solemn 'Vulindhlela Mta Ka Dube', for example, Caluza even introduces the song with a lively ragtime piano solo, thereby demonstrating the compatibility of the hymnodic, nationalist idiom with *iRagtime* (Zonophone 4280).

Other ragtime songs were concerned with the growing cultural differentiation within black society. Thus, 'Ematawini or Excuse Me Please' (In Town) (HMV GU 43) reflects the amazement that new arrivals in Durban might have felt at the complexities of town life and the adroitness of the 'Excuse-me-people', the slick and well-adapted urban dwellers:

> As you see us here we are from home.
> Along the coast we saw sugar cane fields and a sugar mill,
> and people who buy treacle for their beer.
> We went to Durban and we got attracted to
> young women and men marching up and down the streets.
> They are proud of their clothes.
> Some of them were going to the beach and to Madala.
> They say: 'Excuse me please, can I please pass?
> We would like a cup of tea.'
> Young men were wearing hats,
> and young women were walking like ducks.
> You could see that some of them were students.
> It is like that in town.
> There are all kinds of people.
> Ugly and beautiful people, proud and simple people.
> Some of them are embarrassing.
> And you also find dangerous people.
>
> (transl. Nana Jali)

Songs such as these provided Durban's urban blacks with models for self-parody that minimised the trauma of rural economic and cultural decline and satirised the over-assimilationist tendencies within the upper reaches of Durban's *amakholwa*.

At the same time, Caluza was sensitive to the deteriorating middle-class position in the urban economy. His songs illustrate this quite vividly. In November 1923 the Durban city fathers had introduced a new dispensation that provided for the compulsory medical examination of all black work-seekers and for a procedure referred to as 'dipping'. The process whereby male workers were 'deverminised' in tanks was met with bitter and fierce popular resistance and was later abandoned. But *idiphu*, as the practice was known to Zulu-speaking Durbanites, nevertheless became the target of extensive comment in popular songs such as Caluza's 'Idiphu eThekwini' (The Dipping in Durban) (HMV GU 41) that was sung by critics from across the entire spectrum of black society:

> What are you people saying about the dipping tank in Durban?
> What is chasing people away from Durban?
> Hey, everybody, long live the black nation.
> Blacks must be united.
> Talk on our behalf, Mafukuzela! [John Dube]
> We thank you, Mr. Mathibela and Mr. Bhulose
> for co-operating with Mafukuzela.
>
> (transl. Nana Jali)

On a similar level, Caluza's song 'Sixotshwa Emsebenzini' (We are Being Expelled from Work) (HMV GU 23), composed in 1924, criticises the Industrial Conciliation Act that threatened to push black artisans, shop assistants, nurses and other black professionals into the army of jobless or underpaid labourers:

> A serious problem is facing the black nation.
> Whites are expelling us from work.
> They only employ whites.
> We have been working for them for many
> years, without any problems.
> But now blacks get no jobs in Durban and
> Johannesburg.
> Most are idling, because they have nothing
> to do.
> But we have to pay rent.
> We are going to be arrested without money.
> What are we going to do?
>
> (transl. Nana Jali)

The brunt of 'dipping', job reservation and other restrictive measures that made the lives of black Durbanites miserable, was clearly borne by the majority of urban poor. It was small wonder, therefore, that songs such as these met with a high degree of appreciation among Durban's labourers. At the same time, songs such as 'Idiphu' and 'Sixotshwa' afforded the black intelligentsia a platform from which to proclaim their leadership role. Thus, in spite of a perceived common black identity, the forms and direction of black intra-communal criticism, as well as the specific ways in which American popular culture was transformed, were clearly also a question of social position and negotiation. The construction of a black identity through the medium of songs, dance and musical comedy involved at least as many contradictions and ambiguities as the evolution of Zulu ethnic traditions in modern Durban.

Afro-American cultural models, however diluted by minstrelsy they may have been, clearly provided black alternatives to a 'civilisation' that was increasingly being resented as being exclusively 'white'. But they also lacked the ethnic components that rural Africans could readily identify and use in expressing the widespread anti-colonial sentiments. At the same time, ethnic traditions were a double-edged sword, whether in the hands of the black cultural élite, or in those of the white liberals, white capitalists and the state. The central ambiguity in ethnicity in southern Africa, and elsewhere in Africa, was the fact that it could be 'created' from above in an attempt to hamper unified political resistance against colonial subjection. At the same time ethnic consciousness served in many cases as a powerful focus of popular opposition, and frequently co-existed with other forms of consciousness, whether national, racial or worker.[29]

It is this ambivalence that is reflected in the evolution of Zulu performance genres in Durban and Natal between the turn of the century and the mid-1930s. Naturally, it was within the Christian churches that the frictions between pre-colonial cultural traditions and modernity first became apparent. The missionaries, one *Ilanga* correspondent complained, had 'naturally discouraged and tabooed' traditional culture, but failed to put anything 'in the place of old heathen songs of the Natives'.[30] In parts of Natal rural Christians had, therefore, begun to replace the blunt Victorian type of Christianity with their own African Christian church repertoire. In Inanda, only a stone's throw away from Dube's Ohlange Institute, Isaiah Shembe had founded the Church of Nazareth in 1911. He composed an extensive body of liturgical songs, in part based on traditional genres such as *isigekle*. To complement the notion of a truly African form of Christian worship, Shembe also created a new type of ritual dress, combining traditional Zulu regalia with white colonial uniforms called *amaScotch*, and a religious choreography (*ukusina*) that drew extensively on traditional *isigekle* dance patterns.[31]

Others, who were not concerned with the intricacies of black Christianity, contented themselves with more worldly, satirical songs. One of these,

'Inkomidi Isesikoleni' (The Committee is at School), was popular in Ndwedwe District among John Dube's clan of the Qadi people:

> The Committee is at the school.
> We are plagued by Christians.[32]

Clearly, against the dwindling resonance of Christian and Victorian values, and notwithstanding the popularity of minstrel music with urban and mission audiences, the spokesmen of the Christian élite of black landowners had to consider more effective ways of securing their hegemony over the black labouring masses. At the turn of the century, the larger *amakholwa* landowners were finding their position increasingly undermined by war, drought and rinderpest, and finally by the Natives' Land Act. Weakening prospects of accumulation, and of integration into the colonial bourgeoisie, prompted the insight that the landowners 'would need to seek a larger constituency to help protect the gains they had made so far, if not to expand them. And this meant forging links with the wider African community.'[33] John Dube himself, although opposed to non-Christian 'tribal' customs such as *lobola* (bride-wealth), had very clear ideas about this dilemma:

> It is under the tribal system that the land is help [*sic*] by our Natives and, if I want land, I cannot get away from it. If I want land, I must associate the occupation of the land with the tribal system.[34]

Getting the land meant singing the song of the land. Music was therefore ideal as a symbolic system of collective identification, and it is in this sphere of ideological discourse that the Natal black élite was remarkably successful in mobilising large constituencies. Whereas, previously, the *amakholwa* and traditional peasantry had each belonged to mutually exclusive classes with their own diametrically opposed cultures, early competitions organised by Dube, before and during the war, featured sporadic performances of dance songs such as 'Umfazi Umaqed Isikhwana' (My Wife is Wasting Money). These were accompanied by traditional drums and reed flutes and, as the title of the example suggests, expressed Zulu traditionalist criticism of the wasteful European life-style of the *kholwa*.[35] Traditional musical genres, together with Zulu versions of western part songs and choir arrangements of Zulu folk tunes, constituted *isiZulu*, a musical category whose popularity sometimes exceeded that of *imusic* and *iRagtime*. Although *isiZulu* and traditional dances were usually shunned by white missionaries as 'heathen', traditional performance idioms provided a common, genuine framework for the expression of Zulu ethnic identity in opposition to the virulent racism of Natal's white settlers.

But what thus became defined as 'traditional', of necessity had to be based on élite notions of a 'purified' cultural heritage. Clearly, when the rural and urban

black masses drew on vigorous pre-colonial cultural practices to define and make more secure their situation under the new economic order, such continuity frequently threatened the position and leadership claims of Natal's black élite that were based on assimilation to the hegemonic European lifestyle. What was thus discarded as outmoded, or simply declared as non-Zulu in the name of a 'Christian Zulu' culture, in most cases did not accord with the strategies of Dube and his allies to advance their acceptance in white colonial society. Critics of the concept of 'invented tradition' are right, of course, in arguing that traditions are always invented ones. But it is the appropriation of peasant traditions by urban élites, and the subsequent myth of cultural continuity, that make the notion of 'invented tradition' particularly useful within the South African context.

One of the first published collections of a reformulated Zulu musical 'heritage' is *Amagama Abantu*, a collection of African secular songs, published in 1911 by John Dube and his music-teacher wife Nokutela.[36] The booklet contained tonic sol-fa scores of thirty-one Zulu wedding songs, love songs and *umqumqumbelo* dance songs, cast in four-square part structures. The booklet helped, together with other activities in the sphere of performance, to fill the void created by missionary cultural indoctrination, and defined middle-class notions of the Zulu musical heritage. It also provided the foundations of a repertoire that was distinct from 'Zulu songs which are of a very poor quality and thus cannot be sung in front of the educated audience'.[37]

It became clearer after 1918 that the revitalised and domesticated traditions of the pre-colonial countryside could be used to check the resonance of anti-capitalist ideologies and militancy among the urban masses, as well as among rural labour tenants and reserve dwellers. The war had restructured Durban's black society profoundly. The city witnessed a period of unprecedented expansion, and thousands of work-seekers fleeing desperate rural living conditions, swelled the ranks of Durban's black residents. Between 1911 and 1921, the city's black population increased by 88 per cent from 18 179 to 34 217. To counter increasing outbursts of popular discontent, the Durban municipality devised a set of reform programs including improved housing and recreation facilities. On a more general level, the post-war period saw a more sustained effort by the state to influence black political thinking by a restoration of Zulu tribal authorities, and a strengthening of ethnic consciousness. Thus Shula Marks has shown how, in the hands of the state, Zulu history, the Zulu monarchy and the symbols of Zulu ethnicity became a crucial part of the strategy of social control. The foundation of Inkatha in 1922–24, an organisation aimed at gaining state recognition for the Zulu monarchy, was an important component of this strategy.[38]

Within popular performance, the resurgence of Zulu ethnicity among shopkeepers and stevedores was the product of an even neater meshing of various class initiatives. Already prior to the First World War, more

conservative nationalist leaders, such as Dube, had used Zulu ethnic consciousness and traditionalism as a base for broadening their ideological hegemony and to buttress their class position. Expression had been found for these ideas in the performance of traditional music belonging to the *isiZulu* category. Such attempts reached grander, commercial dimensions when the first gramophone recordings appeared on the Durban market. In 1927, James Stuart recorded some twenty records of royal *izibongo* and other traditional lore, and in 1929–30, Simon Sibiya and John Matthews Ngwane followed with a further thirty-four records which included not only traditional songs but also 'comic songs' like 'Ngi bonelen amapoyisa' (Zonophone 4243).[39]

Certainly, such recordings were calculated to invoke in town audiences images of rural harmony, and to discourage permanent urban residence as a viable life project. But to ascribe the popularity of Zulu lore and royal symbols to the working of some ideological strategy of the state, or the entertainment industry alone, would be to underestimate the popular acceptance of traditional power structures. Among rural Africans, the loss of independent African power, and the destruction of gender relations and the patriarchal structures of the Zulu kingdom, nurtured a strong and genuine anti-capitalist ideology, tempered by traditionalist sentiments focused on the Zulu king. The affairs of Zulu royalty therefore resonated deeply with rural Africans, and the fact that royal political manoeuvres became topics of songs is more than the result of some ideological strategy from above. A song such as 'Inkosi Bayibizile Eshowe' (The King has Been Summoned to Eshowe), now widely considered a genuine, 'traditional' song, commemorates Solomon kaDinuzulu's frequent bouts of ill-feeling *vis-à-vis* the white administration in Eshowe, then administrative capital of Zululand:

> The king has been summoned to Eshowe.
> We will get there tomorrow.
> O, they have summoned him to Nongoma.
> Gentlemen, remain calm!
>
> (transl. Nan Jali)

If the acceptance of ethnic traditions among black cultural leaders, before the war and during much of the 1920s, was never more than half-hearted, the 1930s saw significant changes in black attitudes towards tradition and ethnicity. Thus in 1932, Mark Radebe, chief musical ideologue and Johannesburg music critic, argued that a genuine national musical idiom had to be 'based on the only real Bantu music, namely, its folk music'.[40] Radebe's pro-folklore stance grew out of the gradual shift of liberal positions and urban reform projects towards an acceptance of territorial segregation and the idea of African reserves as viable repositories of black development. In Natal, an ideological alliance between Dube, sugar baron Heaton Nicholls, and Senator Edgar Brookes, exerted a strong influence on African thinking about ethnic tradition, and both Ohlange

Institute and Adams were instrumental in bringing the educated élite into tune with the new policy.[41] Thus it is by no means accidental that in terms of musical performance, the shift towards traditionalism first occurred at Adams and Ohlange. Brookes was Principal at Adams, and the most influential troupe of 'ethnic' vaudeville, Mthethwa's Lucky Stars, was largely composed of teachers trained at Adams.

The Lucky Stars had been founded in 1929 by Esau Fika Mthethwa, a teacher at Amanzimtoti. On his death in 1933, the troupe was taken over by his younger brother, Isaac Layton Mthethwa, a teacher, born at Inanda in 1913, and Joseph Nkunzi Zubane, born in 1896. Isaac Mthethwa first became involved in such solid middle-class enterprises as the Mendi Memorial Club, but later also in the ICU. In addition to Mthethwa and Zubane, the Lucky Stars consisted of eight members, most of them young graduates of Adams College. The troupe quickly made a name for itself through appearances at the Bantu Social Centre, Durban's Town Hall, and eventually on tours of the Union. Esau Mthethwa had been a skilled performer on violin, piano, guitar and concertina, and this mixed heritage was partly reflected in the shows. Apart from such European classics as 'The Sea Hath its Pearls', the Lucky Stars gloried in 'scenes of native domestic life with a realism which would be otherwise unobtainable'.[42] These scenes were fully developed one-act skits, modelled on the Mariannhill plays of 1919, which concentrated on themes like *Umthakathi* (Witchdoctor) and *Ukoqomisa* (Courting).[43] The show impressed white liberal audiences and evoked in impresario Bertha Slosberg the desire to 'salvage from European influence the remaining power, the native simplicity, the splendid savage grandeur of a dying pagan land'.[44] However, plans to take the Lucky Stars to Europe failed to materialise, and until shortly after Isaac Mthethwa's death in 1937, the troupe continued to play to mixed audiences throughout the Union. Among black audiences, as D. Coplan points out, the dramatisations of an idealised cohesive and culturally integrated society were all the more appealing for their remoteness from the insecurity and alienation of urban life.[45] And though élite critics such as Herbert Dhlomo mocked the show as 'exotic crudities',[46] Durban audiences 'perceived finer shades of relevant ethical significance, and relished the skilful dramatisation of a double-barrelled purpose in each play'.[47]

But the reworking of ethnic traditions did not only depend on class initiatives from above. It also resulted from the complex interplay of social actors mobilising a wide spectrum of sometimes conflicting cultural resources, and is perhaps best illustrated by the evolution of dance in Durban and Natal. Although the contours of Durban's popular performance idioms, after the war and during the early 1920s, are blurred by the lack of sufficient numbers of sound recordings before 1930, and a dearth of written and oral evidence, we can safely assume that rural dance forms continued to occupy a great deal of the leisure time of newly urbanised domestic servants and dock workers. It is to African male dances, in particular, one of the most powerful and most

prominent symbols of working-class identity, that we must therefore direct our attention.

The majority of traditional Zulu dances were group activities that were embedded in and reflected the social and gender divisions within pre-capitalist Zulu society.[48] The dances that white colonists tended to notice most were *amahubo* regimental dances, the most powerful expression of Zulu military might and group identity. Although, by the 1880s, Zulu independent political power had been broken, the songs and dances still rang with anti-white feelings and violence. Once removed from their pre-capitalist context and transformed into assertions of new regional or ethnic identities in the cities, these dances were therefore received with considerable nervousness by white colonists. In particular, it was the alleged military connotations of urban dancing, collectively referred to as *ingoma*, that stirred up white fears.

The term *ingoma* (lit. 'song') covers a broad range of male group dances like *isikhuze*, *isicathulo*, *isiBhaca*, *umzansi*, and *isishameni* that form the peak of Zulu-speaking migrants' dance culture. But the *ingoma* dances of the 1920s represented less the continuity of pre-colonial, traditional performance than the complex interaction of traditional dance forms, labour migration and mission influence. In particular, *ingoma* was a product of the dramatic socio-economic changes in the South African countryside after the First World War. After the turn of the century, with increasing dispossession and scarcity of land, and the collapse of Zulu military organisation, the regional opposition between clans, an element of pre-capitalist political cohesion, could no longer be expressed and contained in legitimate ways. The so-called faction fights that pitted families and clans against each other in grim battles, were a result of the massive demographic pressure on a frail infrastructure in the 'tribal' reserves of Natal. On white farm land, competition between clans for access to farm employment, grazing land and sharecropping arrangements regularly led to ferocious armed conflicts. By the 1920s these tensions had long passed the stage where inter-district competition could be expressed and controlled in spring festivals and *umgangela* stick-fighting matches. The latter were organised by returning migrants to provide an outlet 'whereby inter-district tension was afforded ritual expression but contained at the same time'.[49] Although *umgangela* was governed by a strict set of rules that, *inter alia*, prohibited stabbing and other lethal war techniques, it was gradually being transformed into a substitute for faction fighting.

It was within this perturbed rural social order that *ingoma* dancing started to replace *umgangela* as a 'self-policing' institution. Farm labourers in the Natal midlands, such as Jubele 'Lumbu' Dubazane, young migrants in Johannesburg, and dock workers in Durban, began to redefine the group alliances, oppositions, and conflicts of the countryside as expressed in dances such as *umqonqo*, *indlamu*, *ingadla* and *inkondlo* wedding dances, in ways more congruous with the harsh realities of rural dispossession and proletarianisation.

In their search for aesthetic models and expressions of self-conscious urban status, workers first became interested in the dances and songs developed in and around the mission stations. Interestingly, it was on rural mission stations that *isicathulo*, one of the first urban working-class dance forms, developed. Hugh Tracey maintains that the original *isicathulo* dance was 'performed by Zulu pupils at a certain mission where the authorities had banned the local country dances'. The name *isicathulo*, 'shoe', refers to the introduction of footgear at the missions, and reflects how the sharp sound of boots and the clicking of the heels contrasted with the muffled thud of bare feet in more rural dances such as *indlamu*.[50] Regardless, however, of such early evidence of the presumably middle-class origins of *isicathulo*, the determination of an exclusive class basis for this dance form is problematic. Rather *isicathulo* offers an example of the intermingling of rural, urban, mission and working-class performance traditions around the First World War. As a step dance, it was closely related to, if not identical with, other dance forms that had evolved earlier among farm labourers and inhabitants of the rural reserves. Foremost among these was *stishi* ('stitches'), a ragtime-like dance that spread from the Reef towns into rural areas as far afield as Paulpietersburg, and influenced present-day dance routines also known as *stishi*.[51]

To the south of Durban, in Pondoland, Bhaca migrants developed a similar step dance, called *isiBhaca*, that some researchers alternatively regard as the prime source of tap and gumboot dancing after the war. Jonathan Clegg, for instance, maintains that as early as the 1880s Bhaca migrants brought the style to the Reef mines from where it filtered back to Durban. From the 1920s, Bhaca workers also constituted an increasingly larger percentage of Durban's migrant labour force. Either way, it seems clear that around the First World War, *isiBhaca* was danced in Durban's docks by stevedores and workers with rubber wellington boots, and became generally known as 'gumboot' dance. Present-day *isicathulo* consists of routines like *Amaphoyisa* ('Policemen') and *Salutho* ('Salute') that mimic the behaviour of black policemen and 'boss boys', while patterns like *Benoni* or *Maritzburg* are named after their city of origin. In addition, *isicathulo* dancers frequently indulge in sophisticated solo stepping, examples of which had been available to migrant workers from the mid-1920s through Charlie Chaplin and Fred Astaire movies as well as touring black tap-dance groups.

Another form of *ingoma* that arose from the experience of colonial conquest and police repression in town was *ukukomika*. Probably not unlike some *isicathulo* routines, it consisted of pantomime-like movement imitating and ridiculing Western army drill, and as such may have been inspired by *beni* in East Africa and southern Central Africa.[52] Early in 1930, Margery Perham witnessed a display of *ukukomika* in the Durban Workers' Hall:

> One team did a dance founded on the British Tommy . . . They marched in ranks, formed fours, saluted, bringing their hands down with a resounding smack on their bare thighs, carrying their sticks like rifles, whistling famous half-remembered tunes of the war.[53]

But *ukukomika*, despite its comical component, also represented a more serious attempt to appropriate the symbols of imperial warfare to the expression of Zulu workers' resistance. In any event, both aspects of *ukukomika* were two sides of the same coin and as such too sensitive to be acceptable to white residents. Thus when ICU leader A. W. G. Champion organised a display of *ingoma* for whites in December 1929, only a few months after the Durban riots, the military *ukukomika* was replaced by a more innocent satire of a tennis match![54] But, in general, such smoothing over of the rougher manifestations of Zulu dance did little to dispel white fears that the dangerous side of *ingoma* by far outweighed its beneficial, self-policing effects.

The competitive dance events that the labour migrants constructed around these genres not only helped to make sense of the experience of labour migration, but at the same time afforded an opportunity to assert ties of solidarity based on common regional and ethnic origin. As such, competitive dance performances were the cultural correlate of the 'political economy of tribal animosity' among migrant workers and contained both stabilising and labour-disruptive elements.[55] The conflicts between dance teams, in ritualised competitive performance, as well as during the ensuing violent clashes, were not the result of age-old clan and tribal antagonisms, but rather stemmed from the mobilisation of networks of kin and regional solidarity under the highly competitive conditions of the urban labour market. Thus, the violent aspects of *ingoma* dancing, which some nervous burgesses attributed to the combined effects of liquor and 'excitement', appeared more accurately, to more perceptive observers of African leisure-time activities, as the result of the military and criminal aspects of urban forms of youth organisation and their cross-linkages with *ingoma* dancing.

In fact, analyses that trace the origins of *ingoma* to *umgangela* stick-fighting rituals of rural youths,[56] are congruous with attempts to understand domestic servants' criminal organisations in terms of struggles over employment opportunities. From the turn of the century, Durban's African migrant population, numbered at eighteen thousand, increasingly produced a stratum of young migrants who were the most vulnerable, and hence least successful, sector of the nascent working class, in adapting to the capitalist socio-economic order. Many of these newcomers, variously called *abaqhafi* or *amagxagxa*, translated the trauma of proletarianisation into a set of rigid organisational patterns whose focal point were the *amalaita* gangs.[57] Although by no means all *ingoma* amateurs were *amalaita*, the group activities of gangs and *ingoma* dancers had in common a set of mostly military symbols, inherited from the pre-colonial past, and the experience of impoverishment, emasculation and *intra*-class antagonisms.

But *ingoma* dancing did more than form the core of migrants' leisure-time activities and overlap with the group symbols of criminal gangs. Long after the destruction of the Zulu kingdom, and when independent African power had become but a distant memory, these dances continued to resonate in the minds of dock-workers, domestic servants and farm hands with the glory of the Zulu heritage. But above all the songs articulated the most deep-seated desires of the expelled, dehumanised and dispossessed black masses: the cry for land, the longing to regain the land their forefathers had lost to the white settlers. And it was precisely these thousands of landless people from the reserves, the 'yawning crack that empties forth human beings',[58] that formed the rank and file of the ICU. It was the dock workers and nine thousand domestic servants in the port town who, by dancing *ingoma*, demonstrated that they wished to be subjects of chiefs rather than 'boys' who were 'nagged in the kitchen by white housewives'.[59] On occasion, these dancers could be heard singing *ingoma* songs with a defiant note:

> Who has taken our country from us?
> Who has taken it?
> Come out! Let us fight!
> The land was ours.
> Now it is taken.[60]

Much of this underlying angry mood came to the surface in the outburst of protest and violence in June 1929, when thousands of harbour workers decided to mount a systematic boycott of Durban's beerhalls. The campaign was intermittently backed by Champion and the ICU, and smashed by an unprecedented use of police force that left many workers dead. Among the more material losses sustained by the ICU were the hall and the brass band which fell victim to looting white crowds. In the wake of the riots, Mark Radebe's élite African Male Voice Choir recorded the popular protest song, 'Namhla Siyahlushwa' (Today we are Troubled) (Columbia AE 37):

> Whatever shall we do?
> To-day we are troubled.
> We are made to pay money that does not help us.
> Our leaders strive for honours
> While we do not know where to go.
> Our precious Makhalempongo died.
> He died with his men, son of Bulose!
> They fought against the Special and Registration passes.
> We don't know what to do with ourselves.
> Where shall we go?[61]

Interestingly, this song captures more of the black grass-roots militancy and disenchantment with a conciliatory leadership than the hymn-like tune on which it is based would seem to indicate.

The riots may have turned a new page in the history of Durban's popular struggles. But they also highlighted the existence of a substantial and permanently urbanised stratum of workers, whose contours and forms of cultural expression were becoming more clearly visible, and were perceived as potentially detrimental to ruling-class hegemony. Consequently, the riots also ushered in an era of increased attempts to shape these emerging black urban cultural formations in accordance with ruling-class hegemony, and to redefine the expressive content and organisational structure of popular performance activities such as *ingoma*.

Among the lighter tasks completed by the Commission on Native Riots investigating the disturbances in Durban, was a Sunday afternoon outing to Cartwrights Flats and an evening at the ICU Hall in Prince Edward Street. A. W. G. Champion had invited the members of the commission to persuade themselves of the harmless character of *ingoma* dances and to get the local authorities to lift the ban on *ingoma*.[62] In its final report, the de Waal and Native Affairs Commissions recommended a more refined strategy to defuse popular discontent by appointing a Native Welfare Officer and channelling substantial funds into African welfare. Early in 1932, the town council eventually decided to lift the ban on *ingoma* dancing and by February, Sidney Shepstone was able to report that dancing had been organised on most Sunday afternoons on one of the football fields at the Native Recreation Grounds in Somtseu Road. Finally, in June, on Shepstone's initiative, the dance teams held a meeting at the Snell Parade Police Station that led to the formation of an association of dance teams presided over by a disciplinary committee and the leaders (*amagoso*) of the teams.[63] Notwithstanding some minor incidents of violence, by 1933 relations between dance teams and the police had reached a previously unknown amicability, for some teams were happy to rehearse and perform in front of the adjoining Native Police Barracks! Crowds of up to three thousand spectators were regularly drawn to the spectacle, and what in previous years might have appeared to paranoid burgesses as an intimidating gathering of bellicose men in traditional regalia, was now clearly, and much to the relief of the Chief Constable 'having a beneficial effect in drawing Natives away from the centre of the town during week-ends'.[64]

Yet the domestication of *ingoma* was by no means complete before the end of the decade. Since 1938, at least, plans to build an *ingoma* arena had been mooted by NAD officials and Broadcasting Director Hugh Tracey,[65] not without causing some disquiet among a great number of *ingoma* dancers led by Mameyiguda. Apart from being an acknowledged dance leader, Mameyiguda was much in demand with the Durban broadcasting studio, and in 1932 he had recorded a whole range of traditional songs and *ingoma* songs for His Master's Voice.[66] He was thus well aware of his own commercial prospects and suspicious of moves to build the arena. Acting through A. W. G. Champion and backed by some Native Advisory Board members, Mameyiguda expressed the fears of twenty-six dance leaders that 'they will be like race horses in the race course who run and break their legs but (are) not paid anything for their trouble'.[67] Notwithstanding official assurances of the non-commercial nature of the proposed scheme, the *amagoso* threatened to withdraw from *ingoma* dancing unless they were 'advised as to how much money [they would] be paid for such services rendered'.[68] Although the arena failed to materialise, a committee composed of whites only was eventually able to disperse Mameyiguda's doubts and to stage the first 'Natal Native Dancing Championships' in June/July 1939 in which over fifty teams participated free of charge.

For all the NAD's skilful manoeuvring, the domestication of *ingoma* was also made possible by the rivalry between the teams. The opposition between dance groups was one of the main sources of the *ingoma* aesthetic and over the years some of the more adept dance leaders had learnt to use official support to strengthen their own position. Thus workers, in shaping their leisure time, were never simply the victims of the 'system'; some at least also understood how to work the system in order to defend their interests. In the final analysis, however, the Administrator of Natal, speaking at the opening of the championships, correctly predicted that after more than three decades of 'thought on the organised development of Native dancing', coupled with a set of restrictive administrative measures, future *ingoma* competitions would promote the kind of qualities that were crucial to the formation of an industrial proletariat; in short, they would be 'conducive to the inculcation of that team spirit and healthy rivalry which we all know to be so valuable'.[69]

The domestication of *ingoma* dancing spearheaded a much more concerted and comprehensive move by the local state and some Durban companies to define the terms of reproduction of the labour force. From the mid-1920s the role of the city's black population had grown significantly in shaping the city's 'cultural geography' through the creation of a network of cultural 'spaces' that cut across class boundaries and were largely independent of white benevolence and support. The network spread concentrically from Cartwright's Flats, the most strategically situated and the busiest site of working-class leisure-time activities during the 1920s and early 1930s. Slightly to the east of the Flats were located three important areas of black housing: Msizini Barracks, Baumannville location and the Greyville South African Railways Barracks. This residential complex was catered for by a dense network of beerhalls, shebeens, and dance-halls in the surrounding smaller streets and lanes. Typical of these was Fountain Lane, a favourite gathering place for Durban's black workers and, as such, not held in high esteem by the police. The Chief Constable deplored the fact that the street 'required more police attention and supervision than any other thoroughfare in the vicinity'. The degree of attention it had received in

little less than twelve months in 1932–33 is clearly evident in the more than 260 arrests made there, which were partly due to the presence of C.D. Tusi's dance hall. This venue enjoyed considerable support from Durban's intelligentsia, but also attracted a good deal of illicit liquor consumption and 'rowdyism'. Equally popular was an establishment run by one Mrs Phillips that offered liquor and commercial sex.

Among the dances that were performed in places such as Tusi's dance hall was *thula ndivile*. The latter had emerged in Durban in the late 1920s as a result of the marked shifts in the ethnic composition of the migrant workforce. Growing numbers of poverty-stricken Africans from the Transkei and Basutoland travelled to Durban in search of work and brought with them a repertoire of performance styles that carried strong Xhosa and Sotho connotations. The original tune of *thula ndivile* has been ascribed to the Durban composer Willie Mdholzini,[70] but it was not until 1930 that it was first recorded by Caluza's Double Quartet in London (HMV GU 37). As yet little is known about Mdholzini's biography, but during or shortly after the Second World War he was busy leading the Clermont Township Lads and Lasses as well as the African Babies. The latter choir recorded two of his songs for HMV (JP 7), and the lyrics of two of his songs were published by Hugh Tracey.[71] Together with other examples, Mdholzini's songs appear to demonstrate that as a genre *thula ndivile* concerned itself primarily with the collapse of traditional value systems under the constraints of urban living. Mdholzini's song 'Izhiwane Elihle', for example, blames the alcoholism among slum-dwellers on the breaking up of family ties:

> Girls and young men, you are needed at your homes.
> You are swallowed up by Durban.
> Some of you left your wives and parents crying at home,
> But hope does not kill.
>
> Once a young man went away from home
> He returned and found it in ruins,
> He needed somewhere to sleep,
> So he bestirred himself and went to his neighbours.
> He said: 'But hope does not kill.'
> He said: 'But a good-looking fig is bad inside '
> O, the vanity of worshipping drink.
> Wood burns but to ashes only,
> And a good-looking fig may be full of worms.[72]

In addition to entertainment, Durban's black dance-halls also accounted for a significant portion of the city's limited black entrepreneurial activities and provided income opportunities for semi-professional and professional performers. One such hall, Seme's club, for instance, attracted such a numerous clientele that its proprietor was able to hire the services of the resident pianist Mathwica.[73] Instrumental performers like Mathwica were few and far between in Durban's dance-halls and shebeens, but some achieved legendary fame. One of these musicians was MaReyiza, a violinist. MaReyiza was the first to introduce *marabi* to Durban, his most popular tunes of later years being 'Silele kwaBhanki' and 'Sohamba noMaReyiza, Sohamba Kuze Kuse' (We will Accompany MaReyiza until Daybreak).[74] MaReyiza's favourite haunts were the shebeens in the less built-up areas of Mkhumbane where he was active until the 1950s.[75] Here enthusiastic shebeen patrons accompanied MaReyiza by playing the *marabi* percussion part, traditionally performed with pebble-filled milk tins, and with sticks rattling along corrugated iron sheets. In the more densely populated areas of Samseni in Mkhumbane, not to mention Durban's inner-city district, such vigorous music-making usually ran the risk of attracting the wrath of landlords and burgesses.[76]

But Samseni not only had the advantage of offering a wide range of alternative, illicit alcoholic drinks; it was also conveniently linked to the Victoria Street beerhall in town by a direct bus-line. This beerhall was one of the oldest establishments of its kind in Durban. Although more restricted in the freedom they offered to workers who wished to create their own forms of entertainment, municipal beerhalls like Victoria Street were nevertheless important venues of working-class recreation and musical creativity. They were complemented by numerous less auspicious halls, backrooms, and sheds such as *Ematramini*, the disused tramway sheds in Alice Street, that workers managed to transform into relatively uncontrolled spaces.

It is in this sphere of intense experiment and cross-fertilisation that blacks in Durban were struggling to defend their autonomy as urban dwellers. The urban space thus became the most hotly contested sphere of black cultural transformation in which both the local black élite and the state had a stake. The poet and journalist Rolfes R.R. Dhlomo, for example, echoing apprehensions in the United States about ragtime, pointed to the effect of ragtime on working-class leisure-time activities and called for initiatives to stem the tide of the 'dancing craze'. Other cultural leaders, teachers, and clergymen deplored the mushrooming of dance-halls.[77] But these spokesmen perceived a threat directed not so much to Christian morals, as to their credibility with white officials as leaders of submissive black communities.

At another level, and concurrently with the domestication of *ingoma*, Durban's white politicians set out to determine the scope and character of black urbanisation. In fact, official benevolence with regard to *ingoma* was only part of a package of much harsher measures aimed at a tighter control of alternative, autonomous forms of popular entertainment. In February 1932, under strongest protest from Durban's black leaders, the town council passed regulations for the control of dance-halls and meetings that amounted to a *de facto*

cleaning-up operation of Durban's inner-district black entertainment facilities. The sudden vacuum created by this move probably not only benefited the shebeens on the outskirts of the city, but also, at least partially, had the opposite effect of driving frustrated workers into the less controllable niches of black entertainment. At the very least, the anti-liberal measures reinforced the widening gap between black dock workers, domestic servants, preachers, teachers and white society, and destroyed middle-class hopes of urban 'civilised' status.

With the suppression of the 1929–30 riots, the closing down of dance-halls and the institutionalisation of *ingoma* dancing, Durban's political climate was clearly beginning to be characterised by much less stormy weather conditions. As communist and ICU activist Gilbert Coka acidly remarked:

> Indoor entertainments were confined to concerts. Ragtime comic songs provided the usual programmes. Dancing had already claimed adherents when the Town Council closed dance-halls. The native press echoed the sentiments of its subsidisers. It appealed for moderation and constitutionalism.[78]

The new phase of political acquiescence is reflected in the activities of two institutions designed to represent and spread ruling-class notions of black urban culture and to organise a popular constituency for black élite leadership: the Bantu Social Centre and Champion's Workers' Club, popularly known as *ICU*.

Six years after its foundation, the Durban branch of the ICU opened the African Workers' Club at 11 Leopold Street in December 1925. This was succeeded by the Natal Workers' Club in May 1928, shortly before Champion and the Natal branch seceded from the parent body to form the ICU *Yase* Natal. Although after 1930 Champion's ICU *Yase* Natal had ceased to exist as a political force of any importance in Durban's black popular resistance, for more than a decade the union club played an important role in the construction of a politically conscious, popular cultural alliance in Durban.

Some scholars have pointed to the class discrepancies between the ICU leadership and rank and file,[79] but as a result of the meshed musical and symbolic heritage of Durban's black strata, and the fragmented and ambiguous nature of class formation and class consciousness, these distinctions were not translated mechanically into union cultural and musical activities. During the worst years of the economic recession, the structure and content of ICU concerts graphically illustrate the meshed cultural traditions of Durban's black strata and Champion's attempts to reconstruct a popular alliance around the symbols of African nationalism and Zulu ethnicity.

Champion wished ICU concerts to be 'indistinguishable from those of whites'.[80] ICU hymns, apart from 'Nkosi Sikelel iAfrika', included Mazisa's 'Vukani Mawethu' (Awake My People), the 'Red Flag', and other hymn-based songs. In the Natal countryside ICU branches, somewhat incongruously, even organised weekly fund-raising concerts featuring organ-playing by well-dressed officials.[81] A brass band and the ICU National Choir completed the regalia that publicly signalled the union's claims. Brass bands were not only an important instrumental tradition among black South Africans, but also lent themselves to the expression of very diverse class ideologies. Thus, Ohlange Institute and Mariannhill both supported brass bands whose repertoires consisted of tunes like 'Hiawatha's March'. The ICU band, for its part, concentrated more on union songs of British provenance.[82]

The year 1932 seems to have been a particularly active one, because 'Stage Manager' H. Msomi was able to present the Sunbeams, the Dem Darkies from Pretoria under James D. Mogaecho, the Blue Ham Bees from Durban, and the Mad Boys from Johannesburg on three consecutive nights in April. The ICU Hall, he claimed, attracted choirs from all over the country, 'because peace prevails in this place'. In June of the same year, under the motto 'The more we are together, the happier we will be', mission-school tap-dance troupes such as the Midnight Follies and the Famous Broadway Entertainers appeared, as well as A.A. Kumalo's Zulu Male Voice Party, J.P. Mahlobo's Thulasizwe Choir and the Moonlight Six of ICU led by Gideon Zonke Masinga. The activities of this Inanda-born composer and entertainer also involved vaudeville shows with the Masinga Minstrel Strutters and the Broadway Entertainers, one of the best known tap-dance groups in Durban during the late 1930s.[83] The year was rounded off with a 'unique entertainment' by the Dixies Raglads from the Amanzimtoti mission-school and the Apologise Voices from Izingolweni College.[84]

As Helen Bradford correctly points out, 'in a dehumanising environment largely lacking in venues for legal entertainment, the ICU's cultural events fostered cohesion, afforded collective enjoyment and reaffirmed blacks' right to shape the world for themselves.'[85] But despite the focus on 'peace' and 'happiness', the basis for such black collective identification was thin when so much of it was modelled on white hegemonic culture. Furthermore, the attempts of political leaders such as Champion to shape union cultural activities according to their own class-based preferences were constantly kept in check by the strong working-class element in their constituencies. For Champion's largest following had always been drawn from the ranks of Durban's estimated nine thousand domestic workers, and hence ICU events featured a great deal of *ingoma* dancing. In Champion's view, *ingoma* was indeed 'the real thing'.[86]

If Champion's cultural initiative reflected the revised ICU policy of acquiescence and accommodation, the Bantu Social Centre represented a more openly defined attempt at co-opting Durban's black urban dwellers. The Centre opened its doors to the public in 1934. Directed by the Edendale-born composer, Alfred Assegai Kumalo (1879–1966), the Centre's list of paid-up

members included those at the pinnacle of Durban's black society, names like Frank Caluza, W.F. Bhulose, J. Dube, Ngazana Luthuli, Jack Malinga, William Mseleku, Wallet B. Vilakazi, and others. But regardless of the Centre's élite leadership, throughout the late 1930s it attracted an ever growing sector of Durban's black population more heterogeneous in class composition than is generally assumed. For the sixteen thousand visitors that attended bioscope evenings in 1938 were certainly not all drawn from the ranks of the literate minority of urban blacks. Nor were the two and a half thousand and five and a half thousand visitors who were entertained by *ingoma* dances and boxing events respectively in 1935. Concerts were by far the most popular single category of activities offered at the Centre, but even these were not uniformly sedate affairs, as far as can be judged from the 'rough usage' to which the concert piano had been exposed.[87]

But however popular *ingoma* may have proved, it is Durban's restrictive urban cultural policies that can largely be blamed for a gradual decline in black performance activities in the port town after 1933. This is exemplified by both the development of black jazz and professional performance in Durban. From the late 1920s, dance bands modelled on whatever glimpses black South Africans could catch of American, preferably Afro-American performers, had been emerging in South Africa.[88] But the radius of action of these bands – the Merry Blackbirds, Jazz Maniacs or Merrymakers – was Johannesburg and the smaller towns along the Reef. Similar bands did not exist in Durban, and prominent Durban-born or bred performers such as Ndaba Majola and Nimrod Makhanya had migrated to Johannesburg – possibly as a result of Durban's restricted entertainment venues.

But there are deeper reasons for the decline of popular performance in Durban. Although the Natal metropolis experienced an explosive growth and further industrial expansion, the development of South African manufacturing industries and the concomitant social differentiation during the mid-1930s was a process that was concentrated on the Rand. In 1935, the strongest fraction of Durban's working class was still the domestic workers with 14 000 employed as opposed to a mere 4 731 merchants and 352 policemen. Durban's intermediate stratum, then, was clearly too small to support full-time professional bands. Against this weak middle class in Durban, the 23 000 property-holders that populated Johannesburg's suburbs, Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare, in 1938, clearly represented a more substantial support base for a dense network of cinemas, dance clubs and jazz bands. Conversely, with a 6d. to 1s. 6d. admission charge to the ICU Hall, and an average monthly wage of 56s. in Durban in 1931, the city's working class hardly represented a stable support basis for such dance bands.[89]

The dilemma is exemplified by the career of William Mseleku, one of Durban's younger black entertainers during the late 1930s, and perhaps one of Caluza's most promising disciples. A Mariannhill graduate and Amanzimtoti

teacher, Mseleku had been experimenting with traditional dance and music genres tied together in a coherent stage presentation from at least 1932 when he formed a group of musicians and actors, variously called Amanzimtoti Players, Amanzimtoti Zulu Choir, or Mseleku's Party. The troupe recorded close on thirty records for HMV and consisted of Mseleku's siblings Mavis and Alfred, his wife Elvira, and the students Victor Khumalo, Siberia Chamane, Raymond Dladla, Alzena Sishi, and Lulu Msome.[90] In 1935, the group was renamed Amanzimtoti Royal Entertainers, and recorded further records for Gallo (GE 135–138). Despite Mseleku's popularity, Durban's black community could not support a group like the Amanzimtoti Royal Entertainers on a professional basis. Typically, Mseleku's Royal Entertainers tried to solve the problem by constantly locating new audiences of diverse social backgrounds and by negotiating the whole range of musical styles available at the time. Whilst most other black entertainers never left the orbit of the mission schools to become semi-professional entertainers, Mseleku combined tours of the white coastal resort hotels with fund-raising concerts for himself.[91]

An alternative example of the real possibility of developing a viable black performance genre in Durban in the late 1930s, in the interstices of the black élite and co-opted urban popular culture, is *isicathamiya* dancing.[92] This all-male dance style was accompanied by polyphonic singing and had evolved in the late 1920s among Zulu-speaking migrants. It was a sophisticated, more Western-oriented amalgamation of *ingoma*-related wedding and dance songs (*isingoma zomtshado*), ragtime stepping movements (*ururéka*), and early twentieth-century urban vaudeville and 'coon' songs (*isikhunzi*).

One of the cradles of *isicathamiya* performance was the Msinga area, and the surrounding white farms, from where migrants fed the expanding labour markets in Durban and the Witwatersrand. Among the earliest Durban *isicathamiya* groups were the Crocodiles under Isaac Mzobe and the Evening Birds under Edwin 'Siqokoma' Mkhize. These and other groups performed at wedding parties, Christmas concerts and beerdrinks, but some also took part in more regular events such as weekend concerts at Champion's ICU Workers' Hall. During its formative years and for much of the rest of its history, *isicathamiya* acted as a strong protective mechanism among migrant workers against complete proletarianisation. Its lyrical content centred around values crucial to the maintenance of an intact rural homestead, such as the seniority of the homestead head, the obedience of women and children, and the necessity to accumulate cattle.

As in the case of most present-day *isicathamiya* choirs, the members of these pioneer choirs came from one particular rural area and thus constituted a network that provided material and moral support to urban newcomers. At the same time, *isicathamiya* singing and dancing represented a form of leisure-time activity that was rooted in rural patterns of socialisation. While the internal structure of the choirs emphasised a ranking system based on the seniority of the

members, competitions between choirs were an adaptation of the institutionalised, ritualised confrontations between 'home-boys' common in *ingoma* dancing.

It is clear that by the late 1930s such a performance style and its context, aimed as they were at the negotiation and articulation of intra-group conflict within Durban's growing migrant workforce, could only begin to play a major role in Durban's black popular culture. After the Second World War, with a further growth of the manufacturing industries, stunted black urbanisation and massive state intervention in the process of circulatory labour migration, *isicathamiya* became one of the strongest elements in Durban's black popular music scene.

There can be little doubt that Durban and its rural hinterland have played a crucial role in the history of black popular music in South Africa. But for at least two reasons Durban is distinguished from Johannesburg, Kimberley or Cape Town by the uniquely colourful threads of individual musicians, regional styles, and ethnic traditions which it wove into the magnificent tapestry of South Africa's black music.

First, the presence of remarkably prosperous mission stations from as early as the mid-nineteenth century in Natal enabled a minute, but culturally vibrant community of black landowners, merchants, teachers and artisans to steep itself in British and Afro-American musical traditions, at the same time maintaining numerous links with the wider rural periphery. Reuben Caluza and his action songs are a classical product of this juncture, as is the emergence of a black musical theatre from the Mariannhill plays and Mthethwa's Lucky Stars.

Secondly, the syncretic blending of musical styles and performance practices has always been one of the strongest motors of urban musical change in Africa. In this regard, the industrial heartland around Johannesburg beyond any doubt is the main crucible in which migrants from throughout the subcontinent appropriated each other's repertoires of cultural symbols. By contrast, and irrespective of the finer regional and stylistic shades of 'Zulu music', Durban and Natal stand out as a musically relatively homogeneous area and home to one of the most distinctive dialects within south Africa's black musical languages.

Finally, Durban's black musical history during the earlier decades of the twentieth century also serves as a reminder that musical history in South Africa, and probably in Africa in general, cannot be 'read off' from abstracted social relations. Rather, black popular performance in Durban between 1913 and 1939 has structured social relations in the port town in ways that frequently work against an analysis of Durban's social history in class terms alone.

NOTES

1. Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Johannesburg, 1986), p. 58.
2. *Natal Witness*, 27 March 1863.
3. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 28 May 1904 and 24 June 1910.
4. Karin Barber, 'Popular Arts in Africa', *African Studies Review*, 30(3), pp. 1–78.
5. Veit Erlmann, 'A Feeling of Prejudice – Orpheus McAdoo and the Virginia Jubilee Singers in South Africa, 1890–1898', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14(3), pp. 331–50.
6. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 17 May 1912 and 21 January 1916.
7. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 3 June 1904, 18 May 1909, 11 March 1910, 5 July 1912 and 1 May 1914.
8. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 11 March 1910, 21 June 1911, 24 December 1915, 5 January 1917 and 12 November 1915.
9. Percival Kirby, *The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1968), pp. 10–11.
10. Amy Bridgman Cowles, *Annual Report of Umzumbe Station*, 19 May 1918, p. 7 (American Board of Commission of Foreign Missions [ABCFM], South African Mission, Zulu Branch 1910–1919, vol. 1, Documents, Harvard University). S. Plaatje also mentions that 'Tipperary' was popular among South African blacks. Sol T. Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1982), p. 19.
11. Interview with Robert T. Mazibuko, Edendale, 11 November 1984.
12. David Coplan, *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre* (Johannesburg, 1985), p. 71.
13. Interview with Robert T. Mazibuko, *op. cit.*
14. See also William W. Austin, *'Susanna', 'Jeanie' and 'The Old Folks at Home': The Songs of Stephen C. Foster from His Time to Ours* (New York, London, 1975), pp. 27–40.
15. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 3 June 1904. See also Paul Oliver, *Songsters and Saints: Vocal Traditions on Race Records* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 108.
16. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 9 January 1920. B. Vilakazi, on the other hand, claimed that it was the Mariannhill plays that furthered the development of popular Zulu music. See Benedict W. Vilakazi, 'Some Aspects of Zulu Literature', *African Studies*, 1, 1942, p. 273 and also *Ilanga lase Natal*, 14 November 1919. Some of the one-act skits were published in the January and April issues of the *Native Teachers' Journal*, 1921. Hans Nathan, *Dan Emmett and the Rise of Early Negro Minstrelsy* (Norman, 1962), p. 220.
17. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 21 March 1919.
18. Ray E. Phillips, *The Bantu in the City: A Study of Cultural Adjustment on the Witwatersrand* (Lovedale, 1938), p. 58. See also Tim Couzens, 'Moralizing Leisure Time: The Transatlantic Connection and Black Johannesburg 1918–1936', in S. Marks and R. Rathbone (eds), *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness, 1870–1930* (London, 1982), pp. 314–37.
19. Vilakazi, 'Zulu Literature', p. 272.
20. Ibid., p. 273.
21. *Zonk*, August 1951, p. 28. For recordings of Makhanya and the Bantu Glee Singers see HMV GU 76–9, 86–9, 94–6, 102–5, 110–13, 116, 118–121, 126–9, 134–45.
22. Hugh Tracey, *Lalela Zulu: 100 Zulu Lyrics* (Johannesburg, 1948), p. 82.

23. Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom* (New York, 1977), p. 300.
24. Tracey, *Lalela Zulu*, p. 14.
25. For a detailed bibliographical study of Caluza see my forthcoming book *Studies in Black Popular Music in South Africa*.
26. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 22 December 1916, 5 January 1917.
27. Percival Kirby, 'The Bantu Composers of South Africa' in J. P. Malan, (ed.), *S.A. Music Encyclopedia* (Cape Town, 1979), p. 90.
28. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 5 October 1923.
29. See, for instance, Leroy Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London, 1989). Also William Beinart, 'Worker Consciousness, Ethnic Particularism and Nationalism: The Experiences of a South African Migrant, 1930–1960' in Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London, 1987), pp. 286–310.
30. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 23 June 1922.
31. For a fuller discussion of the performance component in Isaiah Shembe's Nazareth Church, see Bongani Mthethwa, *Tradition and Change in the Music of an African Church: The Hymns of Isaiah Shembe* (unpublished manuscript), and Peter Larlham, *Black Theatre, Dance and Ritual in South Africa* (Ann Arbor, 1985).
32. Tracey, *Lalela Zulu*, p. 35.
33. Marks, *Ambiguities*, p. 59.
34. 1930–32 Native Economic Commission, Evidence 6268.
35. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 22 November 1922, 12 November 1915 and 24 December 1915.
36. John and Nokutela Dube, *Amagama Abantu: Awe Mishado, Imiqugumbelo, Utando, Nawe Mikekelo No Kudhlala*, [1911].
37. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 12 November 1915. As early as 1905, Ohlange teacher Ngazana Luthuli had tried to compile a book of secular songs, but the project evidently never materialised. See ABCFM, South African Mission, Zulu and Rhodesian Branches, 1900–1909, vol. 3, Documents.
38. Nicholas Cope, 'The Zulu Royal Family under the South African Government, 1910–1933: Solomon kaDinuzulu, Inkatha and Zulu Nationalism', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, 1985), and Shula Marks, *Ambiguities*, p. 112, and 'Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness' in Vail, *Creation of Tribalism*, pp. 215–40.
39. The British Zonophone company had been producing for the South African market probably as far back as 1900, but by at least 1908 the first recordings of African performers were available. Significantly, they were Sankey and Moody hymns sung in Siswati by a delegation of Swazi chiefs visiting England (Zonophone 4021–23, previously released as G.C. 4–12894–897 and G.C. 2–14145–147, recorded in December 1907). However, the first substantial number of Zulu titles that were advertised in Zonophone's catalogue of 'Native Records' were Stuart's recordings (4175–4185, 4193–4200). Sibiya's and Ngwane's recordings are Zonophone 4201–4213, 4215–4219 and 4243–4248.
40. *Umteteli wa Bantu*, 9 July 1932.
41. See also Paul Rich, *White Power and the Liberal Conscience: Racial Segregation and South African Liberalism* (Johannesburg, 1984).
42. T.C. Lloyd, 'The Bantu Tread the Footlights', *South African Opinion*, 8 March 1935, p. 3.

43. On the Lucky Stars see N.H. Makanya, 'Late Isaac Mtetwa (A Tribute)', *Bantu World*, 23 October 1937, and Transvaal Archives, NTS 2714, 241/301. For pictures of the Lucky Stars see *Ilanga lase Natal*, 1 May 1937 and Bertha Slosberg, *Pagan Tapestry* (London, 1939), p. 194. For photographs from the plays, see Lloyd, 'Footlights', p. 4.
44. Slosberg, *Pagan Tapestry*, p. 192.
45. Coplan, *In Township Tonight!*, p. 126.
46. *Bantu World*, 21 October 1933.
47. Albert Gérard, *Four African Literatures* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London), 1971 p. 197.
48. For a fuller description of traditional Zulu dances see Eileen Krige, *The Social System of the Zulus* (Pietermaritzburg, 1950), pp. 340–4, and David Rycroft, 'A Royal Account of Music in Zulu Life', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 38, 1975, pp. 351–402.
49. Johnny Clegg, '*Ukubuyisa Isidumbu* – "Bringing Back the Body": An Examination into the Ideology of Vengeance in the Msinga and Mpofana Rural Locations, 1882–1944' in Philip Bonner (ed.) *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, vol. 2 (Johannesburg, 1981), p. 168.
50. Hugh Tracey, *African Dances of the Witwatersrand Gold Mines* (Johannesburg, 1952), p. 7.
51. Interview with Ngweto Zondo, Paulpietersburg, 3 November 1985; Carol Muller and Janet Topp, 'A Preliminary Study of Gumboot Dance', (unpublished B.Mus. dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1985).
52. Terence Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa 1890–1970: The Beni Ngoma* (London, 1975).
53. Margery Perham, *African Apprenticeship: An Autobiographical Journey in Southern Africa, 1929* (London, 1974), p. 196.
54. Helen Bradford, *A Taste of Freedom: The ICU in Rural South Africa, 1924–1930* (New Haven and London, 1987), p. 333.
55. Ian R. Phimister and C. van Onselen, 'The Political Economy of Tribal Animosity: A Case Study of the 1929 Bulawayo Location "Faction Fights"', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 6(1), 1979, pp. 1–43.
56. Johnny Clegg, 'Towards an Understanding of African Dance: the Zulu Isishameni Style', in A. Tracey (ed.), *Papers presented at the Second Symposium on Ethnomusicology* (Grahamstown, 1982), pp. 8–14, and 'An Examination of the Umzansi Dance Style', in A. Tracey (ed.), *Papers presented at the Third and Fourth Symposia on Ethnomusicology* (Grahamstown, 1984), pp. 64–70.
57. For the first systematic treatment of *amalaita* in Durban, see Paul la Hausse, '"Mayihlome!": Towards an Understanding of Amalaita Gangs in Durban, *c.* 1900–1930', (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Seminar Paper No. 210, 1987).
58. Chief Mgizo, Evidence to the Native Economic Commission, quoted in Bradford, *Taste of Freedom*, p. 17.
59. Perham, *African Apprenticeship*, p. 200.
60. Ibid., p. 196.
61. Tracey, *Lalela Zulu*, p. 10.
62. Durban Town Clerk's Files [TCF], Ingoma Dances and Proposed Native Dance Arena, 315J, vol. 1, 1938–1948, A.W.G. Champion to Town Clerk, 20 March 1939.
63. TCF, Native Affairs in the Borough, 1932, File 3. Report of Native Welfare Officer, 13 June 1934.

64. Minutes of Native Advisory Board, meeting of 17 January 1934.
65. TCF, Ingoma Dances and Proposed Native Dance Arena, 315J, vol. 1, 1938–1948. S. Shepstone to Town Clerk, 22 May 1939,
66. See HMV GU 84–85, 93, 97, 101, 109, 117, 124–25, 131–32, 149–51 and HMV JP 8, 12, 20, 26, 130. For a photograph of Mameyiguda and his group see the HMV catalogue 'Zulu Records' issued in April 1933. For Mameyiguda's later career see Jeff Thomas, 'Ingoma Dancers and their Response to Town', (unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, 1988).
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68. TCF, Ingoma Dances and Proposed Native Dance Arena, 315J, vol. 1, 1938–1948. A.W.G. Champion to Town Clerk, 20 March 1939,
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70. Interview with Selina Khuzwayo, Edendale, 16 August 1984.
71. Tracey, *Lalela Zulu*, pp. 43 and 67.
72. Ibid., p. 43.
73. For Durban's dance-halls see various documents in TCF, 467C Native Dance Halls and Meetings, 1935; Durban City Council, 63A/467C; TCF, Native Dance Halls and Meetings, 467C, vol. 1, 1931–34, File 1, and TCF, Native Affairs in the Borough, 467, vol. 6, 1931–1932, File No. 2. For the role of homosexuality among migrants see Dunbar Moodie, 'Migrancy and Male Sexuality on the South African Gold Mines', (Paper delivered at History Workshop, Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, 1987).
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75. Godfrey Moloi, *My Life* (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 27.
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79. Bradford, *Taste of Freedom*; Marks, *Ambiguities of Dependence*; la Hausse, 'Mayihlome', and 'The Dispersal of the Regiments: African Popular Protest in Durban, 1930', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 10, 1987, pp. 77–102.
80. Quoted in Bradford, *Taste of Freedom*, p. 209.
81. Vusi Nkumane and Helen Bradford, Interview with Charles Kumalo, ICU organiser in Estcourt, Mooi River, 1 February 1982, University of the Witwatersrand, African Studies Institute, Oral History Project.
82. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 24 June 1910. There is a collection of photographs entitled *Bilder aus Südafrika, aufgenommen vom Photographischen Atelier der Trappistenmission, Mariannhill, Natal 1900–1908* in the archives of Mariannhill monastery showing a large brass band. Also Interview with Robert T. Mazibuko, *loc. cit.*

83. Yvonne Huskisson, *The Bantu Composers of Southern Africa* (Johannesburg, 1969), pp. 106–7. During and after the war, Masinga also directed the Rhythm Darkies. For four song texts by that group see Tracey, *Lalela Zulu*, pp. 13–14, 35 and 48.
84. The information in this paragraph rests on three handbills (*Isaziso*) in the Forman Papers at the University of Cape Town (33L, BC 581, B22.7, 9 and 11). I am indebted to Paul la Hausse for bringing this material to my attention. For a short biographical note on Mogaecho see John Mancoe, *First Edition of the Bloemfontein Bantu and Coloured People's Directory* (Bloemfontein, 1934). For the words of an unreleased recording of the Blue Ham Bees see Tracey, *Lalela Zulu*, p. 58. Gallo test recordings of the Blue Hams that are presently kept at the International Library of African Music are: 777–78S, 784S, 786S, 790S, 947–49S.
85. Bradford, *Taste of Freedom*, p. 207.
86. Perham, *African Apprenticeship*, p. 198.
87. The information on the Bantu Social Centre was compiled from Durban City Council 315H, Schedules of Attendances at Bantu Social Centre 1934–1939, and Minutes of the Executive Meeting, 23 September 1935.
88. For a finely etched portrait of these early years of black jazz in South Africa see Christopher Ballantine, '"Concert and Dance": The Foundations of Black Jazz in South Africa between the Twenties and Early Forties', (unpublished manuscript).
89. The figures in this paragraph are based on Paul la Hausse, 'The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902–1936', (unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1984), pp. 330 and 334, and Phillips *Bantu in the City*, p. xxix.
90. See HMV GU 81–83, 90–92, 98–100, 106–108, 114–116, 122–123, 130, 133, 146–148, 152. Interview with Elvira Mseleku, Lamontville, 8 December 1986.
91. Interview with Elvira Mseleku, *loc. cit.*
92. For a fuller treatment of *isicathamiya* see Veit Erlmann, *Liner Notes: Mbube Roots. Zulu Choral Music from South Africa, 1930s–1960s* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), Rounder CD 5025, and my recent book *Nightsong* (Chicago, 1995).

Cato Manor, June 1959

Men, Women, Crowds, Violence, Politics and History

IAIN EDWARDS

The militant crowd challenging existing social order is no novelty in Durban. Crowds have often been responsible for forceful interventions in city politics. In the later 1950s and early 1960s the African crowd changed. State urban policy and brutal political repression put an end to political marches, riots and mass protest and the apartheid state's era of mass pass raids, mass housing, mass transport and mass education began. The June 1959 Cato Manor beerhall riot is central to these events.

The beerhall riot is an essential facet of many versions of history, two of which have become particularly influential. Their proponents forged them, and fought for their ascendency, during the struggle against the apartheid state. Remembering the late 1950s was crucial to both. The apartheid state stressed riotous, drunken anti-social violence, particularly by shack women. The riot legitimated repressive measures against violent insurrectionary crowds and their political leaders. The destruction of Cato Manor and the creation of KwaMashu were cited as evidence of the beneficent nature of state intervention. Municipal officials proclaimed KwaMashu as their greatest success.[1] For the ANC the riot was proof that militant grass-roots political struggles summoned up support for and radicalised the ANC during its organised mass campaigns of the period. Cato Manor's women's struggles were heroic; their violent actions justified, and the riot proof of a united ANC.[2]

These are disingenuous, partial political interpretations. Both misrepresent the nature of the riot. Both stress the active role of women; for the state, highlighting allows derision, and for the ANC patronising praise. The state's view ignores the brutality of its urban policies, particularly towards urban women. The ANC's standpoint ignores very real gender struggles within urban society and its own organisation. Both have simplistic views of crowds; the state views popular crowd politics with complete hostility whilst the ANC is romantic. Both require simplistic notions of relations between political party, leaders and the masses. For political parties seeking loyal support from men and women in South Africa's growing shacklands, and for a new state seeking to improve the lives of all shantytown residents, these are very dangerous histories.

So, too, are many academic histories. Central to the state's urban policy was the desire to create African working-class families, living in townships and with the African male worker as the household head. African women were by no means peripheral to this policy. These crucial points have largely been ignored.

Both S.B. Greenberg and D. Hindson have been intent upon studying the interventionist character of state policy. Both have suffered from failing to look properly at social relations within urban African society and the gendered nature of state policy.[3] Indeed, aside from some perfunctory and largely statistical details of women's participation in pass resistance campaigns, women hardly feature in Hindson's study. Hindson's urban African proletariat is largely male, while his notion of families remains undefined and very simplistically linked to permanent urban residence. While the apartheid state was brutal, it was not gender blind. However, Hindson's work is androcentric. The apartheid state had a very particular notion of the urban African family, which Hindson accepts uncritically.[4]

D. Posel's analysis is far more acute.[5] She understands that state policy was an assault on women's lives and recognises the complexity of women's positions in urban African society. These are important points, which have long been a part of black South African literature.[6]

Important studies of mass politics during the later 1950s stress the complexity of urban society, its varied links to organised labour and the diverse forms which popular militancy took.[7] J. Wells has noted how studies of women's protests are both few in number and often tend to oversimplify the issues. She suggests that the women's anti-pass struggles were 'essentially a struggle against full proletarianisation' and that the most militant women were those 'who had achieved a balance between responsibilities to family and generating income' from informal sector activities.[8] Wells has also observed that the 'most effective calls to action centred on their roles as mothers and defenders of their children'.[9] Numerous recent studies have dealt with political violence during the 1980s. These provide further insights into street politics, township political organisation and the connections between violence and crowds, and violence and urban families. Here, C. Campbell's work on violence and masculinity is important. However, her understanding of the complexities and breakup of contemporary urban African families is premised on a somewhat historical basis.[10]

At the time, the June 1959 riot caused much comment. It was considered an enormously important event, not only because of its political ramifications but, more essentially, because it involved women as the central actors.

The politics of gender actually constituted the event itself. Men's public reactions to the riot were paternalist, sexist and deeply insensitive. When Chief Luthuli conveyed his sympathy with the causes for which the women rioted, he explained the relationship between the people and the ANC in the following

way: 'a child that does not cry may die unnoticed, carried by its mother on her back'.[11] When asked how he thought the women of Cato Manor felt towards him, S.B. Bourquin, Durban's manager of Bantu administration, commented: 'The women, I think, only dislike me in my official capacity. But I have to carry out the law. Privately, when they talk to me, they call me father.'[12] In early 1960, amidst a huge ANC-led resistance campaign, Bourquin paid an unprecedented visit to Moses Mabhida. In an effort to resolve the crisis, they chatted 'man to man'.[13] Immediately after the riots Colonel Jenkins, the District Commissioner of Police commented: 'Now I wouldn't like to tell you what I'd do to my wife if she picketed my favourite pub. She wouldn't be able to sit down for a week . . .'[14]

Three interrelated issues feature prominently in the literature on the riot. These are the relationship between a political party and its mass of constituents, the nature of state policy and resistance to it, and the gendered nature of power in urban African life. However, all too often analyses of June 1959 are riddled with implicit and explicit assumptions about 'Zulu women', a 'traditional-modern' divide, the benefits of nuclear family life, and other stereotyping, sexist or gender-blind assumptions.

Myrna Blumberg, the Cape Town-based correspondent for the *Daily Herald*, and associate of many progressive South African journalists and politicians visited Cato Manor the day after the riots. To Blumberg the riots seemed a spontaneous legitimate reaction to the imposition of the pass laws and municipal attempts to suppress beer brewing, destroy Cato Manor and evict women from the city. Although recognising that domestic relationships were often very much more complex than any simple Western notion of nuclear family life can comprehend, she nevertheless implicitly upheld the virtues of nuclear family life and housing, only criticising the KwaMashu scheme for its expensive rentals. To Blumberg, the riot was all about resistance to the municipality. The women were not only 'heroines' but, drawing from and amplifying one of the women's own slogans, she saw them as 'those magnificently-built Zulu warriors of 1959'. Although noting that the ANC, and particularly Chief Luthuli, had played a noble role in attempting to restore peace, Blumberg concluded on a note of warning. She wrote:

> Congress, with its non-violent policy, knows that in the long run, however, violence will harm their movement. But in spite of their opposition, these sorts of outbursts will surely increase. You cannot stoke up the fires, sit on the safety valves, and still hope to avoid the explosion.[15]

Leo Kuper, the noted sociologist of social change amongst urban Africans, saw matters rather differently. In his classic work *An African Bourgeoisie*, Kuper used the Cato Manor riot and other 'mass murmurings' of the time as the crucial backdrop indicating major social changes amongst urban Africans. In this study, however, Kuper was more concerned with élite formation, than with shackland society.[16]

However, in a separate article on the riots, Kuper stressed the initiative of the women and noted how 'lawless' men also became involved. The women did have legitimate grievances, primary amongst which was the collapse of family life in Cato Manor. However, their grievances were not simply directed at the municipality. Through the women's attempted 'deliberate exclusion of men' and their 'determination to act and speak for themselves', the women could be seen as militant emancipationists and the demonstrations suggested 'the beginnings of a suffragette movement'. Kuper hailed this as 'remarkable' when viewed against the 'traditional subordination of the Zulu woman'.[17] However Kuper failed to follow this line through, and indeed, when referring to the legitimate grievances of women, quoted favourably from a now famous document written by Bourquin on urban African poverty which contained the following key paragraph:

> The poverty of the urban Bantu; the discrepancy between *his* earning capacity and *his* cost of living; *his* inability to meet the demands of modern times in a city modelled on the Western way of life; *his* inability even to meet the barest necessity of life, to feed, clothe, educate and house *himself* and *his* family.[18]

Kuper was keen to disavow any easy laying of blame on the ANC, seeing the riots as spontaneous and the ANC as pursuing 'constructive non-violent action'. The legacy of the riots to the ANC was a serious problem: 'How to canalise passion, under conditions of great hardship and provocation, into disciplined and effective non-violent action.' And just where did these passions come from? 'The deeper emotional involvements of the men' during and after the riots and, primarily, 'by the introduction [into Natal's politics] of the raw inexperienced cadres of the women'.[19]

K. Luckhardt and B. Wall presented the women in a very different light. Although portraying them as victims of unprovoked police brutality, and dealing with women's grievances in a simplistic fashion, they did acknowledge gender struggles within the Congress movement. They also accepted that within the riots themselves, women showed their contempt for African men.[20]

In analysing the riot, T. Lodge pointed to gender struggles within Cato Manor, and noted how short-lived was the riot. Lodge accepted but did not fully analyse the relationship between the beerhall riot, mass militancy and ANC-led campaigns.[21]

C. Walker viewed the riot as the spark igniting militant women's struggles, led by the ANC, throughout Natal's cities and countryside. The riot was

spontaneous, catalised by being women beer brewers' and shebeen queens' opposition to a specific municipal crack-down on illegal brewing. Despite the essential aim of her project, Walker failed to realise the complexities of gender-related issues faced by women. Her women were within nuclear families: 'They had come to town to escape intolerable conditions in the reserves, to be reunited with their husbands and families.' Walker embraced a very romantic image of life in Cato Manor. As the context for the riot, she stressed opposition to pass laws and removal to KwaMashu, but never really provided substantial analysis. Although she noted that the ANCWL had been active in Cato Manor before the riots, she viewed the ANCWL, alongside the ANC, as having only truly become involved afterwards, with the main aim of both parties being that of drawing the women into organised politics and introducing them 'to a wider political dimension'. For Walker it was the public act of resisting and rioting which radicalised women. In concluding, she agreed with but did not expand on Kuper's view of just how novel and militant the women's behaviour was.[22]

Crowds are a central factor in the study of modern urban society. Until recently, much work tended to be both explicitly and implicitly antipathetic to mass action, and also stressed crowd irrationality. On the other hand, some historical and sociological studies, including classic work by Hobsbawn, Thompson and Rudé emphasised rational agency, albeit from a possibly romantic perspective on ordinary people's crowd politics. Taking their cue from these, many consequent studies have found riotous crowds not to be simply anti-social rabble. They have sought to examine the composition of the crowd, its objectives, the relationships between leaders and followers, and the particular conditions which link crowds to militant street action.[23] The idea that crowds have a collective conscience has now been rejected. According to T. Harris, crowds are internally fractious and change over time: '. . . every time a new crowd appears, the individuals are regrouped. Some die, some become disillusioned, some change sides and some do fight again, whilst others see no need to, but each crowd is different from the last'.[24] Crowds are not only sending messages to a common enemy; major struggles are being waged within the crowd, and from these may emerge new leaders and new politics. Harris makes the further point, however, that violent mass action is not the only means of popular protest, and that important as the composition of the crowd is, it is equally important to identify those who choose not to form part of it.[25]

D. Riches stressed that societies develop their own, contested, understandings of acceptable and non-acceptable violence. These are assimilated socially through prior violent conflict. Notions of masculinity, liquor and drunkenness closely interlink with violence. In some societies words associated with inflicting physical hurt are within a broader rubric; 'a supreme masculinity and bravery'.[26] When looked at from the perspective of the performer, violence is not disorder but rather tactically pre-emptive, aimed at disempowering others intent upon achieving their own aims. Perpetrators understand their intervention and recognise that their public message will be 'profoundly challenging and disquieting'.[27] Violence attempts to destroy existing social rituals, which are viewed as 'seriously at odds with the reality of the social relations which prevail in [non-ritual] everyday situations'. The importance of the message is that it is conveyed not only to the victims of violence, but also to other witnesses who, 'need not – and perhaps should not – be directly the victims of violence'.[28]

Since the classic studies by F. Furedi and P. Gutkind on urban African crowds and mass politics, considerable work has been focused on the composition of the African city crowd and its relationships to African élites and political parties during and after the colonial period.[29] Recent important work on Latin American and African shantytown politics recognises that shantytowns are not simply composed of urban marginals with an anarchic social structure.[30] Shack society is structured in particular and very gendered ways. Shack dwellers are not simply urban left-wing militants. Shack society is most politically active, initially, during the period of immediate settlement and, later, when confronting threats to its existence. Power lies in the hands of those, predominantly male, who control residential resources. The links that bind shack societies to the outside world, particularly the state, are those of state repression and violence – ultimately shack demolition – clientilism and patronage.

These are important points which need to be taken much further. Community politics within shacklands embody an intense, and often very violent, gendered struggle. Further, shack society tends to be more politically active and internally fractious when faced with imminent destruction.

The ANC and Shantytown Leadership

Mkhumbane's leadership came from a small group of wealthy shacklords, legal and illegal traders, and other entrepreneurs. The majority of these leaders were men. All had risen to power during the later 1940s. The key association in Cato Manor was the Zulu Hlanganani. Led by shacklords, traders, herbalists and Zionist preachers, this co-operative society had formed immediately after the riots of January 1949. Anti-Indian, the society espoused a strongly fundamentalist form of Zulu patriotism, saw Mkhumbane as the promised land and sought to assist African leaders in taking control of Mkhumbane. Although some leaders had personal or commercial dealings with A.W.G. Champion, none was actually involved with his organisation. During the early 1950s, some of these men had flirted with the Moral Re-Armament Movement and the Bantu National Congress (BNC). The latter movement was rabidly anti-Indian and stressed the need for an exclusive African racial identity. The Zulu Hlanganani was formally allied to the BNC.[31]

Mkhumbane comprised over twenty settlement areas, each with its own name, leaders, traditions and communal loyalties. In 1953, when the municipality established the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board (CMWDB) – a body of local leaders elected to represent the residents in discussions with the municipality – the electoral ward divisions were those of the existing settlement areas. Cato Manor's leaders almost elected themselves onto the first board.

Esau Makatini, a shantytown leader of long standing and descendant of the militant Eastern Cape 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'.[32] Residents recalled how board members 'talked as if they were very special people'.[33] Charles Khumalo had the following to say:

> 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".[34]

Other residents recalled 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.'[35] Board member Shange remembered that he 'was a big man'.[36]

During the early 1950s, the ANC had very little popular support or organisation in Mkhumbane. Stanford Mtolo remembers: 'Msizini was there. Congress had them. In Lamont and Chesterville the people were hot. But everyone wanted Mkhumbane.'[37] During the course of the first meeting of the ANC in Durban, after Albert Luthuli's election as Natal leader, Luthuli set aside a whole morning during which he 'sent' Congress members into the shacklands to organize.[38] Luthuli was constantly to stress that the only way to gain this support was through focusing on the day-to-day needs of the residents. Although they agreed that it was necessary to gain support in the area, many ANC leaders were nevertheless daunted by the shack dwellers' disrespectful attitude towards political leaders. Leaders also held a somewhat instrumentalist view of popular support; Stanford Mtolo spoke of needing to gain support so that the organisation could 'rely on the people of Mkhumbane when we needed them'.[39]

Luthuli was a frequent visitor to the shacklands, and was also a close friend of Ashmon Nene, a shacklord and, probably, the 'Congress stalwart' in the shantytowns.[40] A 'very fierce African nationalist', Nene was viewed by many as 'the power behind [Luthuli's] throne'. Whilst Nene himself disavowed such a role, it is clear that on his visits to Durban, Luthuli often stayed with Nene in the Two Sticks area of Mkhumbane.[41]

The ANC which elected Chief Luthuli was, in many important ways, a new organisation. As one member recalled, 'we took Congress over, it was the Congress Youth League now stepping into the *father* Congress.'[42] Its core leadership was often relatively unknown and sometimes rejected, perhaps politically inexperienced, and certainly lacking in any really effective support from subaltern strata. The ANC was also continually short of funds and willing, unpaid organisers.

The ANC's organising drive in Mkhumbane was, as in other areas of the city, almost entirely dependent upon the abilities of unpaid members and 'volunteers' resident in the shantytown.[43] Most of the ANC organisers in the shantytown were already well known in the area. 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.[44]

Others like Ashmon Nene are remembered for 'looking and speaking like a king, a priest, in shabby clothes'.[45]

The ANC planned to establish local branches in each of the communities. By the time of the Defiance Campaign, the ANC's organising 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.[46]

In 1954 there were nominally four ANC branches in the Mkhumbane area. However, two of these branches, Draaihoek and New Look were 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.[47]

By 1956, the sorry state of the organisational growth of the ANC in Mkhumbane was being recognised. 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 former adherents had failed to renew their membership. As Ashmon Nene commented at the end of one meeting: 'All organisers must go around each house getting new members. Present members never attend.'[48] However, although a powerful public orator, Ashmon Nene was criticised for failing to attend branch meetings. The local voluntary organiser for the ANC

branch in the New Clare area of the Emergency Camp declared that the local branch was weak but 'public meetings [were] not essential'.[49]

However, although the ANC was failing to gain organised support from residents, Mkhumbane's shack leaders, by now elected leaders sitting on the CMWDB, moved away from organisations like the Bantu National Congress to join the ANC. The political character of the ANC in the shantytowns was in many important ways to be shaped by the attitudes of such people.[50]

By this time CMWDB members were then facing almost constant criticism from residents. They were accused of only looking after their own economic interests, failing to provide real development in the slums, and being 'Bourquin's impimpi'.[51] The first board was soon dissolved. Charles Khumalo recalled that 'they were rubbish: 'Yes sir, thank you baas. Yes mnumzane.' This was when they went away.'[52]

Shack leaders and licensed traders resented this popular pressure. Although they regarded themselves as the natural leaders of the community, they nevertheless started a campaign to acquire popular support. They intended to lead the community in the struggle to acquire improved urban facilities and, ultimately, permanent residence in Cato Manor. Seeking wider legitimation, leaders joined the ANC. Or as Congress Majola remembered, the ANC was led by 'respectable and educated civic leaders . . . [and] *we* became the ANC'.[53]

The ANC was eager to gain the support of traders and other established leaders in Mkhumbane. The ANC also believed it to be strategically important to take control of the CMWDB.[54] With such control, it would be possible to develop branches in Mkhumbane, organise around specific local issues, and acquire a knowledge of municipal policy which could not be otherwise gained.[55] 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.[56] Other board members, such as Dorothy Nyembe and Ruth Shabane, were shack residents whose local standing was directly related to their activities in the ANC. By the mid-1950s 'most' of the members of the CMWDB were 'in Congress', while by the end of the decade 'all but one [of the board members] were ANC stooges.'[57] The ANC deliberately cultivated support from shacklords.

Up to around 1958, board members were united in their refusal to move from Mkhumbane. They were determined that the municipality should accede to this and provide essential urban facilities: roads, schools, crèches and electricity and water. Having done this, the municipality should allow Mkhumbane's trading class to develop the area commercially. However, on issues beyond this point, board members were divided. Contention was centred around housing and the already acrimonious issue of trading licences. Ruth Shabane and others wanted the municipality to build houses, which could then be sold or rented to residents. Dorothy Nyembe explained: '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.' Nyembe was also insistent that women should be given more trading rights.[58] Isaac Zwane, Zulu Hlanganani, leader and shacklord, saw the housing problem differently: 'People today did not want to go to locations, but wanted to reside on land they could hold in freehold tenure.'[59]

Shacklords, personally, made enormous profits from rack-renting. 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.[60] 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.'[61] Furthermore, such 'Native investors should be allowed to put up shacks on a number of sites'.[62] Board members reasoned in the following 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*.[63]

This was pure smokescreen. In common with shack development in other parts of Africa, the original ideal of individual shack ownership quickly became lost in a confusing array of shacklord-renter arrangements. In order to secure their position, shacklords constantly avowed radical politics or, indeed, any politics, and assured the municipality of their complete loyalty. The shacklords were clients looking for state patronage. In exchange for securing political peace, the shacklords asked for their leadership roles and controls over housing to be recognised.

Shacklords and traders on the board had a very élitist view of politics. Board meetings were full of drama. Municipal officials continually professed a genuine desire to listen and help. They were also prone to delivering patronising speeches about municipal sincerity, board members' duties and burdens of responsibility and the need to avoid any meddling in politics. These were reinforced by masses of documents, legal phrases and minute-taking. It was a stylised ritual in which board members reciprocated: long-winded speeches about the desperate needs of 'our people', effusive thanks to the municipality, and cravenly asked questions on minute detail. At rare mass meetings held to discuss board meetings, the shacklords, with their municipal masters always also present, made lengthy speeches about nothing.

Shacklords' interests and those of the municipality were fundamentally incompatible. The municipality had already decided to destroy the settlement, but it needed the board to preserve political peace in Cato Manor. Up until 1958

municipal officials were careful not to reveal the full nature and implications of their plans for Mkhumbane to the residents. It was necessary to keep the shacklords obsequious so as to prolong formal discussions. In 1958 this charade ended and Cato Manor's leadership collapsed in disarray amid considerable infighting.

Shacklords changed sides, seeking to take the opportunity to acquire trading licences in KwaMashu proffered by the municipality. Board meetings were disrupted by rancorous altercations between shacklords and traders as competition to secure trading licenses in KwaMashu grew fierce.[64] Meetings of the board were dominated by political speeches accusing the municipality of brutality and duplicity, of which it was certainly guilty. Municipal officials, in response, adopted a far more insistent, bureaucratic and threatening stand. Meetings of the board were angry and frustrating occasions.

Mass meetings were called and were well attended. Municipal officials were shouted down, as were many board members. Board members publicly disagreed with each other. The CMWDB became riddled with internal dissension. Dorothy Nyembe had already suggested that the ANC call a boycott of the CMWDB,[65] but the call was not supported. Indeed, the ANC provincial leadership were in favour of supporting the shacklords and traders.[66] 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 his cronies from the board. Zwane's opponents had, however, no alternative strategy. Each side accused the other of 'kowtowing' to the municipality. Zwane regained his position as Chairman of the Board in August 1958. Throughout the critical months around June 1959, the board was ineffectual. In the estimation of the municipality, the board did not have the legitimacy to secure political peace.[67] Board members who were loyal to the KwaMashu project were criticised and even attacked by residents. Those that remained steadfast in fighting for Mkhumbane were applauded.[68]

The ANC's provincial leadership seemed politically feckless. The ANC lacked mass support and organisational structures and was dependent upon a group of leaders who were now fighting amongst themselves. Furthermore, the ANC never really confronted the question of shack demolition in Durban. Congress leaders attempted without success to get local support for the campaign against the Sophiatown removals. The issue of permanent African residence in Cato Manor was discussed during the Defiance Campaign and then summarily dropped.[69] For the ANC to support allocating Cato Manor for Africans meant, implicitly but obviously, support for taking the land from Indian landowners. This would not only be politically embarrassing, but went against the declared policy of both the ANC and the Natal Indian Congress to oppose all group areas legislation. There was nevertheless considerable support amongst the provincial executive for the Mkhumbane shack dwellers. M. B. Yengwa, himself a trader in the area, was particularly vehement in calling for the area to be given to Africans.[70]

Sensing political weakness, convinced of the inevitability of shack destruction, and seeking municipal favour, shacklords left the ANC. By the mid-1950s many residents believed that the police and the municipality had gained extensive knowledge of ANC activities in the Emergency Camp.[71] Much of this information came from certain traders in Cato Manor seeking municipal favour in KwaMashu; they 'went to the police and told them who was Congress' in the shantytowns.[72] The ANC was in a weak position. In the late 1950s the municipality prevented certain board members who were known ANC leaders from attending board meetings.[73]

The power which the ANC did manage to grasp in Mkhumbane came to a large extent through a very active Women's League. Fortunate in having the skills of some remarkable activists, and close relations with various church and women's groups in the shantytowns, the League was a potent force.[74] Congress Youth Leaguers would assist the Women's League in campaigns.[75] Campaigns around particular issues, such as medical examinations, passes and liquor-brewing, bore impressive results. Women's Leaguers stressed family values and women's dignity within home, community and politics. These were the sites of struggle as, within the context of their lives, this was a militant position.[76] Luthuli spoke of the need to form a Housewives' League, comprising numerous women's groups.[77] Practical difficulties were blatantly obvious. Men were opposed to 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'.[78]

In 1951, Bertha Mkhize had been elected a member of the ANC provincial executive. By 1956 enduring tensions between the League and the provincial executive of the ANC resulted in Bertha Mkhize and Gusta Khuzwayo, one of the more elderly but key ANCWL activists in Mkhumbane, being 'kicked out' of the ANC.[79] Quite what these political conflicts were is not known. There was opposition from within the provincial executive to women playing leadership roles within the ANC: Gladys Manzi remembered that 'it was said we were too emotional and angry'.[80]

There were also contemporaneous and possibly similar conflicts within the Women's League in Cato Manor; for instance, between Gusta Khuzwayo and Bertha Mkhize on the one hand and Henrietta Ostrich and Ruth Shabane on the other.[81] This involved a critique of ANC leadership, Africanism, and the male Youth Leaguers' dropping of militant politics, and was exacerbated by the personality clashes so apt to erupt in such situations. The provincial executive regarded the conflict as serious.[82] Support for the ousted Mkhize and Khuzwayo came from within the provincial executive; Ashmon Nene and Pitness Simelane, both staunch African nationalists, were key figures. Congress Youth League branches in many areas of Durban also publicly announced their championship of Mkhize and Khuzwayo.

By this stage, Congress Youth Leaguers had 'captured' the 'congress for

Luthuli'.[83] It was time for the 'Vukayibambe', the localized Youth League bases of the 1940s, to revitalise a moderate provincial executive. Luthuli was considered to be too moderate.[84] This was the period when the ANC was planning massive mass campaigns against pass laws and urban wage rates. To facilitate these actions, political peace was made. 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'.[85] Here was the quest for militance and action which the ANC needed.

In 1959 the ANC's political alliance with male shacklords in Cato Manor was broken. Many shacklords were no longer loyal to the ANC. Others remained loyal, but were refused legitimacy by the Cato Manor crowds; indeed, they were shouted down. There was dissent within the Mkhumbane Women's League, and gender-related disputes over strategy and tactics within the ANC provincial leadership. The organisation was busy in the townships and hostels, planning renewed mass demonstrations against the pass laws and wider state policy. Cato Manor's crowds were only eventually to become prominent in these campaigns. First, new politics had to develop in Cato Manor and they developed through personal tensions in the shacklands.

A Very Personal Crisis

Paternalism, a determinedly interventionist state and urban capitalism are a potent mix. It is widely accepted that the apartheid state had absolutely no desire to seek any form of legitimation amongst South Africa's urban masses.[86] According to this view, the South African state was an interventionist state which only sought to make alliances, by isolating and comforting cliques of leadership, in an attempt to control a hostile social mass. However, it can be argued that central to the South African state's urban African housing policies of the late 1950s was a desire to gain the loyalty of the urban African masses. The key 'person' in this strategy was one with a partly imagined social profile: the African male worker. The municipality had created a very well-defined image of a desired urban African. He was a hard-working man who, respectful of discipline and mindful of paternalism's benign desire to integrate him into urban society, would live in a model township; either in a hostel, which would allow him to keep his rural roots, or raising his own family in his own home. The problem lay in finding the man and making him conform to the projected image. By 1958 his urban home, KwaMashu, had already been built and settled.

KwaMashu would provide two forms of housing; male hostels and family residential houses of various types. Such houses could be either purchased or rented. Household heads were defined as working men only. A man could only own or rent one house. No sub-leasing or trading was to be permitted on residential premises. Only licensed traders would be permitted to trade in designated areas. KwaMashu was planned according to British New Town

principles, and municipal officials truly believed that it would open 'the road to progress and a happy home life'.[87] Bolstered by the support of a very determined state, and belief in the legitimacy of international town planning standards, municipal social engineers set their goals. It was privately acknowledged that the task was enormous; this was not simply relocating a squatter community, but breaking it up both in terms of its physical location and social structure.

This was a task municipal officials undertook assiduously. Their status could be taken for granted. They were the 'fathers' of the urban Africans, and Cato Manor's leaders were constantly reaffirming their gratitude to municipal officials willing to assist in problem solving. The fathers needed allies, and the leaders found no difficulty in taking on the role of sons. Municipal officials' instruments of power came readily to hand and were quickly assembled. The key was the written document and its awesome concomitants; committees, procedure and legal terminology. How their basic designs, administrative powers and oral skills stood up to the stresses involved in dealing with crowds, delegations and individuals was another matter.

Procedure for carrying out the great move began with the proposition that all residents in the greater Cato Manor area, including the municipal Cato Manor Emergency Camp would be 'screened'. Files would be opened on each household with completed questionnaires giving details of place of birth, marital status, dependants, period of residence in Durban, employment and wage record and even the estimated value of domestic goods, including chickens, goats and cattle. Men who qualified for the privilege of Section 10 urban domicile would be entitled to live in KwaMashu. Those who were legally married and could afford the housing would be allocated premises in the family residential area. All other residents of Mkhumbane; the 'won't works', the criminals and those labelled 'illegals' were to be evicted from Cato Manor. This category was vast, encompassing unemployed and self-employed men and women, widowed women and their dependants, single women and the elderly and infirm not directly related to a prospective KwaMashu household head.

Shack dwellers bear fealty to urban society. However, their social composition is not, and cannot, be that of middle-class urbanites. Shack dwellers inhabit an urban world far removed from the one occupied by those who hold power and shape the socially dominant views of urban morality. Municipal plans to destroy Mkhumbane and provide very different forms of planned housing in a controlled township cut deep.

Shack societies are not simply residential areas. As part of the network of petty trading ventures, which were key aspects in the unregulated and capitalist structure of the city which lay at the heart of African Durban, shacklands like Cato Manor were more like towns within a city. Indeed, Cato Manor was the centre for African petty accumulation in Durban.

Shacklands are also different from other urban residential areas, in that class

distinctions in the latter are much more clearly defined. Shack societies have far more complex class characteristics; they are not comprised merely of urban marginals. Cato Manor was home to people who were socially recognised and integrated into various strata of local society: as teachers, nurses, government clerks, policemen and Christian preachers. Cato Manor was also home to masses of male workers; skilled, semi-skilled, menial and casual. There were also many residents who earned a living through the extensive array of adventures and enterprises that constitutes people's capitalism. Their success stories were also told; sometimes in print through newspapers and court reports, but mostly verbally within shacklands and African society. Indeed, it was these people, deemed as marginals, who were often the most prominently featured members of the society, for they were the focal point of Durban middle-class anger.

Domestic arrangements were also complex. Men and women owned or rented accommodation in Mkhumbane. Many women were household heads, supporting their own children, and living with and often also supporting male and female relatives. Many men were not household heads, but rather rented bed space or a room from a shack owner or renter, who could also be a close and older male or female relative. Men, bonded by ties of kinship, rural origin, the workplace, or simply masculinity would share accommodation. There were also similarly constituted households of women. Nevertheless, most of the shackland community was made up of men and women living together as partners. A substantial number of these couples were not formally married under either Christian or customary rites. As Superintendent Colin Shum related:

> 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 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.[88]

A local liberal pressure group explained the situation in the following way:

> The relatively high incidence of stable unions without registration of marriage is not indicative of low moral standards on the part of the African community. Unless practising Christians, it is extremely difficult for urban Africans to contract a marriage. The entering into and registration of customary unions in terms of the Natal Code is complicated by the migratory labour system and by many other factors, e.g. difficulties connected with lobola; obtaining the consent of the guardian.[89]

However the main problem was considerably more fundamental: in Natal, unlike all the other provinces, there were no legal provisions for African civil marriages.[90]

Within Cato Manor and, indeed, within wider urban African society, two terms describe differing heterosexual cohabitation relations. There were 'girlfriend and boyfriend' couples and 'kipita' ('keep it') couples. Couples would support children from both their own relationship and those from previous relationships, particularly the mother's.

Some men were accommodated in male hostels or company compounds elsewhere in Durban and also set up house in the shantytown. Kunene remembered:

> 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.[91]

Men living in 'girlfriend-boyfriend' and 'kipita' relationships in Mkhumbane could also be married; most often to a woman or polygamously to women living in the countryside. They would then also be supporting this family's dependants.[92]

Within this heterosexual community men would describe different types of people. The male fully employed industrial and commercial workers, the self-employed, and government clerks considered themselves to be the acme of proletarian urbanity. They were the Mtka; leaning self-confidently against a lamp-post or wall, like a tugboat, and smoking a cigarette. Or they were 'outs'; streetwise and now 'out' of being blind to the vicissitudes of city life. They referred to 'nice women' as 'sister' or 'ubaby'. Smart city women called Mtka either u-bhuti; 'boetie', or 'u-clever'. When an Mtka was too clever, smart women would call him a tsotsi.

The only people the Mtka considered to be above themselves were Christian churchgoers; to the Mtka and all others, these men and women were simply, but respectfully, 'ikholwa'. At the bottom of the Mtka's urban social ladder were the Mpatha, raw farm boys, just arrived from the reserves. Then there were the '*isiscatemiya*'-music loving Umxhka, newly arrived migrants with no street sense. Women who, according to the perspectives of the man, 'fell in love with too many men', were 'izifaba', or simply 'a bitch'.

By the late 1950s a set of American-derived styles were considered to be dominant. For the man, a gabardine suit, a Boston or Battersby hat, tie and, obviously, shoes not boots were the key to a public celebration of urban success. Imitating the dress of the Manhattan Brothers, films featuring John Wayne or

Roy Rogers were favoured means of finding and identifying with their chosen image of their own masculinity. Or there would be dancing, either in a classy Cato Manor shebeen or downtown at the Bantu Social Centre.

Here, dance styles could vary; from the shack dance *iphata patha*, 'touch-touch' danced to tunes by 'for example' Miriam Makeba, to the Jitterbug big band happiness played by groups, like the Rhythm Aces, long time favourites like Elvis Presley's 'Jailhouse Rock' or Latin American swing styles.

For the women attending these dances, dress styles were similarly American derived. Imitations of Zsa Zsa Gabor and Marilyn Monroe were crucial: lipstick, referred to as 'rosy cheeks' or 'lipstick', Butone or Karoo cosmetics, dresses known as 'stiff petticoats', high heels and handbag and beret.[93]

There was also a male homosexual or Izitabane community living in a distinct settlement in Cato Manor. Other residents spoke of 'Moffies' living at Esinyameni, 'The Place of Darkness'. The Izitabane were divided into three groups, with the Ungqingili, or 'professional homosexuals' at the apex. Lovers came from within the male 'kitchen boy' networks, the near-child male labour employees in the stevedoring industry,[94] jails, or from amongst those young men whom the state wished to endorse out of the city.[95]

Shack rooms were often decorated in imitation of the bedrooms of their suburban white madams'. Heterosexual men remember this with envy: Kunene remembered that 'we could never make ours so nice'.[96] Heterosexual men say the gays had a fearful reputation as brutal stick fighters, with gay men regarding heterosexual men as drunks, whilst they were 'fit good Zulu boys'.[97]

Lovers would be taken into kipita relationships at Cato Manor and taught the rituals of 'entertaining a boyfriend, how to shave properly, how to smile, how to attract a man [and] how to behave with a man'. Initiates were warned to behave properly because they 'were competing with other men'. However, for the Umgqingila, it was women, and in particular women entering the developing domestic servant employment market, who were the real competition. Gay men could be misogynist.[98]

But gay men did develop close relationships with some women. Mrs Phewa, one such associate, taught male homosexual confidants sewing and dress-making. She remembers how heterosexual women were 'jealous' of the gays' domestic skills, including beer brewing; the richness of their shimeyane apparently being attributed to the fact that 'they stole their white madam's buttered toast, it makes the beer nice and rich'.[99]

On Sunday, the domestic workers' day off, ceremonies, known as *Umgido wezi-labane*, or 'the cultural performances of the gays' would be held in Cato Manor. Here men would be promoted through the ranks of the homosexual hierarchy and weddings celebrated, announcements of births made and homages paid to deaths. Initially, men would apparently marry wearing 'traditional Zulu attire', but by the 1950s 'women' were wearing white 'stiff petticoat' dresses and the other accoutrements of Western heterosexual wedding dress. 'Kipita' couples would also announce the imminent birth of a child, and, a few months later a funeral, where, often, a baby doll wrapped in a shoe box would be buried.[100] Mrs Phewa remembers:

> 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.[101]

Anybody could attend these ceremonies, but any signs of laughter or ridicule would be severely punished.[102]

Here are remembered the reflected and deeply gender-related anxieties of a proletarian heterosexual community whose life bore little relationship to the one to which they aspired and seemingly admired; a life of male and female pride, household status and with the trappings of public decency. Priests would continually extol the virtues of married life.[103] Women's associations in Cato Manor echoed the same refrain. Here the roles of woman, mother and social worker seemed interchangeable; women had to look after their children, make school clothes and strive for a better family life. This attitude was reinforced by the local media. *Drum* magazine and the local Zulu-language newspaper *Ilanga lase Natal* and, to a lesser extent, the Roman Catholic *Um Afrika* and the very left-wing *Guardian* carried advertisements showing smartly dressed men; wearing a Battersby hat, strumming the Wizard guitar, or listening to the latest records. The latter were sometimes of Zulu choral music, but more often reflected the sound of 'now!', *kwela*; a frantic-paced dance style. For women the message was washing with a particular soap, using domestic disinfectant, and wearing the latest dress styles or nylon stockings. Many of the advertisements were in cartoon style with the lesson conveyed in the final frame: man and woman happy together. For those who would listen, and they were many, here was an urban dream offering the gifts of security in the modern world, heterosexual attraction and domestic bliss. Set against this were sensationalist accounts of brutal witchcraft, and derogatory comments aimed at backward customs.

There were, however, cruel ironies. *Drum* magazine and *Ilanga lase Natal* encouraged male drunkenness as praiseworthy and amusing. *Ilanga lase Natal* reported murders, rapes, stabbings, robberies and police raids in their diary-style 'Daily Happenings' section. People wearing smart hats were 'swanks'. The *kwela* dance had its origins in the active command word '*kwela*!' or 'jump!' used by policemen instructing people to jump into the back of

three-ton pick-up vans, known as *kwela* vans. Assertions of dignity were in constant conflict with the reality of the police and law courts. In a song popular during the time of the removals, a woman sings of her desire for 'A nice home down Mashu way, perhaps a little car one day' and, singing to her city lovers; 'Dick, Dan and Joe', she asserts that she 'does not want a man who goes to bed in his boots', she 'wants a man from the Bantustan'.[104]

During pass screenings, the vast majority of men had acquired permanent urban residence privileges; often simply through lying, abetted by the difficulties of verifying a previously undocumented past and benign officialdom.[105] The legal status of a woman in the city was essentially derived from her being either the dependant or the spouse of a man entitled to permanent city residence. Furthermore, Durban's formal labour market offered few opportunities for African women. There was little employment in domestic labour. In Durban 'kitchen boys' and 'garden boys' were the staple requirement of white women seeking labour at the labour bureaux. African women remained dependent upon incomes derived from petty commodity production, shack renting and such small earnings as could be derived from casual domestic work, such as laundering or child-minding. Apart from such earnings, women were dependent upon wages earned by formally employed men.

And yet the gender struggle in Cato Manor was far from one-sided. Women gained a degree of authority through their household activities. 'Good husbands' were described as those who handed over their weekly pay packages to their woman partner, who would then hand back some 'pocket money'.[106] Men recognised this as an important measure in sustaining domestic bliss; although shebeen conversation would inevitably turn on who had more money to spend and whether this had anything do with his female partner or maybe the lack of such a partner.[107] This influence was increased through women's central role within the shantytown community. Status was accorded not only to shebeen queens and other women involved in legal trading ventures, but also to teachers, social workers and petty traders.[108] Women had ambivalent attitudes towards shebeen queens; while scorning them for trading in liquor and keeping their husbands or lovers in debt, they would laugh admiringly at the shebeen queens' legendary ability to keep their husbands thin, cowardly and dominated.[109] Women also tended to seek out the attentions of wealthier or better established men. Men described this as both flattery and flirting and their recollections reveal considerable insecurity and annoyance.[110]

Nevertheless, the shacklands was still very much a male dominated society. The key leadership grouping was almost entirely comprised of men. Even the shebeen queens, while often associated with the main shack leaders, were in an ambiguous position within the leadership element because the establishment of a shebeen was 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.[111] Even those popular jokes which '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.[112] Such a situation was probably inevitable. Shack life was based on the 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.[113]

The threat of removal to KwaMashu highlighted and exacerbated considerable tensions between men and women in Cato Manor. A somewhat prescient indication of the nature of women's struggles can be identified in an incident which occurred in December 1955. Led by the ANCWL, a 'large deputation' of women, many from Mkhumbane, marched to the municipal Native Administration Department to protest against municipal attempts to issue letters of privilege to African women. Officials refused to discus the issue so the women marched to the nearby Victoria Street beerhall. Calling themselves 'the untouchables'; both scorned by their men and daring men to stand up to them, they invaded the beerhall. The men fled, and the idea of letters of privilege was dropped.[114]

The role of the ANC Women's League cannot be overestimated. During a campaign against the pass laws, the Women's League gave a political explanation for the problem. Dorothy Nyembe remembered:

> 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.[115]

By 1959, opposition to the pass laws had fused with concern over shack demolition, and the resultant possible eviction from the city or housing in KwaMashu.

In early 1959 the municipality began formulating a coherent resettlement and removal policy. This involved meshing pass-law regulations with practical considerations and the total amount of formal housing to be provided in KwaMashu. As was the case for a man, a woman could only acquire personal permanent domiciliary rights to live in Durban if she had either been born in the city, or had been formally employed by one employer for ten years or by various employers for fifteen years. Few women actually qualified. But this was by no means the end of the matter. Women's status was further connected to men's legal domiciliary status and the total amount of accommodation to be provided by the municipality.

In a partial relaxation of the regulations, the municipality agreed that unmarried men and women who had been living together as a couple for a 'reasonable' amount of time, could qualify for family accommodation. However, due to the shortage of accommodation, only such couples with children would be allocated family housing.[116]

Women with no personal domiciliary rights could acquire them on legal marriage to a man with Section 10 1 (a, b or c) rights. However, on the death of the husband, or in the case of divorce, separation or desertion, the woman lost her right to live in Durban unless she was formally employed. No widow or divorced woman, or one separated from or deserted by her husband, and not having dependent children, would be eligible for family accommodation. Further, women could only be household heads if they had formal employment and were legally emancipated. Women shack traders, rack-renters and other self-employed women who did qualify for permanent domiciliary rights were given a blunt warning. To stay in Durban they would have to 'turn their hands to lawful occupations'.

The municipality considered that most African women who were not eligible for either family or hostel accommodation should return to their rural areas. Widows should be taken in according to the *ngena* custom or, if not emancipated (something which was extremely rare) otherwise cared for by their parents or guardians. No relative within a family's extended kinship network was to acquire any legal powers or urban residence unless he or she was formally employed in the city. If they did so qualify, only certain kinship members would be permitted to stay in the same house as their relatives.[117]

Men were clearly in favour in many respects. In 1958 the municipality had formed the Isicoco. The name, given by the municipality and referring to the headring worn by Zulu married men, was hardly an accident. The Isicoco was comprised of a number of African factory indunas and was intended to provide a leadership to counter growing ANC influence. The Isicoco was consulted about the resettlement policy and apparently agreed. Further, a letter from a man living in Bizana provides further clues as to some men's views. The writer complained that 'all our women from the reserves are running to Durban . . . to visit us.' They leave 'their [*sic*] children with friends or relatives; sometimes paying people to look after them. They then stay in Durban, brew beer and get cheeky.' 'We cannot say a thing' he complained. His solution was blunt: women should remain in Pondoland, 'farm mealies' and only be allowed to come to Durban for one month each year.[118]

For women it created an invidious position. Staying outside the system meant almost total insecurity, yet the terms of the new system were highly prejudicial to them. Passes for women brought them under the ambit of the state, thus creating conditions for arrest and deportation. Pass laws also incorporated women into the system, either as units of labour or as shackled dependants of men.

There were many married men and women who did want to move to KwaMashu, but simply could not. This was the very issue that was focused upon by Durban's left-wing press. Mrs Tenjwayo had moved to a new shack settlement. Her story was reported as follows:

> 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.[119]

The local press defined the issue in terms of an unjust administration being cruel to nuclear families. However, there was a great deal more to the issue than that.

Conditions created differing personal agonies, but the overarching brutal fact was that women's future lives in the city were being very narrowly circumscribed. Some women had lost all personal ties to the rural areas. Others had been recently evicted from white-owned farms during the large 'squatter' evictions in many areas of the Natal midlands. Others were repelled by the *ngena* custom. Furthermore, rural chiefs were at this time preventing women from having access to tribal land and allocating land 'in favour of males only'.[120] The imminence of this threat made women confront the contradictory question of their own identity and position in the city. Anger was expressed towards African men. Women grew increasingly 'impatient' with the failure of 'our men to see what was happening to us. We did not think they really were interested.'[121] According to Constance Matiwane, for many women the dominant male proletarian culture was riddled with '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.'[122]

There was a spate of marriages in Mkhumbane. Thomas Shabalala recalled how:

> You had to get married otherwise Kwa Muhle [Bourquin] 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."[123]

The municipality began to encourage and later to compel unmarried couples living in the shantytowns to marry. Bourquin said in an interview:

> 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.[124]

Reluctant spouses were resettled in temporary accommodation in KwaMashu and given one month to formalise their marriage. If they were still recalcitrant, the municipality would relocate the man to a hostel and endeavour to expel the woman from Durban.[125] Marriage officers, like Henry Sibisi, were a very visible feature of life in the early years of KwaMashu.

Women saw that many men were reluctant to marry, or had near complete control over fundamental decisions concerning women's future in the city. Men could choose single-male hostel accommodation and thus desert their partners.[126] Men pursuing extramarital relationships in the shantytowns could elect to bring their wives to the city and disregard the future of their shantytown partners.[127]

For many men, the establishment of KwaMashu also brought personal agonies. The cost of accommodation was high, thereby threatening the very basis of so much male identity – his wage as a working man. 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 9s.11d. per week, 'he was told that accommodation was available but that he was not earning enough'.[128]

Having been requested to raise wages so that their African employees could afford the expenses of township life, many employers attempted to compel 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.'[129] The local Native Commissioner supported this proposal. Resisting, or financially unable to meet, the costs of accommodation in KwaMashu, Mkhumbane residents began to leave the area and settle in the new fast-growing shack settlements such as Malakazi. *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.'[130] Personal experiences in labour bureau queues were humiliating. Being arrested in shebeens was equally so. Women's critiques of men touched raw nerves. The situation brought on a crisis of masculinity. Seeking the patronage of the new state was hard.

For men and women this was a time of severe personal crisis which often ended tragically. Women, either having been rejected by their male partner or having lived alone in the shantytowns, committed suicide, in some cases by dousing themselves with paraffin and setting themselves alight.[131] There were

clashes between women over 'the same boyfriend', clashes between town women and 'farm wives who had heard about Kwa Mashu and came to collect their man and go with him to the location', and at least one case of a man being stabbed to death after fighting 'with his girlfriend's ex-boyfriend'.[132] In Shumville a man assaulted his 'girlfriend' who ran to the Mkhumbane river and drowned 'when the boyfriend persisted in beating her up'.[133]

Children suffered grievously. They were living evidence of an often complex past and threats to future security. In 1957 it was estimated that over a third of all children living in the Mkhumbane area were illegitimate.[134] Women evicted from the shack settlement, and separated from their male partners who had been relocated to KwaMashu, would queue outside the Grey Street Women's Hostel with their children looking for accommodation. Tokoza was not only a place of solitude but, more importantly, of rejection – by fathers. Other women wandered the streets destitute, many having abandoned their children. One African woman was reported to have encouraged her daughter to fatally stab her younger sister.[135] Other couples, unable to afford upbringing costs in the township also abandoned children. After the Raincoat shack settlement, which adjoined the Mkhumbane area, was cleared, municipal inspectors found many abandoned 'babies'.[136]

The influence of the ever-present *sangoma* increased. In July 1958 hundreds of *izisangoma* gathered at Two Sticks to celebrate their rising leadership role. The women slaughtered three cattle in praise of the goddess 'Unomkhumbulwane'. A fully-trained school teacher and school principal left the profession and 'opted to become an izisangoma'.[137] Men and women would seek advice from the women spirit mediums on why their partners or children were 'bewitched'.[138]

Men and women were being stabbed, beheaded or otherwise killed in what were clearly ritual murders.[139] There were reported cases of 'mad' women wandering the streets.[140] A women claimed to have given birth to a 'pig', and inside the animal was a baby girl.[141] A man roamed the shacklands 'telling everyone that he was the new Messiah'.[142]

Rumours abounded. It was said that KwaMashu was deliberately built on a 'swamp' so that when it was fully settled the land would subside taking all residents to their deaths.[143] Similarly, the 'serpents' living in the KwaMashu area would 'eat us'.[144] Rumours, however, also 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.'[145] Amidst the uncertainties of the period, the sufferings of children became enveloped in rumour. Superstition 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.[146]

Men became increasingly critical of women. Attitudes became downright misogynist: 'Why should we have been bothered with those women, they were nothing.'[147] African women in the city were 'Durban Dust' which men should leave well alone. African men should recognize the attributes of rural women who would be more suitable as 'city wives'.[148] 'Dick, Dan and Joe' were answering back, and not just in song. Various men, including Joseph Mazibuko writing to *Ilanga lase Natal*, suggested that when African women, whom African city men 'keep', request money they should: 'simply chase her away or rather go back to your compound or barracks. These women do not love you but your pay packets.'[149]

Beauty competitions, only recently a feature of African life in the city, thrived. It was suggested that the organisers of these competitions should offer greater prize money, select competitors as opposed to allowing anyone to enter, and ensure that competitors both lived in Durban and were 'unmarried'. Beauty queens could be better viewed if they wore bathing costumes and not long dresses.[150] Sexism, parochialism and male assertiveness were reflected in another comment: a writer to *Ilanga lase Natal* criticised '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'.[151] 'Trained beauticians' offered their services to help women 'who want to be nice to be looked at'.[152] Advertisements in popular newspapers showed new styles in hair and clothes fashion, with 'Reckitts Blue' being promoted as the way to prevent women's clothes from looking 'dull'.[153]

Beerhalls became a place of refuge. In the words of Kunene:

> You must go to Gezinzandla [Cato Manor Beerhall]. You must have drinks, talk of your chief and respect. You must never allow other things to interfere. That is what we did. You see, outside were women offering us beer and lots of things to say. That is why you must go to the beerhall. No women allowed! That was the law! Not allowed![154]

Beerhalls became places to express anger, reaffirm men's dignity and discuss women. Shebeens were not quite the same. Mrs Phewa continued:

> You must talk to your sissie in shebeens. Everyone knows that you are her man. You do not stand outside and make the signs of the breasts and the sign of beards. No you must enter! Hey, a lot of men would not do that. They were too scared.[155]

To men, the beerhall offered the prospect of drunken male solitude. The shebeen was a public reminder of the sexual and emotional gender pattern of the shacklands. In the late 1950s, all the symbolic rituals of the shebeen were stripped away. Drinking did this. Some patrons spoke of their plans for a new life in KwaMashu and its attendant problems, while others could not. For them, the power of the male wage packet had gone. Gone also was men's ability to play with sexual innuendoes in front of women. What had also vanished was men's ability to attract girlfriends. Too much was known. The gender split within politics in Cato Manor, KwaMuhle's sought-for alliance with African men, and those men's financial and emotional insecurities, were too openly part of the public domain. The shebeen had been stripped. Long-time home of community spirit, good strong liquor, and African commercial loyalty in despite of municipal beerhalls, the shebeen was now too obvious. The site of male symbolism, which had tried to cover over deep social contradictions between residents and between them and the city, had been lost. In Mkhumbane shebeens died, not through lack of clientele, but through drunkenness and a lack of ritual and spirit. The shebeen's secret life was exposed, not by police raids, but by the male shebeen drinker. He was the catalyst and, in her own way, the shebeen queen became a victim.

The removals to KwaMashu began in mid-1958. For a short while the removals were not opposed by residents.[156] Then, in August 1958, the municipality endeavoured to destroy the shack settlement of Thusini. Resistance was peaceful and effective; residents, some with legal support, simply relocated their dwellings.[157]

However, no sense of coherent opposition was apparent. Even Luthuli was unable to offer any clear strategy, simply suggesting that residents resist relocation and thereby compel the municipality to consider forced removal.[158] The CMWDB was in disarray and could only attract six hundred people to a meeting about removals.[159] At this meeting municipal officials baldly stated that removals would continue.[160] Indeed they had acquired legal power to override any interdicts against removals.[161]

In early 1959 Draaihoek was cleared.[162] The area's large settlement of Mpondo women were declared illegals.[163] The strong ANC Women's League branch was decimated.[164] Draaihoek women took to the streets, led by Dorothy Nyembe.[165] Obtaining an interview with Bourquin, the group refused a suggestion that a future meeting be held at the Tokoza women's hostel and responded to official insistence that shack demolitions would continue, by physically attacking Bourquin.[166] Finally, meeting Durban's mayor, a woman spoke: 'We have a grievance. The Director [municipal Bantu Administration] 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.' 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.[167] This was a victory for the ANC Women's League. As Curnick Ndlovu, then a SACTU organiser living in Mkhumbane, remembered, 'from that time onwards things moved very fast'.[168]

Cato Manor, June 1959

In 1959, a typhoid epidemic broke out in Cato Manor. Municipal work gangs, assisted by local residents, started burning piles of refuse, including waste remnants from illicit stills.[169] The municipality insisted on maintaining and enforcing a by-law prohibiting home brewing. Squads of municipal workers, accompanied by 'blackjacks', soon swooped down on illicit liquor activities.[170] Shebeen queens, until then largely uninvolved in politics, approached the League to discuss a beer boycott. The Mkhumbane Women's League issued handwritten pamphlets. Unauthorised, and even condemned, by the ANC provincial leadership, one issued 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 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.[171]

Mkhumbane Women's Leaguers developed a new slogan: 'Ibuya Makhosikazi, ibuya!' (Come back women, come back!).[172] Leading members of today's Women's League find this slogan puzzling. Gladys Manzi, then a leading Cato Manor Women's Leaguer, explained its significance:

> You lose. Every time. Its the men, its Bokweni, its the law. The women needed to be told 'Come back!' We were going backwards, you see. We needed to get back to that place where we were. That is what we said. We were not Bokweni's girls and we did not want our men. That is what we said, we are the warriors! [laughter][173]

And of the basis of women's unity? Gladys Manzi again:

> We told those troublesome people that we are fighting for our rights. Women should be given rights to do what they liked. We could not remain traditional because times were changing; we had educated women who wanted to look good. Others were not educated but were becoming civilised. So people should be allowed to do what they liked.[174]

By this time there was a new crowd on Mkhumbane's streets. Queues of men waited at the municipal offices in Mkhumbane wishing to apply for housing in KwaMashu. They could afford to go to KwaMashu. Whatever their own agonies and personal doubts, they had made their choice. They could be publicly seen. Charles Khumalo, who 'volunteered' for housing in KwaMashu, remembered: 'We were going it alone.'[175] At least one whole section of KwaMashu, 'E' section, was settled by such willing prospective residents.

On 6 June eight hundred Cato Manor residents, dressed in ANC volunteer uniforms attended the funeral of popular Cato Manor ANC leader Ben Chiya. Dorothy Nyembe, Moses Mabida and Ashmon Nene were the main speakers, using the occasion to call for resistance to removals and support for the ANC's campaign against the municipal superintendent of Cato Manor.[176] Fearing this conflict could get violent, non-ANC board members refused to stand for re-election, saying they wanted 'to exclude' themselves.[177]

On 17 June at around two o'clock, as the beerhall was closing for the mid-afternoon break, about fifty women, armed with sticks, knives, hatchets or pieces of firewood, invaded the beerhall.[178] Shouting 'We are the Zulu warriors', the women insulted and mocked the men and smashed the drinkers' personal clay beer containers. The women said that they had no complaints against white municipal officials who should leave them to sort out their quarrel with their men. Mabel Dlamini continued:

> If we do not give money to KwaMuhle then they cannot bring us here to KwaMashu. This is the whole thing. Then we can all stay in Cato Manor. All the money can come to us, nothing to u-Bokweni. It was through this thing that [Kwa] Mashu can be stopped. If we can chase 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 can get them out.[179]

Gladys Manzi remembered that cries of 'Yinj'umlungu! Yinj'umlunga!' (Whites are dogs) were meant merely to 'scare them away'; their real target was African drinkers: 'We wanted no man here.'[180] Men in the vicinity of the beerhall were chased and beaten. Municipal police on normal duty at the beerhall seemingly made no attempt to intervene.

Women called for a boycott of the beerhall. The women warned that they would return at four o'clock when the beerhall reopened and deal with any men found there.[181] Led by shebeen queens, groups of women moved through the shacklands. Dorothy Nyembe remembered:

> They were the people who sell the liquor from homes. Shebeens. They marched up and down into the houses, just like that. And the people who followed them were the traditional women, the women just from the farms. Come! Come! We are going to take our men. It was like that because men were away at work.[182]

A crowd of two hundred women did return. They were refused entry and amidst loud shouting complained bitterly about the destruction of their liquor stills. Within half an hour more stick-wielding women staked out bus stops warning male passengers not to go to the beerhall. Groups of women gathered throughout the shacklands. There were issues to be discussed. Mrs Phewa recalled:

> Some women just wanted an end to it all. It must all do away, you see, "Just like this!" Then you see you say, "but that is difficult. How can you do this?" This is what made women very angry. If you say there is something you cannot do then you must say why. That is not easy because then you see people say you are being special. And the municipal was not giving us anything special. People got very angry with themselves.[183]

While newer and far more militant strategies were being discussed elsewhere, a group of around fifty women had remained, sitting quietly some distance away from the beerhall. These women wanted to speak to Bourquin and nobody else. Board member Isaac Zwane then set up a table and chair for himself and started taking complaints from the women. For women, the time for these rituals had now passed. However, although willing to speak with Zwane, the women surrounded Cato Manor's 'mayor', Esaau Makatini and escorted him to the beerhall, where he was told to take 'shelter' because he was not popular with women who believed he spoke 'with the mouth which was in the hands of the Europeans'.[184]

Women were extremely critical of male Board members, whom they disparaged. They became the focus not only of women's criticism of shack leadership, but also of men in general. Dorothy Nyembe remembered:

> These were men who would sit and talk with their enemy, Bourquin. Men were cowards. We had seen what passes did to our men. Even if you go to church without a pass you are taken. We watched this happening all the time. Taken away! Our men were not men, they were just boys. We said to them "You must come of age." How can you live with boys?[185]

By ten o'clock the following morning several hundred women had gathered on the sports grounds and meeting ground in front of the beerhall. They refused to elect a delegation, demanded to speak to Bourquin, and shouted down Zwane and the police. By eleven o'clock there were over a thousand women at the meeting. This crowd then split; one section, gathering strength, went off to besiege municipal beerhalls in town until,by midday, a crowd of around three thousand 'impatient' women remained on the sports ground.

Bourquin finally agreed to attend their meeting. The women still refused to elect a deputation. The crowd was their safety and their power; they could not

and would not elect leaders. Existing leaders had been so thoroughly discredited that the very notion of leaders was threatening. Furthermore, the critical issues which had formed the crowd were complex and contradictory. The women needed to talk to the municipality and to themselves.

A succession of women came forward. There were impassioned, pleading and threatening speeches. Some spoke of how they were arrested in their own homes, of shack demolition and of being homeless. Others demanded the right to brew beer. Some admitted that they were illicit traders, but argued that this was the only way they could feed, clothe and educate their families. Every time Bourquin tried to answer a particular grievance – by resorting to the tried and tested formula of policy details and individual technical problems – he was shouted down and more speakers came forward. Zwane's continual pleas for the crowd to allow Bourquin to speak were decried. The meeting ended angrily. Bourquin left, publicly saying that he regretted the women's behaviour, that he had come to a meeting not a demonstration, and that he would forward any complaints through official channels, but that government policy would remain.

Whilst this meeting was continuing, the other group of Cato Manor women were invading beerhalls in town. At the Victoria Street beerhall Florence Mkhize and Dorothy Nyembe led the way. Not only were male patrons chased and beaten and the premises ransacked, but Nyembe urinated into one vat of beer while Mkhize dunked her underclothes in another. These were immensely significant acts; not only were women entering a male domain and then attacking and taunting men and spoiling their cherished drink, they were also turning men's defilement of women against them. Accounts of this action spread and quickly became legend. Masculinity was being defiled and men publicly threatened and challenged. Police used teargas to clear the beerhalls. The municipality estimated that up to a quarter of a million pounds damage may have been caused to beerhalls in the city by crowds of women from Cato Manor.[187] The women returned to Cato Manor triumphant; they had dealt with Bourquin and taught their men a lesson.

After Bourquin had left the meeting, the crowd remained behind, angrily discussing the issues. Although they had very different personal perspectives and interests, discussion gave the women a strong sense of public unity. Further, it brought awareness that discussing their problems had been to no avail. The level of frustration rose. Speakers said Bourquin had, perhaps in a frustrated off-the-cuff remark, or perhaps simply by his attitude, denigrated African women. Bourquin denied making any such remark, but news of Bourquin's insulting behaviour spread. Bourquin was threatening all women. The meeting was surrounded by one hundred and fifty policemen. After the women had refused to obey three calls to disperse, the police baton-charged. It was a scene captured by memorable photographs, one of which has become one of the classics of apartheid history. As police chased and beat women underfoot,

women fled, fighting a rearguard action by throwing bottles and stones at police. African men joined the fray, attacking the police. The police started shooting. The crowds retreated into the shacklands.[188] A brand-new municipal bus was torched. Gladys Manzi remembered:

> This bus with the radio inside. I still remember the song from . . . the radio there. "Ngagula, ngalala phansi, bajabula bonke sengilele phansi" ("I am sick, I am lying down; as I lay down dying they are all happy") and the bus was actually lying down on its side in flames.

Who burnt the bus? Listen:

> Cele: 'Who burnt the bus?
> Manzi: 'What do you think? Women.'[189]

The police could not intervene. Armed men had started shooting at the police, who retreated into the beerhall. A crowd of women then proceeded up the road to a municipal trading complex. Manzi continued:

> I remember that from there we went to those shops that belonged to the municipality that were hired by Africans like Mr Xhakaza and Mr Hlongwane. All those shops were burnt down. People were told to take out all their staff and their properties so that a shop was burnt without anyone who hired it being a loser.[190]

By five o'clock chanting crowds of men and women marched along Booth Road in Cato Manor. The crowds were swelled by men alighting from buses returning from the factory areas.[191] This was a turning point. Charles Khumalo explained:

> Our women were beating us to it. It was no use talking to them. They were saying we were cowards and Bourquin's boys. That we are nothing to marry. So that is when we started to talk to Bourquin using this [bangs fist on table].[192]

Kunene remembered that 'we needed to teach our women a lesson. They would not listen.'[193] Seizing the initiative, groups of men attacked the municipal offices. Officials were chased away, offices ransacked and then torched. Most of the filing cabinets with the personal family and shack files which were so vital to the municipal shack destruction and resettlement plans were destroyed. Men danced gleefully on smouldering files.[194]

That night Cato Manor burnt. Personal vendettas were settled: 'If a man has your wife, this man is a thief. That was the time when you can do it to him.'[195]

The shacklords' vigilantes turned against their patrons, recognising their leaders' failure to provide them with future security.[196] Looters moved through the shantytown pillaging and burning Indian-owned and licensed African-owned shops. A group of around fifteen thousand Cato Manor men assembled close to the beerhall. The police fired warning shots, but the men's target was not the beerhall. Coming mainly from the Ridge View, Esinyameni and New Clare settlements, this *impi* proceeded to the Shumville area where, after allowing shack traders to remove their stock, they torched the shops.[197]

Police cordoned Cato Manor off and sited a huge searchlight on a hill. All night it swept over the shacks searching for looters and marching crowds. Obviously anticipating action, a large crowd of men and women gathered on the slopes of the hills surrounding the beerhall. That night there were three 'attacks' on the beerhall, where the police had remained stationed. As the attacks occurred, the crowd threw bricks, bottles and anything else to hand into the beerhall. All forays were organised and involved only men. The first, by approximately one hundred men, was repulsed by police gunfire. Soon after this the crowds gave a huge cry as Cato Manor's streetlights were successfully sabotaged. Apart from the searchlight, and the glow from burning buildings, the shantytown was plunged into darkness. A further attack on the beerhall was led by a man wielding a huge panga. Taunting the police still inside the beerhall, the group then withdrew. A third dual-pronged attack also 'failed'.

At around midnight a lone bugler, who had been playing military music for most of the night now changed his tune, playing *kwela* jazz. People continued to mill around the streets near the beerhall until early morning. At around three that morning, as usual, buses arrived; but this time only private, Indian-owned buses, moved in to Cato Manor to collect commuters.[198] Men and women were off to work. Saracen armoured cars had arrived from Grahamstown. But Indian and African shopkeepers picked through their burnt stores, a queue of women with their children waited patiently and plaintively outside the burnt municipal welfare offices, and journalists roamed around. On that same day Bourquin closed all the municipal beerhalls, which were in any event empty and often badly damaged. Another day had begun.

Officials said that three men had been killed; all by police action. However, a municipal ambulance driver placed the figure at well over twenty.[199] Twenty-nine men and women were admitted to hospital, half of them wounded by gunshot. Most municipal buildings in Cato Manor were destroyed or badly damaged. All the shops of licensed African traders in Cato Manor had been looted and many torched. Shacks had also been destroyed, as had the premises of welfare organisations.

Gradually municipal officials re-entered the shantytowns. Known political activists were either arrested or banished from the city. At first under armed escort, municipal clerks resumed those administrative tasks essential for shack destruction and removal. Liquor and pass raids returned, as did the screening

work whereby officials determined who was legally in the city and which men were also financially eligible for either hostel or single-site, single-family accommodation in KwaMashu. Aircraft dropped pamphlets advertising the benefits of the new township housing.

The ANC was already heavily involved in organising campaigns in other areas of the city. The people of Cato Manor had seemingly scorned these activities. It was only as the fires in Cato Manor burnt that ordinary men and women formed new ANC branches. With new leaders; from amongst themselves. Albertina Mnguni remembered the quick expansion of ANC groups:

> All you could talk about was ANC, ANC! It was everywhere. We had the Mandela Plan which was how people would get together and form their own branches of the ANC. Each street in Cabazini, Dabulamanzi . . . everywhere, they were in the ANC.[200]

Likewise, Kunene recalled:

> It was during those days that my wife was brewing, and they were chasing us out of the beerhalls, this was when I went to the African National Congress.[201]

Bundles of ANC pamphlets, often handwritten, were passed around within the shacklands. ANC banners appeared, flying from rooftops. Leading ANC provincial office-bearer, Stanford Mtolo, himself a resident of Cato Manor, told of this being the time when 'the people of Mkhumbane had come to the ANC'.[202] The crowds of people, streaming daily out of Cato Manor, became triumphal celebrations and unofficial rallies. Under banners, shouting ANC and SACTU songs and slogans and ridiculing white and black bystanders, people from Cato Manor became a highly active part of the wider political campaigns then being fought in Durban. They had already fought the municipality; 'our spears were bloodied', said Khumalo.[203] They sought support from the ANC and when they came onto the streets their message was to the ANC, the municipality and other people in the marching crowds. As they marched, so men and women from Cato Manor also commenced seemingly endless meetings with the municipality over the details of the already proceeding removals.

These meetings, long drawn out affairs replete with documents, laws and administrative procedure, and speeches vituperative, pleading and patronising, were essential to both the municipality and the ANC. For KwaMuhle they were part of a necessary strategy of negotiation with Cato Manor's residents. For the ANC they were an essential part of its greater political campaigning for mass support. Indeed so powerful was the ANC's mass support and involvement in negotiations that Bourquin asked to, and did, meet ANC leader Moses Mabhida. Bourquin recalled: 'We had a man to man chat.'[204]

But the fate of Cato Manor was already sealed. In the early 1960s Africans became legally free to drink 'white man's beer'. For KwaMashu residents, the municipality organised a competition and offered prizes for the best-kept gardens. At the same time, KwaMashu was host to a trade exhibition, showing various styles of home furniture, lounge suites and kitchen appliances. KwaMashu's Residents Council was even to be split from the Champion- and ANC-contested Joint Locations Advisory Board. These were the fruits of loyalty.

The new leaders of the ANC in Cato Manor were to 'be our block *men* of Congress in KwaMashu'.[205] The early years in KwaMashu had been the time 'that we men struck back'.[206] At the state, certainly; through mass bus boycotts, clandestine organising, the sabotaging of the homes of township councillors and participation in the mass campaigns of the early 1960s. But surely this imagery uses the campaign slogans of the women's anti-pass struggles of the 1950s? Had men forgotten the women's slogans of the riots: 'Ibuya Makhosikazi, Ibuya!'? Gladys Manzi, who was finally moved to Umlazi township, had this to say:

> I remember that in mid-60s, it was said that women should not use lipsticks and not to treat their hair nicely with any hair dye. It was said that this was not a part of our African culture. It was also said that women should not wear the miniskirts.[207]

So did the shackland's often very silent and threatened male majority assume power.

Cato Manor Remembered

In the later 1950s, the municipality centred its plans around its desired African male worker. As these plans encompassed shack demolition, people were required to confront the often very large gap between personal perceptions of self-worth and urban relevance, and those being forged for them by the municipality. Understanding state intervention requires confrontation of personal, public and political identities. These are always ambiguously inter-related. State intervention exacerbated gender ambiguities and social conflict. So faced, all could feel themselves as victims. But individual choices had to be made, and they had to made publicly. These are the agonies which created and lay within Cato Manor's crowds of June 1959.

Cato Manor has become enmeshed in Durban's legends. It is remembered for its bloody role in the 1949 'Indian African' riots, as a slumyard, for the June 1959 beerhall riots and the early 1960 massacre of nine policemen. Cato Manor

is also part of two political histories of South Africa's masses. The riot and the mass campaigns of the period are also part of popular legend and reflection. During the 1980 KwaMashu school boycott many activist children – the first born in KwaMashu – angrily blamed their mothers and fathers for past political failure.[208] Africans have now returned to Cato Manor; again as shack dwellers. Their lives uncertain, they seek relations with political parties and the new state.

The politicising histories under which men and women have lived for so long need to be re-examined. Sadly, the rewriting of our history seems to have taken some outrageous forms. Speaking during the first session of the new parliament, Professor Kader Asmal said:

> For the first time, therefore, we have the triumph of rules over the power of men – women hardly had anything to do with what has happened in our country in the past 45 years!
>
> . . .
>
> The rights which the hon. the President has identified are those rights which form the *patrimony* of our people.[209]

This is unacceptable.

NOTES

1. Even during the period of the Port Natal Administration Board, induction lessons for new staff members included a slide-tape show on Cato Manor and the building and settlement of KwaMashu.
2. ANC (External Mission), *The African National Congress of South Africa* (Dar es Salaam, 1962), p. 17 and F. Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us* (London, 1990), pp. 131–3.
3. S. B. Greenberg, *Legitimating the Illegitimate* (Berkeley, 1987) and D. Hindson, *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat* (Johannesburg, 1987).
4. Hindson, *Pass Controls*, pp. 53–79.
5. D. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid* (Oxford, 1991).
6. See for example Modikwe Dikobe, *The Marabi Dance* (Johannesburg, 1973), pp. 6–7.
7. For important analysis of how the African urban crowd is represented in South African fiction, see D. Maughan Brown, 'The Image of the Crowd in South African Fiction', *English in Africa*, 14(1), May 1987.
8. J. Wells, 'Why Women Rebel: A Comparative Study of South African Women's Resistance in Bloemfontein (1913) and Johannesburg (1958)', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10(1), October 1983, p. 69.
9. J. Wells, 'The Rise and Fall of Motherism as a Force in Black Women's Resistance Movements', Women and Gender in Southern Africa conference, University of Natal, Durban, January–February 1991, p. 2.

10. See N. Manganyi and A. du Toit, (eds), *Political Violence and the Struggle in South Africa* (London, 1990); J. Seeking, 'Trailing Behind the Masses: The United Democratic Front and Township Politics in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand Region, 1983–1984', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18(1), March 1992 and A. Sitas, 'The Making of the "Comrades" Movement in Natal' and C. Campbell, 'Learning to Kill? Masculinity, the Family and Violence', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18(3), September 1992.
11. L. Kuper, 'Rights and Riots in Natal, *Africa South*, 4, 1959–1960, p. 24.
12. M. Blumberg, 'Durban Explodes', *Africa South*, 4(1), (Oct.–Dec. 1959), p. 15.
13. Interview with Mr S. Bourquin, 10 September 1980.
14. Blumberg, 'Durban Explodes', pp. 14 and 15 (Original emphasis).
15. Ibid., p. 17.
16. L. Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie* (New Haven, 1965).
17. Kuper, 'Rights and Riots', pp. 21 and 24.
18. Ibid., p. 23 (My emphasis).
19. Ibid., p. 26.
20. K. Luckhardt, and B. Wall, *Organise or Starve!* (London, 1980), pp. 303–6.
21. T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg, 1983), pp. 147–8, 204 and 224.
22. C. Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (London, 1982), pp. 230–5; Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie* and J. Yawitch, 'Natal 1959 – The Women's Protests', (unpublished paper presented at the History of Opposition in South Africa conference, University of the Witwatersrand, January 1978).
23. See for example A. Gordon, 'The Crowd and Politics in Imperial Japan, Tokyo, 1905–1918', *Past and Present*, 121, November 1988; R. J. Holton, 'The Crowd in History: Some Problems of Theory and Method', *Social History*, 3(2), May 1979, S. Moscovici, *The Age of the Crowd* (Cambridge, 1985); J. S. McClelland, *The Crowd and the Mob. From Plato to Canetti* (London, 1989); T. I. Uldricks, 'The "Crowd" in the Russian Revolution: Towards Reassessing the Nature of Revolutionary Leadership', *Politics and Society*, 4(3), July 1974 and J. W. White, 'Rational Rioters: Leaders, Followers, and Popular Protest in Early Modern Japan', *Politics and Society*, 16(1), March 1988.
24. Ibid., p. 10.
25. T. Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge, 1987).
26. D. Riches, (ed.), *The Anthropology of Violence* (Oxford, 1986), p. 22. See also J. C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven, 1990).
27. Riches, *Anthropology of Violence*, p. 14.
28. Ibid., pp. 19–20.
29. F. Furedi, 'The African Crowd in Nairobi: Popular Movements and Élite politics', *Journal of African History*, 14(2), 1973 and P. Gutkind, 'The View from Below: Political Consciousness of the Urban Poor in Ibadan', *Cahiers D'Etudes Africaines*, 57(1), 1975.
30. See for example F. Cooper, (ed.) *Struggle for the City* (Beverly Hills, 1983); S. Eckstein, 'Urbanisation Revisited: Inner City Slum of Hope and Squatter Settlement Despair', *World Development*, 18, 1990; R. Gay, 'Neighbourhood Associations and Political Change in Rio de Janeiro', *Latin American Review*, 25, 1990; A. Portes, 'Rationality and the Slum: An Essay in Interpretive Sociology', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 14, 1972 and D. Simon, *Cities, Capital and Development* (London, 1992).
31. *The Guardian*, 22 November 1951, *Ilanga lase Natal*, 6 October 1952, *Advance*, 25 December 1952 and Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p. 305.

32. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 14 July 1985.
33. Interview with Mr T. Phewa, 12 May 1985.
34. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 19 July 1985.
35. 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.
36. Killie Campbell Audio-Visual Collection (KCAV); interview with Mr J. Shange, 24 July 1979.
37. Interview with Mr S. S. L. Mtolo, 10 June 1983.
38. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 11 August 1951.
39. Interview with Mr S. S. L. Mtolo, 10 June 1983.
40. Ibid.
41. Interview with Mr C. N. Shum, 22 June 1985.
42. Interview with Mr S. S. L. Mtolo, 10 June 1983. See also interview with Mr M. B Yengwa by Ms B. Naidoo, n.d. [My emphasis]
43. For similar analysis see Lodge, *Black Politics*, p. 75.
44. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 14 July 1985. See also *Ilanga lase Natal*, 7 June 1958.
45. Interview with Mr M. O. D. Kunene, 5 May 1985.
46. Carter-Karis Microfilm Collection (CKM); reel 3B; 2:DA 19:30/13; ANC (Natal), Minutes of annual conference, 1–2 November 1952.
47. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19: 20/1–6; ANC (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.
48. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19:30/18, ANC (Natal), Minutes of annual conference, 8–9 October 1956.
49. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19: 30/18; ANC (Natal), Annual conference held at Nene Hall, Two Sticks, 8–9 October 1956.
50. Interview with Mr S. S. L. Mtolo, 10 June 1983. See Mbutho Papers, interview 5.
51. Interview with Mr S. Selby, 19 August 1980.
52. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 23 June 1985.
53. Interview with Mr C. C. Majola, 2 March 1983.
54. Ibid., 10 June 1983.
55. Interview with Mr S. S. L. Mtolo, 10 June 1983.
56. 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 he had personally registered his attendance at the 1954 provincial conference.
57. Ibid., and personal communication, Mr C. N. Shum.
58. Interview with Ms D. Nyembe, 10 June 1985.
59. Municipal Native Affairs Department; Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board (MNAD; CMWDB); Board agenda, 8 December 1960.
60. See for example MNAD; CMWDB; Board minutes, 17 August 1953, 29 September 1955, 16 May 1956 and 24 April 1957.
61. According to one informant this broad policy was deliberately designed to 'keep Champion out.' Interview with Mr A. Nene, 18 January 1984.
62. MNAD; CMWDB, vol. 2; Minutes of a meeting between the Manager, MNAD and the Services Committee, CMWDB, 27 October 1953.
63. Native Administration Committee agenda, 18 November 1953. Emphasis added.

64. Mbutho Papers; C. D. S. Mbutho – Chief Commissioner, South African Police, April 1959.
65. Interview with Ms D. Nyembe, 10 June 1985.
66. Interview with with Mrs G. Manzi by Ms P. Cele, June 1990.
67. Bourquin Papers; S. Bourquin, Memorandum on the Cato Manor disturbances of June 1960.
68. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 21 June 1985.
69. CKM; roll 3B; 2: DA 19:30/16; ANC (Natal) Executive Committee meeting, 6 June 1954.
70. Interview with Mr M. B. Yengwa by Ms P. Naidoo, n.d.
71. KCAV; interview with Mrs A. Mnguni, 19 July 1979.
72. Interview with Mr M. O. D. Kunene, 28 April 1985 and interview with Mr H. C. Sibisi, 7 November 1985. Also see Mbutho Papers, interview 11.
73. Bourquin Papers; Notes on the meeting of 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 been used despite earlier cases of absence.
74. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 1 April 1950.
75. Ibid.
76. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 25 August 1956 and interview with Ms D. Nyembe, 10 June 1985.
77. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 9 June 1951 and 12 September 1953.
78. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19:30/18; ANC (Natal) annual conference, Nene Hall, 8–9 October 1956 and interview with Ms R. Shabane, 18 November 1986.
79. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 14 July 1956. This information was supplied to the newspaper by Stephen Dlamini so can be regarded as reliable.
80. Interview with Mrs G. Manzi by Ms P. Cele, June 1990.
81. CKM; reel 3B;2:DA19/1:30/8; ANC (Natal), Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, 26–27 November 1955.
82. CKM; reel 3B; 2:DA 19/1:30/8; ANC (Natal), Minutes of the Provincial Executive Committee, 26–27 November 1955.
83. Interview with Mr S. S. L. Mtolo, 10 June 1983.
84. See for example *Ilanga lase Natal*, 11 August 1956 and 1 September 1956.
85. Ibid., 18 January 1958.
86. See for example T. Lodge, '"We are Being Punished Because we are Poor": The Bus Boycotts of Evaton and Alexandra, 1955–1957' in P. Bonner, (ed.), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, vol. 2 (Johannesburg, 1981), p. 258.
87. MNAD; H/Gen, vol. 2; Pamphlet, n.d. This pamphlet was distributed in Mkhumbane during late 1959 and 1959.
88. Interview with Mr C. N. Shum, 20 June 1986. See also interview with Mr R. F. Drew, 17 December 1980.
89. Bourquin Files; vol. 7, Coordinating Committee on Welfare of African Women and Children in Durban – Manager, MNAD, 24 March 1959.
90. Ibid.
91. Interview with Mr M. O. D. Kunene, 5 May 1985.
92. MRR; file 323, vol. 1; Memorandum on the legal status of African married women in Durban, 1959.
93. I am particularly grateful to Ms P. Cele, Mr C. Ndlovu and Mr S. Ntuli for this information.

94. Many stevedoring tasks required very lithe young men for crawling inside and maintaining ship's boiler machinery.
95. Interview with Mr A. Khumalo, 26 November 1995.
96. Interview with Mr M.O.D. Kunene, 12 May 1985 and interview with Mr C.N. Shum, 20 June 1985.
97. Interview with Mr M.O.D. Kunene, 12 May 1985.
98. Interview with Mr S. Ntuli, September 1995 and Mr A. Khumalo, 26 November 1995.
99. Interview with Mrs T. Phewa, 7 July 1985.
100. Interview with Mr A. Khumalo, 7 November 1995.
101. Interview with Mrs T. Phewa, 7 July 1985.
102. Ibid.
103. Interview with Father St George, 10 September 1985.
104. *Mkhumbane* (Gallo recording of the musical, 1960)
105. Interview with Mr C.N. Shum, 20 June 1985.
106. Interview with Mrs T. Phewa, 23 June 1985.
107. Interview with Mr M.O.D. Kunene, 12 May 1985.
108. Ibid.
109. See I. Edwards, 'Shebeen Queens: Illicit Liquor and the Social Structure of Drinking Dens in Cato Manor', *Agenda*, 3, 1988.
110. Interview with Ms D. Nyembe, 10 July 1986.
111. Edwards, 'Shebeen Queens'.
112. Interview with Mr M.O.D. Kunene, 5 May 1985.
113. M. Friedman, 'Gender, Geography and Urban Forms: A Case Study of Durban', unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1987.
114. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 17 December 1955.
115. Interview with Ms D. Nyembe, 10 July 1986.
116. Bourquin Files, vol.7, Bantu Administration Committee Agenda, 18 March 1959, MNAD – Town Clerk, 16 March 1959.
117. See Bourquin Files, vol.7; Bantu Administration Committee agenda 18 March 1959, Manager, MNAD to Town Clerk, 16 March 1959; Coordinating Committee on welfare of African Women and Children in Durban – Manager, MNAD, 24 March 1959, Memorandum to manager, MNAD, n.d.; Draft document prepared by Prof. H. Pollack, 26 June 1959 (This later became the basis of Mr H.J. Bengu's SAIRR talk on Cato Manor given on the 19 August 1959.)
118. Bourquin Files, vol.3; Unsigned letter posted at Bizana and addressed to Bourquin, July 1959.
119. See Bourquin Files, vol.7.
120. Bourquin Files; Coordinating Committee on Welfare of African Women and Children in Durban – Manager, MNAD, 18 March, 24 March 1959 and Case: Letta Mpanza, 18 March 1959; Case 2: Elvira Dlongolo, 18 March 1959 and Case 3: Litta Mpanza, n.d.
121. Interview with Mr T. Phewa, 28 April 1985.
122. Interview with Mrs C. Matiwane, 23 April 1982.
123. Interview with Mr T. Shabalala, 31 June 1985.
124. Interview with Mr S. Bourquin, 8 September 1980.
125. MRR; file 323, vol.1; S. Bourquin, African women and pass laws, August 1958.
126. MRR; file 323, vol.1; B. Huntley, African women and Kwa Mashu, June 1959.
127. Interview with Mr C.D.S. Mbutho, 21 April 1982.
128. Ibid.

129. *New Age*, 27 February 1958.
130. Ibid.
131. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 1 September 1956, 19 January 1957, 3 May 1958 and 21 July 1958.
132. Ibid., 12 July 1958.
133. Ibid.
134. Ibid., 18 May 1957.
135. Ibid., 27 April 1957.
136. Ibid., 5 July 1958.
137. Ibid., 24 July 1958.
138. Ibid., 12 July 1958.
139. Ibid.
140. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 7 July 1985.
141. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 15 September 1956.
142. Ibid., 1 September 1956 and interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 7 July 1985.
143. *New Age*, 27 February 1958.
144. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 7 July 1985 and KCAV; interview with Mr B. Mnqadi, 11 August 1980.
145. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 7 September 1958.
146. Ibid., 7 June 1958.
147. Interview with Mrs C. Matiwane, 23 April 1982.
148. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 23 February 1957.
149. Ibid.
150. Ibid., 14 September 1957.
151. Ibid, 27 April 1957.
152. Ibid.
153. Ibid., 21 August 1957.
154. Interview with Mr M.O.P. Kunene, 12 May 1985.
155. Interview with Mrs T. Phewa. Used by men, hand signs were explicity sexual messages sent to secretly find out whether your lover or the person you lusted for or her husband/lover were present. I am grateful for Mr C. Ndlovu for careful explanation.
156. Interview with Mr S. Bourquin, 5 September 1980 and Maasdorp and Humphreys *From Shantytown to Township*, p.62.
157. Interview with Mr R. Arenstein, 13 November 1985.
158. Luthuli, *Let My People Go*, p.56.
159. MRR; file 323, vol.1; S. Bourquin, memorandum on the Cato Manor disturbances of June 1959.
160. Bourquin Papers; file 5; Minutes of the public meeting held at Cato Manor, 21 September 1958.
161. *Government Gazette*, proclamation 268 of 1958, 7 November 1958.
162. Bourquin Papers; B. Huntley, memorandum on shack demolitions and removals, January 1960.
163. Port Natal Administration Board (PNAB) slide archive.
164. Interview with Ms D. Nyembe, 10 July 1986.
165. MRR; file 323, vol.1; S. Bourquin, memorandum relative to the events arising out of the clearance of shacks at Mnyasana, 4 March 1959.
166. Interview with Mr S. Bourquin, 5 September 1980. MRR; file 323, vol.1; S. Bourquin, memorandum relative to the events arising out of the clearance of shacks at Mnyasana, 4 March 1959.
167. Ibid.
168. Personal communication with Mr Curnick Ndlovu.

169. For a very detailed chronology of the riots see L.K. Ladlau, 'The Cato Manor Beerhall Riots', unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, 1975.
170. Bourquin Papers: 'Memorandum on Cato Manor disturbances of June 1959'.
171. KwaMuhle Museum Collection; 'Messsage from the Women of Cato Manor'.
172. Interview with Mrs G. Manzi by Ms P. Cele, June 1990.
173. Ibid.
174. Ibid.
175. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 3 June 1987.
176. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 6 June 1959. Municipal Archives; Records 323, vol. 1, W.E Drew, 'Memorandum'.
177. Bourquin Papers; Doc 4, July 1959.
178. Municipal Archives; Records 323, vol. 1, W.E. Drew, 'Memorandum'.
179. Interview with Mrs M. Dlamini, 2 February 1982.
180. Interview with Mrs G. Manzi by Ms P. Cele, June 1990.
181. Bourquin Papers; 'Personal memorandum on events on 17 and 18 June'.
182. Interview with Mrs D. Nyembe, 10 July 1986.
183. Interview with Mrs T. Phewa, 23 June 1985.
184. Bourquin Papers; 'Personal memorandum', June 1959.
185. Interview with Mrs D. Nyembe, 10 July 1986.
186. Municipal Records; 323, vol. 1, 'Notes taken at the meeting of the Combined Locations Advisory Boards, the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board and the *Ibandla Lenkosi*, 21 June 1959; W.E. Drew, 'Memorandum' and *Natal Mercury*, 19 June 1959.
187. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 27 June 1959.
188. Municipal Records; 323, vol. 1, Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board minutes, June 1959 and Durban Magistrate Court Records; Regina vs Elizabeth Zondi and Others, Evidence of Major J.C. van de Merwe.
189. Interview with Mrs G. Manzi by Ms P. Cele, June 1990.
190. Ibid.
191. Interview with Mrs D. Nyembe, 10 July 1986.
192. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 31 June 1985.
193. Interview with Mr M.O.D. Kunene, 7 July 1985.
194. KwaMuhle Museum Collection; Cato Manor photograph collection.
195. Interview with Mr T. Shabalala, 21 June 1985.
196. Ibid.
197. *Natal Mercury*, 19 June 1959 and *Daily News*, 19 June 1959.
198. Ibid.
199. Informant to remain anonymous. I am grateful to Mr C. Emdon for assistance.
200. Interview with Mrs A. Mnguni, 20 July 1985.
201. Interview with Mr M.O.D. Kunene, 7 July 1985.
202. Interview with Mr S.S.L. Mtolo, 12 July 1983.
203. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 31 June 1985.
204. Interview with Mr S. Bourquin, 10 September 1980.
205. Interview with Mr C. Khumalo, 21 June 1985. Under the ANC's 'M' plan system, KwaMashu was divided into various areas, with the key local structure being the block.
206. Interview with Mr M.O.D. Kunene, 7 July 1985.
207. Interview with Mrs G. Manzi by Ms P. Cele, June 1990.
208. Personal communication with Mr S. Ntombela, June 1985.
209. House of Assembly Debates, First Session, First Parliament, 9 to 27 May 1994, the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, columns 21 and 22.

The People's City

An Essay in Pictures

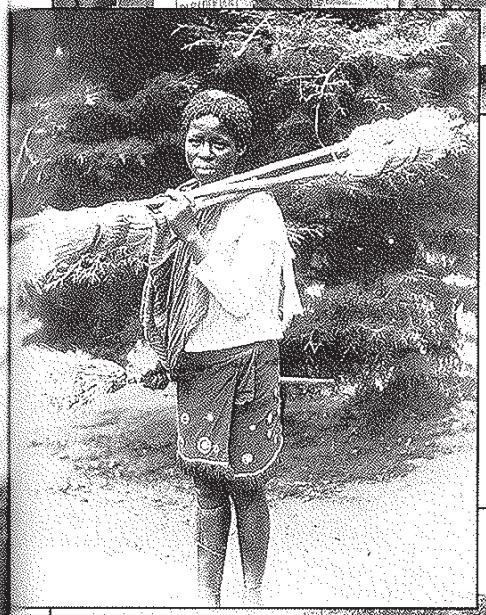
From the early twentieth century, years before the National Party came to power in 1948, Durban was essentially an apartheid city. African men and women were exploited in the work-place, and they were largely denied a share in the space appropriated by the 'white' city for residential, business and recreation purposes. There was thus a separate city, 'The People's City'. Uniquely African, this was an urban society which was little known or understood by most other residents of the city. Although apartheid's imprint is still stamped on greater Durban and apartheid's legacy is still felt, the two cities are in the process of merging into one.

These photographs, many never before published, have been chosen to capture the experience of the inhabitants of that 'other' city, at work and at leisure, in the home, and in crowds, at rest and in confrontation with the state. They show the tragedies and injustices, but also the vibrancy and resilience of a segregated people institutionally disadvantaged, but none the less living full and productive lives.

Women's Work
Woman washing clothes, possibly Lamont early 1940s

Working Lives

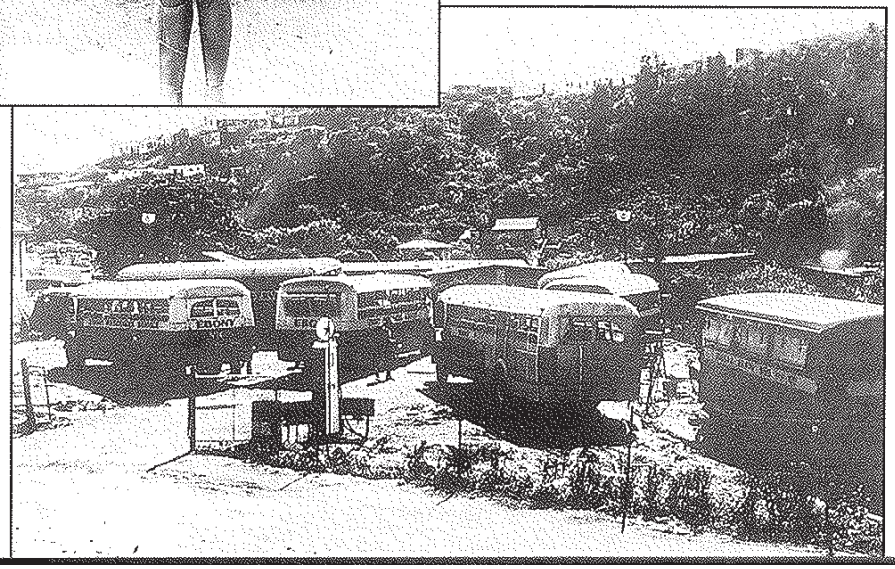
Factory Bound
Vacuum oil tinning plant, *c.* 1942



Boy's Work
Young itinerant broom seller, *c.* 1910

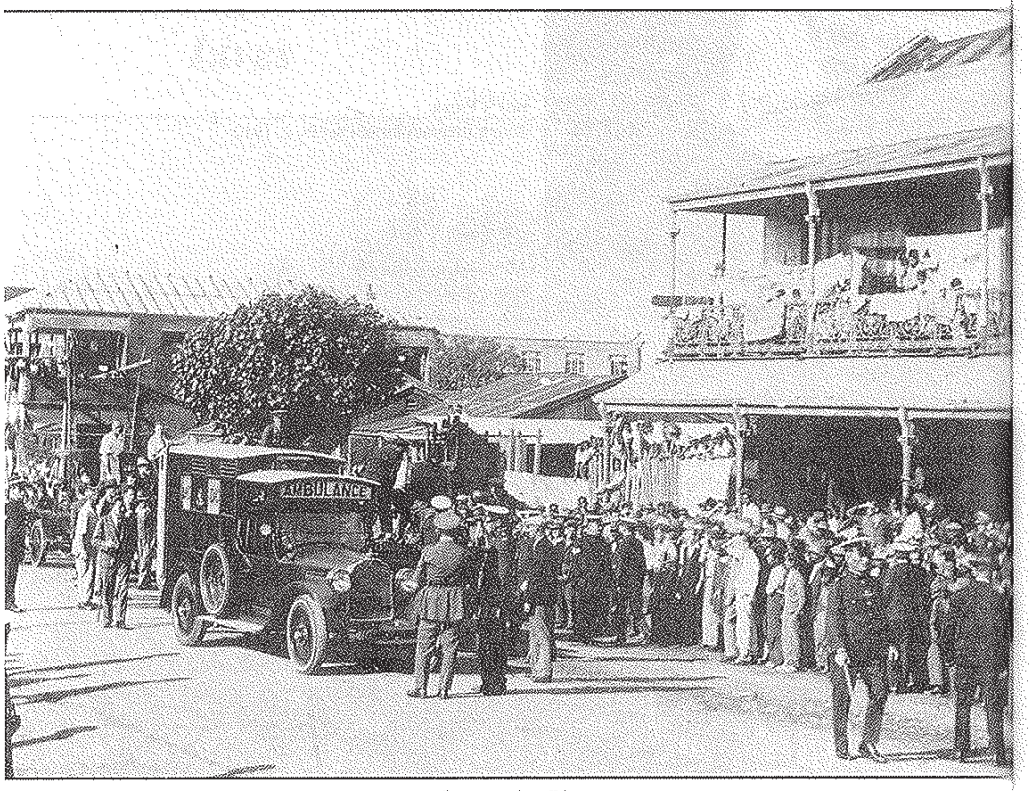
Outward Bound
Migrant dock-workers, Durban harbour, early twentieth-century

African Capitalism
Ebony bus company, Cato Manor, 1958

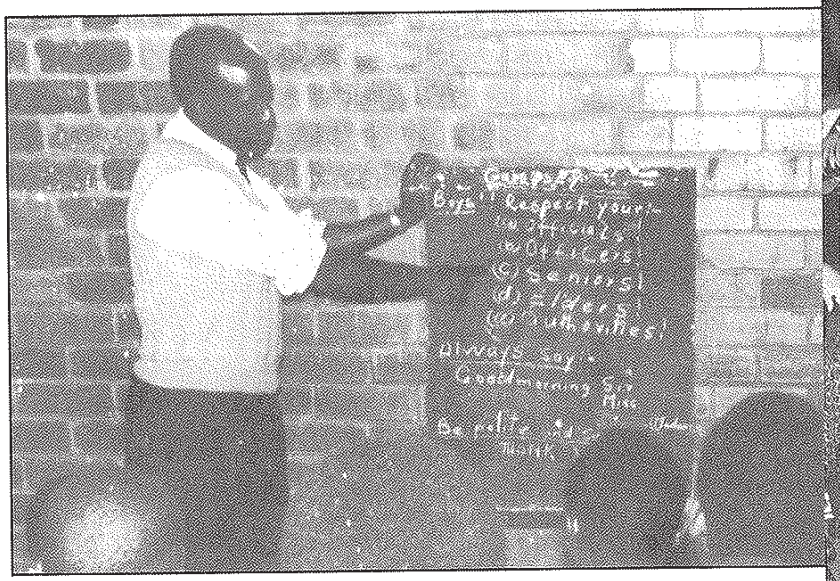


The State

Us and Them: The Dance of Legitimacy
'S.B.' Bourquin performs a 'Zulu war dance', 28 May 1959



Suppressing Dissent
1929 riots, police at Victoria Street

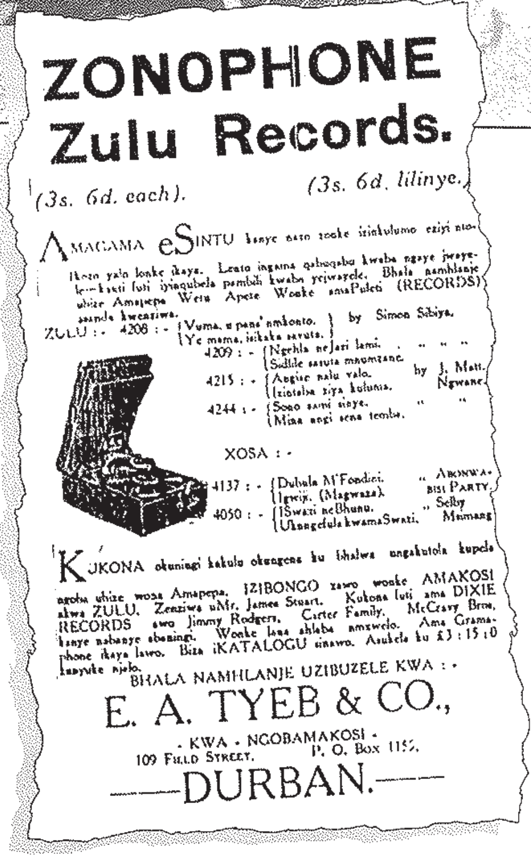


Teaching Obedience
Mr Themba giving a civics lecture at the Youth Unemployment Centre, early 1960s

Us and Them: The Document and the Pose of Power
A dawn raid on the 'Raincoat' shack settlement, July 1958

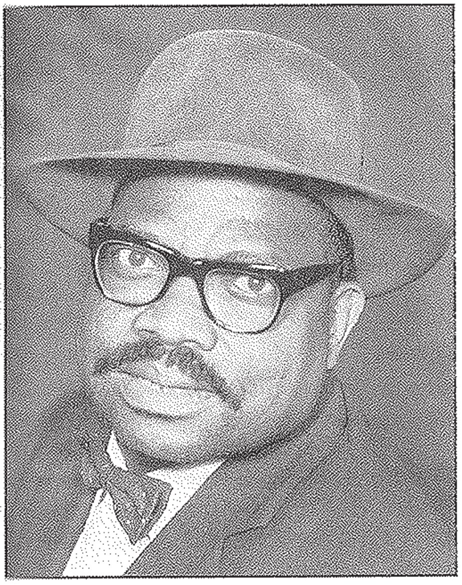
Working Rhythms
Ricksha-puller, *c.* 1920s

City Styles



City Swing
Ilanga lase Natal, 26 September 1930, advertisement for Zulu records

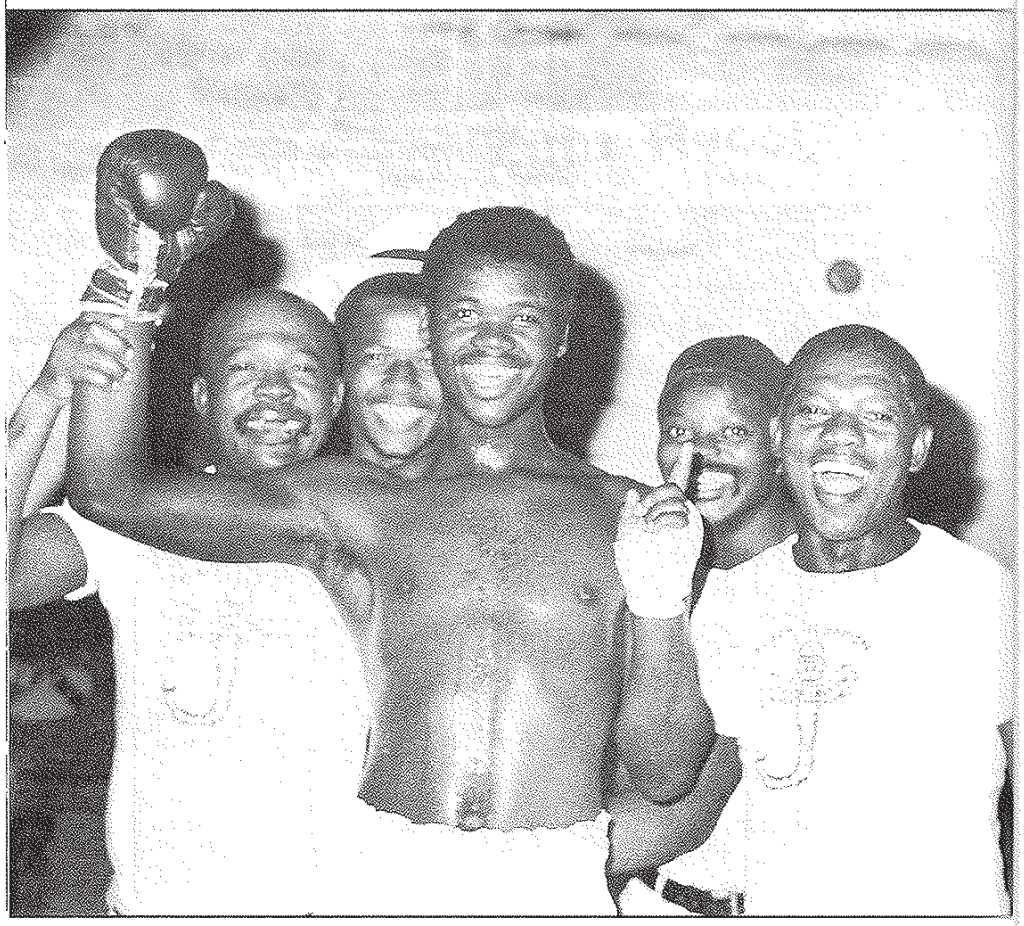
City Man
Elias Zondi, self-portrait, *c.* 1980s



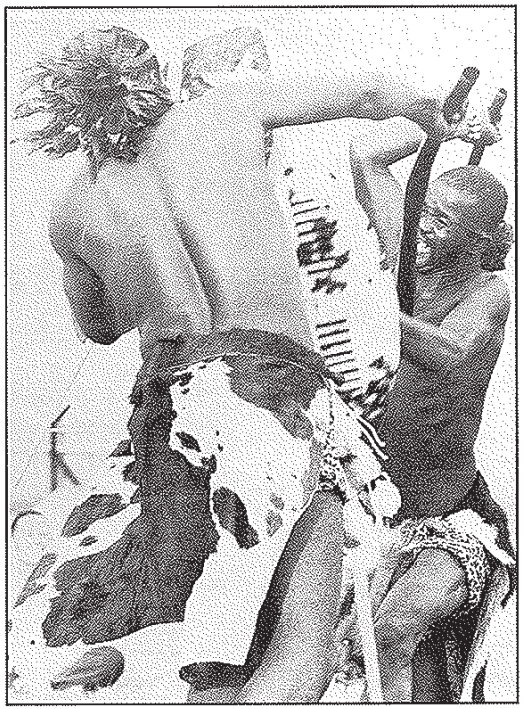
City Queen
Banana Queen crowned, 1950s

Migrant Couple
Jack and Khululaphi Hlambisa wedding photograph, 1958/9

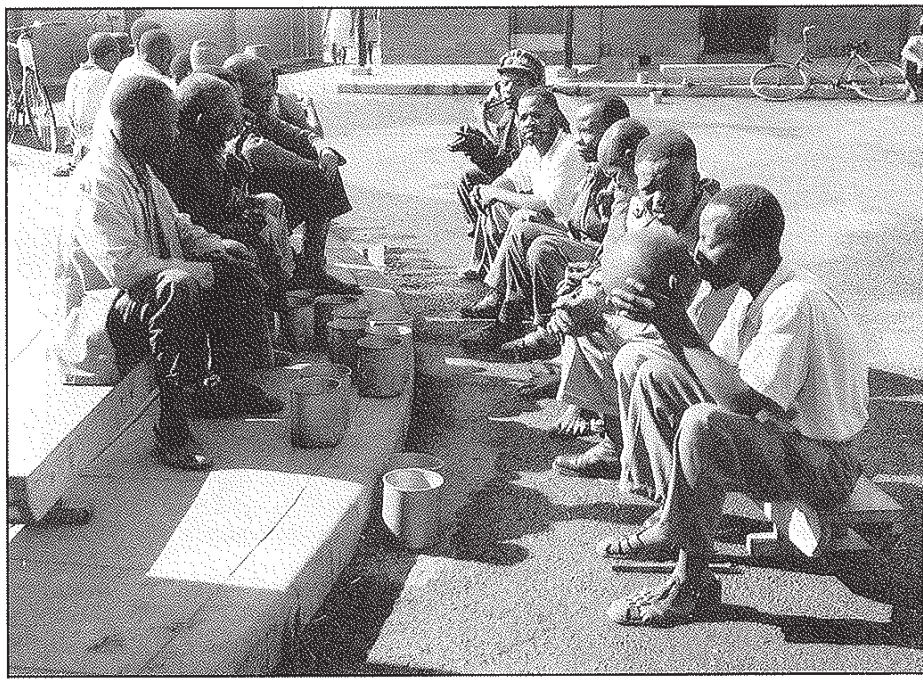
Male Domains



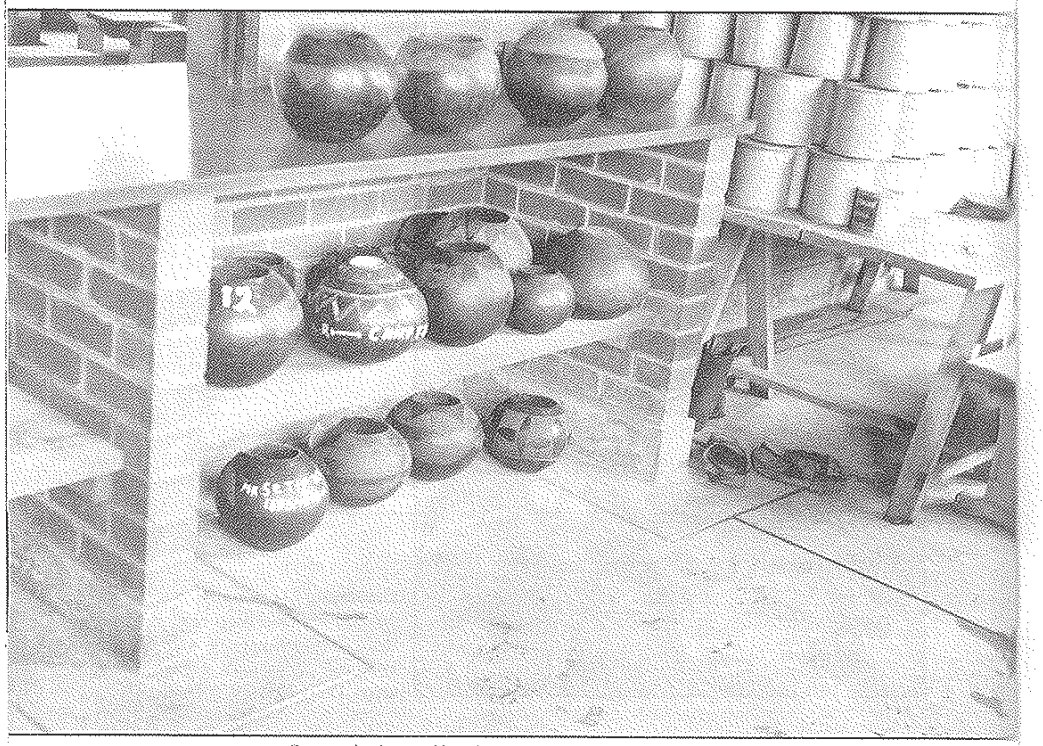
Contesting Masculinity
Middleweight boxing, A. Mokoene, D. Masondo and F. Dlamini, *c.* 1960s



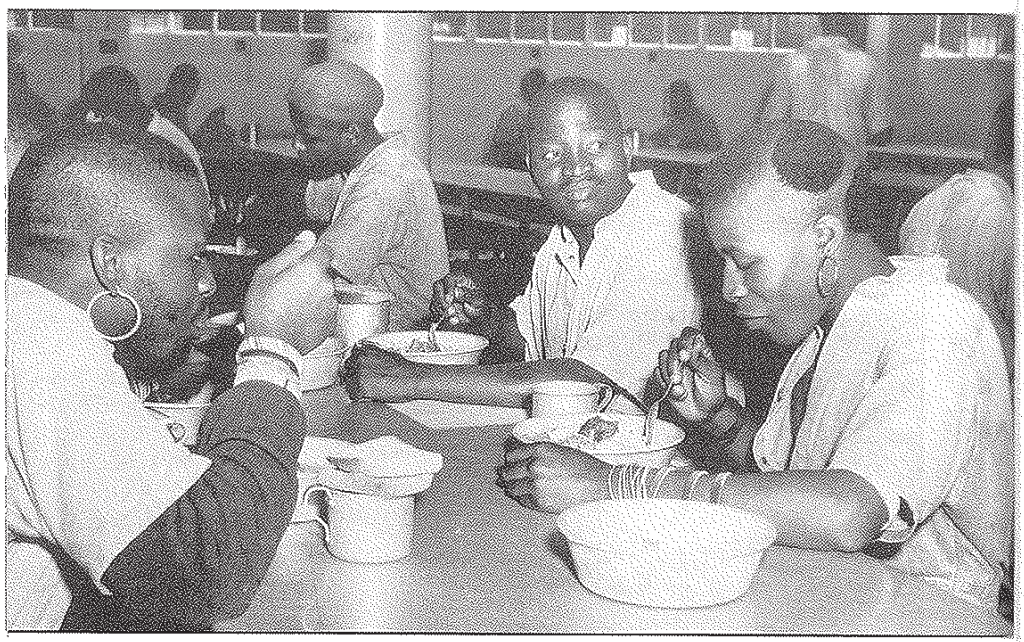
Contesting Masculinity
Ntambe Phakathi beats Francis Memela (back to camera) at stick-fighting at the Point railway grounds *ingoma* dancing arena, Daily News, 23 March 1976



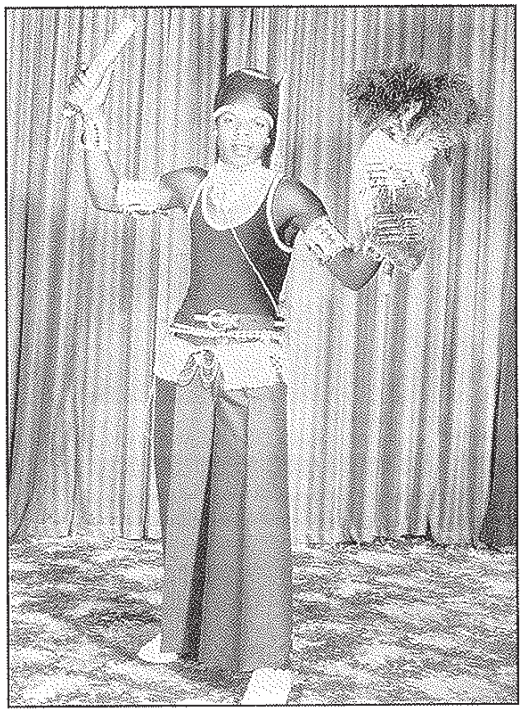
Beerhall Bonding
The Victoria Street Beerhall, *c.* 1958



Rows of private *ukhambas* at the Victoria Street Beerhall



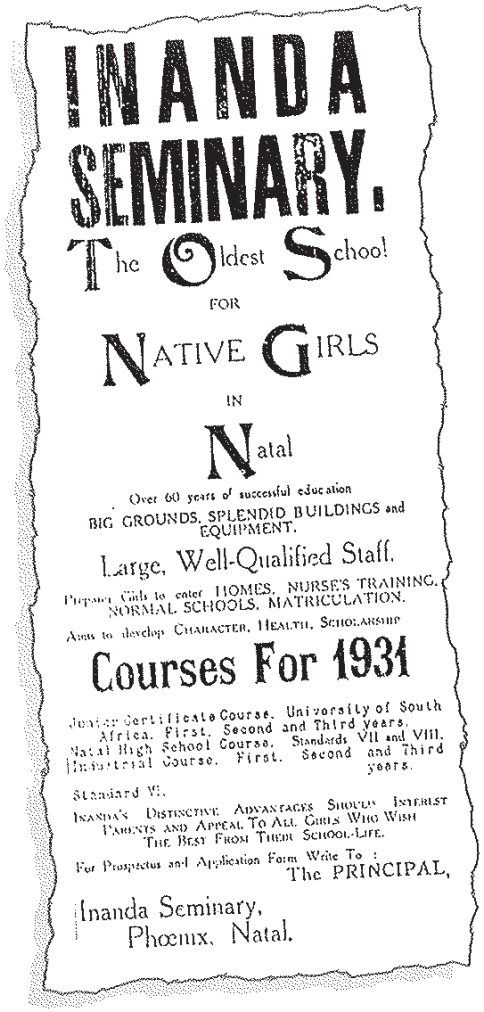
Canteen Bonding
Eating in the Lever Brothers canteen, *c.* 1950s



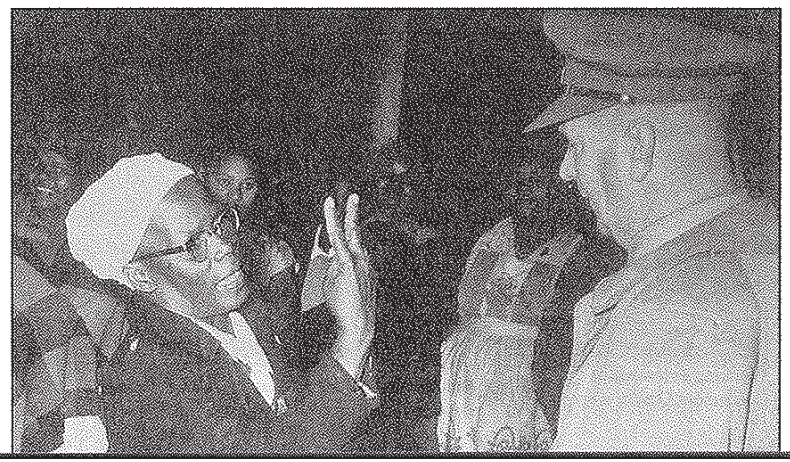
Migrant Pride
Zulu migrant, *c.* 1970s

Working Friendships
Coedemore Quarry workers, *c.* 1906

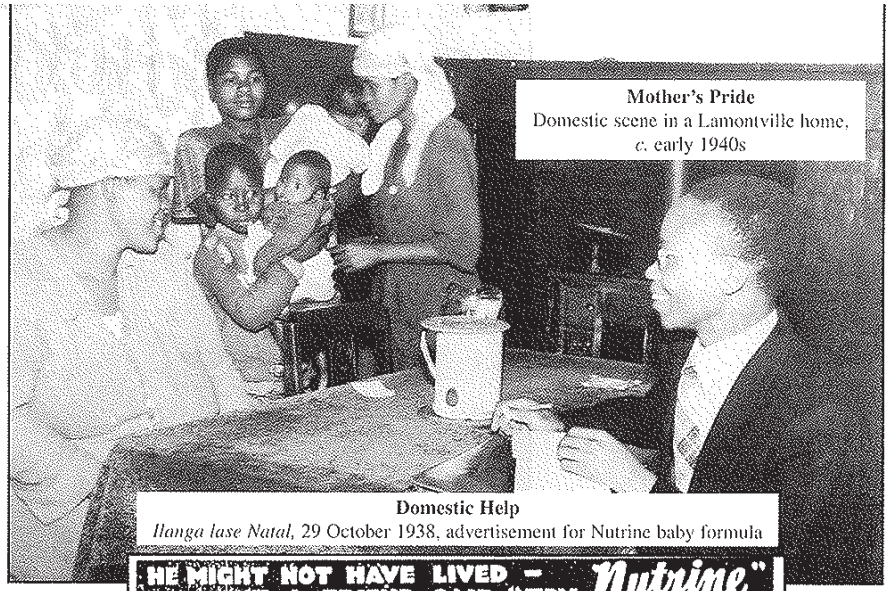
Women's Worlds



Making Ourselves
Ilanga lase Natal 3 October 1930
advertisement for the Inanda Seminary

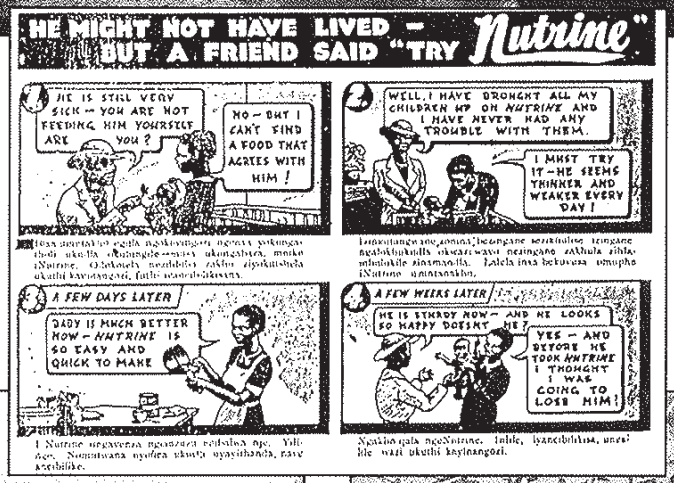


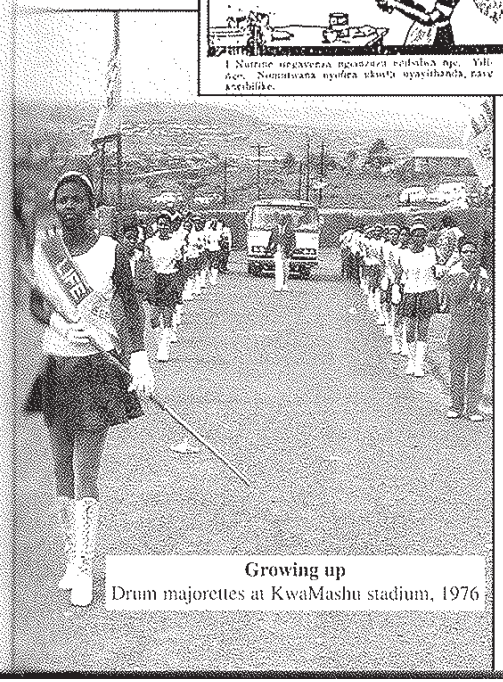
Gender Defiance
Woman gives 'two's up' sign to
Lt. Col. J.M. Delport, June 1959



Mother's Pride
Domestic scene in a Lamontville home,
c. early 1940s

Domestic Help
Ilanga lase Natal, 29 October 1938, advertisement for Nutrine baby formula

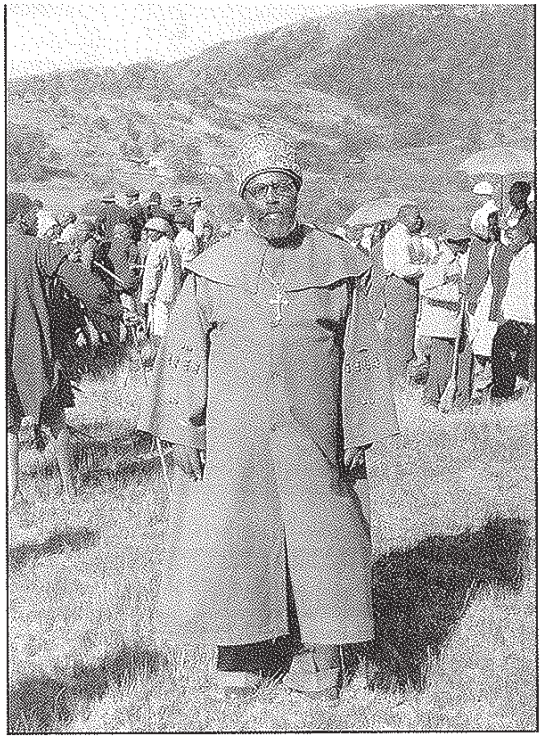




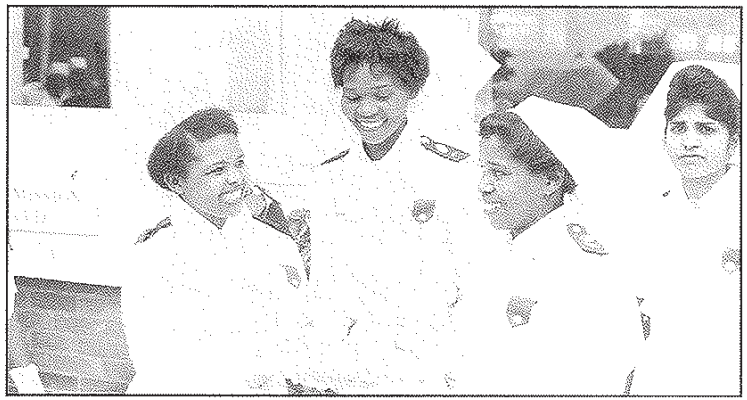
Growing up
Drum majorettes at KwaMashu stadium, 1976

Gender Submission
'Me and Mine' Municipal policeman and partner,
early twentieth century

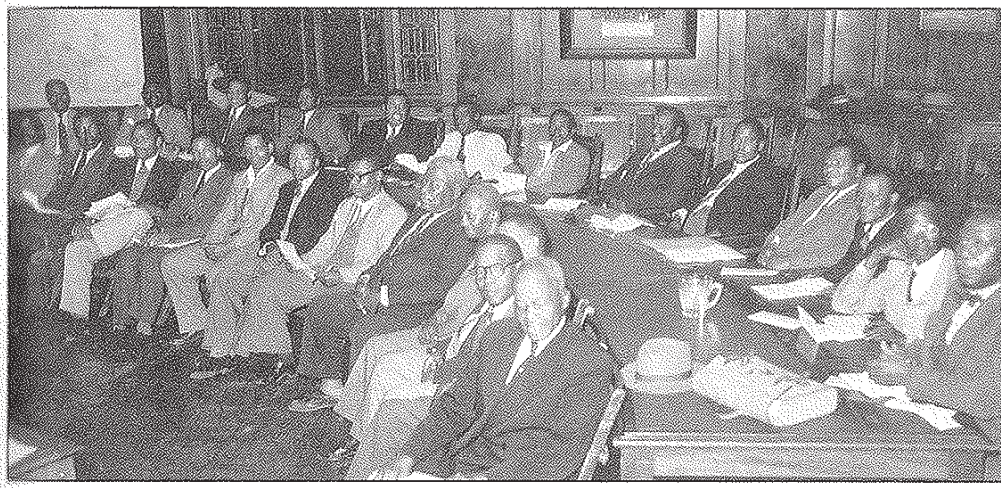
Leaders



Promised Land Prophet
Bishop Shezi of one of the Zionist sects, 30 September 1956

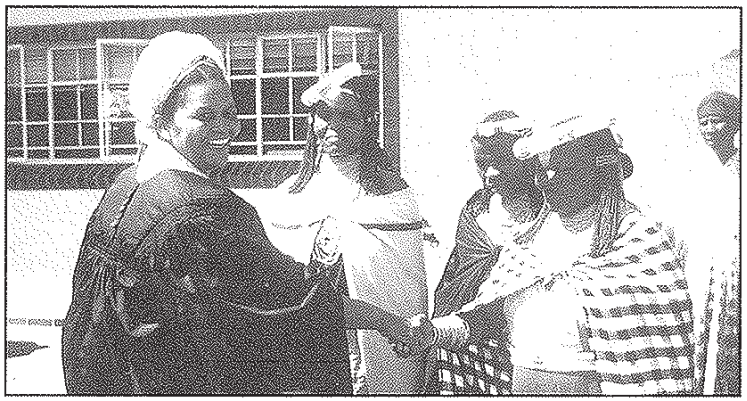


City Healers
Midwives celebrate their graduation, King Edward VIII Hospital, early 1970s



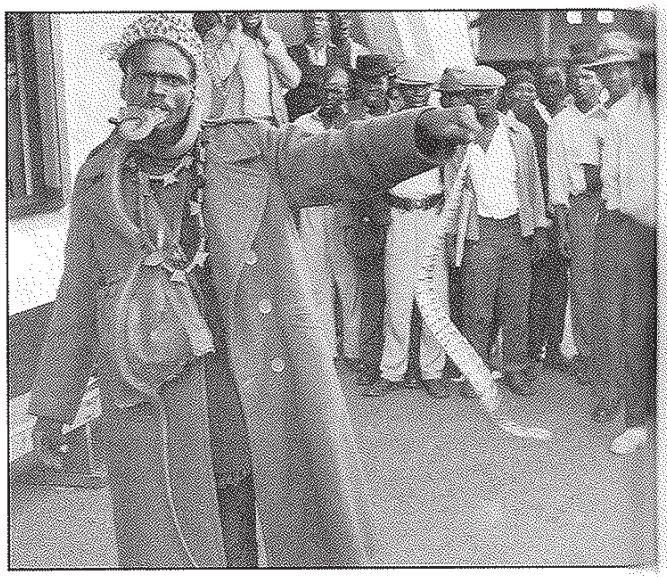
Leaders Within
Combined Bantu Location Advisory Boards meeting, *c.* late 1950s

Absent Leaders
Demonstration outside Durban Central Prison, 1 April 1959

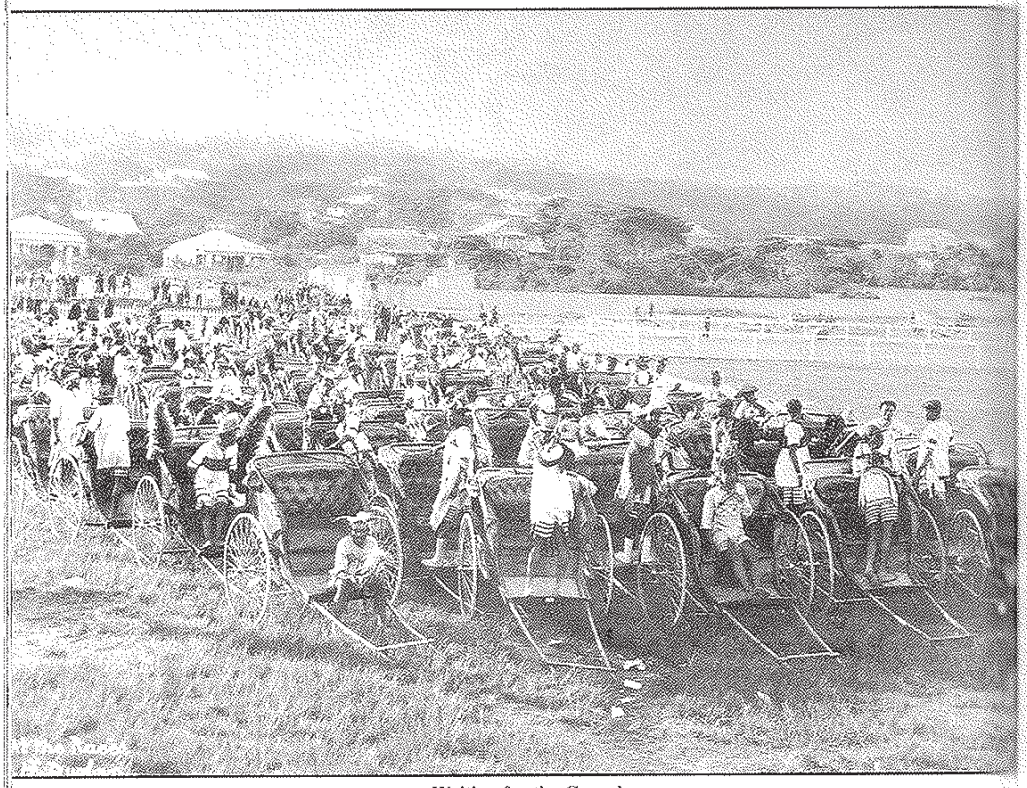


City Leader
UBC Offices Lamont, official opening; Councillor Mrs Ntuli and guests, April 1968

Crowds



Their Captive Queue
Snake charmer and a queue of work seekers at Ordnance Road, *c*. 1960

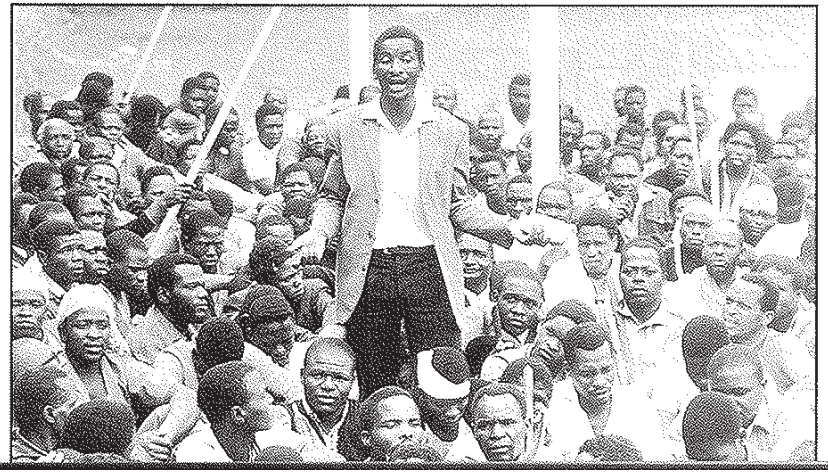


Waiting for the Crowd
Ricksha-pullers waiting for the end of the Greyville races, *c* 1901-07

Playing to the Crowd
Wanderers' Football Club, 1945

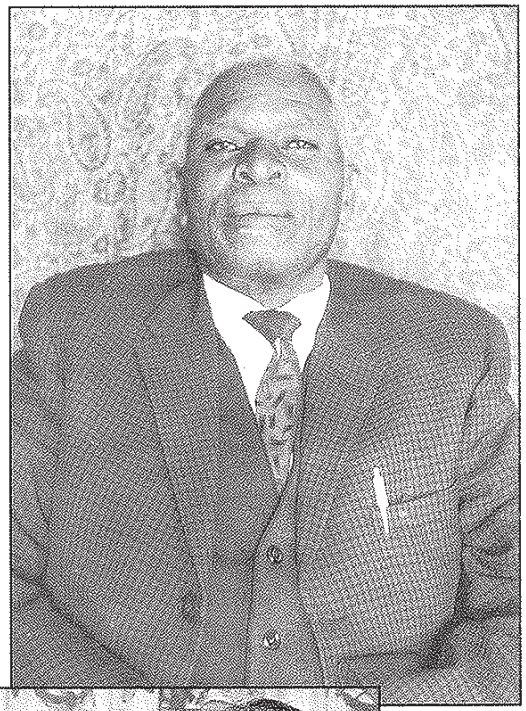
The Political Crowd
'Freedom Day', Curries Fountain, 26 July 1959

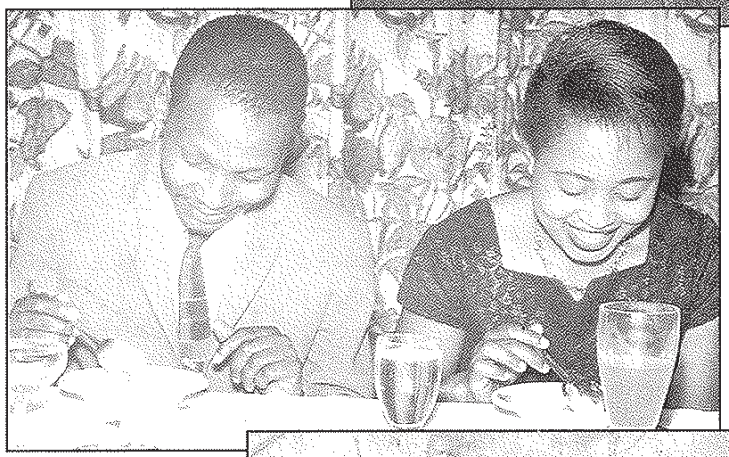
Our Labour Power
Coronation Brick and Tile workers come out on strike, January 1973

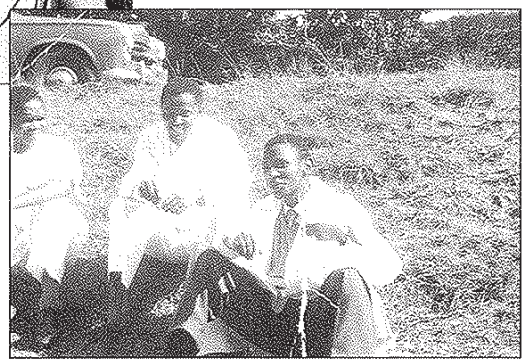


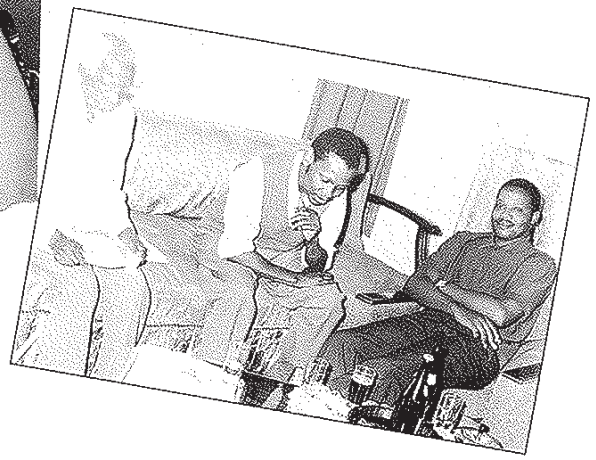
Just for Ourselves

Montage of photographs from various personal scrapbooks









In the Eye of the Storm

Dock-Workers in Durban

DAVID HEMSON

The history of dock-workers internationally is replete with radical action combined with a certain traditional working-class outlook: a pride in the elementary solidarity of the gang, a fierce independence, and a scepticism about the possibility of a secure livelihood. This, indeed, is the theme of Stephen Hill's review of social conditions and attitudes of London's dockers in the 1970s.[1] This combination has led those who theorise about the nature of strike activity to conclude that certain occupations and industries are strike-prone owing to the peculiarities of the labour process, the isolation of workers from the rest of society, and the elemental human solidarity of men in small groups working under dangerous and harsh conditions.[2] In the colonial context, the dock-workers were forced to shed their existing tribal African traditions under the dictatorship of capital; and the traditions of work have since been established over a century and a half of labour. These traditions (taking on the name *inyathi*[3]), include gaining a sense of independence, accumulating techniques and strategies, forming political groupings, and building the custom and practice of the work-place. They are very much what has come to constitute, in Marxist terms, the customary, or social and cultural, element in the expenditure of their labour.

The empirical approach, based as it is on the examination of the data on strikes, has had a certain obvious explanatory validity. Nevertheless these studies are locked into time and space, dependent on the data generated by relatively liberal industrial relations regimes, and they concentrate on the most advanced industrial countries. Their explanatory value is limited within these constraints and social theorists have raised the question of an entirely different setting and rhythm of strike action in the Third World.[4]

What has not been brought out so effectively in the literature on dock-workers, or more widely in assessing the role of the working class in the former colonial and semi-colonial world, is the question of social change over the long period – the history of the attempts of groups of working people to make a permanent improvement in their conditions both at the work-place and beyond. A study of the Durban dock-workers over a period of a century and a half

periods of activity and strong militancy, followed by periods of quiescence but not acquiescence (if the distinction can be clearly drawn). Both phases demand an explanation.

The dockers have, in different periods, drawn nascent social movements towards themselves, lending weight in concentrated numbers and enthusiastic support, going a certain distance, but then, on finding the movements turning in a different direction or collapsing, becoming isolated and lapsing again into quiescence.

Historians and sociologists have studied the unstable nature of social movements, the precipitating factors of social dissatisfaction and unrest, the generalisation of the values they espouse, and their eventual dissipation as they either succeed and form stable institutions, or fail and collapse. A social movement is not a permanent social development; the point at which social action becomes institutionalised is the beginning of its demise.[5] The achievement, or partial achievement, of its goals also may bring its end, as its impulse dissolves. Social movements, demanding the time, funding, and energies of participants eventually atrophy under the competition of other demands on social individuals.

The literature on social movements invites a comparison with natural history; a natural cycle of birth, adolescent growth, maturity, decline, and death. (This literature does not deal with the question of reproduction, each social movement is understood as an egotistical, self-centred phenomenon.) The study of the dockers' movements draws attention to the impermanence of high levels of social action and organisation among workers at the level of the work-place, but it also draws attention to what remains: the retention of a certain informal leadership, a memory of class action, a consciousness of class position, and a certain strategic understanding of the balance of forces in the employment setting.

All these factors are mediated by the issues of labour migrancy and landholding (at times theorised as an insuperable obstacle to class consciousness), and changes in the labour process. Again these questions have to be considered in the context of socio-political changes which, at times, decisively change power relations between employers and employed as regulated by the state.

The history of the dock-workers reveals four conjunctures of self-organisation and radicalisation: in the mid-1870s when 'togt' labour became a widespread phenomenon; in the late 1920s with the expansion of the ICU in Durban; in the 1940s with a number of strikes and the rise of their own leader, Zulu Phungula; and again in the early 1970s when the dock strike of October 1972 was the herald of mass strikes. Durban was the storm centre in the late 1920s, late 1940s, late 1950s and then the 1970s, evincing a peculiar mixture of traditionalism and radicalism (and at times chauvinist and pogromist moods), but also responsive to radical currents to a greater extent than elsewhere.

In the intervals between, there are periods of greater or lesser quiescence in which the workers' resistance to capital either cannot be traced, or has taken more hidden forms (such as refusing to move into the compounds, slowing the pace of work, a high labour turnover, or theft of cargo). In this essay I will attempt to account for these periods and their varying characteristics, discuss the alternation of mood and environment, and then move on to the difficult question of the long quiescence after the mass strikes of 1973.

The discussion will, of necessity, focus on the workplace, pan back to the wider view of urban social relations, and then refocus on the workplace again to get a sense both of the alternating relations of isolation and solidarity of the dock-workers and of the growing working-class movement. Historically, the dockers have been a rebellious grouping, attracting social movements, giving them weight, and then being left isolated at their demise.

The Setting

The colonial labour market had its own peculiarities and, at least in the cities, if it can now be said, a certain charm. The traditions of tribal life weighed heavily on the employment relationship: time was not yet subject to the rigid measuring of the clock, and workers were still easily distracted by the sociable and extra-contractual aspects of city life.

An early colonial writer described the frustration of white employers at workers, bedecked with beads, feathers, porcupines' quills, and deer skins, wandering off the job to greet Zulu girls coming into the city bearing beer:

> The only fault in our Caffre [*sic*] labourers arose from their excessive gallantry; for (I should observe) it is a native rule never to allow Caffre maidens to pass within sight without saluting them, or else, intercepting their path, standing quite mute and motionless, while the girls survey them and pass on. Now it frequently happened that troops of girls came in from the Caffre craals [*sic*] with maize, thatch, milk, eggs, wild fruit, sugar-cane, potatoes, etc, etc, for sale; and, no sooner did their shrill song reach the ears of our servants, than they rushed from their work just as they were . . .[6]

The employment contract did not bear the awesome power later developed: the African work-force always had the 'featherbedding' of the land, and the habits of instant and automatic obedience had not yet been learned.

The continued vitality of homestead production demanded of the white colonist a relatively flexible working relationship, and a certain respect for tribal life. Under these conditions, and before the conquest and destruction of the Zulu kingdom was achieved, the slavery born of the service contract was hard to enforce. On the land, the planters complained loudly that African labour was not cheap and that entering into long contracts was resisted. The demand

for cheap labour bore heavily on the minds of colonial administrators, and resulted in an outpouring of official investigations into and reports on the possibilities of indentured recruitment throughout south-east Africa and beyond.

Eventually the question of labour on the plantations was resolved by the introduction of downtrodden and desperate Indian working-class families from southern India. But, in the colonial cities, the upward pressure on wages remained, and in the early stages collective bargaining took the form not primarily of strikes (although there is evidence of a number of disputes), but of insistence on a short-term contract. Although the evidence is a little sketchy, documentary sources of the 1870s indicate a tendency on the part of African workers to demand day labour instead of engaging in monthly or even longer contracts. What seems to have happened was a spilling over of the daily paid labour contract of the docks into the wider colonial town and region, as there is evidence from both Durban and Pietermaritzburg of the phenomenon of 'togt' labour.

This attempt to maximise returns from hours worked, raised a quiet challenge to the existing master and servants regulations. It met with a furious response from the colonial administrators, whose counter-offensive shifted the ground from labour relations to encompass the gamut of racial domination over the emerging urban proletariat. It was as though the ruling élite, plotting the destruction of the 'man-slaying human military machine' of the Zulu army,[7] were suddenly to have found itself undermined by the beginnings of modern resistance in the heart of its power.

The counter-offensive expressed, in advance of the detailed regulation of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, the unvarnished dictatorship of colonial capital, and its reinforcement of the tribal regime. The regulations which followed contained, in essence, the combination of these ideas: that African workers were only to be tolerated in the urban setting if they were serving as cheap labour to the white employer; that it was the role of the state to ensure the conditions of cheap labour; and that there was to be no African family life in the urban areas, but rather that tribal society was to be reinforced. It was from these origins, and through a series of successive developments encompassing the growth of the repressive apparatus of municipal police, compounds, beerhalls, and the formal controls of the Native Affairs Department, that the later structure of urban segregation and labour repression took form. The togt labour regulations spelt out the fundamental class and racial character of the local state's antagonism to the emerging African working class. There was but a short step from colonial labour control, to the detailed enforcement of national oppression in the urban context of the rising African majority.

The plan outlined in 1874 by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, the Secretary of Native Affairs, was a property-owning ratepayers dream.[8] To offer themselves as day labourers, African workers had to register and pay a registration fee,

which in turn paid for the municipal police, municipal barracks, and a little more. This principle of 'self-domination' (that is, that the African worker should pay for his own policing and control) was the core principle of all successive plans of 'native' administration. The cost of control and repression came from the pockets of those who were the butt of these official actions.

In this early phase of what could be termed primary resistance by African workers, the dockers had established themselves as a focal point for resistance, and their early forms of opposition produced a thunderous response from the authorities. From this point on, the authorities attempted to bring the workers under control and direction, to force them into municipal compounds, and to weaken their ability to demand a reasonable wage. But in doing so they eventually evoked, from an apparently quiescent working class, a challenge which was to shake the municipal system to its roots.

Beer, Women and the ICU

From tentative resistance to early labour controls, the dock-workers turned towards worker action around the turn of the century. There is an extensive literature on the debates in official circles on the provision of a location out of the city limits, as a response to the influx of African people into the city during the South African War years, 1899–1902. These debates resulted only much later in the first segregated African accommodation in the form of married mens' quarters, and townships such as Lamontville. But the eyes of the colonial and city administrators were turned more immediately to the improvement of the compound accommodation of dock-workers, not on the fringes of the town, but on sites close to the work-place itself. A dockers' compound was established in Bell Street, and the ABC stevedoring company maintained its own establishment in the Point area. The compounds were, on one level, a practical response to the problem of maintaining a large work-force on call when shipping demands were heavy. But on another level, they were a response in accordance with social policy to control and, if possible, eliminate the possibility of African families establishing themselves in the colonial city. A breakdown in migrant labour would have shattered the whole edifice of cheap labour controls.

The earliest evidence of the beginnings of African family life is found in the Natal Harbour Board reports in the 1880s.[9] What is clear from the documents of the time is the official concern over the growing numbers of Indians, Africans, Chinese, St Helenians, and others settling in Bamboo Square near Addington Hospital. There is evidence that many of the Indians were fishermen or lightermen from Bombay, employed in unloading ships out at sea. The Africans were undoubtedly the dock-workers employed on the nearby wharves and lighters. Fascinatingly, there is evidence that as early as 1892 there were 18 African women and, more significantly, 7 children in Bamboo Square: the first statistics of the emerging urban African family in Durban, possibly represent-

ing the families of the 2 African lessors of land from the Harbour Board reported in 1893. This multi-racial community, providing a cushion between the white employer and the African worker, was a challenge to the character of the British colonial city. There is evidence of the determination of council officials to reduce the emerging multi-cultural community in Bamboo Square, and to force the African men into the compounds rather than allow them to establish a family presence in the city.

These population figures, gathered by a diligent Water Police, have an importance beyond their modest numbers as they help to establish the claim of the African working class to family life in the Point area. This was an implicit threat to the racial geography of segregation: Africans on land in the reserves; whites in the cities and on the farms. Property relations depended on the whole system of racial domination and separation remaining basically intact. Migrant labour, unlike the experience of many other colonial countries, had to be maintained as a permanent institution in opposition to the shift of a working population from low-income areas to higher.

The overall strategy, apparently, was to limit and restrict the multi-racial community emerging at the Point in the late 1880s. Policy seems to have been marked by fear that the settlements of intermediary layers of population between white and African would provide some alternative to the strict labour regime that the council and large-scale employers were struggling to enforce. Through forcible intervention, particularly after the plague of 1902, the urban African population at the Point and elsewhere within the city boundaries was reduced, and the growing family structure eliminated.

From about the turn of the century, the control of beer and women become themes in the outlook of the municipal authorities. Much has been written on the subject of the 'Durban system' of 'Native Administration':[10] the mixture of paternal governance (concerned with maintaining the African link to the land and avoiding the 'demoralisation' of the city) and coercion well backed by the policeman and prison. In a perverse application of the municipal enterprise of British local government at the time (termed 'municipal socialism' by the Webbs, but also practised by Conservative local authorities), in response to the emerging labour movement, the council simultaneously prohibited the brewing of beer within the municipal area, and established a municipal monopoly of sorghum beer. Rather than examining the precise mechanisms of the emerging Durban system and the way in which the city fathers explained it to themselves, it is only necessary here to establish the relationship between women and beer, and the antagonism between the male workers and the administration on these questions. For a whole period municipal government is characterised by decisive intervention in the politics of distribution, accompanied by a certain investment in production (the beer brewery). Both are closely tied to the determination of the value of labour power in the city, or more prosaically and concretely, the cheap labour system.

There was a necessary connection between the antagonism towards women in town (of such ferocity as to demand a study in itself), and the resulting beer monopoly. The emerging system of 'native' administration was constructed on four pillars: the separation of African workers from wives; the separation of men from home-brewed beer; the suppression of the working-class African family, with its claim on the city; and support for the tribal system. On these supports, and taking on substance from the income generated by African workers (the trickle of income from the togt workers became a flood under the beer monopoly), a peculiarly oppressive racial and class order was established in Durban.

By-laws and regulations, enforced by a strong municipal police force, ensured that Africans were 'dipped' like cattle on entry to the town, expected to stay off the pavements and give way to whites on the streets, required to register as day labourers, prohibited from brewing beer, separated from other 'non-white' working-class accommodation, and required to carry passes justifying their presence in town or risk being declared vagrants. In comparison, early social conditions in Durban before 1874 seem a very paradise of the Rights of Man.

The simple relations of class and conquest enshrined in the colonial Master and Servants Act were constantly developed in a particularistic and racist way: defining the African worker; separating him from other workers; reinforcing his official subordination; and building a monstrous edifice of laws, regulations, rules, and structures weighing on the sale of the African workers' labour power. A class of workers was established who were not workers. Taken as a whole, these regulations impeded the gradual evolution of a working class based on urban inter-racial families, and a common urban African culture. A rigidly segregated and oppressive city emerged, rather than a 'Latin American' alternative of inter-racial cohabitation and a variegated mosaic of class and racial relations.

Not unexpectedly, it is these issues (the extra-contractual element), rather than the wage question in itself, which acted as the spur to dock-workers' organisation during the 1920s. The value of the labour power of the African worker had to be established, in its specific context, both at the work-place and in the city in which it was expended. Their resistance was concentrated on the battery of customary and legal restrictions on their movement and organisation in the 1920s and early 1930s.

The dock-workers were no strangers to the process of seeking to improve their position. Before the turn of the century, there is evidence of the upward pressure on wages and the growth of self-organisation among the workers, with isolated strikes. Despite the togt registration fee which was designed to force wages down, wages doubled between 1874 and 1880. After this, wages declined a little, before rising in response to the enormous increase in tonnage landed during the South African War. The number of dock-workers more than

doubled between 1900 and 1903 to 5 125, a figure never again reached in the docks. This was an enormously favourable position for the workers, and there was a rash of strikes with demands for fairly modest increases. In the aftermath of the First World War there was a further round of strikes, as workers faced rising inflation, and some concessions were granted. More ambitious demands were made for 10s. a day in 1920.

A point of comparison should be made here to gain some understanding of the position of the dock-workers on an international scale. The only readily available published contemporary material is of the rates in the London docks. During the famous battle of 1889 the London workers won the 'docker's tanner', that is 6d. an hour translating roughly into 4s. for an eight-hour day.[11] In 1890 the Durban dockers were earning just over half that figure (2s. 6d.), rising to 3s. 6d. a day in 1902. Despite the battery of laws and regulations faced by Durban workers, from which London's dockers were exempt, these comparative figures do not provide evidence of ultra-cheap and downtrodden African labour. The dockers were far from being a labour aristocracy, but neither were they the poorest-paid workers in the city.

Social relations in Durban in the early 1920s were unflatteringly (and probably accurately) described by Clements Kadalie as being extremely backward, and white rule appeared to him unchallenged: 'I must admit that my first impressions of Durban and the Zulu people were very disappointing. All seemed to be so tame and ready to submit to anything the official European suggested to them.'[12] Compared to the developments in Cape Town, where the ICU was born in strike action in 1918 (the first and virtually the last strike fought by the ICU), and Johannesburg, where there had been the recent experience of the anti-pass movement, the African population of Durban appeared acquiescent and in the grip of the paternalist Native Administration Department.

Yet, in a relatively short time, Durban became a battlefield contested by workers and police, with deaths on both sides, as hundreds of migrant workers joined the Communist Party which was then in a radical phase. During this period, Durban was described as the 'storm centre' of South Africa, in which the municipal police were unable to maintain order and to which the Minister of Police, Oswald Pirow, dramatically flew from Pretoria to take control. The crisis in 'race relations' (which can be defined as the relations of domination and subordination imposed by the Durban system), which marked the late 1920s and early 1930s, demand a certain explanation. How can one account for this abrupt transition?

The history of the workers' movement in Durban is full of contradictory phases, of changeable moods, and extraordinary personalities. The transformation of docility into militancy undoubtedly has to be ascribed to the rise of the ICU under the local leadership of A.W.G. Champion. His personality is described by the acute social historian, Edward Roux, who knew him well, in the following manner:

> A Native of southern Natal, urbane, slow-moving, slightly obese, an indifferent speaker but a competent organiser, Champion . . . had not entered the ICU until its success had seemed assured. He was by nature cautious, evasive, concerned with power, no natural revolutionary.[13]

He had originally been an agent for the authorities, engaged to spy on the early labour movement and on the Zulu Paramount Chief, and had come only late to the ICU. Yet he achieved extraordinary success in attracting a majority of African workers in Durban to the ICU.[14]

His inclination to use the growing coffers of the ICU to finance legal action against the oppressive regulations governing African workers initially had great success. This strategy was attractive to someone of Champion's orientation. It required no depth of worker organisation, involved no head-on clash with the authorities, left the battles to be resolved by gentlemen of the law, but gave him enormous prestige. The regulations requiring African entrants to the city to undergo the humiliation of being dipped like cattle were set aside, and there were other smaller victories, such as the successful challenge to the official decision that Kadalie should be denied entry to Natal.[15]

The ICU under Champion (or the other leaders for that matter) did not take up the demand for higher wages, or attempt to mobilise around work-place conditions. Rather it tended to express the many grievances of the African majority in a generalised way without putting forward any programme of action. In Durban, after it acquired a large hall, probably modelled on the labour halls of Britain and Europe, it became a provider of entertainment, rather than a trade union.

Nevertheless Champion was propelled into a confrontation with the authorities over the municipal beer monopoly. There were two streams of opposition to the monopoly: a consistent one from African women whose urban livelihood was at stake; and another more episodic one from African male workers, particularly the dock-workers, who organised a beer boycott. The two streams came together in late 1929 as the ICU gave direction to this two-pronged opposition by launching the Anti-Kaffir Beer Manufacturing League. Although Kadalie reported that the first workers to join the ICU, when he visited Durban in 1924, were dockers,[16] it was only with the anti-beerhall campaign that the dock-workers became really attached to the ICU in the context of an industrial or political battle.

Once the boycott took off, Champion attempted to act as interpreter, intermediary, and negotiator between the authorities and the workers, rather than the leader of the opposition. But in the heated atmosphere, white vigilantes took matters into their own hands, and the ICU hall was attacked. The dock-workers rallied in defence of their organisation, and probably would have routed the vigilantes had not the municipal police turned their guns on them. Six Africans and two whites died.

From this point on, Champion was in retreat, pinning his hopes on the Native Advisory Board as intercessor with the municipal authorities, and trying to develop relationships with the chiefs. But such was the impact of the turmoil on national affairs, and so great was the fear of the growing influence of the Communist Party with its slogan of a 'black republic', that the Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow, in support of the municipality, organised a clamp-down on Durban's African workers. A pre-dawn assault was launched on the Point barracks on 14 November 1929, and hundreds were arrested, brought before special courts, and charged with refusing to pay the poll tax imposed on African people.

Despite Champion's moderation, he was deported for a period from Durban. As Shula Marks has definitively demonstrated, this was not at the insistence of the city council, which was beginning to appreciate the intermediary role that a weakened Champion could play, but because Champion was entertaining the idea of linking his ambitions to the smouldering resentment of the Zulu chiefs, and in particular the Zulu king Solomon kaDinuzulu.[17] Champion had attempted to form a pact with Solomon, who was closely associated with the first Inkatha. This organisation, which had rallied the chiefs and people against the radical workers' organisation, later appears to have been putting out tentative and ambiguous feelers towards the ICU. In an attempt to consolidate urban support, Solomon met the togt workers on 3 September 1930 at the Bell Street beerhall, which was then being boycotted by the ICU *yase* Natal, and then immediately attended a meeting of the ICU. His purpose, apparently, was to stake a claim to the organisation's revenue, based on the premise that the ICU *yase* Natal was invoking Zulu nationalism.[18]

But even prior to Champion's deportation, the dock-workers turned to more radical leaders such as Johannes Nkosi, the Communist Party organiser. The ferment aroused by the challenge to oppressive regulations by the ICU refused to die down. The expression of support for the Usuthu tradition of resistance combined readily with the fiery revolutionary outlook of the Communist Party of the time. The pass-burning campaign of 1930, organised nationally by the Communist Party, succeeded only in Durban, even though Champion's representative condemned it. But the campaigners were brutally attacked by the municipal police. Nkosi was shot, then severely beaten, and died shortly thereafter in hospital. But his death did not dampen enthusiasm for the Communist Party. On the contrary, the party's influence spread into the countryside, and in the docks there is evidence of dock-workers holding shipboard meetings organised by the communist-led International Seamen and Dock Workers' Union. The dockers appeared to be forming the support-base of underground organisation. It was only through painstaking police work, undertaken by Detective-Sergeant Arnold, known by the Zulu workers as Tshaka for his ruthlessness, that the cells of African communists were broken up, many being imprisoned, and the radicalism of the dockers quashed.[19] The

significance of this development is that this is probably the largest single block of African industrial workers who ever attached themselves to the Communist Party in South Africa, then or since. Some five years after Kadalie's disparaging assessment, a stronger contrast could not be made with his view of docility and acquiescence.

At this point, it is worth drawing together some of the threads in the assessment of this awakening. Although the evidence that has been presented of worker action in defence of their interests dates from 1874, the dockers, by themselves, were unable to rise to generalised action against the oppressive municipal system without the catalysts of, initially, the ICU and, later, the Communist Party. The relationship between social movements and their supporters, as the evidence so far shows, is complex: the promise held out by social movements of a transformation of conditions attracts attention not only from the workers, but also from the state determined to maintain stable conditions of subordination. The resulting impasse can either strengthen the hands of conservative leaders, who can demonstrate that radical action leads to suffering and disorganisation (cf. Champion in his opposition to the Communist Party), or prepare the ground for more intense struggle in the future.

Phungula and the Self-organisation of the Dockers

Years of war have almost invariably been years of struggle for the dock-workers. Whatever disorganisation had resulted from the repression which followed the pitched battle against the police during the late 1920s and early 1930s, order was surprisingly quickly restored through the emergence of a leadership from among the dockers. It is not recorded when Zulu Phungula first worked in the docks, and it is possible that he was a participant in the previous battles. But with his emergence in 1939 came the first evidence that the dockers could, from their ranks, throw up individuals capable of representing their interests independently from external agencies. Neither the ANC nor, it will be argued, the Communist Party, provided a focus for opposition from the African working class. In Natal in 1942, the ANC was described by an activist as dying.[20] The Communist Party of the 1940s, despite growing fairly rapidly, and having a certain base of support among Africans, also did not serve this purpose. Its policy during the war was to support the Smuts government while making some criticisms, and to oppose all strike action. Its social composition was a mixture of sympathetic members of the liberal middle class in the upper layers, and African workers providing patchy support at the base. It bears very little comparison with the revolutionary Communist Party of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Durban District Party Committee of 1944–47, for instance, was strongly dominated by whites and Indians.[21] A sensitive study of the Indian working class, which includes a comprehensive analysis of the role of the Communist Party of the time, makes no reference to organisation among

African workers, which seems to imply a weakness in this area.[22] Although many African workers responded to the Communist Party's rallies during the war years, a mood of scepticism is evident as the dock-workers wanted to know: 'Why did you leave us in 1930? What happened to you?'[23]

The rise of Zulu Phungula marked the transition from opposition to the Durban system to a more forceful industrial militancy. Here was a leader significantly different in education and temperament from those of the ICU or the Communist Party of the 1940s, and one who laid down durable traditions. Phungula developed a style of leadership, a distinctive ideology, and a radical practice which, in part, was carried over from the heady days of the ICU and the Communist Party, but was demonstrably in opposition to the practice of both the ANC and the Communist Party of the day. Uniquely, he developed an approach which appropriated much of the Usuthu tradition of resistance – originally the cause of Cetshwayo, and all those who struggled to restore an independent Zulu kingdom, against the collaborating forces of Zibhebhu. Often employing the theatre of revolution, he was free of the politics of ambiguous deference characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie. As a migrant labourer from Ixopo, he articulated a proletarian, if syncretic, outlook in opposition to the order faced by his fellows. Financially supported by other dockers, there are suggestions of an unorthodox lifestyle: for one, that he smoked the 'diabolic weed'.[24]

In strikes during 1941 and 1942 the dockers broke through the invisible barrier which had held wages below 4s. for the sixty-one years since 1880. These wages were half of those of Cape Town dockers, who earned 8s. a day. During this period there had been phases of rapid inflation, especially during the war years – 1899–1902 and 1914–18 – and real wages must have declined fairly significantly over the whole period. Seen over the long term, this downward pressure on wages is somewhat similar to the situation revealed in Francis Wilson's study of the mines which demonstrated that mining wages had not increased in real terms in the period 1911–69.[25] In the period 1880–1941 wages were virtually constant, and declining in real terms. Between 1910 and 1940 (a period for which a consistent price index exists) food prices had increased by some 32,4 per cent while wages had increased by only 14,3 per cent. The reasons for this decline in real wages have to be sought in the cheap labour regime of segregation; wages were suppressed because the African worker was denied an urban existence and forced to subsidise his wages by petty production on the land. Despite the ferocious battles of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the national policy of segregation and the local regime of the Durban system were having the desired effect.

In his speeches (recorded by diligent stenographers of the period, and by Wilson Cele in *Inkululeko*) Phungula expressed the workers revolt against the cheap labour regime in terms of an entirely different vision of the future:

> We have been taught by the Europeans what to eat and we like to eat the same things as the Europeans, for instance eggs and tea in the mornings, we would like to fly in aeroplanes and drive round in motor cars. The shops are full of clothes and motor cars, but we cannot buy these things because we have no money . . . the government only gives us an empty dish to lick.[26]

Phungula's argument was couched in terms of the desire for a complete break with the conditions of life of the oppressed migrant worker, a desire to become a modern urban proletarian on a par with the 'European' worker.

In the strikes of 1941 and 1942 in which demands for 8s. a day were put forward, the response of the authorities was to threaten the deportation of any recalcitrant dockers. When the togt workers came out on strike for a minimum of 8s. a day on 28 July 1942, the government issued War Measure 86 of 31 July 1942 which gave the police authority to expel any togt worker from the municipal area if he refused to work at the prescribed wage. Through a mixture of deportations and the use of African troops, the strike was broken.

The repressive force of the regulations does not appear to have weighed too heavily on the workers who seem to have trickled back to work. The Communist Party supported the use of 'constitutional' means (i.e. no strikes) to resolve the conflicts in the docks, and representatives of the Cape Town Stevedoring and Dock Workers' Union came to Durban to help establish a branch. These representatives argued that the higher wages earned in the Cape had been achieved through negotiation and were due to wage differentiation among the workers with higher wages for gangwaymen and winchmen.

But this form of trade-unionism did not entirely suit the Durban dockers, although they eagerly took up the idea and voted to double the subscription proposed by visiting Cape organisers. Within a short period, the union was demanding a wage (25s.) more than four times the existing wage! These methods and approach were described by a Communist Party member of the time rather contemptuously:

> Zulu Phungula was a peasant, he was not a real worker in terms of having been born and bred in city life. He still looked at things from the peasant point of view. But he was stubborn like a peasant is and he was prepared to fight all out.[27]

A sharper contast with the venal A. W. G. Champion and the 'bread and butter' African trade-unionists of the time, officially tolerated and semi-encouraged, could hardly be imagined. Here we have a workers' leader emerging from the ranks of his comrades without education, external tuition, or guidance who successfully challenges the employers and no less a personage than the wartime Controller of Industrial Manpower, Ivan Walker, armed with the authority of the central state.

Robert Michels, who combined a keen insight into the European labour movement of the early 1900s with deep pessimism about the prospects for democracy and socialism, argued that labour leaders of proletarian origin have the greatest love for power, do not brook contradiction, and like all self-made men are intensely vain. With these characteristics, such a leader 'accommodates himself to the existing order, and ultimately, weary of the struggle, becomes even reconciled to that order'.[28] He provided examples of the worker leaders who boasted of being received by the rich and powerful. Phungula, by way of contrast, showed the opposite tendency: prepared to make sacrifices, to suffer the consequences of his actions, and to return to battle again.

What was the basis of this radicalism and independence? Despite the perjorative context, the 'peasant-like' characteristics of Phungula deserve closer examination. Isolated in the city in prison-like compounds, the dockworkers were largely excluded from the possibility of permanent urban residence. It seems that most still had close links to the land, although it appears a minority made their home in Cato Manor.[29] Those who attained permanent urban status were interested in more regular, less physically demanding, and better-paid employment.

During the war years there was undoubtedly much greater pressure on the land, and official commissions recognised the sharp erosion of the wage supplement from land.[30] This side of the question has been emphasised by historians keen to demolish the fraudulent claims of segregation and apartheid apologists that an independent livelihood was possible for Africans on the land. Nevertheless, in selective areas there is evidence of continued landholding and the possibility of reasonable maize harvests in good years, and thus a certain 'peasant-like' independence. For migrant workers to deny themselves the support from the foothold they retained on the land would have been absurd; the working class has to struggle in the concrete conditions in which it finds itself, and not in any ideal world.

Hypothetically, the retention of links with the land could lead to a 'peasant-like' radicalism among migrants in the cities. In theory, any alternative to wage labour, even on a very small scale, could provide the economic basis on which migrants could challenge the authorities. In general terms, however, it could also be argued that workers with a more secure rural base could have been less likely to take radical action. They would more likely be preoccupied with investing in this base (in cattle and wives) and in fear of offending the autocratic and conservative chief.

But it does not seem that Phungula had any real economic security on the land, and that his radicalism reflected the struggle of the migrant workers to force open the possibility of becoming part of the urban proletariat. The Ixopo reserves from which he came are small patches of land surrounded by well-endowed white farms. In the assessment made by the Natal Regional Survey[31] in the late 1940s, Ixopo is described as an area with two to four times normal subsistence population. On a scale of seven it was ranked second lowest in terms of land cultivated per family of five, although it held the fourth rank in terms of calories per head, per day, which seems to imply higher productivity from the land. But the link to the land in Ixopo certainly had far less of the element of chiefly control so evident in later years.[32]

Certainly, the radical self-organisation of the dockers, initiated in the early 1940s, benefited the dockers. From the strike in 1941, wages rose from 4s. a day via many intermediary steps to 14s. by 1959, a remarkable increase given the fact that wages had been held virtually constant during the period 1880 to 1941. The dockers were represented by the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), although a fully constituted dock union was not organised around the nucleus of worker militants. Industrial militancy certainly brought the results the workers had hoped for, but it also precipitated a ferocious response from the employers and the state.

In March 1959, following the crushing of a strike against the induna system and for higher wages, the authorities counter-attacked by inaugurating the Durban Stevedoring Labour Supply Company (DSLSC) to bring the workers under central control. No longer could workers exploit any differences between stevedoring companies or evade control; the DSLSC was the central authority for all employers, distributing labour to its 'principals' (the stevedoring companies) as they required. This move strengthened the authority of the indunas over the workers, but also had aspects of reform: the dockers were guaranteed a 'fall-back' weekly wage.

The Road to 1973

The employers and the police congratulated themselves on having secured labour peace in the docks forever. And indeed the local measure of the DSLSC, combined with the onslaught on the national movement and trade unions in the early 1960s, appeared to have had the desired effect. As the extraordinary boom of the 1960s gathered momentum on top of the defeat of the workers' movement and resistance to apartheid, the stevedores were worked harder and harder as the ships bearing the plant and equipment to sustain the boom gathered outside the port.

With the DSLSC in place, conditions in the harbour were reorganised. There was a two-shift system, a day shift from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and a night shift from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. With greater administrative and political control over the workers, achieved in the early 1960s, fewer workers could be employed for longer hours. Despite this gain in control, the employers continued to complain of the low productivity of workers. Certainly there were problems in cargo handling as the authorities struggled with unprecedented volumes, but blaming the dockers does not seem justified from the figures: an enormous increase in cargo was handled by virtually the same number of workers as before.

It was in this context that the dockers came out on strike in April 1969. This was an extraordinary display of resistance after almost a decade of quiescence in which the ANC and PAC were banned, resistance crushed, the bantustans strongly reinforced, and labour controls, planned with the inauguration of apartheid, vigorously enforced. Coming at precisely the same time as the ANC and SACP had concluded at the Morogoro Conference that mass action among the working class had been exhausted as a means of resistance to apartheid,[33] the stevedore strike was an early foretaste of the working-class upsurge which was to come rather than a spasmodic and doomed eruption. It was forcibly repressed with a display of enormous firepower and resolve on the part of the police, but it remained part of docker consciousness, and its demands would reappear.[34]

This strike, and the subsequent strike of October 1972, which demonstrated effectively the capacity of the dockers to reorganise after defeat, indicated the tendency for the dock-workers to act in advance of the workers of Durban and, indeed, of the entire country. The dock-workers, separated in compounds from a wider urban setting, in many ways still tied to the land, and unorganised in any open trade union dimension, appear to have had the advantage of isolation from the wider social and political trends, notably the general, deep sense of defeat. There is the apparent contradiction that a group of migrant workers should lead the advance of the African working class into an entirely new era of industrial and political relations.

While the 1969 strike could have appeared at the time to be a desperate reaction to the slave-driving management, and led very swiftly to defeat, the growth of worker activity culminating in the strike of October 1972 indicated that the dockers were, despite their isolation and traditionalism, a resilient social force. Despite the mass expulsions which brought the 1969 strike to an end, and which must have disorganised the social networks sustaining resistance, these workers blazed the trail for the 1973 mass strike upsurge. In an extraordinary letter from 'The Stevedoring Workers' to the Wage Board in 1972 the workers demanded the return of 'those who stood for us in 1969', attacked the privileges of the indunas, and presented a demand for R18 a week.[35] The letter provided concrete evidence of an underground network which did not declare itself even when open trade-unionism started among dock-workers at about that time.

These two strikes show the need to understand the deeper underlying social developments within the work-force. In my thesis I traced the accelerated reliance of the workers on their wage, the lengthening contract particularly in the 1960s, and the continued tendency for employers to seek out labour from the furthest outlying and most traditional areas of KwaZulu.

The 1972 strike showed that the most oppressed layer of migrant workers could and did spearhead the modern emergence of industrial relations and, in this sense, demand a place in civil society. Their contacts with migrant workers in similar work-places (e.g. the Coronation Brick and Tile workers) certainly

helped spark off strike action by other contingents of workers in 1973. The leaders of the Coronation workers were brought to the union offices some months after the 1973 strikes, and there appeared to be close links between the two (although the Coronation workers did not become as readily organised as the stevedores). It was not clear at that time whether these contacts were of the traditional (home area associations and kin relationships) or more modern organisational relationships. Either way, these workers shared the life of migrant workers: long distance migration, housing in compounds, hard and dirty work, and a certain gritty working-class outlook. Their link to homesteads in the more distant KwaZulu areas also meant that strata of these workers were susceptible to traditional beliefs in the virtue of polygamy and in the chiefly structure.[36]

Although the pace of unionisation, which followed in the 1970s, was uneven and at times faltering, the stevedores established themselves as one of the nuclei of worker groups which made up the independent trade-union movement during its most difficult phase of development. This was a noteworthy achievement within the environment of a relentlessly hostile Department of Labour, close surveillance by the Security Police, a tight co-ordination of employers' responses to workers' demands through the Natal Employers' Association, pass raids, bannings and detentions. The docks were additionally a high security zone which attracted very detailed attention from the authorities as one of the 'key points' of the apartheid economic structure. Against this background there were the natural responses of fear, uncertainty, and scepticism among the workers which were equal constraints on growth.

Union Recognition, Retrenchments, and Disorientation

In the early 1980s, it might have been expected that the pent-up energy of the dockers, heavily repressed for decades, would have found its expression in a vigorous radicalism similar to that of dockers in San Francisco, London, Gdansk, and Bombay. Indeed in the new era of collective bargaining which followed the concessionary legislation of the Wiehahn Commission,[37] the General Workers' Union (GWU) made, by contemporary standards, lightning advances in organising the stevedores.

By 1985 Mike Morris, then organiser of the GWU campaign to unionise the dockers in Durban, could write:

> The General Workers Union's (GWU) control over the stevedoring industry is unique in South Africa. In no other industry is any union, let alone an emergent union, so totally dominant as to have 90% of the workers as members.[38]

This was an astonishing achievement in the relatively short period since serious attention had been given to organising the Durban dockers in 1982, in an

industry which had a high strategic significance for the national economy and security establishment. It opened up the prospect for national collective bargaining by an unregistered union, an unprecedented opportunity at the time. The ecstatic confidence and high morale of the early 1980s was remarked on by a stevedore in 1982: 'Since the union came here it opened my eyes. I can't forget about this. Even if I'm sleeping, I think about this.'[39] All articles on the dockers at the time write of the transformation of consciousness from low esteem, despair, and demoralisation to self-confidence and pride.

This metamorphosis was wrought with remarkably little industrial action, in comparison with British dockers who reacted with strong hostility and high levels of strike action to the changes in technology from simple break bulk cargo to containerisation, and who won relatively high wages through their militancy. Yet even as the confident statements of inexorable progress were being penned, the dockers were being severely undermined by a series of catastrophic developments which wrought havoc upon the early sense of unity and common purpose.

It is astonishing that there has been no major confrontation between dock-workers and bosses over the past twenty-two years (1972–94), a time of industrial and political upheaval in South Africa. In 1979 when I completed my thesis I wrote of the stevedores as follows:

> In the coming struggles the dock workers of Durban, who have had a decisive part in the initiation of mass working class resistance in South Africa, will be likely to take up a leading role.[40]

This assessment was backed by the study of worker action in the docks encompassing more than a century. But subsequent developments have produced a scenario that has been contradictory, double-sided and, indeed, at times destructive of that statement.

In retracing my thinking of the time, I had anticipated that there was likely to be a radicalisation of the dockers because of the threat to their jobs, especially from containerisation; this would combine with the new mood of political resistance. I had anticipated that unionisation and the dockers' greater bargaining power arising from mechanisation would mean an unsettled time in the harbour.

In the period which has followed, roughly from 1984 (which appears in retrospect the peak of confidence) to the present, there has been a series of developments counter-productive to collective organisation. Among these has been a series of remorseless retrenchments, which were invariably lesser or greater defeats for the workers. In the twelve years following the recognition of an independent trade union (1982) there have been ten years in which retrenchments have taken place.

The tactic of the unions, the GWU in the early phase, and later the TGWU (Transport and General Workers' Union), has been to negotiate these retrenchments more or less on the basis of some improvement in the severance pay offered by the company, or to refer the matter to the industrial court, rather than to lead a militant resistance to these attacks on permanent employment.[41]

The results of the retrenchments certainly have been a decline in the confidence of workers, sharp internal disputes over the strategy towards retrenchments, and a collapse of the esctatic faith in the trade union that was characteristic of the early 1980s (although a majority are still in the TGWU). Most evidently, there has been a rise in ethnic identity and support for Inkatha among a section of the workers, apparently a factor which most interviewees agreed was latent until the retrenchments took place.

In Britain, until recently, the docks have been one of the most strike-prone areas. More specifically it has been concluded that more permanent employment has had litttle effect on strike activity; increased strike activity has been directly linked to the pace of mechanisation.[42] International comparisons would seem to bear out the reasonableness of my expectation, yet the only strike over the past period seems to have been that of September 1981.

There appear to be two prime reasons for this passivity: the first that employers were prepared for the new mood of militancy through their experience of relations with the GWU in Cape Town; and the second that the retrenchments, negotiated or not, had devastating consquences on the morale of workers. Following from these prime reasons flow the secondary logical and negative developments: a heightened awareness of the political links to the land (the expression of ethnic politics); and a certain, although not complete, disillusion with the union.

Arguments have been offered that the dock-workers are spatially separated from the African working class in Durban and that they are a traditional work-force with a culture of their own. The dockers have a distinct labour process untypical of manufacturing. These social distinctions could imply a different logic of social action. Rather than pursue these arguments here, the main line of argument – that retrenchments have a decisive effect on workers' consciousness – will be pursued. The relentless pace of retrenchments and the conditions in the industry in the early 1980s stunned the workers and exacerbated existing divisions:

> Retrenchments break workers, they break their morale, they break their spirit, those retrenchments broke the back of the union. 600 workers retrenched! All the divisions happened at the same time.[43]

The argument is compelling. Just as the workers organised themselves into a trade union for the first time in their history, they were struck by the catastrophic retrenchments. There is evidence of psychological trauma to workers who had given their lives to the company, only to find their labour

worthless. The workers felt crushed and bewildered. The extraordinary chief induna of SASSCO, a stalwart of the union, C. Mtshali, was 'just devastated, his whole life had collapsed when we said we did not want any more senior indunas' a manager reported.[44] Similar psychological disintegration and disorientation has been reported in retrenched mine workers:

> Plenty of them go crazy. We call it *ukuphambano*. Its a condition that afflicts those who think too much about the fact that they have no means to keep their families alive.[45]

The trauma of retrenchment was undoubtedly deepened by the workers' feeling that they had been betrayed by the union. Jeremy Baskin wrote how cautiously the stevedores appraised the GWU, only gradually extending their trust until a flood of applicants entered the union towards the end of 1982.[46] The policy of the GWU leadership, of following the wage negotiations almost immediately with those for retrenchments, was undoubtedly a mistake. The uproar from the workers in response to the retrenchments showed that the members had not really understood what was involved, even if their leaders had agreed to the retrenchment package.

More than that, because they had not offered the strongest of resistance to the retrenchments, management would not feel restrained from continuing the cuts in employment. Worst of all for the morale of the workers, accepting defeat without a fight was infinitely demoralising. Adding to the humiliation of the union was the fact that the demand for labour unexpectedly picked up after the retrenchments and at times there were up to a thousand casuals employed in the docks.

The growing mechanisation of stevedoring work has vastly increased the bargaining power, particularly of the fork-lift drivers, who are critical to the speedy shifting of masses of cargo. Objective developments such as these, which could have been a lever in collective action, were nullified by the subjective factors: solidarity was undermined by the retrenchments and the workers were divided.

In the bewilderment caused by retrenchments, the tribal factor became salient. In the past, the DSLSC management had formed close relationships with chiefs to guarantee a constant flow of workers to the docks and this policy was reinforced in the early 1970s by employing J.B. Buthelezi, a relative of Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, as 'compound manager'. J.B. Buthelezi organised the counter-attack on the union's early attempt to organise in the early 1970s, gave preference to men from the monarchical areas (Nongoma and Mahlabatini), and discriminated against Xhosa workers.[47]

Certainly management manipulated ethnic and clan relations in the 1960s and 1970s, and the labour recruited in the presence of the chief was bound by an element of tribal discipline. In later years UWUSA (the United Workers Union of SA) was launched by Inkatha with the stated aim of crushing the radical COSATU. Union members claim that management has fostered UWUSA, and after its collapse, the Inkatha Freedom Party. Certainly the belief that management has made use of ethnic loyalties to divide and rule is widespread among the unionised work-force. In late 1993 a branch of Inkatha was launched in the compound without opposition from management, in a sense to assert its control of the establishment. Leading shop stewards had to vacate the premises in fear of their lives. A mood of 'King and Country' now exists among a section of the Zulu-speaking work-force, and a number of dockers joined in the march to the Durban City Hall on 14 February 1994 to support the demand for the restoration of the Zulu kingdom.

Conclusions

In the title of this essay the dock-workers are positioned in the eye of the storm. The metaphor may be a little more fully explored. The dockers have been at the active centre of events in Durban, the agency of resistance, in the periods when Durban has been characterised as the storm centre of South Africa. In the recent period the dockers have been at the uneasily quiet centre of a storm raging around them, particularly in the period 1984–86. In past movements they have been the fulcrum of change, the most active element in a turbulent centre, and highly responsive to radical social movements. They have helped precipitate and sustain periods of confrontation with employers and the state, and have been a constant source of opposition and a far from conservative layer. In spearheading the 1973 strikes they inaugurated a new phase of national social and political development.

Durban itself has usually moved out of phase with the general national mood: ahead of the country in the late 1920s and early 1930s, in phase with the 1942 strike wave on the Rand, out of phase in the 1949 riots, quieter in the early 1950s, experiencing a strong although late industrial upsurge in the 1950s, leading the strike movement in the early 1970s, and lagging behind the national movement in the 1980s.

In none of these phases have the stevedores' struggles produced the elements of a high-wage group which could be characterised as a labour aristocracy. In contrast to those in Britain in the 1960s and 1970s, the dock-workers of Durban have not, except for extremely limited periods, won advances in wages which could constitute the basis for a labour aristocracy, or even a better-off layer of the working class, despite their strategic location. The wage increases won by the GWU in the early 1980s were almost immediately countered with retrenchments and short time. Until recently, the labour process in stevedoring required the raw and extravagant use of human muscle power at low wages. There appears to have been slow change in the 1930s and 1940s, followed by rapid change in the 1960s (the phase of 'unitisation'), and stunning change in the 1980s (containerisation).

Now the commanding presence of the dockers in all social upsurges to date has been replaced with a lesser sense of communality with other Durban workers. The crushing weight of market forces, as evidenced in the remorseless pressure of technological change and declining employment, has brought a pervasive and depressing powerlessness. Strike activity has now shifted, at least for a period, to the shore-based harbour workers organised by the SA Harbour and Railways Union.

In the period since Phungula proudly referred to SS Inyathi ('Steamship Buffalo') and the 'strike called inyathi' in 1942, the meaning of the term has been transmuted in the dark humour of the working class to that of 'shit worker' (or in more polite language: bucket or sanitary worker), a downtrodden and dirty bunch. And yet more of the harbour work is demanding technical skills, such as crane driving, tractor driving, hyster driving, and the workforce is becoming *internally* differentiated and polarised between permament and casual, skilled and unskilled, with the stevedoring labourer at the bottom of the pile: vulnerable to retrenchment, clinging on to claims to the land, and often caught up in desperate social movements to aggressively 'defend' King and Country.

Historically, capital attempts to seek out the most sturdy layers from the countryside, what Marx calls 'the constant absorption of primitive and natural elements from the countryside', to replace workers exhausted through labour.[48] Migrant labour in South Africa has stretched this truth to its limits. In the docks this has been extended long past its limits, but this trend seems to have worked itself out and a shift is now taking place towards city workers under the dual pressure of technological change and a breakdown in the material basis of migrancy.[49] But it is incomplete, uneven, and contradictory.

For a long period, the state tried to resist coming to terms with the fact that the advance guard of the trade unions was composed of migrant workers – a phenomenon which threatened the basis of the bantustan political enterprise and would accelerate the transfer of the best and most capable section of the rural population into the urban centres and squatter camps. The crude attempt of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commissions to prise migrants from the trade unions by offering selective registration was met by a vigorous resistance to such contradictory and piecemeal 'reforms', the basic intention being to split the working class into migrant and urban workers.

J.K. Galbraith has argued that the development of capitalism has required labour to be drawn in from the countryside to the urban centres; the very process of labour migration is in itself a powerfully corrosive force upon traditionalism.[50] The erection of the huge bureaucratic apparatus of apartheid, to control migration and ensure the return of migrant workers to the bantustans, was a tribute to this very corrosion. But the removal of massive state intervention in the labour market has tended to reinforce the imbalances between town and countryside rather than correct them. New inequalities are reproduced through the social power of capital rather than politically.

The migrant workers who led the upsurge in unionisation initially benefited from the new era of collective bargaining they had introduced, but the recession of the 1980s, which forced the pace of retrenchments, and technological change have borne heavily on them. The rise of trade-unionism among the most oppressed, but industrially strong, components of the class appeared to destroy almost at one stroke the interesting but ultimately theoretically fruitless contradiction that influx control would radically separate the urban from the migrant worker. Initially, the unionised migrants made great strides and challenged the apartheid dream of rightless, ethnically orientated helots.

In the 1980s FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions) unions emerged from the hostels, particularly in the East Rand; now COSATU and the Zulu migrant workers of those hostels are bitterly divided, in deadly opposition. What has emerged from this period is a rather embittered and resentful group of workers, irrespective of political affiliation, with a radically sceptical view of the emerging order. Many express radical views but not necessarily radical political affiliation. Very few are members of the ANC and the SA Communist Party, and in the pre-election period all were concerned that the coming period would bring a sharp polarisation among the workers which would impel them into acts of violence against each other.

From the mid-1980s onwards, the life of the stevedores has been an accumulation of anguish. In the opening phases of the 'new South Africa' their existence is under greater threat than before. It would be a disaster if the new South African dockers were to be finally removed from the Point and from the possibility of family life in the the area by the operation of the free market, thus silently and non-politically achieving what was first destroyed at the turn of the century through municipal intervention, and envisaged by Hendrik Verwoerd at the height of apartheid dreaming in the 1950s.

Compared to colonial society, the social relations of modern capitalism are not simple and direct. As in nature, developments in society move through contradictions: the dock-workers are entirely necessary to the work of the harbour, but they are denied a family life; working-class power is established in the labour process, but when exercised it meets a ferocious official response, and then is eroded by retrenchments; compounds concentrate workers and create favourable situations for organisation, but they also maintain links to tribal authorities and set worker against worker; the land provides a cushion from the harshness of capitalist exploitation, and provides a false alternative to the city, as well as maintaining an increasingly despotic though enfeebled tribal order.

All this implies a final negation of human agency, and of the role of the working class. But Durban's social relations can best be understood in terms of combined and uneven development: the combination of the most backward relations and preserved connection to the land with the potential for the most radical action to change these conditions. But this development has not existed

as a finished product, a formula, rather it has been cast and then recast at different conjunctures. A series of tensions, contradictions, and temporary solutions are held in suspension at any moment. Historically, periods of repressive solidity have been followed by flux. At this moment there is a contradictory and violent change, with retrenchments and plans for redevelopment of the Point threatening the very social existence of those migrant workers whose struggles had helped bring it into existence. Yet the advances of the new era have not been entirely wiped out as the majority of the stevedores retain loyalty to the Transport and General Workers' Union.

The social history of the dockers is not yet exhausted. As Harvey, the Marxist geographer, explains, the 'capitalist city is the arena of the most intense social and political experiences', full of passions and repressions, of agitation and ferment.[51] In an era of political revolution few developments are likely to proceed in a straight line.

Sequence of events 1980–1994

Early 1980	† GWU recognised by Cape Town stevedoring employers
May 1981	‡ GWU opens Durban offices in Point Road
Dec 1981	‡ 500 members of GWU recruited
Feb 1982	‡ GWU recognised by SASSCO management
Aug 1982	* SASSCO and Rennies Grindrod Cotts merged in August
Early Dec 1982	‡ SASSCO management informs GWU of 150 intended retrenchments; union opposition and retrenchments postponed, but some workers resign and receive R300
Dec 1982	‡ Workers forced to take 6 weeks unpaid leave after working for three or four months
Dec 1982	† Keeleys starts stevedoring operations
Jan 1983	* 500 stevedores retrenched as result of merger, (LIFO 1975)
1983	* Trident Marine taken over by SAS
Apr 1983	† Strike of Keeleys workers; in May GWU recognised
May 1983	† New wage determination issued
Dec 1983	† SAS wages standardised nationally after negotiations with GWU
Mar 1985	* 557 stevedores retrenched (LIFO 1973/74)
Nov 1985	COSATU launched in Durban
May 1986	UWUSA launched with symbolic coffin marking the death of COSATU
1986	GWU amalgamates with TGWU
Mar 1987	Mtshali, key shop steward, hacked to death in compound after many death threats
13 Mar 1987	§ SATS strike, the largest in the history of the industry, involves Portnet workers
Nov 1987	¶ Gceba, leading shop steward, attacked on the road and in his home in KwaNdengezi after death threats by UWUSA supporters
May 1988	** SAS states UWUSA claims majority membership among SAS workers
1 August 1988	** SAS cancels the recognition agreement with TGWU
1988	¶ Major retrenchment, Gwamanda negotiates terms
1 Nov 1989	§ Countrywide strike of railway workers
Feb 1991	Strike by forklift drivers over SAS management in Durban refusing to sign wage agreement
Apr 1991	** Referendum over union support gives convincing victory to TGWU
Feb 1993	SAS initiates retrenchment of more than 100 workers
1993	¶ Keeleys dismisses 128 workers after they refuse to work overtime in dispute over wages and re-employment of retrenched workers
May 1993	¶ Durban Bulk Shipping retrench 42 workers out of 210. There are two unions present: BAWU and TGWU

Notes: * MM1: Morris, Mike. January 1986. Stevedoring and the General Workers' Union, Part 1: The impact of the stevedores on the GWU. *South African Labour Bulletin (SALB)*, 11(2):90–114.

† MM2: April-May 1986. Part II: The impact of the stevedores on the GWU. *SALB*, 11(5):100–118

‡ B: Baskin, Jeremy. December 1982. GWU and the Durban dockworkers. *SALB* VIII(3): 18–33

§ SRR: Survey of Race Relations, SAIRR

¶ Interviews

** Union Records

SASSCO: South African Stevedores Servicing Company

NOTES

1. S. Hill, *The Dockers: Class and Tradition in London* (London, 1976).
2. C. Kerr and A. Siegel, 'Interindustry Propensity to Strike', in A. Flanders (ed.) *Collective Bargaining* (Harmondsworth, 1969).
3. The name means 'buffalo' in Zulu and was the term used by the dockers to categorise themselves as the powerful beasts of burden of the stevedoring trade. I discuss the transmutation of this name in the conclusion.
4. Adrian du Plessis, 'A Theoretical Approach to Strikes and Industrial Conflict in the Third World', *African Perspective* 9, 1978, pp. 1–11.
5. Originally the term social movement referred to the complex of social activity described as the labour movement in its trade union, co-operative, socialist, and other forms. The labour movement was the social movement; the study of social movements is now much broader in scope and includes civil rights, ecological, women's, youth, religious, and many other movements. In his classical study *Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology* (New York, 1951), Rudolf Heberle takes up the question of the articulation of social movements and political parties. An extensive literature has followed. At the risk of somewhat oversimplifying, a critique of the old social movement (the European labour movement) is made in favour of greater research interest in the new social movements. In the textbook, *Sociology,* Anthony Giddens defines a social movement 'as a collective attempt to further a common interest, or secure a common goal, through collective action outside the sphere of established institutions' (1990 edition, p. 624). This very broad definition implies a sharp distinction between a movement and an institution, a distinction which will be maintained in this study.
6. G.H. Mason, *Life with the Zulus of Natal, South Africa* (London, 1855), p. 195.
7. The phrase is that of Frere, British High Commissioner, to Hicks Beach, of the Colonial Office, 12 February 1879, quoted in C.W. de Kiewiet, *The Imperial Factor in South Africa* (London, 1965), p. 223.
8. Memorandum by the Secretary of Native Affairs on the evils arising out of the practice now becoming so general among the native labourers in the towns of Pietermaritzburg and Durban, of refusing employment except as jobbers, and the remedy suggested, *Natal Government Gazette*, 31 March 1874.
9. Although I had briefly surveyed this development in my thesis, much of the material which follows has been generously provided to me by Professor Brian Kearney who has enthusiastically revived interest in the early development of the Point.
10. M.W. Swanson, 'Urban Origins of Separate Development', *Race* 10, 1968, pp. 31–40 and 'The "Durban System": Roots of Urban Apartheid in Colonial Natal', *African Studies* 35(2–4), 1976, pp. 159–76.
11. Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (Harmondsworth, 1976), p. 98, provides the information on London dockers' wages and an account of the strike which followed in that year. As late as 1880 the Superintendent of Police complained that African workers were becoming fond of drink and fine clothes and were earning more than some labouring men in England. *Mayor's Minute*, 1880, p. 20.
12. Clements Kadalie, *My Life and the ICU: The Autobiography of a Black Trade Unionist in South Africa* (London, 1970), p. 62.
13. Edward Roux, *Time Longer than Rope* (London, 1948), p. 185. With the notable exception of Shula Marks's work on Champion, other commentators fail to grasp the terrible contradictions and destructive ambiguities of the man. In discussion with the writer in 1972, Champion described himself as a 'decaying petty bourgeois'. In many ways he was an extraordinary man; at the funeral of a son who died at the hands of the police he declared that he had been a tsotsi and deserved to die: all tsotsis deserved this outcome! (Discussion with Obed Kunene, then editor of *Ilanga lase Natal c.* 1973).
14. Shula Marks, in her very illuminating study of the cross-currents buffeting the African petty bourgeois, notes that Champion had succeeded in organising the majority of African workers in Durban. Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Johannesburg, 1986).
15. Peter Wickens, 'The Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of Africa', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1973). Later published by Oxford University Press (1978).
16. Kadalie, *My Life and the ICU*, p. 63.
17. Marks, *Ambiguities of Dependence*, pp. 87–91.
18. Nicholas Cope, 'The Zulu Royal Family under the South African Government, 1910–1933: Solomon kaDinuzulu, Inkatha and Zulu Nationalism' (Ph.D. thesis: University of Natal, Durban, 1985), p. 380.
19. A graphic description of this period is given in Edward Roux, *Time Longer than Rope*, pp. 251–63.
20. F. Meli, *South Africa Belongs to Us* (London, 1989), p. 88.
21. Alan Brooks, 'From Class Struggle to National Liberation: The Communist Party of South Africa, 1940 to 1950', (MA thesis, University of Sussex, 1967), p. 114.
22. V. Padayachee, S. Vawda and P. Tichmann, *Indian Workers and Trades Unions in Durban, 1930–1950* (Durban, 1985), Institute for Social and Economic Research, Report No. 20, University of Durban-Westville. The African trade-unionists of the time seem to have considered the Communist Party's trade-union work to be tied up with its involvement in Indian politics. See Baruch Hirson, 'Trade Union Organizer in Durban: M.B. Yengwa, 1943–44', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 11, 1988, pp. 93–113.
23. Quoted in Iain Edwards, 'Recollections: The Communist Party and Worker Militancy in Durban, early 1940s', *South African Labour Bulletin* 11(4), 1986, p. 80. Arenstein explains that this scepticism was marked among those workers who were active in the previous period, especially the dockers. The Party was attracted to the rising militancy of the Indian working class, and its campaigns concentrated on attracting support from that sector, rather than engaging in the painstaking work of developing a firm industrial base among Africans. (Interview, March 1994).
24. Interview with Christopher Mbonambi.
25. Francis Wilson, *Labour in the South African Gold Mines, 1911–1969* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 66.
26. Quoted in my 'Dock Workers, Labour Circulation and Class Struggles in Durban, 1940–1959', *Journal of South African Studies*, 4(1), p. 96.
27. A remark by an unidentified member of the Communist Party quoted in Edwards, 'Recollections', p. 73.
28. Robert Michels, *Political Parties* (New York, 1959), pp. 302–5.
29. Information from Christopher Mbonambi, Interview 1975.
30. See the evidence gathered by Dan O'Meara in his paper on the mineworkers' strike of 1946, 'The 1946 African Mineworkers' Strike and the Political Economy of South Africa', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 13, 2.
31. Edgar H. Brookes and N. Hurwitz, *The Native Reserves of Natal*, Natal Regional Survey, vol. 7, (Cape Town, 1957), pp. 124–7.
32. There is some evidence that Phungula fought the tribal authorities in the Ixopo area with vigour equal to that with which he opposed the authorities in the city. (Interview with Rowley Arenstein, 1975).

33. In the Morogoro Declaration of 1969 the only mention of the possibilities of internal resistance or of trade-union organisation, is in the past tense, as a failed tactic. (Morogoro Declaration. Tanzania, April 1969, in *ANC Speaks*, documents and statements of the African National Congress, n.p., September 1977, pp. 172–90.) General strikes are ruled out (p. 176) guerilla warfare is 'the only form in which the armed liberation struggle can be launched' and priority is given to recruitment of guerillas, or use of the population simply as auxiliaries (p. 180). The analysis just stops short of declaring South Africa fascist (i.e. one in which internal resistance is suicidal or even counter-productive), there is a 'Hitlerlike feeling of confidence' (p. 184). No mention is made at all of any prospects for trade-unionism, industrial strikes, student activity, or any defensive form of social or political struggle such as bus boycotts.
34. It was from this defeated strike that this writer as a student suddenly grasped the vulnerability of the economy and the monolithic white order to mass action by African workers and started to gather documentary material on the history of the dockers in an attempt to understand their future.
35. Appended to D. Hemson, 'Stevedoring Workers in Durban', unpublished paper, October 1973.
36. Personal recollection of organisational questions in the General Factory Workers' Benefit Fund *c.* April, 1973.
37. I do not wish to imply that this legislation was the conscious conclusion of the Wiehahn Commission which is unfortunately implied in much of the literature of the period e.g. Steven Friedman, *Building Tomorrow Today* (Johannesburg, 1987). The Wiehahn Commission, it should be noted, in line with the strategy of late apartheid proposed a radical separation between migrant and urban workers. It was only through the most resolute opposition from the radical wing of the emerging labour movement, and outspoken hostility from international labour organisations, that this tactic of perverse reform was dropped, and unions of migrant and urban workers allowed to be registered as 'official' unions.
38. Mike Morris, 'Stevedoring and the General Workers Union, Part 1: The Impact of the Stevedores on the GWU', *South African Labour Bulletin* 11(2), 1986, p. 90.
39. Worker quoted in Jeremy Baskin, 'GWU and the Durban Dockworkers', *South African Labour Bulletin*, 8(3), 1982, p. 29.
40. David Hemson, 'Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers', (Ph.D. thesis, Warwick University, 1980), p. 719.
41. The writer wishes to make clear the two alternatives not with a view to offering a 'winning' alternative: it may well be that both strategies would lead to some loss or defeat. It is obviously very difficult to successfully resist retrenchments for any length of time if there is an objective basis for them in declining trade or technological change. The strategy of resistance can, it is suggested, have a major effect on morale; that a battle was fought and lost rather than lost without the dignity of resistance.
42. David Sapsford and Peter Turnbull, 'Dockers, Devlin and Industrial Disputes', *Industrial Relations Journal* 21(1), 1990, pp. 32–3.
43. Interview with former union official, Mike Morris, 24 June 1991.
44. Interview with director of stevedoring company, 26 June 1991.
45. Mzwandile Xabiso, NUM official, reported in the *Weekly Mail*, 28 March to 4 April 1991.
46. Jeremy Baskin, 'GWU and the Durban Dockworkers', *South African Labour Bulletin* 8(3), 1982, pp. 18–33.
47. See Morris, 'Stevedoring and the General Workers' Union', p. 101.

48. Karl Marx, *Capital* (Harmondsworth, 1976), p. 380.
49. The results of a survey I conducted on the home areas of dock-workers show a tendency towards domicile in areas closer to Durban and Durban townships themselves. Despite Nongoma and Mahlabatini remaining the home area of a high proportion of the workforce, their numbers are declining.
50. J. K. Galbraith, *The Nature of Mass Poverty* (Boston, 1979).
51. D. Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Baltimore, 1985).

The Leaves in the Trees are Proclaiming Our Slavery

African Trade Union Organisation, 1937–1949

TIM A. NUTTALL

Unlike the Rand and Cape Town, Durban did not experience substantial strikes or unionisation involving African workers in the period after the First World War and during the 1920s. During the late 1920s, however, Durban gained prominence as a centre of mass-based community politics mobilised around the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) and the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA).[1] The authorities employed both repression and reform to break this loosely organised popular political movement. There was no collective response among the city's Africans to the severe deprivations of the Great Depression. As the Durban economy revived and changed after the mid-1930s, new forms of co-ordinated action developed. After 1937 wages and working conditions became the target of demands and action on a scale not yet seen amongst Africans in the port city. The relatively large number of strikes between 1937 and 1943, and the emergence of trade unions during the 1940s, signified a heightening of class struggle in the work-place. Worker struggles intensified, beyond informal coping and resistance strategies, towards more direct and organised challenges to capital. Durban's experience was replicated in many towns in Africa.[2]

The existing literature only partially portrays these early work-place struggles. D. Hemson's study provides an important starting point.[3] He focuses on the crucial struggles of dock-workers and provides penetrating insights – but few details – relating to worker action elsewhere in the local economy. A contemporary study by H.G. Ringrose provides a broader picture and useful details, but in the form of bald narrative.[4] V. Padayachee et al. concentrate on the unionisation of Indian workers during the 1930s and the 1940s.[5] They highlight comparative themes for the study of African workers, and they examine instances of joint Indian-African action. M. Pickover and P.O. Tichmann provide a generalised overview based on secondary literature.[6] B. Hirson's fascinating but sketchy account of the experiences of Durban unionism in the 1940s is drawn from interviews with Masabalala Yengwa.[7] I. Edwards has pioneered the uncovering of everyday experiences within Durban's black proletariat during the 1940s.[8]

The central task of this essay is to piece together new archival evidence, while acknowledging that further oral research is essential to the understanding of the nature of consciousness, mobilisation and work-place relations. It starts by exploring Durban's changing economy and labour market after the depression. The aim is to show what work-place conflicts were rooted in local patterns of industrialisation and class formation, and to promote understanding of how these found expression in race-specific channels. Within this crucial context, the nature of strike action and early union organisation amongst African workers is explored.

African Workers in the Durban Economy, 1935–1950

Coping and resistance strategies were shaped by the position of African workers in the racially stratified Durban labour market. Taking the mid-1930s as a baseline, this section outlines African participation in the changing local economy. In 1935 African workers were characteristically male and migrant, employed in unskilled, high-turnover, poorly paid jobs, mostly in tertiary sector services. The mid-1930s saw the beginnings of substantial African settlement in the city, but this accounted for probably no more than twenty thousand of the seventy thousand Africans recorded in the 1936 census.[9] The remainder were migrant workers from all parts of Natal; some commuted daily, others weekly, but most worked in the city for a few months and more, oscillating between wage employment and rural homestead production.[10] Migration reflected continuing access to rural resources. It was also a consequence of Durban's coercive municipal policies which sought to prevent urban settlement. Africans in the city were expected to live in single-sex hostels, backyard *khayas*,[11] and the early shack settlements on the urban periphery. In 1936 the male to female ratio amongst Africans was still as high as 3,6 to 1.[12] Migrants were paid wages far lower than the value of their labour, on the grounds that urban earnings were 'subsidised' by rural production.[13] Reflecting the city's high levels of African migrancy, Durban's unskilled wage rates were the lowest in South Africa.[14]

In 1936, according to the population census, there were 55 615 'gainfully occupied' Africans in Durban.[15] Of these, 6 539 were women, the vast majority of whom (5 508) were domestic workers. Of the 49 076 men, roughly 28 500 were employed in the tertiary sector, in the following main categories: domestic work (15 000); commerce and distribution (5 500); harbour and transport (5 000); and municipal (3 000). The secondary sector – manufacturing and construction – accounted for 12 000 to 15 000 African workers.[16] The Durban economy provided few primary sector jobs, that is, in the extraction and

production of raw materials. African workers were generally confined to the bottom rungs of employment by a double colour bar: white workers monopolised skilled posts; white, Indian and coloured workers competed for semi-skilled labour; and Africans joined large segments of the newly settled Indian proletariat in the search for the remaining unskilled low-paid jobs.[17] The registered unions erected the colour bar as a defensive tactic against the threat of cheaper labour.[18] The racial hierarchy was also shaped by the view common among employers that the 'nimbleness of mind and finger', the 'stability' and 'responsibility' of Indians set them apart for semi-skilled jobs, while the 'robust physical strength' and 'unreliability' of Africans made them 'suited' to unskilled labour.[19] There were exceptions to this racist rationale. In some small firms, where registered unions were weakest and profit margins tightest, tiny numbers of Africans were employed in semi-skilled and even skilled work.[20] On the whole, however, African workers in the mid-1930s were unskilled labourers: packers, loaders, domestics, diggers, cleaners. African and Indian unskilled workers often worked alongside each other, especially in factories, but social conventions had developed which demarcated specific occupations 'African' or 'Indian'. Stevedores, for example, were Africans; municipal street-cleaners were Indians. Amongst Africans, occupations were often connected to 'homeboy' networks; racial cleavages were overlaid by regional and ethnic affiliations.

Most Africans were in jobs that were insecure and offered few prospects of wage increases through length of employment. The ability of many African migrant workers to withdraw periodically from urban wage labour compounded unstable employment patterns in the lower reaches of a segmented labour market. In consequence, Durban had an 'extraordinary high turnover of Native labour'.[21] One survey, covering the period 1917 to 1942, calculated that over 50 per cent of Africans, across a wide spectrum of occupations, changed jobs more than once a year. In domestic work and construction, over 75 per cent changed jobs within a year. High job rotation figures reflected short-term migration between town and countryside, continuous movement between firms and sectors on the part of low-skill workers searching for better conditions, and the fluctuating unskilled labour demands of sections of the Durban economy such as the harbour and seasonal tourist trade.[22]

From the mid-1930s the Durban economy, dominated by the harbour and tertiary sector services, underwent dramatic growth and transformation. The most important new development was the growth of manufacturing, stimulated by protectionist policies during the post-depression recovery and then by war-time demands.[23] How did African workers participate in the booming, changing local economy? Were there shifts from earlier employment patterns? In particular, was there a rise in African skill levels and job permanence? By the late 1940s there had been little substantial change in the skill and job positions of African workers. Very high job turnover and unskilled labour continued to

characterise the African work-force. The continuation of these features militated against sustained worker organisation and weakened the potential impact of strike action. Despite these continuities, this decade was a time of deepening proletarianisation amongst African workers. Ever larger numbers demanded a living from wage labour in the city as other options diminished. In the generally tight labour market conditions, pressures banked up against Durban's cheap labour policies.

Table 2 shows the dramatic growth of African manufacturing employment, and table 3 suggests that this occurred partly through displacement of white and Indian workers. Certainly, the changing labour processes of machino-facture demanded new work-forces of cheap semi-skilled operative workers.[24] One might have expected that those employers who were developing 'scientific' mass production techniques would have turned to African workers, historically the cheapest and politically the weakest. But by the late 1940s there were few signs of this in Durban. The use, from 1942 onwards, of African low-level operative labour at the Dunlop rubber factory was a consciously pioneering venture. Only a few other industrial firms, among them Bakers and Lever Brothers, followed the Dunlop path.[25] The rest of industry and commerce did not hire African semi-skilled labour, on the grounds that Africans remained 'unreliable'.[26] The 1951 census classed 80 per cent of African males as either 'labourers' or domestic servants.[27] The increased number of Africans in manufacturing reflected the huge demand for unskilled labour in Durban's largest industrial sectors: chemicals, clothing and textiles, metals and engineering, food and drink, and construction.[28] A substantial part of production in these sectors remained labour-intensive, involving maintenance and repair work, or processing bulk raw materials and finished products.[29]

Table 2 Secondary and tertiary sector employment of Africans, Metropolitan Durban, 1936–1946

	Male	% econ. active	Female	% econ. active
Secondary				
1936	12–15 000	24–30	117	2
1946	25–30 000	33–40	418	3
Tertiary				
1936	27–30 000	55–61	5 696	87
1946	38–43 000	50–56	12 420	80

Source: 'Industry' and 'Occupation' tables of the *Population Census*, 1936 and 1946; *Census of Industrial Establishments*; Burrows, *Population and Labour*, pp. 150–52, 164.

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Source: 'Industry' and 'Occupation' tables of the *Population Census*, 1936 and 1946; *Census of Industrial Establishments*; Burrows, *Population and Labour*, pp. 150–52, 164.

Table 3 Growth of manufacturing employment in Durban, by racial groups, 1934/35 – 1944/45

Year	Africans	%	Whites	%	Indians	%	Coloureds	%	Total
1934/5	10 887	39	10 634	38	5 647	20	978	3	28 146
1939	17 528	43	13 565	33	8 450	21	1 531	4	41 074
1944/5	28 878	50	15 251	26	11 549	20	2 195	4	57 873

Source: Padayachee et al., *Indian Workers*, p. 33.

By the late 1940s 'African' skill levels had not changed substantially, nor had job turnover rates declined. A 1946 survey at the Dunlop factory revealed that 83 per cent of the firm's 1 052 African workers had been employed there for less than sixteen months.[30] Turnover rates were probably higher in most other firms, as Dunlop's 'African' wages were relatively high and the factory's experiments with Africans in semi-skilled work would have stabilised at least some of its workers. In 1947 an informed observer of the Durban economy described it as 'one huge casual market' of African workers.[31] Durban's Native Administration officials coined the phrase 'job-hopping' to describe the endless queues of workers at the pass office, coming to change jobs at the end of monthly contracts or even 'in midstream'.[32] In the mid-1930s job turnover rates had been a function of unskilled migrant labour. By the mid-1940s they were less a reflection of oscillating migration between city and countryside, and more a consequence of processes within the city: the fluctuating demands for unskilled labour on the part of the harbour, tourism and construction; differing unskilled wage rates between sectors and industries; and the constraints of the double colour bar.[33]

Job seeking was intensified as increasing numbers of migrants settled permanently in Durban, or at least spent the whole year there in wage employment. Many were coerced by deepening rural poverty, caused by the decline of the Reserve economies and the transition to capitalist production in white agriculture.[34] But the impact of these rural forces was uneven; many people travelled to Durban – and stayed – voluntarily.[35] One index of urban settlement was the marked increase of African women in the city. The male to female ratio dropped from 3,6 to 1 in 1936 to 2,3 to 1 in 1951.[36] During the 1940s, shacklands mushroomed to the north and south of Durban, but the most substantial growth occurred in the west at Mkhumbane (Cato Manor). In 1939 there were an estimated 2 500 African squatters at Mkhumbane; by 1949 estimates stood at over 50 000.[37] In 1942, striking dock-workers replied to the warning that they would be 'sent home': 'The government must show us where to go because our homes are here in Durban.'[38] A common point made in evidence to the 1949 Industrial Legislation Commission was that an increasing majority of workers laboured in Durban continuously, despite the recording of a

'home area' in their service contracts.[39] Wage labourers retained a rural toehold for a multitude of reasons: the lack of facilities in town for family housing; employment uncertainties; and the benefits of continuing access to rural resources and support networks.[40]

Increasing reliance on wage labour favoured job stabilisation, but the particular constraints on African workers forced them to maintain a high job turnover rate. The generally tight labour market conditions between 1935 and the early 1950s facilitated this phenomenon. For unskilled African workers the importance of these conditions was not that their jobs were more secure, but that alternative employment was readily available. In 1937, fifteen hundred striking *togt* workers were able to refuse South African Railways employment for two weeks because they had found alternative work in a busy harbour. In 1946, when a 'roadgang' of municipal workers was summarily fired for 'insubordination', they immediately replied: 'It's all right, there's plenty of work.' In 1948 the Broome Commission reported that 'nearly all of the [African] menfolk and many of the women are usefully employed in Durban'. In 1949 the implementation of stringent influx regulations quickly evoked protests over labour shortages.[41] White citizens' alarm over 'surplus Natives' in the city was not shared by employers.[42]

Despite the dramatic growth of the Durban economy, the vast majority of African workers remained in unskilled jobs. They were confined to this structurally weak position in the labour process by a double colour bar. The buoyant economy encouraged high job turnover rates which, together with strategies such as deliberately slowing down the work-pace or pilfering goods at the point of production,[43] signalled informal coping with cheap-labour policies and unpopular employment. High job turnover rates simultaneously militated against sustained working-class organisation. Yet the growth of an African proletariat, in conditions of relative labour scarcity, generated and facilitated demands for wage increases. We turn to examine how these demands and informal strategies escalated into strike confrontation.

Patterns of Strike Action, 1937–43

The unprecedented strike action by African workers during this period was concentrated in two bursts, in 1937 and 1941–42. The broad structural processes outlined above provide an important, but blunt, analytical framework. Working-class militancy did not simply rise as proletarianisation deepened. The two strike waves occurred at particular junctures of grievance, mobilisation and opportunity.

Apart from an abortive dock strike in 1932, African workers had not struck work in the harsh conditions of the Great Depression. The 1937 strikes consciously sought to reverse the wage cuts of the early 1930s, and to claim a greater share of the reviving economy. Skilled white workers and semi-skilled

white and Indian workers had turned to strikes from as early as 1935 in attempts to gain similar objectives.[44] The delay in action by African workers indicated their vulnerable relationship with employers. The strikers in 1937 were motivated by the increased tempo of the local economy; they were also aware that some African politicians were championing unskilled wage increases, that the Durban Chamber of Commerce was currently debating this issue, and that the Department of Labour's Wage Board had recently nudged up unskilled wages in some Durban industries.[45] There was a new fluidity in wages policy as the central state and urban employers began to grapple with the labour requirements of unprecedented manufacturing growth.[46]

After rumblings of African worker discontent in early 1937, the period between April and September encompassed an unprecedented strike wave. Ten strikes, involving over three thousand African workers, were recorded: in private stevedoring, at the Falkirk Iron Foundry, amongst South African Railways (SAR) employees at the docks, timber loaders at the harbour firm of W F Johnstone, chemical workers at African Explosives, commercial fishermen, soap workers, box makers, and millworkers at the Illovo and Huletts sugar refineries.[47]

The largest strikes occurred amongst daily paid (togt) workers at the docks, where increased cargo traffic was the most obvious indicator of the new prosperity. The private sector stevedores demanded that Saturday pay be raised from 3s. to 4s., the rate for the rest of the week. The SAR togt workers, paid 3s. daily, struck for an extra shilling. The W F Johnstone timber loaders, who received an ultra-low 2s. 6d. daily, also sought parity with the four-shilling stevedores. These wage demands by the lowest-paid harbour workers were notably limited, seeking merely to restore old wage levels. The proficiency and physical strength of the togt labourers gave them a level of work-place bargaining that was denied to the vast majority of Durban's unskilled workers.[48] Togt workers could also contemplate strike action more readily than most other workers; they were hired on a daily basis and to strike meant to boycott specified employers rather than to break a work contract. This option was obviously most feasible when the harbour was busy. Most dock-workers lived in large compounds near the harbour; their barrack-like living conditions and common work experiences created the potential for building solidarity around informal social networks.[49] This was an important factor in the concentrated timing of the strikes.

The Falkirk strike was unique in that its participants were members of a pioneering trade union which organised both Indian and African workers.[50] The unregistered Natal Iron and Steel Workers' Union (NISWU) had been formed in 1937 by Communist Party activists – in keeping with the non-racial principles adopted by the Party when it revived during the late 1930s. Four hundred Indian and African workers struck at Falkirk in protest against employer victimisation of NISWU leaders working at the factory. The protracted, unsuccessful strike was fought using trade union resources and connections beyond the work-place.

The other 1937 strikes involved only African workers, and were mobilised through internal work-place, or compound, networks. For example, at African Explosives the workers in the factory compound sent a deputation to management demanding wage increases, cash payments instead of food rations, and the dismissal of the compound manager who instilled discipline through punishment cells and beatings. The failure of the deputation precipitated a strike, during which management and government officials addressed large gatherings of workers in the compound. It was at one of these meetings that the four hundred strikers bowed to the return-to-work ultimatum.[51] The railway strikers were led by their own committee. The accountability of the railway leaders was demonstrated on one occasion during the strike: they broke off negotiations with the SAR system manager to consult with the crowd of strikers gathered outside the office and then returned to report that the strike would continue.[52]

The most common employer response to the strikes was to call in the Zulu-speaking officials of the Native Affairs Department, who would point out to the characteristically 'orderly' strikers the error of their ways, and then threaten them with prosecution under the master and servants laws. All the strikers returned to work within one or two days, pending management promises to investigate wages. One exception was the determined SAR strike, which lasted for two weeks until a drop in harbour traffic forced the strikers back at the old wage. Strikes could not easily be sustained: strong union organisation was absent; employers could obtain scab labour; and unskilled workers occupied a weak bargaining position.

The wage demands and strikes prompted a burst of public activity on the part of political leaders in John Dube's Natal Native Congress and George Champion's ICU *yase* Natal. At the time these numerically small organisations were embroiled in a number of issues confined to the petty bourgeois political arena.[53] Their responses to the strikes reflected both a sensitivity to pressures 'from below', and a conscious attempt to gain political advantage by articulating popular demands. The ICU's activists, for example, urged those who gathered in Cross Street on Sunday afternoons to start afresh, to rebuild the Union into an organisation of 'strong soldiers'.[54] The ICU called a public meeting on wages at the Bantu Social Centre on 9 August 1937.[55] One thousand people attended. Railway workers were particularly vocal, and their low wages and rations – food 'fit for pigs' – were a central theme of many of the speeches. Champion linked exploitative wages and working conditions with white domination. John Dube proclaimed that there was no other country where workers were so badly paid, and that Durban's workers were not benefiting from the new prosperity. The thousand-strong gathering elected Champion and Dube to head a deputation to the mayor and employer organisations. The central

demand was a minimum wage of five shillings per day plus accommodation and food.

Hemson has characterised the intervention of the political leadership as an attempt to capture and divert worker militancy for self-serving purposes.[56] It was certainly true that the politicians monopolised the role of mediating on wage demands with the authorities; they opposed strike action as 'rash', and paid no attention to worker organisation. Dube articulated the conflicting interests of management and workers as 'misunderstandings' which could be ironed out through 'consultation' with the political leadership.[57] However, there are grounds for arguing that the political leaders added momentum to wage demands and perhaps even to strike action. In the absence of alternative trade union organisations, they popularised the five-shilling wage call, a wage level higher than that demanded by most strikers. The railway workers began their two-week strike on 10 August 1937, the day after the rousing Bantu Social Centre meeting which many of them had attended. The strikes provided the initial shock to employers, forcing them to consider wage increases. Of lesser, but still significant, importance was the sustained public agitation over wages by the political leaders during 1938 and 1939.[58]

Despite the weak position of the strikers, their actions provoked a collective response from local officials and capitalists. The Mayor of Durban convened two emergency meetings of employers and officials during the 1937 strike wave.[59] One flustered manager declared that 'something had to be done' soon or else there would be 'strikes all round'. The Chamber of Commerce, whose members stood to gain from increased African purchasing power, argued that ultra-low wages should be raised to the levels of higher-paying firms. The Chamber of Industries protested that Durban's 'competitiveness', based on the lowest unskilled wage rates in the country, would be lost. The eventual outcome of the mayor's meetings was a decision to defuse the strikers' militancy by asking the government to implement a national minimum unskilled wage.

The Hertzog government refused to consider this request, but appointed a Wage Board to investigate unskilled wages in Durban. The terms of appointment were unusual, for the Wage Board characteristically operated on an industry basis. Its broader brief signified the extent of the strikers' challenge to Durban's wage structure. In the meantime, the municipality implemented 10 per cent across-the-board wage increases for its three thousand African employees. Some of the strike-affected firms nudged up the very lowest of their togt rates to 3s. Under pressure from the Native Affairs Department, the SAR increased togt rates to 3s. 6d. during 1938.[60] African workers were brought into industrial council agreements for the first time, for example in the furniture and engineering industries.[61] After a number of sittings, the Wage Board, ever cautious about antagonising capital, eventually published its proposals in December 1939: a minimum togt wage of 4s. per day, and a weekly minimum of 18s. It was calculated that 11 995 unskilled African workers (and 3 000 Indians) would benefit.[62] Strong employer reaction delayed implementation of the ruling, so that it only began to be phased in from October 1940.

Gradual wage increases by employers, and the Wage Board hearings, contributed to a decline in strikes between 1938 and 1941.[63] However, by the time the Wage Board determination was implemented, war-time inflation had seriously begun to erode African wage levels. Having increased by roughly 6 per cent between 1936 and 1940, the general price index shot up by 13,8 per cent between 1940 and 1942.[64] War demands boosted production rates and encouraged the introduction of new production methods. New strains were placed on the moral economy of the work-place. The early war years were an anxious time for the authorities. While the Allied forces reeled under the advance of the Axis armies, subversive rumours bubbled up in Natal. One such rumour was that the Zulu king, Dinuzulu, exiled from Natal after the 1906 Bambatha uprising, was alive and well in Germany, and that the Germans would seize the land from Natal's whites and return it to Africans. White Durban expressed alarm that the ubiquitous, docile 'kitchen boy' might believe such 'fantastic' stories.[65] In a semi-literate society, rumours were a powerful force. In addition, during 1942, Japanese attacks on Durban were a distinct possibility.[66] These were the volatile circumstances surrounding the African strikes which occurred in Durban and elsewhere in the country during 1941–42.

During the second half of 1941, African workers struck at the docks, and in the cigar, milling, tea, coffee and chicory, and construction industries. During 1942, strikes were recorded in the brick and tile, paper, laundry, quarrying, engineering and textile industries.[67] In October 1942, Durban's divisional inspector of labour reported 'that dissatisfaction amongst the natives at Durban was rife and strikes or threatened strikes sometimes occurred two or three times in a week'.[68] The details of many of these strikes are still obscure. In their size and significance, the two dock strikes and the Dunlop strike were most important.

The two-day strike by fifteen hundred togt stevedores in August 1941, and a week-long strike by sixteen hundred of these workers in July 1942, provide the most prominent examples of non-union worker leadership and collective mobilisation. The 1941 strike demand, arising from the dramatic increase in war-related harbour traffic, was for wage increases from 4s. to 8s. daily. The strike ended a day later with the promise of 'investigation'. The war-time Controller of Industrial Manpower raised togt wages by 6d., but this and subsequent negotiations with employers failed to satisfy dock-worker demands. They struck again over the eight-shilling demand in July 1942. They stayed out for a week before a special war regulation empowered the police to evict any worker from Durban who refused work at current wage rates. Confronted with police batons, the dock-workers went back to their jobs.[69]

The remarkable worker-leader, Zulu Phungula, was prominent in the strikes.

A migrant togt worker from the Ixopo district, he had been elected in 1939 to lead the residents of Bell Street hostel, the largest compound for dock-workers. What perplexed government officials was that, unlike many indunas of hostels and firms who belonged to chiefly families, Phungula was not a 'natural' leader but a 'commoner'.[70] An incident during the 1942 strike reveals Phungula's popularity, and the symbols of leadership in Natal's past on which he could draw. Having been arrested earlier as the strike leader, he was taken by the police to Bell Street to address the strikers. As one report had it, Phungula got out of the police car and 'greeted the people in the style of Shaka, "beti Zulu" '. Phungula had allegedly agreed to the police's demand that he call off the strike, but he seized this opportunity to do the opposite: 'We better fight and die for what we want until we get it. I do not know what will be the outcome . . . as they have now even taken our country . . . What makes them not give us enough money to feed our children?'[71]

In their persistent demands for 8s. – a 100 per cent increase – the dock-workers showed acute awareness of their exploitation as low-wage workers, and of their bargaining position in the busy docks. The dock strikes had implications for the whole wage structure in Durban. Before the 1942 strike, Phungula said that the workers' sights were in fact set beyond 8s. (the wages of Cape Town stevedores). They aspired to earn 25s., the wages of the white dock-workers whose only tasks consisted of 'sitting down reading newspapers . . . [and] recording the names of the labourers'.[72]

Phungula and his committee showed notable discipline in leading the dock-workers. They pursued every possible avenue of petitioning and reasoning with employers and officials. In February 1942, five months before the second strike, the dock leaders had difficulty persuading an angry Bell Street meeting that immediate strike action would be premature.[73] It was only after four more months of waiting for a government reply that a mass meeting at Bell Street finally decided on strike action. The scales were tipped in July 1942 with the introduction of war-time blackout and daylight saving measures to guard against Japanese air attacks.[74] Daylight saving effectively shortened the break between afternoon and evening work-shifts at the docks, leaving tired workers less time for supper and rest. These changes placed further strain on the already over-stretched moral economy of work in the harbour. The strike began the morning daylight saving hours were introduced.

Phungula articulated a fascinating blend of themes, illustrating the consciousness of the militant dock-workers. The following extract is drawn from a speech of his to two and a half thousand workers, gathered to hear the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) on the third day of the 1942 strike. The extract illuminates the dock-workers' sense of misery and exploitation; the invoking of biblical imagery; the appeal to 'Zulu' identity; and the awareness created by the large number of troops passing through the docks. The CNC had told the gathered crowd that their wage demands would not be considered unless they

listened to their 'father' (the CNC) and returned to work. According to notes made by an official, Phungula replied:

> Although [the CNC] says how much he loves us he is not sorry that we are driven into Hell . . . If we go back to work before these promises are fulfilled we are still in Hell . . . Does not the government see that we should also have a share in the milk and honey that abounds in this country? Huge sums of money are being made by the white man and we have no share in it . . . The Zulus have been loyal [to the war effort] but they have not been given fair pay . . . Our stomachs are empty and we feel that we are left to starve. Even strangers and soldiers coming from other countries are surprised at the state of affairs when they see how we are starving. Our people are treated in a manner comparable to Hell, while the employers are in Heaven . . . Even the leaves in the trees are proclaiming [our] slavery.[75]

During the 1941 and 1942 strikes both the Durban Communist Party and the National Union of Distributive Workers offered organisational assistance to the togt workers. The dock-workers kept these offers, and the overtures of George Champion, at arm's length.[76] The communists, for their part, were ambivalent towards the strikes, regarding them as detrimental to the war against fascism.[77] The dock-workers did not easily fit the Communist Party's conception of factory-based trade-unionism; one Durban communist recalled Phungula as an unruly 'peasant'.[78] However, when the 1942 strikers were literally driven back to work by the police, the communists, among others, issued angry protests.[79] During September 1942, the dock-workers attracted interest from another trade union quarter.[80] Officials of the Cape Town Stevedoring and Dock Workers' Union travelled to the city to establish a local branch. Having convinced port employers and officials of the benefits of 'stabilising' the dock-workers through 'constitutional' unionism, they were allowed to hold a series of meetings at Bell Street. The strike-weary togt workers were persuaded that formal unionism might open up new terrain for their wage demands.

The Durban Stevedoring Union was established, with Phungula as organiser and Abel Mhlongo as secretary. Phungula gave expression to the strategic shift: pledging 'better understanding', he asked the manager of the Durban NAD to recruit members into the new union. But with the other hand the union wrote to the Department of Labour in Pretoria demanding wages ranging from 8s. 3d. to 18s. for day shifts, and from 21s. to 30s. for night shifts. The militant wage demands had not been silenced.[81] The official committee of investigation set up after the 1942 strike considered these demands laughable. It concluded that private-sector stevedore wages should be increased by 6d. plus a 1s. war-time cost of living allowance, to a total of 6s.; and that SAR togt wages should be increased to 5s. These were declared fixed for two years under the war

regulations. Phungula's togt deputation was called before the committee in November 1942 to be informed of the ruling. Phungula replied that 'we still complain', and pledged that after the two-year period they would renew their wage demands.[82]

The Dunlop strike of December 1942–January 1943 differed from the dock strikes in a number of ways.[83] It was the most prominent example of joint action by Indian and African workers, alongside other instances of inter-racial solidarity in the paper, laundry and textile strikes of that year.[84] The Dunlop strike was led by a formally constituted trade union, which sought support beyond the work-place. During 1942, Dunlop had begun to substitute cheaper African workers for Indian workers, and had launched a company union for white workers in a bid to undermine the non-racial Natal Rubber Workers' Industrial Union (NRWIU).[85] The strike by 148 Indian and 291 African members of NRWIU resisted these developments. Despite Dunlop's attempt to divide the strikers racially by prosecuting them under different laws, the strike remained remarkably solid. Native Affairs officials were perplexed by African strikers' reluctance to talk to them: the workers' strong attachment to the Rubber Union was plain to see.[86] Dunlop bussed in migrant workers from beyond Durban early in January 1943, to restart production. NRWIU pickets were arrested when they tried to stop the new workers entering the factory.

The sacked strikers received the support of the Communist Party, sections of the Durban Trades and Labour Council, and African trade-unionists such as Philemon Tsele, Gladman Nxumalo, Zulu Phungula and Grenford Mfeka.[87] A protest meeting of four thousand workers was held in the City Hall during January 1943, but Dunlop stood firm and the strike was broken. The workers' defeat was an important setback for this fragile common front, and represented the high-water mark of black strike activity in war-time Durban.[88] Strikes by African workers continued to occur after 1943, but they were isolated and small in scale.[89] Durban did not experience the African strike wave that occurred on the Rand during 1945–46. Despite deepening proletarianisation and the continuance of tight labour market conditions into the post-war period, the incidence of strikes declined. The necessary mix of circumstances for another strike outburst did not develop until the abortive general strike of 1949 and the strikes of 1951–52.[90] The strikes of the late 1930s and early 1940s were significant not only in themselves; they were part of a broader phenomenon that included the pioneering organisation of trade unions amongst Durban's African workers.

'Planting a Crop': African Workers and Trade Unions, 1937–1949

In 1936–37 two unions began organising African workers: the Natal Iron and Steel Workers' Union at the Falkirk works, and the South African Railways and Harbours Workers' Union (Non-European) at the docks.[91] From the early 1940s, a number of new unions began a difficult process of grafting a range of

initiatives on to the struggles of new proletarians and migrant workers. Three main types of union developed: unregistered non-racial unions; 'parallel' structures for African workers within registered unions, and African-only unions acting 'independently' from non-racial and parallel unions. The emergent unions reflected the constraints and opportunities thrown up by the changing political economy of the 1940s. Crucial variants included the position of African workers in Durban's labour market, and the legal status of Africans within the state's labour relations machinery. The following section outlines the context of the early unions and their main trends, and then assesses the nature of leadership, ideas and organisation. A convenient end-point for analysis is the Industrial Legislation Commission evidence of 1949.

The features of the Durban economy examined in the first part of this chapter were vital in influencing African union organisation. The intensifying dependence of African workers on urban wage labour was an important precondition for unionisation. But proletarians did not necessarily flock into trade unions. Indeed the 1940s tell the opposite story: union organisation was extremely difficult. The structural position of the vast majority of African workers militated against formal work-place unionism. Reinforcing these obstacles was the Industrial Conciliation (IC) Act of 1924, designed to bar Africans from registered unionism and prevent viable organisation. White, Indian and coloured members of registered unions could hide behind this legislation, disassociating their interests from those of African workers. For employers, the IC Act had the negative effect of empowering registered unions, but it also kept unskilled (African) labour disorganised and cheap.

African union activities, nevertheless, grew from the late 1930s. To understand this, and the nature of the unionism that emerged, the new opportunities that developed amidst the constraints must be considered. The emerging unions owed their existence, in varying degrees, to their ability to exploit the smallest of openings that were generated by structural changes and the impact of struggle. The strike waves of 1937 and 1941–42 revealed the capacity for collective confrontation with capital over the wage-relation. The strikes created space for unions to engage in further bargaining. Crucial here was the buoyant and changing economy, which gave employers some latitude. In the country as a whole, the changing labour needs of a rapidly industrialising economy led certain employer and state interests to argue for the 'stabilisation' of sections of the African work-force, by the payment of urban subsistence wages and the granting of differential rights under influx control policies.[92] Integral to this was a changing attitude towards Africans as potential union members. For some elements of manufacturing capital during the 1940s, the unionisation of African workers offered greater regulation of production and more predictable work-place relations amidst the evident militancy of the decade.

The vexed question for state and capital was the extent to which union rights

should be granted to African workers. Each option – nil, partial or full recognition – would entail undeterminable political and work-place consequences. There was a tendency to sidestep the question by intervening administratively with piecemeal reforms in favour of Africans. From 1937, Department of Labour officials were empowered to represent African workers on industrial councils, and the Wage Board was increasingly concerned with improving and standardising African wage levels.[93] In 1939 plans were mooted for administrative registration of African unions.[94] Throughout the 1940s, the Smuts government toyed with this issue, which culminated in the 1947 bill for limited and separate recognition. The Nationalist government put this half-hearted measure on ice, and then in the passing of the 1953 Natives Settlement of Disputes Act rejected it in favour of no recognition.

Although, ultimately, the recognition issue came to nothing, it provided important space for African union organisation. It became a rallying call at union meetings. It enabled some unions to gain unofficial recognition from individual firms, to lobby the Department of Labour, and to appear before the Wage Board. At the same time the spread of machino-facture reinforced the 'logic' of industrial unionism: the need to 'maximize bargaining power through strength of numbers'.[95] The organisation of African 'parallels' flowed from this. Registered union members, like employers, increasingly saw African workers as more than nameless labour units. African 'independent' unions emerged to occupy a unique position. They were hampered materially and politically in many ways, but they were neither explicitly outlawed nor controlled by any registration procedure. The uncontrolled nature of the independent unions, and their growth potential, were two major concerns of Durban's Industrial Employers' Association (IEA) in the mid-1940s. This body was the main forum in which local capital debated labour issues. After two years of internal consultation, the association threw its weight behind the limited and 'supervised' recognition of African-only unions.[96] Some employers supported the IEA stance to secure more productive, stabilised labour; most were interested primarily in imposing control before independent African unionism grew stronger.

This, then, was the broad context within which African unionism emerged after 1937. The prominence of non-racial unions defines a first phase, from 1937 to 1943. These pioneering unions, organised by Communist Party (CPSA) activists, included the Natal Iron and Steel Workers Union' (NISWU), the Laundry Cleaning and Dyeing Employees' Union, and the Natal Rubber Workers' Industrial Union (NRWIU) at Dunlop. After 1942 there was an apparent shift in CPSA tactics, away from unregistered non-racial unions towards organising 'parallels' and supporting independent unions.[97] The NISWU, of which Gladman Nxumalo was a stalwart organiser, was probably the only union that continued to operate non-racially after 1943, but by 1945 it, too, had split, into 'registered' and 'independent' sections.[98] The shift from

explicit non-racial organisation was strongly influenced by the bruising Dunlop strike of 1942, which broke the NRWIU. More generally, the tactical change reflected African-Indian tensions in the work-place and beyond; the problems of persuading Indian workers to join unregistered unions; the pragmatic view that there were benefits to be gained from registered unions participating in industrial councils on behalf of African parallels; and the appearance of African-initiated independent unions during 1942–43. This last feature marked the start of a second phase, lasting until the end of the war. By mid-1943 there were an estimated twenty-three independent African unions in Durban.[99] Over the next two years independent union organisers operated in the following sectors: milling, coal, meat, construction, timber, metals, baking, hotels, hospitals, chemists, tea and coffee, cartage and distribution, brick and tile, the docks and the municipality.[100] The sectoral pattern suggests a dearth of independent union activities in Durban's large chemicals sector, and in the mechanising and rapidly growing garment, textile and furniture industries. This absence was probably directly related to the early existence of parallels in these industries.

Most of the independent unions struggled to survive after 1946; Ringrose's 1948 survey found seven still operating.[101] With a few exceptions, the independent unions did not have a strong enough shopfloor base to continue operating in the less favourable post-war conditions. Durban employers were reportedly far more dismissive of independent unions than their Johannesburg counterparts.[102] After the war, prominent unionists such as Philemon Tsele and Jacob Nyaose attempted to federate the independent unions into a Council of African Trade Unions for Natal. But a measure of this council's weakness was its inability to fund a single delegation to national conferences of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU) during the late 1940s.[103]

The two independent unions that continued with most success into the post-war period were branch unions with a Johannesburg central office: the African Commercial and Distributive Workers' Union (ACDWU), and the African Bakers' and Confectioners' Industrial Union (ABCIU). Both were led by experienced unionists – Christopher Mbonambi and Jacob Nyaose, respectively – and both could draw on funding and support from beyond Durban.[104] The ABCIU was the strongest of the independent unions. At the end of 1945 it secured substantial wage increases – over 100 per cent – for the lowest-paid bakery workers; by 1949 (a year in which it negotiated a new wage agreement with the Master Bakers' Association), it claimed to have four hundred paid-up members.[105]

The history of the African parallel unions is less easy to periodise. The earliest such union was the South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union (Non-European) (SARHWU N-E) organised by J. de Bruin and Philemon Tsele from 1936. This was a national registered union, but in Durban it operated non-racially and did not appear to have a separate parallel structure.

Notices for its meetings called on 'Africans, Indians and Coloureds' to attend.[106] This was so until 1944 when the union was replaced by a management-created Non-European Staff Association, which had a parallel section. A year later, Tsele broke away to form an independent union of African railway workers.[107]

Apart from SARHWU N-E, registered unions first began to organise Africans in about 1940, in the garment, furniture, textile and tin industries.[108] As with the independent unions, the industrial ferment of 1941–42 was crucial in stimulating growth. By mid-1943 there were another twelve parallels, active in the following industries: food and drink, rope and mat, twine and bag, chemicals, leather, liquor and catering, and box making.[109] By 1948, ten of the parallels established between 1940 and 1943 were still operating. The three largest were the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union (1 200 claimed members), the Leather Workers' Industrial Union (738) and the Furniture Workers' Industrial Union (694).[110] By 1948 three new parallels had appeared in the brick and tile, printing, and bus transport industries.

The parallels were concentrated in those industrial sectors where mechanisation was advancing rapidly, and where new unions, affiliated to the Durban Trades and Labour Council, had emerged. These registered unions consisted largely of semi-skilled machine workers, who had a material interest in preventing undercutting by cheaper African labour. The greater the number of workers these unions represented, the stronger was their position in relation to management. For these reasons, the new registered unions sought to organise and control unskilled African workers. It was largely as a result of their connection with registered unions that parallels survived into the late 1940s, unlike most independent unions.

Leadership, Ideas and Organisation

Three questions can be asked regarding the above sketch of African unionism between the mid-1930s and the late 1940s. What was the social and political nature of union leadership? What ideas informed these early unions? How were the unions organised? A minority of the full-time African union leaders had been unskilled or semi-skilled wage labourers. The two most prominent figures from the labouring ranks were the docker Zulu Phungula and Philip Thompson, an engineering worker. The latter had been expelled from Durban in 1930 for Communist Party activities, but then re-emerged in the late 1930s and the war years as an independent trade union organiser. Thompson and Phungula were barely literate and could speak little English. In contrast, most of the African unionists of the 1940s were located higher in the class hierarchy and had at least a smattering of formal education. Their background was that of the mission station and the aspirant urban or rural petty bourgeoisie. Sydney Myeza and Arthur Sililo, for example, were municipal clerks; Sililo and Christopher Mbonambi were members of families 'exempted' from 'native law' on grounds

of education level or property ownership; Wilson Cele was a budding journalist; Masabalala Yengwa was a brilliant young matriculant; and Jacob Nyaose was, judging from newspaper photographs, a well-groomed man who, among other things, belonged to the sedate Durban Joint Council of Europeans and Africans. There were good reasons why such figures emerged at the head of many unions: literacy and English skills were essential for dealing with officials, employers and white and Indian unionists.

In the case of Masabalala Yengwa, one of the few unionists about whom we have some biographical details, it was a matter of chance that, on leaving school, he became a 'parallel' organiser in 1943 for the Liquor and Catering Trades Employees' Union (LCTEU) and not a clerk in the Native Affairs Department.[111] His pay would have been roughly the same in either job. Yengwa's real ambition was to become a bookkeeper in the union's main offices, but when successive vacancies were filled over his head by Indian and coloured people, he left the union to set up a private bookkeeping agency. Sydney Myeza, an energetic independent unionist during the war years, saw his union work as that of a 'labour lawyer'. He was not formally qualified, but drew a fee for each case he accepted.[112] Other war-time unionists who operated on an agency basis were Hubert Sishi, who organised hotel and catering workers, and J.J.D. Manzi, who represented building, hospital and government workers. Myeza and his colleagues showed entrepreneurial flair. Worker assertiveness during the war provided opportunities for articulate individuals to make a living. It was a precarious livelihood, however, for both fees and success rate were low. The independent 'agency' unions disappeared after the war. Myeza, for example, moved into squatter politics, working for the Natal African Tenants' and Peasants' Association. Sishi became an announcer on the new Zulu radio service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation.[113] By contrast, figures such as Gladman Nxumalo, Philemon Tsele, Jacob Nyaose and Christopher Mbonambi were long-standing, committed unionists. Although they came from differing union traditions their common concern was to develop an ideology of worker rights and to build formal union structures.

Differing tendencies developed concerning the perceived role of unions and the relationship between organisations of African and non-African workers. The CPSA organisers pioneered the principles of non-racialism, which arose from the Party's Popular Front policies against fascism, its demands for democratic rights for all, and its stress on working-class organisation. Gladman Nxumalo's statement in November 1942 was a pertinent example: '. . . improvement can alone come from organised workers in a trade union movement. The policy of segregating the African workers from other workers is the root of low wages paid to Africans up to now. . . . All workers irrespective of colour are affected. They must have a common front.'[114] These sentiments contrasted sharply with those of Jacob Nyaose. At the November 1943 launch of the Natal Federation of African Trade Unions, an early attempt to co-ordinate the

activities of the independent unions, he ridiculed the non-racial and parallel unions which, he said, 'belonged to Europeans and Indians'.[115] In the event, the CPSA could not sustain non-racial organisation outside the industrial conciliation machinery. Nxumalo himself experienced his Natal Iron and Steel Workers' Union dividing into 'Indian' and 'African' sections in order for the union to register.

From 1943 there was often tense competition for union constituencies. Communists on the Trades and Labour Council (TLC) committee, such as George Ponen, remained committed to full inclusion of Africans under the IC Act, but in the meantime organised parallels as training grounds for politicised African unionists.[116] Such initiatives clashed with those aiming to extend conservative control over African workers. In the garment and furniture industries, in which the registered unions were led by the well-known unionist Jimmy Bolton, communist attempts to gain influence in the parallels were strongly repulsed.[117] Hubert Sishi, to cite another example, rejected both the non-racialism and the radicalism of the CPSA. In a revealing letter to the town clerk, in which he strongly distanced himself from the communists, Sishi wrote: 'Our trade unions are charity organisations, and [we will] see that workers' meetings are not led to political chaos by irresponsible people.'[118] Some independent unionists remained strictly separate from both the CPSA and the TLC. But a number of independent unions operated from the CPSA offices in West Street, and appeared on public platforms with communists. Unlike Sishi, independent union leaders such as Tsele and Mbonambi saw their unions as a base from which to participate in the community politics of the late 1940s.

An interesting aspect of the early unions was their organisation along industrial lines. A lone exception was the Natal African General Labourers' Union (NAGLU), set up by Philip Thompson in the mid-1940s. One might have expected the high job turnover rate amongst African workers to have encouraged general unionism. For success, this kind of organisation would have required either a strong following across sectors, or a strong political message, uniting workers. Neither pre-requisite was present in the 1940s. In 1948 NAGLU continued to function, but its organiser operated from a box on the pavement in the Indian commercial centre of the city.[119] The rest of the unions operated within industries. They drew on the common work experiences of labourers in particular sectors. The unions were also pushed in an 'industrial' direction by labour law. Legally recognised collective bargaining could only take place within industries, and the Wage Board operated similarly.

Beyond their common operation on industrial lines, the various types of union were organised in diverse ways. Some parallels, for example those in the garment and furniture industries, were practically inactive. But the parallels were not always passive participants in labour relations. In 1946, for example, a threatened strike by the alleged twelve hundred 'parallel' members of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union was only averted when union leaders

negotiated wage increases for African workers in the industry.[120] On the whole, with the backing of the registered unions, parallels gained much easier access to the shopfloor and to stop-order subscription facilities than the independent unions. Access to factories or compounds required the approval of management and indunas ('boss-boys'), whose autocratic rule was threatened by active union organisation. As a result of restricted access, many of the independent unions held public meetings in town rather than at work. In 1942, for example, Myeza and Thompson launched the Natal African Iron and Steel Workers' Union (NAISWU) by setting up a table on a street corner in central Durban.[121] The more successful unions held regular monthly meetings at the Bantu Social Centre or the Methodist Institute. Such meetings were hampered by transport costs. These gatherings were not particularly suitable for collecting subscriptions; but collecting at factory gates was a time-consuming task. In 1949 Christopher Mbonambi explained why only 150 of the 2 300 members of the African Commercial and Distributive Workers' Union were paid-up:

> I am by myself . . . I cannot get into touch with all these people at the right time . . . The town is so spread out that it takes me months to go round to the different places. I have only one day in the week to collect subscriptions and that is a Friday [pay day], and when that day is finished I have been able to do only ten firms.[122]

Mbonambi's efforts were admirable. His statement also illustrated the limits of single-handed organisation by 'educated' leaders who had been socialised into 'representing' people rather than leading them collectively. This might well have placed limits on the depth of union organisation. Union organsers had to work extremely hard, and deliver material benefits, to attract African workers into new practices of collective discipline and mobilisation. Even if African workers could be persuaded to join a union, their meagre pay severely restricted union resources. Alfeus Mfeka, a 'parallel' section organiser for the Rope and Mat Workers' Union in 1948, captured the essence of active African trade-unionism when he said: 'If you plant a crop you have to sweat first, and then if you get a crop it is alright.'[123]

Conclusion

Durban had its own history as a harbour city undergoing substantial industrialisation from the mid-1930s. The transformation of economic growth and urbanisation gave rise to local forms of class struggle. My concern here has been to examine the development of a distinctive African proletariat, rooted in a changing migrant labour system, paid the lowest wages in the country, marginalised by industrial laws, and confined to unskilled work in a labour hierarchy where skill levels were closely tied to racial classification. African workers developed their own forms of struggle against capital.

Existing evidence provides mere glimpses into coping mechanisms and informal resistance strategies. High job turnover, which continued into the late 1940s despite the decline of oscillating migrancy between city and countryside, was one of the more obvious examples. Thousands of unskilled workers sought to improve, and retain some control over, their working conditions not by direct confrontation with capital, but by incessant job searching. Durban employers had come to accept high African job turnover rates as a fact of life. It required cumbersome hiring procedures, often on a daily basis, and necessitated coercive management of a continually changing workforce. But the turnover did not seriously disrupt the vast amount of unskilled work in the semi-industrialised city; it kept workers disorganised, and exerted downward pressure on 'African' wage levels. During the 1940s a handful of large firms began to explore the use of more stabilised African workers as ultra-cheap, semi-skilled machine labour. But for machine tasks the vast majority of employers still preferred a readily available supply of slightly more expensive, but more stabilised and politically less threatening semi-skilled labour: the Indian proletariat.

What propelled African workers from informal strategies into unprecedented strike confrontation with employers in 1937 and 1941–42? What underpinned the emergence of the first trade unions amidst the transience of 'African' work? The Durban strikes and unions during the period under review flowed from the same social processes. The strikes arose from a favourable conjuncture of circumstances. Both strike waves occurred in conditions of economic boom when unskilled workers felt they were being denied a fair share of the prosperity, and when employers were either indecisive or vulnerable. Both were headed by the militant dock-workers, with their greater capacity to take strike action. Both quickly gathered collective momentum but then, as one might expect from disorganised unskilled workers, dissipated with similar speed.

Apart from the togt dockworkers, the African strikers of 1937 and the early war years did not have the power to cripple production. Most of the strikes were little more than a desperate warning that enough was enough; they were nevertheless a defiant challenge by supposedly 'docile' workers against the paternalism or autocracy of management. It was the unpredictability – both in timing and extent – of this challenge that worried employers most. Employers, backed by the central and local state, responded strongly to the strikes. In 1943 the strike leader Zulu Phungula was expelled from Durban for five years, and the Natal Industrial Employers' Association was formed to co-ordinate management strategies on labour.[124] The government's punitive anti-strike measures of December 1942 were used to prosecute African strikers. If these repressive measures stifled strike action then so, too, did the real wage increases which African workers exacted from employers. A new Wage Board determination in 1945 raised the lowest unskilled wage levels.[125] Between 1939 and 1947, according to one estimate, the average real wages of African industrial workers rose by 57 per cent.[126] After 1947 economic uncertainties and declining profitability prompted a firmer stance by local capital.[127] The essentially vulnerable position of African workers was revealed in the 10 per cent real wage decline between 1947 and 1951.[128]

The rise of non-racial and independent trade unions challenged employers on a different level to that of strike action, and confronted the neglect of African interests by the registered unions. If strikes had been a direct challenge to capital, unions were feared more for what they could become.[129] Larger employers and some of the registered industrial unions were, for differing reasons, not averse to the unionisation of African workers, as long as this occurred in a controllable way. Employers stood to gain through greater predictability in work-place relations. Industrial unions hoped to increase numerical bargaining power with management, and limit undercutting by cheaper African semi-skilled labour. Who controlled the unions was therefore a vital consideration. After much deliberation the IEA concluded in 1946 that employer interests would be best served by limited recognition of African-only unions. In the event the association did not have to implement this decision, because the expected challenge from unionised African workers lost momentum after the war.

The pioneering non-racial unions carried the greatest potential threat to both employers and registered unions. They consciously sought working-class unity, particularly between unskilled Indian and African workers. They held up a model of militant organisation, outside the structures of the Industrial Conciliation Act. For a number of reasons, the non-racial unions failed to survive much beyond 1943. Those parallel and independent unions which emerged directly from the worker assertiveness of the early war years reflected the logic of a racially segmented work-place. With varying degrees of success they worked against numerous obstacles to lay the foundations of trade-unionism amongst African workers. Much depended on the commitment and ideological persuasion of the small number of union leaders. Most of the independent unions did not last beyond the war years. The parallels had a better success rate, but they were far less ambitious from the start. A band of committed unionists continued to operate into the late 1940s, but by 1949 had achieved little more than the planting of the first seeds of a future harvest.

NOTES

1. P. la Hausse, 'The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902–1936', (unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1984), chs. 4–6.
2. F. Cooper, *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labour, Capital and the State in Urban Africa* (Beverly Hills, 1983), pp. 35–57.
3. D. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers: Dock Workers of Durban' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1979).
4. H. G. Ringrose, 'A History and Description of Trade Unions in Natal' (unpublished M.Comm. thesis, University of Natal, 1948).
5. V. Padayachee, S. Vawda and P. Tichmann, *Indian Workers and Trades Unions in Durban: 1930–1950* (Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Durban-Westville, 1985).
6. M. Pickover, 'The Development of Black Trade Unions in Durban during the Second World War' (unpublished BA Hons. essay, University of Natal, 1980); P. O. Tichmann, 'African Worker Action in Durban, 1940–1960' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, 1983).
7. B. Hirson, 'A Trade Union Organizer in Durban: M. B. Yengwa, 1943-44', paper presented to the Institute of Commonwealth Studies seminar, University of London, 20 January 1989.
8. I. Edwards, 'Swing the Assegai Peacefully? "New Africa", Mkhumbane, the Co-operative Movement and Attempts to Transform Durban Society in the Late 1940s', in P. Bonner (ed.), *Holding Their Ground* (Johannesburg, 1989); 'Nurturing the Soil to Protect you from Politics: The African Proletariat in Durban in the Early 1950s', paper presented to the South Africa in the 1950s conference, Oxford University, 25–6 September 1987; and 'Mkhumbane Our Home: A History of African Shantytown Society in Cato Manor farm, 1946–60' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, 1989).
9. La Hausse, 'Struggle for the City', pp. 163–4; P. Maylam, 'The "Black Belt" African Squatters in Durban 1935–1950', *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 17 (3) (1983), pp. 413–14; R. H. Smith, 'The Labour Resources of Natal, a Study of Population and Employment' (unpublished M.Comm thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1945), p. 331; University of Natal, Department of Economics, *The Durban Housing Survey: A Study of Housing in a Multi-racial Community* (Pietermaritzburg, 1952), p. 384.
10. Smith, 'Labour Resources', pp. 307.
11. Rooms for domestic workers.
12. C. Simkins, 'African Urbanisation at the Time of the Last Smuts Government', paper presented to the Economic History conference, University of Cape Town, 1982. This ratio compared with 2,49:1 in Cape Town, 1,00:1 in East London and 2,93:1 in Johannesburg.
13. D. Hindson, *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat* (Johannesburg, 1987), p. 6.
14. P. Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912–1952* (London, 1970), p. 307.
15. *Population Census 1936*, 'occupation' tables. This included 1 457 people 'out of work'.
16. Conflicting estimates complicate occupational breakdowns. The occupation tables of the population census tended to lump 'labourers' under 'industry', giving inflated totals for manufacturing employment. The rough totals in the text are condensed from the *Population Census 1936*, the *Census of Industrial Establishments* UG 24– 1938, and the 1936/37 estimates of the Durban Native Administration Department (NAD) in the Natal Archives (NA) 3/DBN 4/1/3/1692, 467, 3 and NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1206, 643J/NH, 6.
17. The double colour bar is hinted at in J. R. Burrows, *The Population and Labour Resources of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, 1959), p. 185; D. J. L. McWhirter *Industry in Greater Durban, Part II: Raw Materials as a Factor in Industrial Location* (Pietermaritzburg, Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, 1959), p. 7; Smith, 'Labour Resources', pp. 72–3, 453–5. For details of the emerging Indian proletariat 1910–30 see J. Kelly, 'Durban's Industrialisation, Unskilled Labour Supplies and Proletarianisation', paper presented to Critical Perspectives on South Africa seminar, University of Natal, Durban, 5 June 1987, pp. 3–9; Padayachee, *Indian Workers*, pp. 26–40.
18. This aspect requires further research. See for example Natal Archives (NA) 3/DBN 4/1/3/325, 47SJ, 2. S. H. Payne to mayor, 21 May 1948.
19. Department of Labour Report 1940, UG 45 (1941): 34–35; Smith, 'Labour Resources', pp. 453–5.
20. See for example *Natal Mercury*, 11 July 1935.
21. Smith, 'Labour Resources', p. 343.
22. Ibid., pp. 341–49.
23. M. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part I: Its Growth and Structure* (Pietermaritzburg, Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, 1961), p. 131.
24. J. Lewis, *Industrialisation and Trade Union Organisation in South Africa, 1924–55* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 47–52; E. Webster, *Cast in a Racial Mould: Labour Process and Trade Unionism in the Foundries* (Johannesburg, 1985), pp. 12–14, 85–6.
25. University of Natal, Department of Economics, *The African Factory Worker* (Cape Town, 1950); Edwards, 'Nurturing the Soil', p. 14; personal communication, Ari Sitas.
26. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part I*, p. 128; McWhirter, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part II*, p. 7.
27. Burrows, *Population and Labour* (Pietermaritzburg, Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, 1959), p. 167.
28. Ibid., pp. 179, 183.
29. T. J. D. Fair, 'Secondary Industry in Natal', *Commerce and Industry* 11 (1952), p. 148; C. G. Hands, *Industrial Survey 1968: A Survey of Manufacturing Industry in Durban* (Durban, City Engineer's Department, 1969), p. 4; Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part I*, pp. 57–66, 71, 163, 175, 177; McWhirter, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part II*, p. 11.
30. University of Natal, *African Factory Worker*, pp. 4–5, 71.
31. Broome Commission, 1947: evidence of Department of Economics, University of Natal.
32. Edwards, 'Nurturing the Soil', p. 14.
33. Ibid., p. 16; Smith, 'Labour Resources', p. 417.
34. Further micro-studies are needed of rural change. For increasing official concern about landlessness in the Reserves during the mid-1930s see NA CNC 108, 94/9, N 1/15/5 Native Commissioners' conference, 18–19 November 1936. Burrows estimated that there was an absolute efflux of 40 525 Africans from white farms in Natal, 1936–51, *Population and Labour*, p. 82.
35. Among other things, Durban wage rates were far higher than those for country work. In Natal during the 1940s, unskilled African industrial wages were six to ten times greater than farm wages. Smith, 'Labour Resources', p. 288.

36. Simkins, 'African Urbanisation', p.10. In central city hostel areas the ratio remained as high as 4.4:1 in 1951, while in areas such as Cato Manor it was as low as 1.4:1. See L. Kuper, H. Watts, and R. Davies, *Durban: a Study in Racial Ecology* (London, 1958), p.118.
37. University of Natal, *Durban Housing Survey*, p.303; G. Maasdorp and A.S.B. Humphreys, *From Shantytown to Township: An Economic Study of African Poverty in a South African City* (Cape Town, 1975), p.15.
38. Central Archives Depot (CAD) NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Meeting, Native Commissioner's office, 11/3/42.
39. For example, CAD K18, 36, NK3, 46: paras.3611–32.
40. Broome Commission, evidence, A.H. Zulu, 18 November 1947.
41. For details and quotations in this paragraph see NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1552, 315E, 3: Native labour officer to Foreman of works, 17/1/46; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1502, 290P, 1: Broome Commission Report, 31/1/48: 20–24; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1694, 467, 6: I Allan to Town Clerk, 22 August 1949.
42. Maylam, 'Black Belt', pp.413–28.
43. Edwards, 'Swing the Assegai', pp.27–8; H.S. Alverson, 'Africans in South African Industry: The Human Dimension', in Morse, S.J. and Orpen, C. (eds), *Contemporary South Africa: Social Psychological Perspectives* (Cape Town, 1975).
44. Ringrose, 'Trade Unions', pp.58–63.
45. NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1550, 315E, 1: A.W.G. Champion to Town Clerk, 16/5/35; Conference on Native Wages, 3/9/37.
46. See Department of Labour Reports, 1935–1940.
47. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', pp.294–300; Ringrose, 'Trade Unions', pp.64–5; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1550, 315E, 1: Report of NAD manager, 19/7/37, and Minutes, conference on Native Wages, 3/9/37; CAD NTS 2208, 359/280.
48. Dock-workers were also prominent in contemporary strikes in other African ports. See R. Sandbrook and R. Cohen (eds) *The Development of an African Working Class: Studies in Class Formation and Action* (London, 1975) and F. Cooper, *On the African Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa* (New Haven, 1987).
49. Oral research is necessary. For a useful comparative study see T.D. Moodie, 'The Moral Economy of the Black Miners' Strike of 1946', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13 (1) (1986), pp.1–35 for the hostel networks operating during the 1946 Rand mine strike.
50. The fullest account of the strike can be found in Padayachee, *Indian Workers*, pp.89–107.
51. See correspondence in CAD NTS 2208, 359/280.
52. CAD NTS 2206, 353/280, 1: NC, Durban to CNC, 19 August 1937.
53. These included Native Advisory Board politics, co-operative trading schemes, the Hertzog bills and the first elections to the Natives Representative Council, and the building of differing ideological versions of the 'Zulu nation'.
54. CAD NTS 7670, 86/332/3: South African Police (SAP), Durban to D. Commissioner, 11 August 1937.
55. Details of this meeting, and surrounding activities are drawn from the following: NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1697, 467C, 3: Champion to Town Clerk, 30/7/37; CAD NTS 7670, 86/332/3: SAP Durban to D. Commissioner, Natal SAP, 11/8/37; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1550, 315E, 1: A.P. Sibankulu to Town Clerk, 10/8/37 and 19/8/37, and Minutes of NC's interview with deputation of native employees, 23 August 1937.

56. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', p.303.
57. CAD NTS 7670, 86/332/3: SAP, Durban to D. Commissioner, 8 September 1937; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1550, 315E, 1: Minutes of NC's interview with deputation of native employees, 23 August 1937.
58. CAD NTS 7670, 85/332/3: SAP Durban to D. Commissioner, 12 October 1937; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1556–7, 315H, 2–3: W. Johnson to executive committee, BSC, 10 December 1937, 4 January 1938, and 12 April 1939.
59. NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1550, 315E, 1: Conference on Native Wages, 3/9/37.
60. City council minutes, 21 December 1937; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1550, 315E, 1: Conference on Native Wages, 3/9/37; CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Report of investigation into togt labour strikes, Durban, 7 October 1942.
61. Smith, 'Labour Resources', pp.557, 610.
62. Department of Labour Report, UG 45: 37.
63. An important exception was the strike of 750 timber workers at the docks in 1939. See CAD NTS 7676, 113/332, 1.
64. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part I*, p.155.
65. *Natal Daily News*, 18 April 1940 and 1 May 1940; *Natal Mercury*, 24 May 1940.
66. See for example, *Natal Mercury*, 21 August 1942, p.7.
67. Ringrose, 'Trade Unions', p.77.
68. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Report of investigation into togt labour strikes, Durban, 7 October 1942.
69. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', pp.326–35.
70. CAD Industrial Legislation Commission K18, 34, NK3, 37: paras.2961-2.
71. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: I Walker to SNA, 21 August 1942.
72. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Minutes, NC's office, Durban, 11 March 1942.
73. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Memo by J. Nabamvu [a Durban Native Affairs spy], 2 February 1942.
74. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Report of investigation into togt labour strikes, Durban, 7 October 1942, pp.10, 23, 29–30.
75. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Notes of meeting, Bell Street barracks, 29 July 1942.
76. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: H. Lugg to D. Smit, 20 August 1941, and Report of investigation into togt labour strikes, Durban, 7 October 1942.
77. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', p.332.
78. Edwards, 'Recollections: The Communist Party and Worker Militancy in Durban, early 1940s', *South African Labour Bulletin* 11 (4) (1986), pp.73–4.
79. *The Guardian*, 27 August 1942.
80. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', pp.333–35; CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Report of investigation into togt labour strikes, Durban, 7 October 1942.
81. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: NC, Durban to CNC, 21 October 1942, and Report of investigation into togt labour strikes, Durban, 7 October 1942.
82. CAD NTS 2222, 416/280, 1: Minutes of meeting with stevedoring togt labourers, 20 November 1942.
83. For details see Padayachee, *Indian Workers*, pp.107–15.
84. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', p.336.
85. A. Sitas, 'Accommodation and Resistance: Industrial Discipline, Mass Production and Conflict in a Rubber Manufacturing Plant', unpublished paper, University of Natal, 1986, p.9.
86. CAD NTS 7681, 167/332, 1 NC, Durban to CNC, 31 December 1942.

87. Padayachee, *Indian Workers*, pp. 112–13.
88. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', p. 337.
89. During 1944, there were African strikes in the chemical, brick and tile, and whaling industries. See Ringrose, 'Trade Unions', p. 79. In 1945, African workers joined with Indian workers in a lengthy laundry strike, the last major instance of joint inter-racial action during the 1940s. See Padayachee, *Indian Workers*, pp. 122–29. Between 1946 and 1948 there were small strikes of African workers at Addington hospital, the Jacobs sewerage works, the Clairwood and Umgeni quarries, and on three occasions in the dairy industry. See CAD NTS 7689, 315/332; NTS 7687, 308/332; NTS 7686, 250/332; NTS 7686, 249/332; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1553, 315E, 4.
90. The post-1943 conditions are explored further in the Conclusion. The 1949 strike occurred as part of the 1949 riots – a subject for a separate study. The 1951–2 strikes are beyond the scope of this essay; for a brief account see Tichmann, 'African Worker Action', pp. 81–2.
91. Padayachee, *Indian Workers*, pp. 89–107; correspondence of SARHWU officials in NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1696, 467C, 2.
92. Department of Labour Reports 1935–1940; Hindson, *Pass Controls*, pp. 46–8.
93. Department of Labour Reports, 1935–1940.
94. NA CNC Box 93, 64/38, N1/14/3: Secretary for Labour to Secretary for Native Affairs, 9 May 1939.
95. J. Lewis, *Trade Union Organisation*, p. 4.
96. Natal IEA, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Annual Reports, 1944–1947.
97. This is a general impression gained from archival correspondence.
98. Ringrose, 'Trade Unions', p. 156; CAD K18, 105, NK30, file 59.
99. CAD NTS 7670, 86/332/3: D. Commissioner, SAP, Pietermaritzburg to Commissioner, Pretoria, 14 November 1942, and NC, Durban to CNC, 15 March 1943; *Race Relations News* 5 (7) (July 1943): 7.
100. This list is drawn from scattered correspondence in NA 3/DBN files.
101. Ringrose, 'Trade Unions', p. 105.
102. *Inkundla*, 2nd fortnight, May 1946.
103. Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope* (Madison, 1964), pp. 332–3; Edwards, 'Swing the Assegai', p. 19; NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1700, 467C, 6: G. E. S. Mhlauli and J. Nyaose to Town Clerk, 17 October 1945, and P. Tsele to Town Clerk, 2 February 1946, *Inkundla*, 1st fortnight, January 1946; *Ilanga*, 16 March 1946; CAD K18, 34, NK3, file 37: evidence, Durban, 21 April 1949, para. 2943.
104. CAD K18, 35, NK3, 40: paras. 3091–122, and K18, 36, NK3, 46: paras. 3611–32, and K18, 104, NK 30, 12.
105. CAD K18, 35, NK3, 40: paras. 3091–122; correspondence in NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1699–1703, 467C, 5–9; *Ilanga*, 6 April 1946.
106. For example, NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1696, 467C, 2: de Bruin to Town Clerk, 15 September 1936.
107. NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1700, 467C, 6: Tsele to Town Clerk, 2 October 1945.
108. Smith, 'Labour Resources', pp. 507–10.
109. CAD NTS 7670, 86/332/3: NC, Durban to CNC, 15 March 1943 and Acting CNC to SNA, 14 June 1943; Padayachee, *Indian Workers*, pp. 52–5.
110. Ringrose, 'Trade Unions', p. 182. The membership totals were for Natal, but by far the majority would have been Durban residents.
111. Hirson, 'Trade Union Organiser', pp. 9, 14–15.
112. This is an impression gained from his correspondence in the NA 3/DBN files on behalf of municipal workers.

113. Hirson, 'Trade Union Organiser', p. 10.
114. *Ilanga* 14 November 1942, cited in Pickover, 'Black Trade Unions', p. 34.
115. Cited in Hirson, 'Trade Union Organiser', p. 5.
116. CAD K18, 34, NK3, 39: paras. 3032–54; CAD K18, 105, NK30, file 73; University of the Witwatersrand, TUCSA papers, AH 646, Dc 18: G. Ponen to Secretary, SATLC, 8 August 1949.
117. CAD K18, 105, NK30, 65(a) and (b).
118. NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1699, 467C, 5: H. S. Sishi to Mayor, 23 November 1943.
119. Ringrose, 'Trade Unions', p. 105.
120. *Ilanga* 13 April 1946 and 22 June 1946.
121. NA 3/DBN 4/1/3/1698, 467C, 4: Chief Constable to Town Clerk, 30 June 1942.
122. CAD K18, 36, NK3, 46: paras. 3611–32.
123. CAD K18, 34, NK3, 39: paras. 3032–54.
124. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness', pp. 336–39.
125. Govt notice no. 2403, 7/12/45, determination no. 130.
126. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part I*, p. 25.
127. Edwards, 'Nurturing the Soil', p. 2.
128. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part I*, p. 25.
129. CAD NTS 7670, 86/332/3: NC, Durban, to CNC, 15 March 1943.

Amahashi

Durban's Ricksha Pullers

ROS POSEL

When, in June 1892, the Natal sugar magnate, Marshall Campbell, negotiated the purchase of ten rickshas[1] from London, he could scarcely have anticipated that this mode of transport would become so inextricably part of Durban's social history for almost a century.

The rickshas were immediately hired out to Africans,[2] initially on a daily basis at charges of between 2s. and 3s.[3] From the outset it seemed that the ricksha might become a highly visible feature of Durban's transport system, being well suited to the needs of the growing, bustling port. The vehicles were well patronised, their convenience being quickly appreciated.[4] The enormous popularity of rickshas was reflected in the massive growth in the number of these vehicles on Durban's roads, despite competition from horse drawn trams and cabs.[5] In part, that growth must be seen in the context of the improvement of the port's harbour facilities and the emergence of Durban as the premier commercial link with the interior.[6] In 1899 it was estimated that approximately 3 400 persons each spent an average of 9d. daily on ricksha travel.[7] During that year, some 11 445 men registered as pullers and about 740 rickshas were in daily use. By 1900 the average monthly registration of pullers was 1 446 and the number of licensed rickshas reached 1 521.[8] In 1902, which appears to have been a 'boom' year, an astonishing 2 170 rickshas thronged the streets and in all 24 020 men registered as pullers.[9]

The ubiquitous ricksha became a familiar part of the landscape on Durban's streets. Until 1930, the monthly registration of ricksha-men fluctuated between 750 and 1 999; the number of rickshas varied between 907 and 1 931. There was something of a decrease over the next two decades, with the yearly average of vehicles standing at 835, while the average monthly registration of pullers seems to have hovered around 700.[10] During the 1960s numbers declined steadily until, by 1970, there were 186 vehicles and 166 pullers on the streets. By the early 1990s, a mere handful of pullers and their rickshas could be found congregated in a single rank along the beach front, remnants of that once vital mode of transport.

Ricksha pulling was a unique operation. The pullers occupied an anomalous

position within Durban's labour market, not being employed by either the ricksha owners or the corporation.[11] Undoubtedly one of the main reasons for the popularity of pulling was that the puller became a 'freelance' operator after obtaining his puller's licence. Moreover, pulling offered certain advantages over other forms of labour in Durban. In particular it afforded greater opportunities for earning money through individual effort. It seems that during some periods, at least, Africans found pulling a remunerative occupation.[12] But it must also be stressed that the nature of pulling made it hazardous work.[13] Indeed, the turnover of ricksha-men was high. In his evidence to the South African Native Affairs Commission, R.C. Alexander, Superintendent of Police, claimed that most pullers worked only two to three months, either because of ill-health (and specifically pneumonia) brought on by the arduous nature of pulling, or simply because they tired of the novelty of the occupation.[14]

Their marginal position within Durban's class structure, (insofar as they may arguably be located between the petty bourgeoisie and proletariat) rendered them vulnerable to exploitation by ricksha owners intent on maximising profits, and subject to controls imposed by the corporation. The scale of the ricksha operation pointed to the profitability of the ricksha-owning business. Durban Rickshas Ltd and Patent Rickshas Ltd were the two largest companies. The former was registered in 1910 with a nominal capital of £5 000; by 1914 the company's assets stood at £20 000.[15] A.O. Ball, the last manager of Patent Rickshas Ltd from 1946 to 1966 (when it was sold), reports that his father, John Ball, always maintained that in their heyday, the rickshas 'educated his children'.[16]

Until the implementation of the Group Areas Act in Durban, owners were obliged to provide 'adequate' and 'suitable' accommodation for both the puller and his hired vehicle.[17] That accommodation did little to promote a healthy existence. Initially pullers were housed in premises near private dwellings, often in ricksha sheds.[18] While there are reports of some premises providing 'fairly good', clean accommodation,[19] regular inspections revealed that there were sheds that seemed more like hovels, not even affording protection from the cold and wet.[20] By 1910, there were between 700 and 800 pullers housed in the Williams Road area, and 140 living in Umgeni Road.[21] Buildings were usually constructed of brick, with paved and boarded floors; the yards were paved and drained. Sewage disposal was provided for by sanitary pails. The standard of African accommodation was set by the relevant provisions of the Slums Act rather than those of the building by-laws. In other words, the minimum standards which would preclude premises being condemned as a slum were in fact adopted, as the resident Medical Officer of Health pointed out at the time.[22] While the council might have appeared to insist on maintaining a resonable standard in its own premises, its commitment to better accommodation for Africans in general seems somewhat debatable. Thus, for example, in

1945 the District Commandant found the premises of Patent Rickshas Ltd (purchased from Durban Rickshas in 1942) in a deplorable state. The compound was filthy, the stench appalling. Hundreds of men slept side by side on cement floors, some even in the bathrooms.[23] Yet the council appears to have been satisfied when the Medical Officer of Health blamed pullers for the filth, explaining that they littered the floors with scraps after the evening meal. The company employed two cleaners who worked from 5 a.m. to 4 p.m., and in the face of the company manager's undertaking to engage additional watchmen to ensure that only those men employed by the company would sleep on those premises, the authorities let the issue lie.[24]

As long as the pullers hired vehicles from the companies, they were vulnerable to decisions in favour of increased hiring fees. When, for example, on 15 April 1918, the largest ricksha company, Durban Rickshas Ltd decided, in view of higher overheads, to raise its hiring fees from 10s. to 12s. weekly, it did not anticipate that the pullers would 'strike'.[25] Their earning capacity was threatened at a time of rising costs, given that basic ricksha fares remained unchanged at 3d. per half-mile and 6d. per mile for distances not otherwise specified.

The ricksha-men were successful on that occasion, due to the role they played in Durban's transport system. However, the motorisation of traffic had obvious repercussions on their earnings. Subsequent protests and 'strikes' in favour of reduced hiring costs during the next few decades foundered in the wake of the opposition of the ricksha companies.[26] For the corporation no longer had any incentive to support the pullers' demands and put pressure on the owners as had been the case in 1918.

Pullers' energies were not only directed against exploitation at the hands of owners; they were also engaged in a continuous struggle against controls deemed necessary for the smooth functioning of Durban's traffic. Once rickshas were introduced, an obvious priority was their integration into Durban's transport system. Between 1894 and 1907 a series of by-laws was passed setting the parameters within which the ricksha business operated, largely unchanged, until the 1960s.[27] Police records, during the first decade or so after the introduction of rickshas, testify to a struggle to teach pullers the rules of the road, a constant task given the often rapid turnover of ricksha-men and the high incidence of accidents involving rickshas.[28] Right from the start, the presence of the ubiquitous vehicles was perceived as an exacerbation of the confusion on Durban's main roads.

An added complication was the perception, especially during the first decade or so, of pullers as 'the most rowdy, threatening and drunken section of the town's African work force', and it was alleged that they committed many 'grave crimes', using their rickshas as a convenient cover for their supposedly nefarious activities.[29] Arguably, the corporation had three options. Firstly, it could simply act in an *ad hoc* way, exercising greater control over various aspects of the business when required; for example, by enforcing the by-law against touting with more rigour. Secondly, it could think along the lines of reducing the scale of ricksha travel by restricting the number of vehicles, or perhaps the hours and areas of operation. The third possibility was to put an end to pulling.

However, all decisions had to be made in relation to various factors. The different departments of the corporation were not always united; for example, the police did not always find a sympathetic ear in the office of the Town Clerk. Moreover, any attempt to resolve a particular problem, or set of problems, was circumscribed by existing by-laws. While some of these could be and were easily altered,[30] others were problematic because they clashed with vested interests including ricksha owners, the Durban public, and indeed the corporation itself. The success of the operation proved lucrative for the corporation, which reaped financial benefits from licensing fees without capital investment in the venture.[31] From the 1950s onwards, Durban's tourist trade became yet another factor to consider, for by that stage rickshas had become a popular tourist attraction. The corporation's actions can therefore be elucidated within the context and scale of that operation, given Durban's transport needs.

By 1909, apart from the appearance of pony rickshas, the traffic situation had been worsened by the increase in the number of motor cars and motor cycles. In 1919, the number of motor vehicles (excluding rickshas, bicycles and railway vehicles) exceeded 100; in the same year there were 2 900 horse drawn vehicles in Durban.[32] The slow and clumsy rickshas constituted a traffic hazard. The source of greatest irritation, however, was the tendency of pullers to roam the main streets in search of passengers.[33] The designation of variously sited ricksha stands, suitably extended or altered to cater for changing needs, and injunctions against touting, loitering and soliciting were measures specifically designed to counter that tendency.[34] But, given the pullers' interests in maximising their takings, in the face of fierce competition and in the context of a low fare structure, the result could hardly have been otherwise. While, on occasion, the corporation recognised that overtrading might exist,[35] it was insensitive to the low fares. In 1919 the municipal Native Affairs Department (NAD) received a delegation of some twenty-five pullers.[36] Their spokesperson Bhekapezulu explained that, rather than strike, they had decided to enlist the department's aid in raising the basic minimum tariff to 6d. J.S. Marwick, manager of the municipal NAD, advised against an increase, arguing that the earnings of pullers were 'in excess of those of any other Native in the Borough'.[37]

In 1912 the Secretary for Native Affairs proposed the abolition of pulling in response to requests for labour from the Natal Sugar Growers' Association; the corporation's response was unequivocal. It had no intention of even limiting numbers at that stage, as even that would affect its revenue adversely.[38] Pressure to limit the number of pullers built up again in 1917, in response to a labour

shortage, whereupon ricksha owners reacted by objecting on the grounds of 'restriction of trade'.[39] Marwick, who had initiated that proposal, was also the driving force behind another two abortive schemes aimed at limiting the number of pullers. The first of these, which involved monitoring the character of pullers by keeping records of their fingerprints, was abandoned as a direct consequence of the pullers' 'strike' of 1918.[40] Plans mooted in 1920 to restrict the number of pullers allowed to ply for hire at night were also shelved in the face of vociferous objections from owners.[41] Nevertheless in the same year, G.A. Morris, the new manager of the municipal NAD, again advocated the gradual abolition of rickshas as a means of public conveyance. While appreciating their convenience and cheapness,[42] he spoke of the danger of the vehicles to Durban's traffic, the demoralising effect on pullers of their contact with immoral 'Europeans', and the effects of pulling on the health of the men.[43] Once again, the ricksha owners protested at what they saw as an interference with vested interests and private rights.[44] Their legal representative also submitted a petition, signed by 10 318 members of the public, in support of pulling.[45]

By 1930 the traffic situation had reached something of a crisis, with some 9 431 motor vehicles and 10 282 horse drawn vehicles having been licensed.[46] Indeed, the Chief Constable was about to introduce traffic-lights to control Durban's traffic. He therefore argued that it was imperative to enforce restrictions on pullers in the heart of the town during the lunch hour and around 5 p.m.[47] At the same time, pullers were faced with competition from the other forms of public transport. Although the ricksha-men claimed that the trams were robbing them of fares, this was probably unfounded. For while statistics show that 120 electrified trams carried some 33 995 223 passengers that year, the tramways actually reported a deficit of £7 310 in the year 1929–30.[48] In any case, the convenience of the ricksha for short journeys, especially in the city centre, was part of its attraction. Pullers had also to compete with omnibuses (which were also responsible for the tram losses). First introduced in 1925 to cover routes other than train routes, there were 16 such vehicles in the fleet by 1930 and 591 415 passengers were carried that year. The fare for both trams and buses stood at 2d. per stage.[49] The growing popularity of taxis [50] and the large number of privately owned motor cars had also eroded the rickshas' white clientele.

In the face of these assaults on their daily earnings, still circumscribed by that original scale of fares, and with claims that they were earning a mere pittance,[51] the pullers formed themselves into a body and asked A.W.G. Champion to intercede on their behalf with the local authorities.[52] Some four months later, their grievances unredressed, the pullers came out on 'strike'.[53] Although the 'strike' was apparently unsuccessful, culminating in a return to work after twelve days, the minimum charge for ricksha rides was subsequently raised to 6d.[54] The corporation refused to budge, however, on the question of easing

restrictions placed on pulling in the centre of the town. Touting and soliciting continued,[55] testifying to continuing competition within a rapidly diminishing market. Moreover, the nature of that market was altering. Rickshas were to become primarily the poor person's taxi. Concomitantly, some pullers abandoned the uneven contest to succeed as transport operators in favour of providing rides, especially along the beach front, thereby serving the growing tourist trade.

The struggles against control and exploitation continued. In 1941, A.J. Sililo wrote to the Town Clerk on behalf of the Combined Locations Native Advisory Boards, pointing out that whilst the boards were opposed in principle to the kind of work done by ricksha-men (that is, pulling), the services of those men were indispensable to Africans who, as the poorest members of the community, were unable to afford any other means of conveyance.[56] In particular, rickshas were used extensively by those who attended markets early in the morning. The Indian market opened at 4 a.m. and table holders arrived an hour thereafter to make preparations. Africans also relied on rickshas as a means of conveyance to and from trains. Under these circumstances, the decision by the General Purposes Committee to recommend a by-law to prohibit rickshas plying for hire between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m.[57] would cause hardship and inconvenience to 'many of the citizens of Durban'.[58] The curfew, originally imposed in 1906, was never obeyed by pullers because night pulling represented an important source of income. The corporation was unable to enforce that prohibition in the face of determined resistance.[59] Indeed, as the city council's legal adviser noted, there appeared to be at least five different regulations pertaining to night pulling, and it was not clear which of these guided official action.[60]

On one occasion, the pullers found unexpected allies. When, in 1941, the city council adopted a motion prohibiting pullers from plying for hire between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.[61] a storm of protest came from ricksha owners who supported the role pullers played at the docks, arguing that rickshas ought to be permitted to ply up to midnight to ensure that visiting troops returned to their ships by that hour.[62] However, during the blackouts instituted at about that time, rickshas were involved in numerous accidents.[63] There were also complaints from Citizens' Associations in Wards 1 and 2 that pullers were using the cover of the blackouts to act as touts for shebeen proprietors.[64] Thus, the by-law was amended, disallowing rickshas from being abroad between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. during blackouts.[65] The ricksha owners were furious; not only had they not been given the opportunity to express their views, but the measures would, it was felt, seriously affect their business interests. Their legal representatives wrote:

> Our clients comprise a considerable number of burgesses of this city contributing through the businesses in question a large sum of money to municipal rates and services, and they respectfully submit that they have not received at the hands of the Council the protection and consideration which they feel they are reasonably entitled to expect.[66]

But the council stood firm. For at this stage it was convinced that there was a surplus of vehicles plying for hire (in fact there were less than 800 at the time). Given also the ever-present traffic consideration it was deemed timeous to restrict the number of vehicles to 500 by 1 January 1942. Thereafter the number ought to be reduced by 100 per annum for the following three years, and then the issue reassessed in January 1945 (when there would be some 200 rickshas on Durban's streets). That re-evaluation would then take into account both the transport developments and the service performed by ricksha travel to certain sections of the community. (But, as an earlier meeting of the Native Administration Committee had indicated, the intention was that rickshas be eliminated from the city limits after seven years.) In the interests of equity, the proposal was that gradual elimination be distributed pro rata amongst various owners.[67]

A flood of protest was unleashed. It was pointed out that the chief licensing officer could not refuse to issue licences if rickshas complied with the conditions stipulated by the relevant by-law.[68] Ricksha owners reminded the authorities of the capital invested in the business. Moreover, the owners felt that such steps would be detrimental both to those sections of the public for whom rickshas had become the poor person's taxi, and to the pullers themselves, most of whom, it was now claimed, made 'a fairly decent living' (thereby, of course, ignoring the pullers' recent protests at the increased hiring fees). And the pullers themselves argued that the demand for rickshas justified the number of vehicles on the streets.[69]

A vigorous debate was also conducted in the press. The correspondence made it clear that many whites, especially the elderly and the poor, also still relied on rickshas. They not only provided a cheap mode of transport, but served routes not covered by the bus service which was criticised as having been 'founded in the purest ignorance of Durban's traffic requirements'.[70]

While the weight of these protests could scarcely be ignored, the report of the city council's legal adviser probably proved decisive. For, apart from the eventual task of having to fit some 960 ex-pullers into other employment, the corporation would also have to consider 'the payment of compensation to vested interests'. The ricksha business was then valued at about £40 000 without compensation. Furthermore, it was dubious whether the city council had the *legal* right to eliminate rickshas. For although it might be argued that the council had the power to restrict the number of rickshas, it certainly could not prohibit rickshas as a means of public transport.[71] The question was referred to the city solicitors for consideration. It has not been possible to trace their reply, but the matter was dropped.[72]

A further opportunity to limit ricksha numbers occurred in 1943 with the redrafting of the by-laws.[73] A clause specified that the licensing officer could refuse to issue a new licence on the grounds that the reasonable needs of the town were sufficiently met by already licensed vehicles. This somewhat weak

compromise testifies to the weight of vested interests; in that year 841 were registered, despite the new by-laws, representing an increase of 96 over figures for 1942. The growth continued. In 1944 there were 869 rickshas and by September 1945, 879 vehicles had already been registered.[74] The trend was attributed to the number of convoys passing through Durban, to the shortage of motor vehicles in the war years, and to the general increase in population.[75] The post-war period, however, saw a reversal of that trend.

By the early 1950s, there were two distinct types of ricksha: the so-called 'decorative' or 'tourist' pullers, mainly Zulu from the Nongoma district, and the 'passenger' or 'goods-carrying' vehicles, the preserve of Mpondo who had begun pulling such rickshas during the previous decade.[76] Given the almost exclusive patronage of ordinary rickshas by Africans around the market area, and the high profile enjoyed by the beach pullers, it was not surprising that by 1958 the city council could report that rickshas no longer used the central streets and were not considered to be traffic nuisances.[77] A further incentive to formalise that situation came in 1961 with the installation of a master controller for Durban's traffic-lights and the consequent need for traffic to move at a regular speed. The Traffic Advisory Board in 1961 thus proposed the prohibition of rickshas from the central areas.[78] Appropriate legislation was effected in 1963, although the restriction of rickshas from that area was confined to the hours between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m. on any day[79] (thereby demonstrating that the curfew issue was still unresolved). Three years later the area from which rickshas were excluded was extended, as were the hours. In effect, the vehicles were additionally prohibited from an area bounded roughly by Aliwal Street, the Victoria Embankment, Russell Street, Pine Street and Soldier's Way between 4.30 p.m. and 5.30 a.m. except on public holidays.[80]

In 1968 the forbidden area was more carefully defined, and the prohibition extended to include the hour from 7.30 a.m. to 8.30 a.m.[81] By that stage it was obvious that rickshas could 'scarcely be considered as a competitive form of modern transport'[82] nor could the business be regarded as a sound proposition.[83] Indeed the number of rickshas now stood at 260.[84] The decline had also been hastened by the Group Areas Act, in terms of which pullers could not be housed in compounds in the city after December 1963. Under the act the Director of Bantu Administration closed private compounds: henceforth pullers would be accommodated in hostels in KwaMashu,[85] and their basic overheads would now include the payment of R2 monthly for accommodation in a hostel, and R2.50 for a monthly train ticket. Even though the companies would no longer provide free accommodation, they refused to lower the hiring fee.[86] While there were still reports of rickshas in use around the market area during the following decade, the focus henceforth fell on the lively 'tourist' pullers.

Shortly after the introduction of rickshas, Alexander had proposed that pullers should wear a distinctive uniform to facilitate their recognition by the police, especially at night or during the early hours of the morning.[87] The basis

of that uniform was the ordinary kitchen-suit made of unbleached calico and trimmed with a single band of red braid. Pullers tended however to add several other rows of braid, sometimes allowing the ends to hang down at each side. The general preference was to be barefooted, but ricksha-men often painted their legs with whitewash in fancy patterns, and wore bangles of plaited reeds with boxes of seeds around their ankles, thereby producing a distinctive rattling sound as the vehicle was hauled.[88] Initially the head-dresses were fairly simple, usually consisting of the horns of an ox through which the strength of that animal was believed to be imparted to the puller.[89] Gradually, the regalia became more elaborate with the addition of feathers and typical Zulu beadwork (the most outstanding feature being the colourfully crafted head-dresses),[90] as pullers competed for the lucrative tourist trade. By the 1930s, the central Gardiner Street rank was a favourite haunt of tourists who delighted in a token ride captured in the inevitable photograph.[91] In 1936, a local correspondent reported that the puller Mkontowenkosi, whose aristocratic manner made him a popular favourite of photographers, wore a waistband 'laid with 30 inches of close-packed florins'.[92]

The Durban Publicity Association (DPA), founded in 1922 for the express purpose of advertising Durban as an attractive holiday resort,[93] adopted the ricksha puller as its logo in 1930. In the same year a 'talkie' publicising the city featured the pullers.[94] The fame of Durban's ricksha-men spread considerably. At the end of 1933, a request was received from Melbourne, Australia for thirty vehicles and pullers to visit the city for six months in order to participate in Victoria's centenary celebrations. (The visit did not eventuate – presumably the 'certain obstacles' mentioned in the correspondence were not overcome.)[95]

Having adopted rickshas as Durban's distinctive advertising motif, the DPA became a vociferous opponent of moves to limit the number of pullers in 1941. The director of the association chose to express the point as follows: 'As with the monkeys to be seen along Burman Drive and at other places, so the rickshas of Durban are attractions to be found in no other city of the Union.'[96] The 1950s proved to be a lucrative period for the 'decorative' pullers, by now mostly concentrated in the beach front areas. Estimates of their earnings were given as £4–£9 weekly. Their income was supplemented through their participation in the annual parade, organised by the DPA from the early 1950s. This ran from Albert Park to the beach front and culminated in a *concours d'élégance* featuring the presentation of cash awards to the best-dressed pullers (five- and four-guinea prizes), the most photogenic puller (three guineas) and so on. Each puller who participated was paid 7s. 6d. and given a medal.[97] The annual event was intended to ensure the high standard of puller's regalia which became even more colourful and elaborate, especially the head-dresses, some of which weighed up to 60 lb.[98] Additional bonuses were provided for guest appearances at other venues, most noticeably in Cape Town during the Van Riebeeck Festival Fair in 1952.[99]

Pat Sullivan, the director of the DPA, in a typical, but crass, promotion handout written in the early 1960s(?)[100] claimed that the ricksha pullers had a major curiosity value for overseas tourists. Indeed, even the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* referred to 'ricksha boys' as Durban's tourist attraction to the outside world. They were, said Sullivan patronisingly, part of Zulu tradition, (thereby displaying breathtaking ignorance). Moreover they were integral to the city's 'holiday atmosphere', part of the 'merry-go-round', the 'circus element', inseparable from any popular holiday beach front. As to whether pullers might be regarded as 'symbols of oppression', examples of South Africa's 'inhumanity to man', Sullivan admitted that 'a public relations consultant, a leading personality in the theatrical world and a business man' had all expressed the opinion that they could well be so regarded, and hence might constitute bad publicity both for Durban and South Africa. That sop to possible criticism was then brushed aside in his conclusion that, above all, the pullers needed to be presented as a spectacle.

The strain of fulfilling this role began to tell on the pullers. With some fifty rickshas competing for the tourist trade, reports of touting and overcharging prompted the Department of Tourism to admonish the DPA and request that incidents such as the intimidation of an Australian tourist must not be allowed to recur. These, it was argued, had an adverse effect on the popularity and prestige of Durban.[101] One obvious way to try to prevent overcharging was to ensure the prominent display of tariff fares on the footboard of the vehicle.[102] But this simply precipitated demands for an increased tariff. Pullers demanded 40c per mile; V.L. Hickman, the last remaining ricksha owner, readily lent his support.[103] The press argued in favour of a reliance on the workings of the market rather than on a fixed fare.[104] In the event, the increase would have to wait a few more years.

By 1968, the bad press ricksha pullers had earned through alleged overcharging and intimidation prompted Sullivan to propose the formal takeover of the operation by a 'responsible body' such as the DPA. Sullivan thought along the lines of a group of twelve pullers who would be paid between R15 and R20 monthly. He estimated that the maintenance of the rickshas, plus promotional costs, would run to approximately R15 000 per annum. Clearly the operation might not be an economic proposition, even though a considerable recovery in the form of revenue from rides and photographic fees could be expected. Legal opinion was therefore sought as to whether the DPA was competent to effect a takeover.[105] But, given the fact that Hickman took exception to Sullivan's reference to 'a responsible body',[106] the takeover only occurred in 1981. (In fact, the DPA waited some seven years after the last ricksha owner threw in the towel before it made its efforts to resuscitate a dying industry.)

As the 1960s drew to a close, Durban's 'tourist image' had become seriously tarnished. For, not unexpectedly, the intense competition amongst some forty

pullers for the privilege of charging passengers 10c for a ride not only invited overcharging, but also resulted in desperate men adopting what were perceived as threatening, arrogant attitudes. Moreover the temptation to tout was held to make them a traffic hazard especially in the busy sections of the Marine Parade. Mutterings were heard as far afield as London, where the daughter of the Chairman of the Snell Parade Ratepayers' Association overheard a conversation in which tourists complained about Durban's pullers.[107] Indeed the Chairman of the Beach Committee predicted that unless ricksha pullers operated under proper supervision, there would be none left in Durban after 1970.[108]

In what amounted to an implicit recognition of their diminishing value as a tourist attraction, the rickshas were relocated in a single rank accommodating twenty vehicles in Erskine Terrace, between Rutherford and Bell Streets, in 1971.[109] At the same time it was suggested that the remaining seventy-five rickshas, which were situated in Sydney Road, Stanger Street, and Lancers Road, also be abolished.[110] Nevertheless this was obviously not implemented for, as the records show, there were still some ninety vehicles registered in 1971.

Although the fares were set at 20c per half-mile (and later per 0,8 km or part thereof) in 1969 and 1970 respectively,[111] the pullers' earnings plummeted. Reports of overcharging continued as the growing shabbiness of the pullers in their often dilapidated vehicles deterred tourists.[112] Furthermore, the short-sightedness of the city council in locating the rank about six hundred metres from toilets forced pullers to use stormwater drains, thereby further alienating many prospective fares.[113]

By March 1973, Hickman was forced to close his business, and he gave notice to the forty-nine pullers, some of whom had pulled for fifty years.[114] But Durban's rickshas did not disappear from the beachfront, for Hickman's business was bought by Van Weers, owner of a waste-paper company. Van Weers' intention was that the pullers would give rides along the beachfront during the holiday season, and that out of season they would collect wastepaper and help to keep the city clean.[115] It was a sad comment on their status.

After thirteen months, Van Weers was ready to concede defeat, despite trying to promote renewed interest in rickshas by reintroducing the parade in December 1973, with a first prize of R50.[116] The restriction of the vehicles to a small, out-of-the-way area, and the high maintenance costs ruled out any possibility that the business could become viable.[117] He was, moreover, angry that although some three years had elapsed since the creation of the new rank, toilet facilities had still not been provided by the corporation.[118] Some months later, he simply handed over the sixty rickshas to the pullers leaving them with the headache of where to store the vehicles, and the problem of maintenance.[119] It was under such circumstances that the pullers finally became owners. Probably it was because there were some councillors who still regarded

rickshas an integral part of Durban's landscape that pulling went on as usual.[120]

Complaints by ricksha-men, that they were earning insufficient to cover their basic overheads, resulted in the basic fare being increased to 30c per passenger, per kilometre.[121] In 1975 there were only 29 rickshas left; by 1977 the figure stood at 16. Earnings appear to have fluctuated; Ntulabakubo Masango, a veteran puller, claimed that on some days pullers might take up to R6, while on other days they earned nothing at all.[122] The *Financial Mail* reported that in a good month pullers might earn around R100.[123] Once more the DPA proposed taking the rickshas under its wing.[124] Terry Toohey spoke about giving the pullers back their 'rightful role as the symbol and embodiment of Durban's many and varied tourist attractions'.[125] He suggested that pullers be permitted to operate over an extended area, namely along the Upper Marine Parade from Addington Hospital to the Snake Park between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and that additional ranks for a further 20 rickshas be created along that route. The provision of shelter and toilet facilities was a further requirement. Moreover, the DPA called for the basic fare to be raised, and for the consideration of the possibility of a grant from the city council to assist in the regular maintenance of the vehicles. Other areas which required investigation were medical aid and pension facilities. While these proposals remained on the drawing board, Toohey was successful in arranging sponsorship of the pullers.[126] For three years, all pullers were sponsored to the tune of R20–R30 per month.[127] The first sponsor was the Edward Hotel; the ricksha in question belonged to Richard Sibiya, previously winner of the *concours d'élégance* and a ricksha-man for some 16 years.[128] He may have served to revive the profile of the pullers when he visited Johannesburg and Israel on promotional tours in 1977.[129] Rickshas were also on display at the Royal Show in Pietermaritzburg.[130] But the journalist, Vusi Khumalo, claimed that the reality was different:

> They are colourful yes, they line their sweating black bodies with bright and shining ornaments as a way of camouflaging their miserable tatters, or a way of finding some mental solace for the physical depravity they suffer . . . as a way of getting the *missus* and that *baas* to take a ride on my carriage so that I can earn that 30 cents for my children back home.[131]

By 1980 most of the ten vehicles still in operation were in a very poor state of repair. Moreover, to add to their difficulties, pullers were informed that the property in Somtseu Road which had been used over the past five years to store their equipment was to be demolished.[132] It was now time for the DPA to intervene if the rickshas were to survive. Toohey's initial plan, which also involved the possible importation of rickshas from Singapore, was abandoned because of the high prices quoted.[133] Instead, the services of a local engineer

were engaged and four new vehicles were built at a cost of R900 each.[134] The DPA also motivated strongly for a tariff increase in order to avoid conflicts between pullers and the public, and in 1981 the fare was fixed at R1 per passenger, per kilometre (or part thereof).[135] And in arranging for pullers to become registered as their own employees, the DPA formally took the ricksha operation under its wing without, however, any substantial changes being made to the *modus operandi*. In 1985 there were some twelve pullers, of whom four hired the DPA's vehicles at a cost of R5 per month. All pullers paid the DPA R3.15 per month. The association's expenses included R50 monthly to the Belmont Parking Arcade where the vehicles were housed, and maintenance repairs to its own rickshas.

Six of the ricksha-men interviewed in 1985 had been pulling for more than thirty years.[136] Five were members of what Samson Sibiya regarded as the 'superior' Mandlakazi clan in the Nongoma district, a clan in which, by tradition, men became pullers. And indeed four of the Mandlakazi ricksha-men had followed their fathers into 'the business'; Shampiyose Nxumalo's grandfather began that tradition. Mngome Zulu, who did not come from such a family, chose to become a puller because of the social standing of the pullers, and their wealth. Estimates of their earnings differed, ranging from R4 to R30 daily, depending on the time of year. While there was money to be made in a season, the pullers stressed that they could no longer afford to buy cattle. A major headache for those who owned their vehicles were repair bills which were given as ranging from R10 to R405. Indeed, so precious were their rickshas that when the men went home to help with the ploughing, for example, no 'locums' were appointed for fear of possible damage.

It is not clear whether Durban still identifies with its erstwhile tourist symbol. It may well be significant that, although the marketing director of the Durban Expo '85 approached ricksha pullers and taxi drivers to act as advance publicity agents, rickshas were conspicuous by their absence during the course of that exhibition a year later.[137]

In October 1989, Jan Venter, then a member of Durban's Management Committee, argued that it was time for the rickshas to be phased out. (He was speaking after the Amenities Committee refused to spend about a quarter of a million rand on ablution and storage facilities for the pullers.) Venter claimed that the pullers were no longer tourist attractions and that there were many people who objected to the nature of the work.[138] In response, the DPA called for the Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) to become involved in a rescue operation, arguing that the pullers qualified as independent small business people.[139] In February 1990, a sub-committee of the city council (including representatives of the SBDC) reported that details were being worked out for controlling the ricksha operation: for example, the possibility of sponsorship and a new fee structure was mooted. Pullers responded by saying they would welcome such a move.[140]

The future of Durban's ricksha pullers remains in the balance. The history of Durban could not be written without reference to the ricksha-men and their role in the city's transport system and the promotion of its tourist image. But while the men became pullers mainly because it offered relative independence as 'freelance operators', that freedom must be seen within the context of the exploitation of black labour in general. Pulling was onerous work, its rewards attractive only in comparison to appallingly low wages elsewhere. Moreover, Durban, having reaped the benefit of the tourist symbol without passing on some of those rewards to the ricksha-men, has now cast itself in a different image. Despite claims that rickshas are still an important tourist attraction, the reality is different. Unless the basic fare is substantially raised, might it not be opportune for the city to reward those men with adequate pensions for their services to the community?

Table 4 Ricksha Statistics

The city licensing department claims that it no longer has the records of registered pullers or vehicles. This list, compiled from various sources, is incomplete. Nevertheleless it gives some idea of the growth and slow decline of the ricksha mode of transport.

Year	No. of Pullers Monthly Av.	No. of Rickshas	Year	No. of Pullers Monthly Av.	No. of Rickshas
1895	200		1944		889
1896	411		1945		870
1897	652	849	1946		855
1899	953		1947		895
1900	1446	1521	1948		870
1901	1701	1970	1949		745
1902	2001		1950		712
1903	1687		1951		745
1904	1999	1931	1955	700	596
1905	1428	1731	1956		580
1906	1131	1638	1957		558
1907	1313		1958		528
1908	1158		1959		444
1909	1192		1960		514
1910	1021		1961	482	564
1911	902		1962	477	477
1912	897		1963	438	475
1913	919	1019	1964	399	407
1914	914	1055	1965	364	364
1915	750	907	1966	275	275
1916	949	1101	1967	287	287
1917	1290	1310	1968	260	260
1918	1467	1355	1969	220	220
1919	1596	1590	1970	166	186
1920	1834	1429	1971	90	103
1927	1267		1972	90	102
1928	1159	1361	1973	68	68
1930	1169		1974	66	66
1931	962		1975	29	29
1933	704		1976		29
1934		899	1977		16
1935		1014	1978		13
1940		696	1980		10
1941		796	1982		15
1942		853	1985	12	12
1943		821			

Sources: Mayor's Minutes; Police Report Books; Durban City Council Files; *Natal Mercury*, *Daily News*.

NOTES

1. Shortened from the now disused word jinricksha. In Japanese *jin* means a man; *riki* power and *sha*, a carriage.
2. Presumably white men regarded pulling as demeaning.
3. Police Report Book [PRB] 4, 4 December 1895. Natal Archives; Pietermaritzburg.
4. *Natal Advertiser*, 6 September 1892.
5. Horsedrawn trams served Durban from 1880 to 1903. Fares were cheap; for example, the journey from Russell Street to the Point, a distance of 2,5 miles, cost 5d. each way. *Sunday Tribune*, 13 September 1936.
6. Paul la Hausse, 'The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban 1902–1936' (unpublished MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1984); David Hemson, 'Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers: The Dock Workers of Durban' (unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Warwick, 1979).
7. That same year an estimated 3 400 passengers spent 4d. per day on tram rides. Mayor's Minutes (MM), 31 July 1899. Cab drivers were also hurt by the competition and it has been suggested that the initial popularity of rickshas may have had something to do with 'the extortionate demands of the cabbies', *Natal Advertiser*, 17 September 1892.
8. MM, 31 July 1899. MM, 5 August 1901.
9. MM, 2 August 1902.
10. See Table 7.1.
11. For a discussion on their class position see Ros Posel 'The Durban Ricksha Pullers' "Strikes" of 1918 and 1930', *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 8, 1985.
13. An indication of the strenuousness of pulling, however, can be gained by a consideration of some of the by-laws. For example, while pullers were not obliged to pull more than one person at a time, they were not forbidden to do so. Moreover they were not permitted to take more than one passenger down an incline specifically marked by a red post or posts. (Amendment of 1900).
14. SANAC. Evidence of Alexander, 17 May 1904, pp.643, 654.
15. File 391/ (10/10) Natal, Durban Rickshas Ltd 1910–1944, State Archives, Pretoria.
16. Interview with A.O. Ball, 23 May 1985.
17. Provincial Notice (PN) 2, 1907.
18. PRB 6, 5 March 1902.
19. *Natal Mercury*, 14 March 1902; Addison to South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC), 19 May 1904.
20. Durban Corporation Letterbook (DCL) 581. Sanitary Inspector to Mayor, 12 March 1909. Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.
21. DCL 586. Chief Constable to Town Clerk, 18 April 1910.
22. MM, July 1929.
23. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, vol.II, 1943–1949. District Commandant to Town Clerk, 12 October 1945. Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.
24. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, vol.II, 1943–1949. DOH to Town Clerk, 5 November 1945.
25. Posel, 'Strikes'.
26. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 56/315c, 1930–1934; DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol.1, 1935–1943; DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1950–1954.
27. While these laws were redrafted in 1943, no *major* changes were prescribed.
28. PRB 4, 8 August 1893; PRB 4, 4 March 1896; PRB 6, 7 November 1898; PRB 6, 6 September 1900; PRB 6, 7 March 1902; *Natal Advertiser*, 23 September 1903.

29. La Hausse, 'Struggle'; PRB 4, 1 February 1894. See also Blue Book 1901; PRB 6, 26 May 1902; PRB 7, 4 April 1906.
30. For example in 1923, the Country Club's request for a ricksha stand in Umgeni Road opposite the Lion Tea Room to cater for members who did not possess motor cars was granted. DCCR Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c 1917–1924.
31. See tables in Posel, 'Strikes'.
32. MM 1932.
33. PRB 4, 14 August 1893.
34. For example, DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Durban Town Clerk to Pietermaritzburg Town Clerk, 7 October 1920.
35. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Minutes of the Native Administration Committee, 15 September 1938.
36. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Interview between Manager, MNAD and 25 ricksha pullers, 17 November 1919.
37. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Report of Manager, MNAD to Native Affairs Committee, 1 December 1919.
38. CNC Minute Papers vol. 1/1/87 CNC 1633/1912, Secretary of Native Affairs to Chief Native Commissioner, 23 August 1912.
39. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. manager, MNAD to Town Clerk, 23 November 1917. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Minutes of the Native Affairs, Police and Fire Brigade Committee, 11 December 1917. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Assistant Town Clerk to Town Solicitors, 25 May 1920.
40. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Chief Constable to Marwick, 18 December 1917.
41. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Manager, MNAD to Town Clerk, 14 July 1920; Town Clerk to Manager, MNAD, 16 July 1920. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Durban Rickshas Ltd to Chief Constable, 12 August 1920.
42. In 1919, motor hiring tariffs stood at 2s. per mile for 1–2 passengers; 6d. per mile for any additional passengers. Report of Native Affairs and Police Commission, 30 April 1919.
43. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Report of Manager, MNAD, 9 September 1920.
44. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. David Calder to Town Clerk, 13 September 1920.
45. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1/315c, 1917–1924. Minutes of Public Health Committee, 28 September 1920.
46. MM 1932.
47. MM 1931. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 56/315c, 1930–1934. Acting Chief Constable to Town Clerk, 10 April 1930.
48. 'Do You Know? Durban's Transport System'. A publication of the Durban Civic Association, Durban, 1954.
49. *Ibid*; F. Stark (ed.), *Durban* (Johannesburg, n.d.), p.203. *Natal Mercury*, 13 May 1930, 15 May 1930, 17 May 1930, 21 May 1930.
50. *Natal Mercury*, 2 April 1930, 17 April 1930.
51. *Natal Advertiser*, 21 May 1930.
52. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 56/315c, 1930–1934. Champion to Town Clerk, 28 January 1930.
53. Posel, 'Strikes'.
54. PN 330, 1930.

55. *Natal Mercury*, 11 January 1932.
56. Thus far representations to have trams and buses extended to the Somtseu Road area had been unsuccessful.
57. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Minutes of the General Purposes Committee, 1 May 1941.
58. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. A.J. Silio to Town Clerk, 3 June 1941. In 1940 there were 126 'non-European' omnibuses.
59. For example, DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 1–315c, 1917–1924. Report of Manager, MNAD, 9 September 1920; *Weekend Advertiser*, 5 September 1936.
    (i) The by-law of 1903 stipulated double rates between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m.
    (ii) Section 19(1) of Act 25 of 1930 allowed pulling up to 1 a.m.
    (iii) The old General Municipal Byelaws permitted plying for hire up to midnight.
    (iv) The Curfew Regulations prohibited pulling between 11 p.m. and 4.30 a.m.
    (v) The MNAD issued pullers with documents allowing them to be abroad until 1 a.m.
61. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Minutes of General Purposes Committee, 18 December 1941.
62. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Ricksha owners to Town Clerk, 28 January 1942.
63. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Chief Constable to Town Clerk, 29 July 1942.
64. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Wards 1 and 2 of Citizens' Association to Town Clerk, 12 October 1942. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Minutes of the General Purposes Committee, 29 October 1942.
65. PN 27, 1943.
66. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Letter from Ricksha Owners to Town Clerk, 17 November 1942.
67. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Minutes of Native Administration Committee, 30 June 1941; Manager, MNAD to Town Clerk, 16 July 1941.
68. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Chief Licensing Officer to Town Clerk, 16 September 1941; Legal Advisor to Town Clerk, 23 September 1941.
69. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1933–1943. Minutes of the General Purposes Committee, 18 December 1941.
70. *Daily News*, 28 August 1941.
71. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. H. H. Kemp to Town Clerk, 19 December 1941.
72. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Minutes of Durban City Council, 9 January 1942.
73. PN 426, 1943.
74. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Licensing Officer to Town Clerk, 10 September 1945.
75. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Licensing Officer to Town Clerk, 10 September 1945.
76. *Daily News*, 10 July 1951; MM 1952. Interview with Mr Khumalo by I. Edwards, 7 July 1985. In recognition of the role played by those 'ordinary' pullers in the carrying of goods, by-laws fixing charges for luggage (weights thereof duly specified), were implemented in 1943, 1956, 1960, 1966, 1970, 1975.
77. *Daily News*, 10 April 1958.

78. *Daily News*, 13 September 1961.
79. PN 184, 1963. Rickshas were prohibited from those portions of Smith and West Street situated between Church and Russell Streets, and any other public road within the city.
80. PN 575, 1966.
81. PN 496, 1968.
82. *Natal Mercury*, 3 October 1968.
83. *Daily News*, 18 June 1968; MM, 1968.
84. *Daily News*, 16 October 1968.
85. *Daily News*, 25 February 1968.
86. *Sunday Times*, 7 April 1963. Some pullers might be lucky enough to stay in a house; that rent was between R3 and R6 per month.
87. PRB 4, 1 February 1894.
88. Yvonne Miller, *Family Album* (Durban, 1973).
89. Contemporary pullers still hold that belief. Interview with Shampijose Nxumalo, 13 March 1985.
90. Joan Lacaille, "How 'the Poor Man's Taxi' came to South Africa", undated (1955?)
91. *Weekend Advertiser*, 5 September 1936.
92. *Weekend Advertiser*, 5 September 1936. (An exaggeration, surely!).
93. MM 1923.
94. *Natal Mercury*, 8 May 1930; 28 June 1930.
95. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. Letter from G.R. McMinn, British and Continent Agencies, Melbourne to Town Clerk, 14 December 1933.
96. DCCF Ricksha Pullers File 60/315c, vol. 1, 1935–1943. A.C.D. Williams, Director of Publicity, DPA to Town Clerk, 6 September 1941.
97. See for example, *Sunday Tribune*, 14 June 1953; *Daily News* 19 June 1954; *Daily News*, 6 September 1955. Perhaps one of the grossest awards was to 'Mr Toothpaste Grin of 1955', given on the basis of the size of teeth, their sparkle and the mouth expression. *Daily News*, 24 June 1955. *Daily News*, 26 June 1959.
98. *Daily News*, 26 June 1959.
99. *Daily News*, 17 April 1952; Interview with A.O. Ball, 23 May 1985.
100. DPA Files, Pat Sullivan, 'Some Talking Points: Durban's Tourist Image: The Ricksha Boy', Durban, (1963?). DPA offices, Durban.
101. DPA Files, Department of Tourism to DPA, 9 November 1964.
102. PN 449, 1968.
103. *Natal Mercury*, 28 September 1968.
104. *Natal Mercury*, 3 October 1968.
105. DPA Files, Exco Minutes, Report of Director, DPA, 3 December 1968.
106. Ibid.
107. *Daily News*, 29 July 1969.
108. *Daily News*, 5 December 1969.
109. PN 66, 1971.
110. *Daily News*, 11 June 1970.
111. PN 310, 1969; PN 689, 1970.
112. *Daily News*, 6 March 1973; *Natal Mercury*, 7 March 1973.
113. *Daily News*, 29 July 1971.
114. *Daily News*, 6 March 1973.
115. *Daily News*, 7 March 1973.
116. *Natal Mercury*, 7 December 1973.

117. *Daily News*, 5 April 1974.
118. The Medical Officer of Health, for example, complained on three separate occasions. *Daily News*, 20 March 1974.
119. *Daily News*, 30 September 1974.
120. *Natal Mercury*, 29 April 1974.
121. PN 30, 1975.
122. *Sunday Times*, 24 April 1977.
123. *Financial Mail*, 16 September 1977.
124. DPA Files, Exco Minutes, 23 February 1977.
125. *Daily News*, 26 August 1977.
126. DPA Files, Draft Proposals re Operation of Rickshas, Durban area, 26 April 1977. Sponsors advertised on boards affixed to the rickshas.
127. DPA Files, Exco Minutes 9 June 1977, 18 August 1977.
128. *Pretoria News*, 1 July 1977.
129. *Natal Mercury*, 5 September 1977.
130. *Daily News*, 2 June 1977.
131. 'The Shrinking World of Durban's Rickshas', *Pace*, March 1979.
132. DPA Files, 4 April 1980.
133. DPA Files, Transocean Liner's Trading Enterprises Pty Ltd to Terry Toohey, 9 May 1980. The prices quoted were: $1230 for a new model, $1000 for a second-hand ricksha. These prices included landing and clearing charges.
134. DPA Files, undated memorandum. The vehicles were made by Mr L. Door of Taurus Engineering, Sarnia.
135. PN 424, 1981.
136. Interviews, 28 February 1985, 13 March 1985.
137. *Daily News*, 1 October 1984.
138. *Natal Mercury*, 4 October 1989.
139. *Natal Mercury*, 1 February 1990.
140. *Natal Mercury*, 1 February 1990.
141. *Natal Mercury*, 23 July 1986.

The Sweat was Black

Working for Dunlop

ARI SITAS

> . . . Whilst walking, thinking about the Workers' problems I saw a fist flying across Dunlop's cheek . . .[1]
>
> A.T. Qabula

In September 1984, the Dunlop strike ended with management agreeing to the unconditional reinstatement of all twelve hundred striking workers. The strike had lasted for over four weeks. The workers, jubilant over their victory, poured out of St Anthony's Hall in Greyville and returned to work, marching and chanting through Durban's busiest streets. Scenes of elation spilled over into the factory yard, bringing to a close a trying period of conflict and discipline: a conflict which, in its strategies, duration and tones, prefigured much of what industrial relations were to become in South Africa – a trial of strength between employers and strongly organised workers:

> 'it is like a labalaba game', explained a worker, 'where the winner takes all. You throw the stone. He blocks it. You throw another one. He blocks, but at the same time he is on the offensive . . . You block . . . The difference is that there is no time for the struggle to end. Each minute going by you both lose something. You lose a finger, by the second week you are a cripple. The same with him. He loses money, profits. So one of you will have to stop and say O.K.[2]

Trials of strength are costly for all concerned: 'They are in many respects', asserts Richard Hyman, 'the industrial equivalent of war between nations.'[3] Such confrontations were a rarity in South Africa's history, given scant trade union resources, black workers' meagre savings, and legislation proscribing such action. Natal's history in particular is marked by hundreds of outbursts, and volatile demonstration strikes, all of short duration. Together with the 1937 Falkirk Iron and Steel strike which lasted for thirteen weeks, the Dunlop strike of 1942–43, and the laundry workers' strike of 1945–46 – already hazy in living memory – the 1984 strike at Dunlop appears as one of the few poignant exceptions.[4] This factor alone would warrant lengthy commentary. Furthermore, such an account could go some way to redressing the balance in commonsense opinion which sees behind each outbreak of conflict, agitators looming in the shadows. Nevertheless, this essay seeks to assert a proposition – that the friction, the sparks, the explosion and the discipline of the strike were the outcome of a collision between a strong, confident shop-steward leadership and the traditional managerialism of a tough, anti-union company.

Dunlop SA has a reputation for being an efficient and profitable multinational corporation. Since the erection of the Dunlop Holdings factory at Congella (Durban) in 1933, it has been at the pinnacle of South Africa's manufacturing development.[5] Throughout its history it stood to benefit immensely from the growth of local industry. Its operations expanded through the war years in support of the Allied war effort, and then during the reconversion of industry to peace-time concerns, through the Tyre Manufacturers' Conference – a cartel of rubber manufacturers in South Africa which ensured joint pricing policies.[6] In 1959, the Dunlopillow operation was transferred to Port Elizabeth. By the 1960s, Dunlop stood to gain from the 'local content' programme of the automobile industry, despite competition. Given the increasing sophistication of the local chemical industry – Sasol's and Sentrachem's initiatives – it stood to benefit from the availability of synthetic rubber; and it profited immensely from South Africa's decentralisation incentives, creating cheap labour pools in 'border areas' – under this scheme a car-tyre plant was erected at Ladysmith.[7] Its growth locally, alongside national capital's interests, was best symbolised by the appointment of Dr T. Muller – doyen of national and parastatal capital – as the chairman of its board of directors.

By 1984 Dunlop sprawled all over South Africa; its Sydney Road, Congella factory was the largest and oldest (1 100 workers). Not as large, but of comparative importance, were the factories at Ladysmith (800 workers, car tyre), Benoni (650 workers, industrial products), East London (450 workers, mattresses and pillows), and a small plant in Jacobs, Durban (150 workers, sports goods). Dunlop SA had grown into an industrial giant with assets exceeding R110 million, and it was planning a R55 million expansion programme to further modernise production facilities.[8]

For its part, the Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) had also been propelled forward by issues wider than its relationship to Dunlop management. The union, formed in 1974 in Natal in the aftermath of the Durban strikes, had experienced in its first period both enthusiastic expansion, and decline. The recession of the 1970s was to cause strains in both its financial and organisational structures. It was only after 1982 that the union began to experience a period of militant revival in Natal (as opposed to the revival in the late 1970s in the Transvaal); its Natal membership doubled between 1982 and 1983 to reach a paid-up total of eight thousand workers.[12] Its confidence increased after a series of victories over wages, dismissals and recognition agreements. As an affiliate of FOSATU it was committed to strong grass-roots

organisation at the work-place through shop steward structures; and it has been a hard bargainer for a 'living wage'. Its militant renewal in Natal earned it the reputation of being an 'uncompromising problem' for the rubber and metal industries.[13] For MAWU, Dunlop's management symbolised a traditionalist authoritarian approach with a tough anti-union stance. But Dunlop workers over the last two generations had developed a tradition of opposition to managerial demands. The 1984 conflict cannot be fully comprehended unless the historic roots of employer-worker relations at Dunlop are traced.

Most workers at Dunlop are employed to work shifts, as machine or process operators in a modern labour process which combines sophisticated chemical, moulding, mechanical and trimming operations. All these processes are highly rationalised and inter-connected, based on a system of mass production. Consequently, work is an unending drive towards high production targets, 'scores'. Productivity and efficiency have been the twin imperatives at Dunlop. Workers do not perceive this as either fulfilling or satisfying; in the mill department, work is considered to be heavy and dangerous, and elsewhere, exhausting.[14] In most of the literature on work one finds that internationally the highest incidence of absenteeism and labour turnover is in such industries. The relatively low labour turnover at Dunlop is accounted for by workers as a matter of having few alternatives: 'You stay at Dunlop because it is slightly better with the wage than most of the others. This doesn't mean that Dunlop pays well.'[15] More than that, Dunlop workers state unequivocally that compared to the profits they make for the company, their wages are minimal. What was remarkable, emerging from the interviews conducted with workers, was the degree of 'low trust' between workers and management. Given the lengthy service records of many Dunlop employees, this 'low trust' has a historical and a contemporary dimension. Experience has cemented over time a tradition of mistrust and a grumbling acquiescence towards managerial authority. Both memory and contemporary experience are important in explaining why such a degree of polarisation and a trial of strength of such proportions could develop in the Sydney Road factory.

The continuity of service amongst older workers at Dunlop ensured at the same time the survival of a mercurial factory tradition; partly a mechanism of adjustment to mass production, partly a lever of discontent. This factory culture, handed down over the years from older to younger recruits, both influenced behaviour and coloured expectations from management. The following lineage of factory socialisation is one of many which could be constructed: Mr Malebane, now retired, was employed in 1944 in the fabrics department; there he became the reference point for and adviser of Mr Kambule who was employed in 1946. In 1954, Mr Kambule socialised Mr Banda in the 'Dunlopillow' department; and he, in turn did the same to Mr Bhaca in the light-truck department; and the latter, finally, was a leading force threatening to kill Themba and Dlamini in the mill department in 1974 – for reasons to be

explored below.[16] There was in the factory, not so much an informal organisation of workers, as a crisscross of reference groups, leaderships and brotherhoods. It was made up of a multiplicity of defensive combinations of workers, and survived as a repository of useful public knowledge.[17] It demarcated an 'us', who belonged together and a 'them' within the black labour force itself. It also distinguished between an 'us' and the 'Mr Iscariot Impimpis'.[18] This demarcation was violent; over the years many such accounts were forcibly settled in the factory, in the locations, or at the bus queues.

Listening to older workers speak about the span of time from the 1940s to the time of the interviews, the themes of 'thankless toil' – sacrificing years for nothing in return – and managerial harshness predominate. 'For over thirty years, I have been working for this company', asserted Mr Kambule, '. . . and, the only thing I managed to buy over and above the bare necessities was a bicycle . . .' And even this proved to be useless after his move to KwaMashu. As the rust started gnawing at it, he exchanged it as part payment for a head of cattle.[19] Mr Banda concurred, enlarging on the theme:

> Dunlop has been a very, very hard firm. The saying goes that if you work there stay unmarried for you can't afford a family . . . wages, nightshift, tiredness . . . if you are married already, don't have more than two children or you will be crying . . . They feel no pain there they make more and more profit but don't pay worker anything to match it. It annoys us a lot to read about their profits in the Dunlop Gazette . . .[20]

The relationship between profit extraction and income was a source of great dissatisfaction. As one commented: 'I used to make 120 tyres for them a day, that was about R6 000–R7 000 . . . you want to know what my wage saw of all that?'[21] The message transmitted down the generations to younger workers was also simple – they, too, should expect nothing from Dunlop. It was not the benevolent employer it claimed to be.

One could construct endless narratives about the grievances, or *khala* (pain), of working life, using the senior workers' accounts. Whether particular events recounted were actually experienced or not, whether they were informed by rumour or exaggeration, they were woven into an array of expectations over time to taint the fabric of every worker's response. This popular memory stops abruptly in 1943. It is necessary to start there in order to begin reconstructing the crucial parameters of this factory tradition.

In 1943 hundreds of African migrant workers were employed at Dunlop to break the strike of black workers, which had begun in November 1942. This strike was led by Indian workers, who downed tools as a last effort to gain recognition for their trade union, the Natal Rubber Workers' Union. Dunlop's predominantly Indian labour force had begun joining the union because of dissatisfaction over piece-rates and wages in the factory. It was a mixed union,

organising white, 'coloured' and Indian workers. It also pushed to represent the African workers, who were then small in number and represented by a works committee under factory-based indunas. Dunlop retorted by forming an in-company union, the Durban Rubber Industrial Workers' Union, and demanded that its white, coloured and Indian workers join this union instead. From the beginning of 1942 the company began firing Indian workers and replacing them with African migrants. By October the Indian workers were reduced to 160 from an initial complement of 950. They went on strike and were joined by the majority of African workers – white workers did not participate. The strike was defeated.[22] The rest is within popular memory: Dunlop became the first employer to place migrant African workers on operative tasks. By June 1943 there were over a thousand African workers at Dunlop, making up 70 per cent of the labour force.[23]

This first generation of workers, like others later, were confronted with the rigour of a factory regime based on mass production and scientific management.[24] Dunlop required a new type of worker – dextrous, responsible, obedient and suited to the dictates of repetitive work. They were to blend into a rationalised and demanding labour process: at its one end, a whole range of raw materials – from synthetic and natural rubber to hundreds of chemical substances – were mixed, blended, smelted, cast into moulds and finished, to produce at its other end pneumatic tyres, industrial belting, sports equipment, and foam rubber. Furthermore, its economies of scale demanded work around the clock – 'daytime, night-time is worktime at Dunlop'.[25]

Work was organised in shifts: one week daytime and one week night-time – for the majority of departments. The first shift would start at 7 a.m. and end at 5 p.m. The second would start at 7 p.m. and finish at 5 a.m. The two hours sandwiched in between shift changes constituted the terrain of overtime work which allowed workers extra money. Each shift included a break of one hour for lunch and two ten-minute tea breaks – to 'mitigate fatigue and monotony . . . much of which (arose due to) rapid work rhythms and repetition work'.[26]

Each task performed on the factory floor was designed in the true spirit of scientific management. Each activity was measured in terms of physical output, and a system of production bonuses was instituted in 1943 – a system which the Indian workers had rejected the previous year. Each task had its pre-set 'normal' output rate. For every extra 1 per cent over this, workers would earn 0.766d. Workers could push production up to a third above normal. There was, in other words, a ceiling on the workers' earnings. But the amount of production needed was decided daily by management, so this was not exactly a system of voluntary bonus scoring.[27] The smooth running of the factory, and its output, were regulated through tight factory discipline with the threat of dismissal if the output of a worker were less then normal.

The employment of African migrant workers on machine operative jobs – 'pioneering' for the time – is well documented in the Natal University study,

The African Factory Worker, which assessed the work performance of this 'novel' workforce.[28] As a study it allayed the fears of employers about the ability of migrant workers to perform such tasks and opened doors for industry to replace many unionised semi-skilled workers: 'A large number of tests and records made in the Dunlop factory', notes the study, 'suggest that the more efficient type of Native takes about half as long again to learn a particular job as a European, and that his normal rate of output is about 85 per cent of the European's.'[29]

In 1946 less than 4.8 per cent of these workers were 'urbanised'; most (53.2 per cent) had households allotted to them within chiefly structures, with an average per capita ownership of cattle running up to fourteen each. The rest, whose homesteads were on crown and mission lands had fewer cattle per capita. They were primarily drawn from the Pinetown, Umbumbulu, Alfred, Richmond and Ixopo areas.[30] A sub-chief from the Ixopo area was employed by Dunlop to be head among their numerous indunas. Despite the relatively higher wages that workers earned in the factory, the study also showed that the overwhelming majority were malnourished and resided in appalling shelters. In the late 1940s, 38 per cent of Dunlop's workers lived in all kinds of rented accommodation in town – from 'kias', to flats, to garages and rooms. This was ascribed to the generally overcrowded conditions in existing designated accommodation for black workers. A further 29 per cent lived in shacks, primarily in Mkhumbane, with infrastructural facilities,[31] and 28 per cent lived in barracks or municipal hostels – Bell Street, Somtseu Road and Dalton Hostel – the cheapest kind of accommodation, but overcrowded and, according to official reports, 'in an appalling state of disrepair'.[32] The job on the one hand, and urban forms of life on the other, severely constrained the lives of Dunlop workers.

Kambule's life, in common with Mr Malebane's, combined both barrack accommodation and rooming arrangements. Kambule lived for ten years (1946–56) in such rooms, after living for two years in the Somtseu Road hostel (he came from Matatiele in 1944). His father had resisted proletarianisation: he had been a remarkable man living to an age of 121 years. He had been born in 1859 and died in 1980. In all his life, he totalled six years in wage-employment for a white farmer, until he repaid a 25-shilling debt that he had incurred because of the poll-tax. In times of strain he would send his sons into the labour market. According to Kambule, who was the youngest, he was sent because of hardship on the land between 1936 and 1947. The father was against the son's idea of selling any one of his inherited twenty-four head of cattle. So the son found himself on a migrant contract at the New State Mines. He worked there during 1942–43 and found mining life intolerable. He then decided to shelter with an uncle at the Somtseu Road barracks. Kinsmen had organised both a job and a corner in the barracks. His job was on a sugar plantation, 'to tractor sugar-cane' near Mobeni. He worked there for one and a half years.

The overcrowding of the Somtseu Road barracks was indescribable.[33] It was the cheapest form of accommodation – five shillings a month – but also the most degrading. People were stealing from each other: 'You cook your food, unless you keep your eyes on the pot, food is gone and in your pot you find a brick instead.'[34] It was filthy and untidy: during Kambule's one-and-a-half-year stay the toilets were always blocked, sending the smell into the rooms; people relieved themselves anywhere in the smallish yard. The Indian section of the barracks was marginally better – there were families living there; but Kambule noticed that although their accommodation was better serviced, the Indian people were also poor. People would drink a lot, and this drinking led to violence, especially over soccer on the weekends. Dunlops' 'Buffaloes' supporters – many of whom stayed at Somtseu Road – were often the aggressors. The rooms were dark: under emergency war regulations all the windows, and these were very small in any case, were blackened and the lights had to be switched off at night. When people were allowed to use the electricity again, 'life was switched off by the indunas at ten o'clock at night'. Residents were also pushed around a lot by the indunas, who even had the right to evict. Kambule did not like this life – the physicality of it, its violence, the municipal beerhall. Two points of reference stopped him, as he recounts, from 'losing' himself: his father's domain in the countryside, reminding him of his rural responsibilities, and the Church of England, which taught him and others about evil: 'about the devil and the time of reckoning'. He wanted to leave the barracks and leave his job for a better all-round situation.

He did not want to move to Mkhumbane (Cato Manor) because he had heard of similar evils there. He wanted to move to a room of his own in town; but the rents charged by Indian property-owners were twice or three times the amount charged in municipal accommodation. He decided that, unless he first found a new job, the move would be impossible. He had heard from the people in the barracks that he could earn more than his 4d. an hour if he moved across to the factory jobs: 6d. at Robertson's,[35] 8d. at Dunlop. His dilemma was resolved as he got retrenched. The plantation was wound up, sold because Durban was growing 'to eat it'. For seven months in 1945–46, he walked the streets of the town for a job. In 1946 he found one at Dunlop.

He presented himself outside the factory. The 'white man' (Native Welfare Officer) lined him and others up and asked questions: Had they worked for Dunlop before? Had they worked for any other employer before? Did they have proof of employment? Did he have his poll-tax paid? Most of the questions were in English and Fanakalo. Kambule's mining experience made the officer hesitate in front of him. The officer felt his muscles, told him to open his mouth and 'other nonsense'. Kambule was tense, but he remembered a similar procedure being followed on the mines. The officer beckoned many people to stand out in front of the line – he was not one of them. To his relief he marched the chosen ones to the gate and out. Kambule and about ten others were marched to the office. There, they were told that Dunlop only wanted clever people and people who can work: 'They made me take tests with screws and rings and blocks . . . I had no idea what they wanted . . . or whether I was doing anything right.' After they discovered that he was clever, he was sent to 'Native Administration' for medical tests and registration. After that he knew he could search for a room.

He found a small room with an Indian family in Seaview Road where he paid ten shillings a month. He stayed there until 1952. From 1952 to 1956 he lived in another such room on Moore Road near the factories. Both families that let out rooms were poor and God-fearing people. But little if any interaction developed between them and Kambule. It was finally the Group Areas legislation, and the relocation of Indian people to the peripheries of Durban that put an end to such renting arrangements. In 1956 he moved to Umlazi to join an elder brother's family. In 1959 he got married in town. He finally obtained his own accommodation in KwaMashu in 1965. Despite his aversion to 'city life', unwittingly, almost unconsciously, over these years he found himself being transformed into an urban resident and a longterm factory worker. The city – 'where you live in your pocket' – colonised his behaviour, his concerns; the countryside began receding, remaining a memory of a better life, but distant from his everyday living. The world of Matatiele, with its extended family networks, was not poor: cattle, horses, sheep and goats were being accumulated; peaches and bananas had begun to be cultivated with commercial intentions; and his own share of livestock was undiminished. Yet, however much it provided him with a moral reference point, increasingly his life as an isolated room-dweller in Durban was constructing a range of meanings which came to constitute his social status.

On the street-corners around Seaview Road, Kambule sat himself down to listen to many Zulu guitarists, also room-dwellers or domestic workers. One of them taught him how to play. Another convinced him to join a boxing club. Music and fighting became his cherished leisure-time occupations. He was good at both, and in turn they became his levers of social integration. The boxing club, apart from the camaraderie that it opened up for him, proved to be a double reward: he became recognised as a very good light-middleweight boxer; and also, as he claimed, vented a lot of his frustrations from factory life onto punch-bags. (Many supervisors and foremen were imagined over time to be on the receiving end. But his boxing career was shortened because of them, as shall be shown below.) This social network, the boxing club, was the channel through which he and his friends were mobilised in 1949 to take part in the 'Zulu against Indian War'. His club was active in the Clairwood and Cavendish Road confrontations – an event which Champion described wryly as 'taking our sticks to the Indians to teach them a lesson'.[36] To this day Kambule has not understood this event properly – a circumstance that worried him.

Whereas boxing offered him recognition, music offered him the possibility

of integration into an urban cultural milieu which allowed him to socialise with men and women with similar concerns: they shared a revulsion against the life of 'drink and destruction'. His guitar group started playing 'socials' at a hall near 'Ethusini' (Howard College) where people would get together to dance, to sing (mostly traditional songs) and share a Saturday night which was without the rumpus of Cato Manor life. The entrance fee of five shillings, plus the absence of alcohol, allowed Kambule to meet a church-going crowd suited to his needs. There was another dimension of meaning which began influencing his life by the late 1950s: the African National Congress which was then beginning to have a profound effect on black communities.

During his seven months in the factory, time was spent tying flaps of fabric together for the Fabrics Department. That is where he met Mr Malebane, who instructed him not to overdo his eagerness to please indunas, the foremen and managers. He was also told how to behave with each one of his superiors in order to avoid trouble. He was advised not to set new standards or everybody would suffer from his work. In the same year, 1946, he was transferred to the test room where the strength and elasticity of rubber and other materials was tested. Although the work-place was better here than on the factory floor, quotas and discipline prevailed. He worked there until 1954. It was here that he began experiencing the interface between control and work performance; the white foreman and production managers 'would kick you and punch you and there was nothing you could do'. Any insubordination was met with instant dismissal: 'Nobody caused trouble because you were out . . . anybody could fire you, from indunas to the boss.' But his turn came to be assaulted for delaying. By standing his ground, he emerged as a respected and recognised grass-roots leader. The foreman threatened to beat him up. He ignored him, so the foreman came for him. He stood up to him, telling him that if he dared move a step closer he would kill him. The induna advised the foreman not to even try to take a step closer because Kambule was a 'mean boxer'. The foreman retreated, swearing, and Kambule emerged as the talk and pride of the day. It was this incident, he suspects, that led to a crane, driven by that foreman, one day unloading its cargo on him, damaging his leg and spoiling his boxing career.

Kambule, through his act of defiance, could have lost his job, like many others. He did not; rather, this act was seen in a positive light by his induna. In 1954, he was transferred to the Dunlopillow department. This move promoted him to a 'viewer and checker' – a higher grade of worker. In 1959, when the entire operation was transferred to Port Elizabeth, he was transferred to the conveyor belt depot, where he continued as a 'viewer and checker'. When, in 1964, this entire process was transported to Benoni, he was packed and parcelled off with it to train new workers. In 1965 he returned, and was transferred to base stores. There he became a section leader by 1968, and a works' committee councillor by 1969, after twenty-three years with the company. From that position, both elected by the workers and appointed by managers, he was to try to rectify the injustices of factory life – low pay, poor working conditions, and arbitrary authority. Over the next decade he was to be frustrated time after time. It was then that he turned to leading the unionisation of workers in the plant. When asked how he survived his life of hardship, he asked permission to think about the question, and returned the next day to answer: In two ways – first by 'holding dear' or ascribing value to spheres of life unrelated to work, and second, by exercising power to limit or change what was allowed on the factory floor.

Mr Banda, who was instructed by Kambule in the Dunlopillow department in 1956, would have agreed with the second observation, with some qualifications. Banda belonged to a different cultural formation. After all, in 1959 he was assaulted and injured by black women in Cato Manor demanding that their men boycott the municipal beerhalls.[37] A few days later he tried to visit a friend near another beerhall. On this occasion, in order to avoid being apprehended by the women in the streets, he dressed up in *isishweshwe* dress and *doek*, but was discovered and again assaulted. Then, he was skirting the edges of Cato Manor's shebeen culture, participating actively in the 'enjoyments' of life. And by 1975 he was participating in another cultural practice common to Dunlop workers. He would make his way to Dalton Road Hostel before his shift, whatever the time, and 'kill his head' – to cope with the job he would drink himself into a placid state.

Banda was born and raised near Estcourt. He left school after form three in 1952. In 1954 he made his way to Durban to join his grandmother and find a job. She was 'washing in town' and was renting a room-a-shack on the premises of a black landlord in Cato Manor. Banda remembers the room as small and uncomfortable. In fact 'poverty was all that was visible everywhere'. The poor conditions were aggravated by the extreme scarcity of water in the vicinity, and the absence of toilets and any proper sleeping place for most people. Tsotsis were an aggravating factor, but neighbourhood life was close-knit and strangers were easily identified and apprehended.

He started work at Nelson's Garage on Berea Road, but by mid-year he had managed to get a job at Dunlop. Compared to the four shillings a week that he had earned in the garage, Dunlop's wages were spectacular.[38] Transport from Cato Manor to town was two cents a day; and, although rents were high in his area, as a single man with a working grandmother, he could even save money to send home. Social life during leisure hours was limited. You either belonged to the churches, he argued, or to the shebeens for drinks. In his case, it was both. In a short time he belonged to a *stokvel* network,[39] and was frequenting both the legal municipal beerhall and the illegal liquor shops.[40] Over weekends, soccer provided a lot of distraction, and occasionally he visited the 'bioscope in town'.

Unlike Kambule, in his isolated room in town, Banda was at the epicentre of urban problems and struggles:

> The police ran the place . . . they used to come, arrest everybody, kick you and hit you . . . they used to accuse you of drink [illegal] and take you to the police station where you would have to pay fines to be released . . . It is this police arrogance which was the cause for people to get annoyed and kill policemen in riots . . .[41]

The atmosphere in Cato Manor in the second half of the 1950s was explosive. People would meet in open fields and make speeches or listen to speeches. The ANC was gaining strength in the area, and even chiefs would come from the countryside to speak to their people about politics.

On the factory floor, life was very hard too. Banda worked for his first year in the fabrics prep(aration) department where the material linings for tyres were made. That was unskilled work, the fetch-and-carry kind. Then he was transferred to the head office to work as a messenger for four years. The wages there were lower than factory wages. Using his access to senior personnel, he pleaded with them for a transfer back to the factory. He was placed back at the Dunlopillow section of the factory and worked there until 1959. It was there that he met Kambule who was a respected worker on the factory floor: 'He always stood his ground and was not afraid to call things by their proper name. But he had a gentle way of doing things and challenging the foremen.' Banda learnt a lot of things through Kambule, about work rules, and about the foremen and the indunas. In 1959, with the relocation of the whole department to Port Elizabeth, he was transferred to the light truck tyre department. Until 1968 he had experienced there the full implications of mass production and control. From 1968 onwards he worked in the earth-moving department as a trimming operative.

It was from his work experience in the light truck department that he felt most strained: 'You would finish your job, eat and collapse. You always needed people to wake you up in the morning.' People drank more in this department; he felt that for many what had been a cause of getting together for enjoyment was becoming a habit. The job was exacting; it was piece-rate work and one had to produce fifteen tyres an hour. One was not allowed to produce less at any time. The indunas would count the tyres at the end of each hour. To earn a bonus a worker had to produce sixteen or more. Anyone who lost the pace of fifteen tyres more than three times was fired as unsuited to mass production. At the same time, the informal rule amongst workers was that no one should go over sixteen at any time to score high bonuses. If that happened management would invariably push the minimum up. So Banda found himself for nine years working at a steady pace of fifteen to sixteen tyres.

The indunas, according to him, were a curse: 'They were there to look after production, the scores and chase the workers for tyres. They were black traitors who would say "so and so is no good or so and so must get fired". And this they did for two cents extra an hour!' The only reason he could advance for their behaviour was that they appreciated having an easy job. All they had to do was 'push the people'. They were making sure 'you sweated before you had a break'. There was a constant war on the shop-floor between the workers and indunas. It was through this war that Banda also emerged as a leading figure in his department. He remembers one case in particular that illustrated the dynamic:

> One day the production manager decided that the normal score had to go up so the supervisor/induna came to them and told them that they must work harder. Before anybody touched the work I challenged him to show me how . . . I told him I thought it was impossible to achieve that score. He made the mistake and took up the challenge . . . and made a fool of himself. He produced one in nine minutes which was about three minutes slower than we did. Before he could recover we called the foreman and presented him with the problem. He said 'rubbish' – so we said: look at the induna a strong man and in the old days a very efficient worker he can't do it, how can we? The foreman tried and managed seven and a half minutes. So we said, with such a score management would fire him. He fumed and went to the production manager and so on, and soon enough all was back to normal.

One thing that he never regretted was that he never had anything to do with the 'Mill'. That was 'Hell' – the worst department where, 'when you cough, you coughed out rubber. There, people breathed it, swallowed it and all'.

The factory floor was one area from which Banda's ascent to leadership began – politics became the other. Unlike Kambule, who was isolated from the hub of political activity, Banda, through the community at first, but later through the factory floor, began his leadership role, organising other workers to participate in the various campaigns of that time. The ANC advised workers to join SACTU.[42] He and many others at Dunlop, primarily from Cato Manor, did so. SACTU was very active, 'doing a lot of things', but was never strong enough to challenge working conditions at Dunlop. Rather, Banda found himself becoming one of the leading campaigners on political issues at work. Two such issues emerge from his account – the one-pound-a-day stay-away and the potato boycott. The pamphlets for the stay-away were circulated in Cato Manor. Most Dunlop workers received them. Banda took some to the factory and approached management. Management said that they should try and get to work, but should not endanger themselves. They stressed the fact that these political questions should not become factory issues.

Workers felt angry about management's response – 'if one-pound-a-day is not their issue, whose issue is it?'; the majority stayed away. The next day he was called in by management: a worker had complained that he had missed work because Banda had threatened him with a stick at Cato Manor. Banda

denied that he had intimidated the other worker. He was warned not to misbehave and sent back to work. He now laughingly remembers how about two hundred of them from Dunlop were out 'with sticks and all' to stop people from going to work, but apart from that particular worker, who became an induna in the 1960s, no one else tried to get to work that day.

The potato boycott was fought out on the factory floor through a boycott of the canteen. Although the works committee approached management and warned them two or three times not to buy or serve potatoes, the personnel staff responsible for the canteen ignored them. Then a boycott was declared. Workers started it by queuing up for their lunch; they would let the servers fill their plates with the potato stew and then they would look at their plates and empty them out (on the floor and some in the bins). Chaos developed in the canteen, and top management in an effort to resolve the problem, fired the chief personnel officer for wasting the company's money, given that he had been notified by the works committee.[43]

These extended case-studies allow one to draw some contours around the issues of adjustment and opposition on the factory floor, and to give some coherence to the emergent factory traditions. To generalise on these accounts will help contextualise the discussion. Many workers' memories stretch back to the 1950s and 1960s. The 1950s stand out as a period of hope. Workers living in Cato Manor or the Dalton Road Hostel, whether in backyards or the peri-urban areas, were actively involved in some of the most explosive political and economic campaigns of the period ('the battle against Verwoerd'). Inscribed as high points in that memory are the potato boycott, the pound-a-day campaign and the beer riots. Most of these affected their lives in the factories.

We have noted elsewhere how the slogans of 'asinamali, sifunimali' (the lack of money) have characterised much of black worker protest in the Durban/Pinetown industrial region. The consistency of the protest was buttressed by the fact that the workers inhabited a world of hardship and poverty and were being suffocated by low wages and deficient accommodation.[44] This, as it had among the workers at Dunlop, developed into a robust economism. It was a major grievance that their effort was exchanged for crumbs. One cannot, though, appreciate the volatility of their cultural formations if one stops there. Leo Kuper described the explosive late 1950s to early 1960s as a period of mass murmurings. To understand the nucleus of the murmur one must first understand the emergence of a national consciousness amongst the rank and file. Despite Luthuli's insistence on mass moral action throughout the 1950s, despite also the workers' undoubted allegiance to his leadership, at grass-roots level a more physical, explosive and millenarian national consciousness was in the ascendant. In contrast to the Congress's forward-seeking creation of a democratic society, this consciousness among the newly proletarianised labour force was backward-looking. It evolved from a struggle which had a strong continuity with countryside traditions. Among the Dunlop workers it was a

conflict with the white 'Money Kingdom', and those it had corrupted – from indunas to informers, and shop-keepers who, like Champion, pretended to be worker leaders.[45]

In the 1960s there was a threefold collapse with concomitant anxieties. First, the collapse of popular militancy, with the banning and persecution of the Congress leadership (Banda was also arrested during the emergency for giving public speeches in the fields at Cato Manor). Second, the collapse of social networks and cultural practices with the removal of people to KwaMashu. Third, a collapse of confidence in the new township environment. The strains of factory life did not abate; distances increased; friendships dissolved because of new distances; and uncertainty prevailed. Banda recalls that 'some people turned more and more to the shebeen and the church . . . I turned to both – most of us to both in order to tell our grievances. Some of us turned to our ancestors to fight for us as we struggled on working every day.' Dunlop's attitude throughout was 'uncaring', and its motto was 'work hard and no more scrap from you my boys'. Banda's 'turning to the ancestors' must be taken literally. He and many others began a moral counter-revolution in the context of the new township. By the late 1960s they were organised into *khotla* associations aimed at curbing the deterioration of the moral fibre of the township. For Banda, and for Kambule, this was the first step of a generation that unleashed Inkatha in the urban areas.[46]

At the same time the factory, save for a few interpersonal skirmishes and mini-stoppages, remained quiescent throughout the 1960s. It was only in 1974 that a strike occurred over a change in the shift-systems and general dissatisfaction over wages. Dunlop dealt ruthlessly with the strike, by sending everyone packing and selectively re-employing workers. To sum up, Dunlop's senior workers were the suppliers of a tradition of frustrated expectations. Their experience over time solidified into a deep-felt grievance that socialised new workers and distanced them from any possibility of a trusting relationship with management.

It remains to consider a third worker life-history. Temba heard that Dunlop was needing workers. He came from a ten-year experience of wage labour – in Carltonville on a construction site for mines, and in Durban.[47] He was already living in a little room at his uncle's place in Inanda. He had had enough of doing skilled work as a plumber for unskilled migrant wages. He decided to apply for a job, and met Langa and Dumisani. All three were employed together as 'hyster' (fork-lift) drivers. They were medically checked and tested, told that at Dunlop people worked hard, and dispatched to the training school. They were taught to drive automatic hysters and then were marched across to the mill department. They walked onto the factory floor, and unwittingly found themselves at the cutting-edge of resistance culture in the factory.

First, the section-leader on Temba's shift was critically injured: 'People had beaten our section leader while going to work . . . They beat him up for going

to work at Dalton Men's Hostel and he nearly died.' Second, they encountered total hostility: 'I will never forget what they did to me. They claimed that we had come to rob them of their job – *ukubephuca umbele emlonyeni* . . . Our life was in danger.' Third, the other drivers refused to show them how to operate the mechanical-gear hyster used in the factory. As a consequence one of the new workers had a serious accident. Fourth, they promised them that their working lives at Dunlop would be short. After all, they were scabs. They were replacing part of the whole mill department shift which had been summarily dismissed after the 1974 strike. Furthermore, they were employed on the new shift system – they were the epitome of the workers' defeat. Through scabs like them, Dunlop managed to push two extra shifts per week, increase productivity and eat into the overtime earnings of workers. Temba and his friends suffered a lot and, as he admits, were lucky not to be killed. But he decided that 'Whatever happens, I was to be patient and prove them wrong.' His perseverance was rewarded, but at the expense of a great degree of isolation. It was only through proving his fighting spirit in the factory that his integration was achieved, and finally, his acceptance as a leading force in the mill.

He spent a great amount of time as part of a lonely crowd in the factory, driving to the base store for raw materials and back to the mill. The mill needs further description:

> I was surprised how these people were exposed, how they lived – they were all black with various powders and the conditions they were in . . . some had plastics over their overalls and wore masks on their faces . . . A person there works in one day for a job meant to be worked over two days . . . the work is heavy and the heat in some parts was unbearable . . . full of black dust and smoke from various chemicals which make you cough even if you are in the hyster like me. He found out that even after a shower when he sweated the sweat was black.

He gradually came to realise the degree of injustice exercised as a matter of course at Dunlop:

> They were chased everyday from work. One man, was a very hard worker who operated the Banbury no. 1.[54] He was Mr M, liked for his dedication to work at Dunlop. In April 1976 we went home for Easter. When we came back, trouble started for him. He was getting old, and he was not producing a big score as before. He was called out often to be asked whether he still wanted to work for Dunlop. He was made to sign [the disciplinary book] because his production was now low, despite the fact that he repeatedly told them that he was not feeling well. He was eventually admitted to hospital, though I have no idea how long he stayed there. When he returned to Dunlop, he had already been written off, and he was given money only after a long fight . . . From that day on I hated the factory. It used people so hard, and when they had no strength to produce more they were dumped into the rubbish piles . . .

From that day on, he started lashing out at authority and reorganising people around him. There were many firings and many disciplinary cases in the mill over the next three years. He was involved in three major confrontations with the indunas and foremen. When MAWU began organising Dunlop it swept through the mill like wildfire.

MAWU began organising there in mid-1982 on a systematic basis. Initially, it proved difficult as workers were suspicious of any talk of joining unions: 'There is no such thing as a union, this is something which is going to eat our money . . .'; 'Don't you think that the white (organiser) is going to rob us and doublecross us with other whites?'; 'This thing was invented by the government. A government is a tsotsi, a gangster . . .'; 'How do they know our problems, they don't work here?' But MAWU managed to secure the support of a disgruntled, informal leadership, frustrated by the failures of the liaison committee. These workers, some old, long-service people and some young, militant and assertive, formed a steering committee to organise inside the factory. During this first phase though, it was primarily the older workers who led the recruitment drives. One of them, with thirty-seven years' service at Dunlop, was a respected liaison committee member; another, with more than twenty-five years' service, and having been active politically in the 1950s and 1960s, now an influential community leader in KwaMashu's Section 9, led the battle for unionisation. They argued incessantly with everyone, persuading and chastising. More than most, they represented symbols of opposition: so close to retirement, with all their benefits to lose, they were standing up for the union. They were ready to become 'a black Jesus for the black nation', as one worker put it. Or, according to another, 'They've got a home, they've got everything; instead of resting and letting their sons look after them, they are ready to stand firm for their union.' In the first month two hundred joined; by the second, four, and by the third, six, out of eleven hundred workers had joined. With each gain for the union, relationships between workers and Dunlop management deteriorated further.[49]

The process of union recruitment was difficult – not only because of the fears enunciated by workers. It was made complicated by the fact that the in-company union activated recruitment inside the factory. Dunlop had, since the 1940s, had an established in-company union – the Durban Rubber Workers' Union – to cater for its Indian and coloured workers. This 'union', as a response to MAWU's recruitment drives, opened its ranks to include African workers. A black personnel officer began zealously organising workers against MAWU. This precipitated an escalation of conflict; in a short time workers had to decide to which 'impi' (regiment) they belonged. Conflict became

personalised between the two 'chiefs' of impis – the personnel officer and one of the elders. The few workers who had joined the Rubber Workers' Union urged the others not to join a union of 'outsiders', who would steal their money; they should join a union recognised by management. MAWU was accused of wanting to break the company and lose everyone their jobs. The MAWU supporters accused the others of being 'bosses' tools' and pointed out that while the workers ran MAWU, it was not clear who ran the Durban Rubber Workers' Union. As the conflict escalated and MAWU's supporters became more vociferous, hundreds of workers began to be recruited from the Labour Office – Dunlop feared a strike.[50]

These factory conflicts, exacerbated by Dunlop refusing to recognise MAWU, enhanced the metal union's dominance in the factory. But the strike, which could have meant the defeat of MAWU, did not take place. Instead the steering committee members kept up a pile-driving pressure on management for recognition. They also set about creating a play about work and life at Dunlop to circulate and publicise their grievances. The play in turn tightened the links between Dunlop workers and the rapidly expanding national union movement.[51] Again, instead of resorting to strike action over recognition, the workers instituted a canteen boycott which was supported by the Dunlop workers in Benoni. The steering committee finally, in numerous contingents, began travelling to Ladysmith to assist in organising Dunlop workers there. In the midst of all this flurry of activity, Dunlop decided to abolish the liaison committee, stop the Durban Rubber Workers' Union and, finally, to recognise MAWU.

Recognition of the trade union signalled, at the same time, an attempt to roll back the tide of militancy in the factory. According to shop stewards, there was an immediate clamp-down on discipline and a tightening of supervisory controls in the factory. The 'three warnings' system began to be implemented with zeal. Finally Dunlop's unbending attitude to unilaterally changing 'scores' and production bonuses led to mini-stoppages and go-slows all over the plant. Both workers and management expected a major confrontation. In the midst of this escalating conflict, MAWU and its shop stewards were trying to negotiate a wage agreement with Dunlop. (It was also at this time, October 1983, that four worker leaders were dismissed; and it was over this issue that workers were to strike in 1984.) The company and the union were seriously deadlocked over wages; management refusing to speak to the workers' representatives unless the go-slow and the factory turmoil ceased. Workers were pushing for a strike. Issues almost came to a chaotic climax during a mass meeting called by the union. There the shop stewards argued for discipline on the factory floor, and for following the procedures required for a legal strike. On this there was instant division; workers attacked the shop stewards for avoiding the issues and demanded immediate strike action. At the end of the meeting, during which the union and the shop stewards almost lost a substantial number of supporters, the

argument for a legal strike prevailed. The strike ballot predictably showed over 90 per cent support for a strike on 16 November. Management retorted by recruiting potential scab labour. On the evening of 15 November, as the union was getting ready for the strike, the Minister of Manpower called for a conciliation board to resolve the dispute. This would have made the strike illegal unless the minister's decision was accepted. On 16 November, the strike did not happen. Instead, hundreds of unemployed potential scabs, having been promised jobs, crowded outside the factory gates. After hearing that there were no jobs to be had, they turned into an angry crowd, charging through the gates and towards the factory demanding their jobs. In a twist of irony, the police were called in to repulse the scab labourers. Conciliation meetings in November and December failed to resolve the deadlock. The factory closed down for Christmas with a strike looming in the new year.

The workers returned from their Christmas break 'cold': many had accumulated more debts during the festive season; others needed money urgently because relatives in the countryside had borrowed heavily to offset the drought; and most were feeling uncertain about lengthy confrontation. The shop stewards were urged to settle and accept management's offer.

After the failure of the wage negotiations, both the work-force and the union experienced internal problems and discrimination. The shop stewards felt that the workers were turning 'cold', against them. Accusations of being sell-outs echoed within the shop steward structures, and acrimony developed between shop stewards and the workers. Enemies of the union climbed onto the bandwagon. A series of death threats were sent to most shop stewards' home addresses. The union felt a severe weakening of its presence in the factory, and the shop stewards witnessed worker unity collapsing. At that stage it was difficult to assess where the challenge to union authority was coming from. One challenge was coming from a younger and more militant strata of workers who accused the leadership of not being tough enough. By the time of the 1984 shop steward elections the feeling was that a good number of shop stewards were 'too soft' and too accommodating to Dunlop's management. MAWU was saved from disintegrating into factional disputes by its strict allegiance to factory elections and democracy. The electors retained some of the old shop stewards and brought into the limelight a new stratum of leaders. All of them were now seen as legitimate representatives, pulling the union out of a crisis in the factory.

It is to the credit of the shop stewards that reconstruction began through rounds of endless meetings and consultation with workers. Furthermore, closer ties were developed with all the other Dunlop factories' shop stewards. Finally, they conducted themselves with a missionary zeal, in airing grievances and seeking out problems in the factory – given the wage agreement which was binding for the year. But if their effort during the first half of the year was enormous, their activities were enhanced by an over-politicised mood taking over the factory.

The year rolled on with a vengeance for the majority of black workers in South Africa. Pressure – economic and political – was becoming suffocating at work, at home and *en route* from the one place to the other. Conflict over bus fares was brewing. General sales tax was increased. Then came the increase in interest rates on hire-purchase and credit. Alongside this came political turbulence, affecting the residents of Lamontville, Clermont and Chesterville. Finally, the new political reforms – the tricameral parliament – were furiously debated. There was an embittered mood: 'Dunlop's blocking us on wages . . . the government is stealing from us with Sales Tax. They then use the money and press us down more and get the Indians on their side . . .'; '. . . Dunlop is like the government. Sometimes they confuse me . . . Is Dunlop the government and the government our exploiter . . . ?'; 'I sometimes don't know whether I need to fight for my rights or to fight to protect my rights.'; '. . . it's all the same: Dunlop says this is how many tyres to make the score . . . they decide. The government says this is the score: Indians in and Kaffir out, they decide.' By the middle of the year, the political register among black workers at Dunlop spelt a new mood.[52]

A few weeks before the strike, a worker died on the job, crushed by a moulding machine. The event struck a political chord amongst the workers. He was immediately seen to have died in the struggle on the 'machine'. He was given a hero's funeral at Lamontville during the peak of the UDF and Inkatha conflict. If anything, this enhanced the political feelings of the work-force. In addition, there was a shop steward structure, confident of its legitimacy, basing itself on a tradition of 'low trust' of managerial intentions, and served by a tough industrial union. Both were on a collision course with management.

NOTES

1. Alfred Qabula, 'Praise Poem to FOSATU', *FOSATU Worker News*, 31, 1984.
2. Interview with A. Ntuli, October 1984.
3. R. Hyman, *Strikes* (Harmondsworth, 1978), p.24.
4. See V. Padayachee et al., 'The Control of Consciousness: Indian Workers and Trade Unions in Durban' (seminar paper, University of Durban-Westville, 1985); and, K. Luckhardt and B. Wall, *Organise or Starve: The History of SACTU* (London, 1981) – for an account of the strikes and contrasting opinion.
5. M. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban*, (Pietermaritzburg, 1951), parts 1 and 2.
6. Board of Trade and Industries, 'Monopolistic Conditions in the Supply and Distribution of Pneumatic Tyres', no.489, 1959.
7. See *inter alia*, Dunlop SA, annual reports, 1962 to 1979.
8. *Sunday Tribune*, October 1983, see also *Tyre Talk*, September/October 1984.
9. MAWU, 'Memorandum on Dunlop SA', Durban, 1984. Calculations based on annual reports of Dunlop SA, 1981–83, and June figures 1984.
10. *The Economist*, London, 1969–79.
11. Ibid.

12. MAWU, Records of Membership compiled for FOSATU Report, 1984.
13. A. Sitas, 'MAWU in Natal', *South African Labour Bulletin*, 9(5), 1983.
14. On the mill, see A.T. Qabula, 'Cruel Beyond Belief', Manuscript, Durban, 1983, pt.2, pp.13 ff.
15. Interviews with W. Banda, September, October, 1983, April, June 1984 and May 1985.
16. A more extensive account of factory life has to await the completion of our broader report.
17. These issues and concepts I have raised in, 'Black Metal Workers' Responses on the East Rand: Changes in the Metal Industry', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984). See especially chapters four and five.
18. An apposite title for 'spies' or 'Bosses' yes-men', captured with vibrancy in a play by Mi Hlatshwayo from Dunlop Sports: 'Gallows for Mr Iscariot Impimpi', 1985.
19. Interviews with M. Kambule, September 1983, April 1984, June 1985.
20. *Dunlop Gazette* is an in-company journal available to workers; it was started in 1942.
21. Interview with N. Bhaca, May 1984.
22. On the strike see Padayachee et al., 'Control of Consciousness'; also, interviews with: Mr Alexander (May 1984 – S. Maree), R. Arenstein (July 1984), R.D. Naidoo (August 1984) and *inter alia*, *Indian Opinion*, 1942–43.
23. Department of Economics, University of Natal, *The African Factory Worker: A Sample Study of the Life and Labour of the Urban African Worker* (Cape Town, 1950), pp.25 ff.
24. Ibid., pp.96 ff.
25. Interview with A. Ntuli.
26. *African Factory Worker*, p.21.
27. Interviews with Banda and Bhaca; Mthethwa, October 1984.
28. See *African Factory Worker*, pp.1–112.
29. Ibid, p.5.
30. Ibid, p.26.
31. Ibid, p.117–23, see also, I. Edwards, 'Living on the Smell of an Oilrag: African Life in Cato Manor Farm in the Late 1940s' (History Workshop paper, University of Natal, 1983), and, G. Maasdorp and A.S.B. Humphreys (eds) *From Shantytown to Township* (Cape Town, 1975).
32. See E. Webster, 'The 1949 Durban Riots: A Case Study in Race and Class' in P. Bonner (ed.) *Working Papers in Southern African Studies* (Johannesburg, 1977).
33. For descriptions see *Mayor's Minutes*, Durban, 1939–47.
34. Interview with Kambule.
35. Robertson's Food Factory in Durban was substituting at the time Indian male and white female workers for African migrants. Interview with General Manager, June 1984.
36. M.W. Swanson (ed.), *The Views of Mahlathi* (Durban, 1982), pp.68–9.
37. See J. Yawitch, 'Natal, 1959 – the Women's Protests', (History of Opposition conference paper, University of Witwatersrand, 1978), and C. Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (London, 1982), pp.230 ff.
38. See A. Sitas et al, 'Trade Unions', for average wage structures; for Dunlop, see *African Factory Worker*, pp.25 ff.
39. On the 'Durban system' see P. Maylam, 'Shackled by the Contradictions: The Municipal Response to African Urbanisation in Durban, 1920–1950', *African Urban Studies*, 14, 1982.

40. Edwards, 'Oilrag'; Maasdorp and Humphreys, *Shantytown*.
41. On this, see also L. Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie* (New Haven, 1965), Introduction.
42. See Luckhardt and Wall, *Organise or Starve* and R. Lambert, draft of Ph.D. thesis on SACTU, 1985.
43. Interviews with W. Ntuli, Banda, Bhaca, Malebane, Qabula, June 1983. Also, individual interviews as above, 1984–85.
44. See A. Sitas et al., 'Trade Unions, Monopoly Power and Poverty in Natal's Industries' (Carnegie Commission conference paper, no. 108, Cape Town, 1983), pp. 1–2.
45. Champion's shop was burned down by the insurgents in 1959.
46. For the interviews here the Inkatha-type revival predates the movement.
47. Qabula, 'A Cruel Life' and interviews, 1983/4/5.
48. The first mixing machines in the labour process.
49. Interviews with shop stewards, May–July, 1983.
50. Ibid.
51. See *South African Labour Bulletin*, 9(8), 1984 – see contributions by A. Sitas, K. Sole and more particularly A. Von Kotze.
52. Interview with chairman of shop stewards committee, August 1984.

Part Three

Life on the Margins

Lamontville

A History 1930–60

LOUISE TORR

Lamontville is Durban's oldest African township. Built in 1934, it represented an attempt to contain and co-opt the African middle class. The 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act had made provision for the establishment of such a township as Lamontville – the delay in its construction was a reflection of a long conflict over who should bear the cost of African housing in Durban.

Prior to the 1923 Act, little formal provision had been made for the accommodation of Africans in Durban. The migrant labour system largely relieved employers and the local authorities of the burden of providing accommodation for African families. A section of the urban labour force depended on the reserves for part of its subsistence.[1] However, rural impoverishment and increased urbanisation undermined this dependence, and the urban nexus itself became fundamental in the reproduction of labour power. The acceptance of this was signified by the provision in the 1923 Act for local authorities to set aside land for 'native villages' in urban areas.

Throughout the 1920s, the Durban local authorities ignored the provisions of the 1923 Act for the creation of a township. The act made no provision for the financing of these townships – this cost was intended to be borne by the local authorities. More than any other local authority, Durban attempted to give concrete expression to the belief that urban Africans should themselves bear a substantial portion of their cost of reproduction through the municipal Native Revenue Account (NRA). The NRA proceeds paid for the municipal hostels, and for one hundred and twenty cottages for African families at Baumannville, built between 1915 and 1917. However, even the large beer profits were insufficient to finance a comprehensive programme of municipal housing for Africans.[2]

The creation of the township was further delayed by the lack of consensus within the ruling class in Durban over the form which African accommodation was to assume. The debate was essentially over whether to adopt a strategy of direct or indirect control, that is, whether to encourage a migrant workforce or a settled proletariat. Reacting to the challenges of African urbanisation and increasing militancy, the Stallard doctrine of 1922 was that only Africans 'ministering to the needs of the white man' should be permitted on a temporary

basis in the urban areas. This view was endorsed by C.F. Layman, the manager of Durban's municipal Native Administration Department (NAD). He objected to the creation of townships for Africans in urban areas, as this encouraged permanence. He believed that the Durban local state should 'provide only for those natives whose services are required for the business and welfare of the town, in the form of locations over which we have complete and absolute control'.[3]

On the other hand, liberal organisations were at the forefront of the move to establish a 'village' for African families. In particular, the Joint Council for Europeans and Natives exerted pressure on the Durban local authorities to establish a village for Africans along the lines prescribed by the 1923 Act. The white members of the Joint Council, reflecting small commercial and industrial interests, concluded that migrancy undermined labour productivity. A representative of the Joint Council believed that 'it would be advantageous to the European if the Council made better provision for accommodating those natives [employed in Durban] by the establishment of a native village'.[4]

A Joint Council investigation in 1928 ascertained that at least 75 per cent of Africans living in informal housing in the peri-urban areas, lived in family groups. The Joint Council lamented that 'decent native artisans and their families are compelled to live in dirty and tumble-down premises near illicit liquor-sellers and quarrelsome people'. Liberals believed it necessary to separate the African aspirant middle class from the proletariat, especially since these two classes coexisted in backyard premises, and under deplorable conditions, outside the borough.[5]

Infectious diseases and concern for public health, operating as societal metaphors, exercised a profound influence on the evolution and development of urban segregation in South Africa. At the turn of the century, townships had been created under the pretext of preserving public health – at Ndabeni (Cape Town) and Klipspruit (Johannesburg), for example. Plagues were seen to emanate from slums. Whites articulated this fear in terms of the 'sanitation syndrome'. So Africans were removed from the inner cities to locations beyond the urban periphery.[6] However, the 'sanitation syndrome' explanation must be situated within the social context and material relationships into which it was integrally bound. The dominant segregationist ideology, with its inherent social pathology, affirmed the temporary status of Africans in towns and served to defend and entrench existing property relations in the urban areas.[7]

The extension of the borough boundaries in 1932 represented an attempt by the local state to deal with the problem of social control. Durban's boundaries had been barely modified since 1854, and land available for housing was severely restricted. Consequently black and white peri-urban settlements had been growing. In 1930 the borough contained 126 020 persons, while 101 786 lived beyond the borough boundary in peri-urban areas. The Durban Boundaries Commission of 1930 found health conditions in these areas deplorable.

Financially constrained Local Administration and Health Boards were unable to deal with problems of health, sanitation and building inspection. These boards represented white landed interests and did not accept responsibility for housing Africans who worked in Durban. In 1932 the former Local Administration and Health Board Areas of South Coast Junction, Umhlatuzana, Mayville, Sydenham and Greenwood Park were incorporated into the borough.[8]

By the late 1920s, African worker resistance in Durban was characterised by increasing militancy. Between 1926 and 1930, the Natal branch of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) under A.W.G. Champion, and the Natal African Congress (NAC) collaborated to articulate the grievances of the urban African working class.[9] Popular opposition was mobilised around the beer monopoly which served as the symbol of Africans' oppression in Durban. In June 1929 concerted boycotts of the beerhalls were organised. Clashes between white vigilantes and boycotters left six Africans and two whites dead, and one hundred and eight persons injured.[10] After 1929 ultra-low wages and economic hardship fuelled resistance to the monopoly system. For the first time the NRA's revenue dropped drastically. After 1930, the Communist Party under Johannes Nkosi further stimulated this popular militancy. African workers in Durban were responsive to a nationwide call for a pass-burning campaign on 16 December 1930.[11]

The local and central state demonstrated a dual response to African worker militancy in Durban. On the one hand, a policy of amelioration was adopted. The 'Durban system' of African administration and the beer monopoly was vindicated by the De Waal Commission of Inquiry, appointed to investigate the riots of 1929. De Waal, however, mildly criticised the Durban local state for its failure to provide housing and welfare facilities for its African population. De Waal concluded that a 'residential native township' was imperative for the 'better class native'. And he 'strongly endorsed a policy of ameliorating the social conditions of Africans as a means of gaining social and political control'.[12] To this end the Durban Corporation established the 'Goodwill' Native Advisory Board in 1930, and planned the provision of differential housing facilities for middle-class Africans. A loan of £50 000 was sought from the central government for a 'village' for the 'best elements of the married type'.

On the other hand, draconian measures characterised the state's repressive response to African resistance. Influx control was tightened, the movement of women to urban areas was severely curtailed, and over a thousand workers were expelled from Durban after 1930. Various parts of the city were systematically proclaimed segregated areas, and all Africans not exempted under the act were required to move to a 'native location, hostel or village'.[13]

The militancy of 1929–30 had alerted the local authorities to the dangers of a frustrated aspirant African petty bourgeois class identifying increasingly with the working class. The 'Goodwill' Advisory Board was an attempt to co-opt

this petty bourgeois leadership in the hope of defusing the militancy and breaking the boycott. The boycott undermined the ability of the local authorities to provide housing for Africans, as funds would be derived from NRS revenue which depended largely on the beer monopoly. The need to placate and co-opt the African petty bourgeoisie, and to draw them away from the working class, lay beneath the council's plan to establish a township. Thus efforts to acquire land for the township were redoubled.

The use of valuable land for the township was never contemplated. Rather, the council sought land that was not suitable either for industrial purposes or for white residential areas. The use of low-investment land for townships was not new. Swanson has described

> the tendency for locations to be established or proposed in the vicinity of rubbish depots and sewerage farms, for example at Uitvlugt (Ndabeni) near Cape Town, Klipspruit for Johannesburg, and on the Umgeni [River] side of the rubbish depot [Durban].[14]

Furthermore, by creating townships on unprofitable land the local authorities avoided excessive financial outlays.

Increasing local state involvement in the sphere of housing was not without its obstacles. The council first attempted to establish a township on land bought at Wentworth in 1926. This land lay within the jurisdiction of the South Coast Junction Area Local Administration and Health Board (LAHB). The local authority's intervention was characterised by a conflict of interest between industrialists and landowners: this was resolved only after the local state had intervened on behalf of the industrialists. The South Coast Junction Area LAHB, representing landed interests, 'persistently opposed the native village scheme', on the grounds that the opportunity for successful land sales in the Wentworth area would decline.[15]

In 1931 the Durban City Council acquired Wood's Estate to the south of Durban (renamed Mobeni after the Second World War) for industrial purposes. Of this land, 425 acres, unsuitable for industry because of its steep terrain, was set aside for the township. This was the 'least desirable land on the whole estate' for sub-economic housing, but it was considered 'suitable' for a number of reasons. First, the position of the township did not impinge on the interests of white property-owners.[16] Second, the location of labour close to industry served the interests of industrialists. Above all, the NRA underpinned the cost of land redundant for industrial purposes, while the council fulfilled its obligations to provide land for African housing in terms of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act, without being burdened financially. The price of Wood's Estate was £220 000. Money spent on potential industrial sites could be recovered by the corporation through industrial land sales. The NRA was burdened with £24 660 of the cost of Wood's Estate – for land which otherwise held little value for the council.

The township was named after the Revd A. Lamont, mayor of Durban from 1929 to 1932. Lamont's council was characterised by liberal-reformist policies in Durban in the years 1929–30, when a solution was sought to rapid African urbanisation and increasing militancy, by engaging the support of the African petty bourgeoisie. Their co-option was acknowledged through differential residence at Lamontville, and through a measure of political expression on the Native Advisory Board – indeed the members of the board suggested Lamont's name for the township.

Lamontville was constructed over a period of roughly thirty years – from the opening of the township in the early 1930s up to 1961. This development occurred in four distinct phases: 1932–34 (the Old Location – 100 cottages); 1937–39 (New Look – 380 cottages); 1948–53 (1 500 flatted houses and flats); and 1955–61 (900 houses in the letting-selling schemes of Gijima, Nylon and Ezigwilini).

The Durban local state attempted to divert its obligations to finance African housing onto the NRA. The NRA however, was mulcted of additional expenditure as capital costs were driven up by the township's inappropriate terrain; by the use of expensive white labour for housing construction; and by the fact that no funds were forthcoming from the council's general rates fund. At the same time, the local authority retained its position as landlord and collector of rentals, thereby acquiring all income generated from the township land and houses. This in turn led to conflict between the central and local state.

Both the government and the local authority were involved in financing African housing. The Housing Act of 1920 signified the first step towards the provision of government finance for housing, and the state provided an increasing amount during the following decades. Whilst the local state accepted loans for housing from the government during the 1930s and 1940s, it directed the building and labour process in Lamontville. Tension arose between the central and local state, as the Durban local authority side-stepped its financial obligations, involving the NRA in increasing expenditure, while at the same time collecting all rentals from the township. After 1948 the central state began coveting this role for itself, and by 1971 it had, through the administration boards, come to supersede the local authority.

The policy of the Durban City Council was not only to keep the NRA self-balancing, but to make it profitable in order to finance capital requirements. By 1937 a huge capital reserve of £373 368 had been built out of revenue surpluses of the NRA.[18] Whilst in other centres the NRA received subsidies from the general rates fund (in 1946–47 the Johannesburg general rates fund supported the NRA to the extent of £182 000), by 1948 Durban's ratepayers had not contributed one penny towards the subsidisation of African housing.[19]

However, the general buoyancy of the NRA did not extend to Lamontville. The total cost of the 'Old Location' was £27 650. The Central Housing Board

approved a loan of £24 600, repayable over thirty years, with the proviso that the deficit of £3 050 should be charged against the borough rates. However, nothing was transferred to the NRA from the general rates fund. In addition, the annual running costs of the township exceeded income from rents and other fees. By 1936 the accumulated loss on Lamontville was already over £14 000. The houses alone, estimated at £142 per dwelling, cost £156 to build on account of the high labour costs and the need for expensive excavation works and retaining walls.[20] By the late 1940s, the council's net annual loss per unit of accommodation at Lamontville was about £34, which was four times higher than the next highest loss which was that at Chesterville.

In addition to the losses on houses, rents and rates on land at Lamontville involved the NRA in further expense. Rentals on the land at Lamontville were fixed at £886 p.a., which was debited to the NRA. The council raised an additional debit in respect of rates, raising the deficit to £1 455 p.a. Since Lamontville was isolated, capital expenditure by the Durban corporation on access roads, water and electricity mains, was for the sole benefit of the township. The Town Treasurer believed that it was 'sound financial practice and equitable policy' to charge the capital expenditure to the NRA, since the capital costs of these services would not be met from the annual income accruing from these services.[21] This meant in effect, that revenue from Lamontville residents passed to the NRA, and then in respect of rates, interest and redemption, to the borough fund. In practice, segregation policies in Durban meant that township residents were subsidising the borough fund.

This situation led to tension between the local and the central state. In principle, both the government and the municipality were involved in losses on sub-economic housing. Under the sub-economic housing policy of the 1930s, the government and the municipality shared the loss. During the 1940s, the proportion of the loss borne by the government was increased from an even ratio of 1 to 1 to 3 to 1.

The Durban corporation in effect suffered no losses, as deficits were debited to the NRA. Only 10 to 13 of the 425 acres had been used for housing, yet the NRA carried a deficit of £1 455 p.a. in respect of rates on the whole area of 425 acres. Rodseth, the government Inspector of Urban Locations found this position inequitable, as 'in effect, the City Council is making the native contribute towards the loss on trams, beaches, music and other facilities, which . . . were European amenities'. In Durban the 'Council had done nothing to give the natives back some of the profits from the sale of native beer', through the subsidisation of housing.[22]

The sub-economic housing formula of the 1930s proved incapable of meeting the increased demand for housing during the war, and was superseded in 1944 by the provisions of the National Housing and Planning Commission, whereby the government carried a larger share of the loss on sub-economic housing. But this also failed to stimulate the construction of houses. The

Nationalist government's new housing dispensation set out to remedy these 'maladies' by the passage of the Native Building Workers Act of 1951 and the Native Services Levy Act of 1952. The effects of both these legislative measures were evident in Lamontville, with the introduction of a homeownership scheme in the late 1950s. However, it is necessary first to consider why this scheme had not been implemented before, despite repeated appeals from the occupants of Lamontville for homeownership.

The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 prohibited Africans from acquiring freehold tenure in municipal townships. Under this act, and the Housing Act of 1920, the local authorities could 'advance monies or supply materials on credit to approved natives for the construction of houses or huts' in townships.[23] During the 1930s and 1940s, the Durban local authorities blocked all avenues towards the achievement of this objective in Lamontville.

The opportunities available to African artisans and builders at Lamontville were not lost on James N. Ngcobo, ICU representative and member of the Native Advisory Board (NAB). Ngcobo, a professed 'bricklayer and carpenter by trade, and an architect by profession',[24] proclaimed

> on behalf of a good number of qualified native bricklayers, carpenters and painters, the above said village is for natives and is to be built by native revenue . . . it is most advisable for the Durban Town Council to allow native builders, carpenters and painters into that work . . .[25]

The delicate question of the employment of African artisans on skilled work was subject to social and political considerations, which militated against the advancement of skilled African artisans.

In the first place, legislation restricted the employment of skilled African artisans. Representing national capital's alliance with white wage-earners, the Pact government strove to protect and promote the interests of white workers. Job colour bars and the 'civilised labour policy' promoted the movement of whites rather than blacks into skilled and supervisory positions.[26] Building was one of the trades affected by this legislation.

In the second place, the Durban local authorities were guided by certain considerations:

> It would not be possible to allow natives to carry out that contract [at Lamontville] at a lesser price and wage than is being paid to European labour, as trade unions would be up in arms, as they would demand that those men carrying out particular work be paid a particular rate of wages.[27]

Moreover, construction on the township was begun during the worst years of the Great Depression. The building industry, always sensitive to economic fluctuations, suffered severely. One thousand building artisans were out of

work during the depression and Durban experienced more unemployment in the building industry than any other region in the Union.[28] While the Durban City Council did nothing to alleviate the unemployment problems of Africans, the relief of white unemployment was a major preoccupation of the council during this period.[29]

The war years 1939–45 gave rise to economic expansion which resulted in massive urban migration and the growth of enormous shack settlements in the peri-urban areas. The acute housing crisis of these years was exacerbated by escalating building costs, an increasing shortage of materials and labour, and a growing reluctance on the part of municipalities to incur further losses on subsidised African housing.

In Durban, as elsewhere, intransigence was encountered from the representatives of white trade unions, who were threatened by the increasing movement of Africans into skilled professions. A recommendation in May 1948 that Africans should be engaged as 'handymen' on the repair and maintenance of buildings, particularly in Lamontville, met with concerted opposition from the white trade unions.[30]

The Nationalist government resolved this impasse by the Native Building Workers Act of 1951, by which the state provided for the employment of African builders in African areas only, at rates of pay which differed from those determined by industrial agreements. This legislation curtailed opportunity for African advancement by restricting the areas in which skilled African workers could operate, and amounted to a defence of skilled work for white labour during a time when their relatively privileged position was being undermined by the entry of Africans into these skilled trades.[31]

In 1955 African building workers were employed on a homeownership scheme at Lamontville; this formed part of the government's plan to reduce costs on housing by conversion from sub-economic to economic rentals. This scheme comprised 800 dwellings: 750 letting/selling units, and 50 sites for the erection of 'better-type' houses under a housing loan scheme. A maximum loan of £250 was advanced to the prospective homeowner, which was to be repaid over thirty years. In July 1956, African building contractors began work at Lamontville. By 1958, the full complement of 743 houses in the letting/selling scheme was completed. Whereas a four-roomed house could be erected by these builders for £250, the lowest tender from a white contractor was £316 per house.[32] The use of African building workers meant a substantial reduction in building costs, produced workmanship of a high quality and induced homeowners to improve their properties of their own accord, a feature which the municipal NAD encouraged by making building materials available at reduced prices. The popularity of the homeownership scheme made it plain that there was a considerable demand amongst residents of Lamontville for larger and better houses. Due to popular demand, a further 86 sites were made available for homeownership dwellings in 1959.

The township was intended for the African aspirant middle class. When the Revd Mtimkulu of the NAB complained that transport costs to and from the township were prohibitive, the (white) Acting Chairman of the Board retorted that 'natives in better financial circumstances than those referred to by Rev. Mtimkulu would take up these houses in the first instance'.[33] From the outset, all applications for accommodation in the township were 'carefully scrutinized' to ensure that the 'right type of native' was selected, and occupancy was 'subject to proper behaviour'.

In many ways A.W.G. Champion exemplified the 'type of native' the Council intended for Lamontville. He had entrepreneurial inclinations and was a man of some means. He himself observed, 'I am a native and that place is set up for natives like myself. I am qualified in every respect to live there.'[34] Yet, in 1935 Champion's application for a cottage at Lamontville was turned down on the grounds that as he 'figured very prominently in the 1929 native riots and was subsequently banished from Durban . . . it would be undesirable to allow him to take up his residence at the . . . Location'. The local authorities sought to 'veto any application . . . by a native whose presence may be considered to be undesirable or against the best interests of the location'.[35]

Control and repression of political activity were central to the administration of the township, a view which is pungently expressed by J. Rex:

> In these areas, called 'locations', a location superintendent responsible to the local authority ruled with absolute authority aided by a specially recruited municipal police force concerned with implementing the dozens of laws which in his everyday life the migrant, his wife or his children might break. In the location a continuous programme of pass raids, liquor raids and other forms of harassment creates a total insecurity which effectively prevents any but completely clandestine political organization.[36]

The duties of the Lamontville Superintendent typified those prescribed for all location superintendents. His basic responsibility for 'maintenance and order' included the selection of tenants, the allocation of houses and trading rights, and the surveillance of the affairs of the tenants. He was responsible for the policing of the township – he could search for liquor, make arrests and expel unauthorised persons. The superintendent had 'the power to enter houses at any hour of the night, to search in the house for liquor, strangers and demand the production of passes'.[37] Regulations prohibited residents from receiving overnight visitors without the permission of the superintendent, whilst no one not a *bona fide* resident was permitted inside the township between the hours of 8 p.m. and 5 a.m., except with the superintendent's authority.[38]

Superintendents were men of little or modest education and social standing. Evidence to the Broome Commission in 1947 revealed that not one of the

superintendents in Durban held university qualifications. A memorandum from the Combined Locations Advisory Board to the Broome Commission noted that 'powers that are given to the location Superintendents do not fit in with their educational training nor in many cases social standing'. The Advisory Board members protested that the superintendents 'are promoted from writing passes and sales of kaffir beer'. The power and assiduity of these officials created resentment in the township; to the African petty bourgeoisie they represented a class of men unqualified to 'control and supervise the affairs of civilized and educated natives'.[39]

The residents particularly resented the interference of the superintendents in their domestic affairs. The partisan intervention of the superintendent in the Advisory Board elections at Somtseu Road in the 1940s, and at Lamontville in the late 1940s and 1950s, created bitter animosity amongst the inhabitants, particularly since the superintendent, a man of modest education, was allied to the 'illiterates' in the township against the educated class. By 1960 enormous enmity had been created in Lamontville, between the opposing Imbokodwe and Isikhumba parties, by the actions of the security corps, and the involvement of the superintendent and the induna in the internal politics of the township. Reports of bias and victimisation were levelled against these officials in regard to the allocation of housing, and the administration and policing of Lamontville.[40]

Objections to the township were of a serious nature. Topographical problems and the paucity of measures to counteract these difficulties, presented themselves from the outset. Within a few days of the opening of Lamontville, soil erosion was brought on by the absence of guttering and stormwater drainage. In 1936 Layman reported that

> after heavy rain . . . togt boys fill in washaways . . . Houses have been vacated because water has run right through them, banked up soil washed down from above and made them absolutely uninhabitable. During the last heavy rains one cottage was so undermined that it is surprising that it did not break in two. Water pipes are constantly being exposed and on one occasion the main water pipe from the reservoir had to be supported to save a collapse, pending the filling in of soil.[41]

Later that year Chester, the Acting Manager of the municipal NAD, reported that due to 'lack of proper drainage', there was a 'tendency for some houses to become undermined, whilst others silt up . . . [some] are constantly being buried in sand . . . [some] are badly cracked . . . in wet weather, water runs into . . . cottages.' Masinda, a member of the NAB, reported that in one instance, 'the water was flowing from the land surrounding the house right into the premises by the front door and running out through the back door'.[42]

African families, who were required to move from the proclaimed areas of the city, were reluctant to occupy cottages at Lamontville. A major grievance was that Lamontville, situated nine miles from central Durban, was too remote from the city. In 1936 it was reported that thirty-five residents were using 'push-bikes' in order to save on transport.[43] The train fare was 8s. 6d. per month, or 21 per cent of the average monthly wage, and further travel expenses were incurred through the absence of schools at Lamontville, as monthly fares for school children were 5s. to 7s. 6d.

Initially, trading facilities were absent at Lamontville and all requirements had to be procured in town, involving train fares. When trading stores were later established at Lamontville their prices were steep because of the absence of competition. Regulations at Lamontville prohibited the wives of tenants from trading. Distance and the prohibitive transport costs prevented women from engaging in informal sector activities, particularly washing and sewing, to augment household incomes. Women were not able to cultivate vegetable gardens because of insufficient arable land in Lamontville. The shack areas offered better opportunities, particularly for the lucrative liquor trade. But the watchful eye of the superintendent and the threat of eviction prohibited such practices at Lamontville.

Durban city councillors expressed astonishment at the preference of Africans for remaining in the shack areas where Indian landlords were charging up to £1 or £1 10s. per month for a single room, whereas a three-roomed cottage could be procured at Lamontville for 17s. 6d. or 15s. in the Old Location or 12s. 6d. in New Look. Ngcobo, ICU *yase* Natal representative on the NAB, pointed out that an average African wage of £2 per month was entirely inadequate to meet the expenses of living in the township. In the early 1930s, a large proportion of Durban's African workers were migrant workers. Wages were low and were set at a 'subsidised' level, in other words, that of a single male whose family received subsistence in the reserve. Such a wage was entirely inadequate to meet the needs of families who were permanent residents in the urban area. This was the fundamental reason for the reluctance of African families to move from the proclaimed areas and the urban peripheries to Lamontville. As the Revd Mtimkulu explained:

> By living at Mayville and other such districts, the natives were able to walk to work; their womenfolk could take in washing and their children were able to attend school in the district, whereas in the case of [Lamontville] Native Village, the tenants would have to pay 8s. 6d. per month for transport and no school was provided for the children.[44]

Whilst expenses at Lamontville proved prohibitive for a certain class of Africans, particularly those who had been renting backyard premises, objections to conditions at Lamontville also came from the African petty bourgeoisie. Bopela and Shangase of the NAB argued that houses at Lamontville

would appeal only to the 'type of natives at present living in undesirable premises' or to 'natives in poor circumstances and would not attract natives with independent means'. For this class, the houses at Lamontville held many disadvantages: they were too small to accommodate the usual household furniture; the absence of inner doors between the bedrooms and living room removed all sense of privacy; sanitary arrangements were primitive; and the cooking area was too restricted. This class of African lobbied for the introduction of a homeownership scheme at Lamontville; and it was on behalf of such people that Champion proclaimed that 'the natives did not want Corporation houses'.

Insight into the general layout and conditions at Lamontville can be gained from a consideration of the names by which the occupants of Lamontville described its various areas. The original area became known as 'Old Location' or 'Engxabana', meaning dispute or quarrel, a reference to the disagreements which occurred over the semi-detached gardens. The area encompassed by the 380 houses built in the late 1930s became known as 'New Look', simply because these houses differed from the smaller barrack-like houses in the Old Location. The flatted houses built in the early 1950s for high-density accommodation, became known as 'Inkawini' or 'Izinkawini', meaning 'monkeys', the implication being that the occupants of the double-storey blocks were regarded as tree-climbers. 'Izitezi' ('stairs'), referred to the few flats which were erected at the same time. The Extension scheme, built in the early 1950s, became known as 'Gijima', which means 'to run'. Initially this area was remote from transport facilities and the occupants had to run to work in the mornings. Also, tenants who committed misdemeanours (for example, illicit brewing), were sometimes 'banished' to Gijima on account of its undesirable locality. This area, for years without transport or street lights, and farthest from the administrative offices, harboured the 'criminal elements', and the occupants were constantly on the run. Thus Gijima was considered to be a dangerous and hence less desirable area.[45]

Kuper notes that the residents of Lamontville 'caricature their fate with ironic humour' in their designation of the various 'suburbs' of the township. The insecurity of tenure was not lost upon those who named the letting/selling scheme of the late 1950s 'Nylon'. This homeownership scheme, based only on leasehold rights, was as transparent as nylon material, introduced into Durban at that time. Despite the fact that 'Nylon' was one of the better areas of Lamontville, the name indicated the flimsiness of the houses. The houses in 'Nylon', though colourfully painted, were more uniform in appearance than those in 'Parktown', 'Durban North' or 'Ezigwilini' (the 'place of the rich'). The occupants of Ezigwilini were ridiculed by Lamontville residents, who contended that they owned only the bricks of their houses and not the land.[46]

Since Africans were prohibited from owning land in townships, the 'homeownership' schemes of the late 1950s in Lamontville implied no more than the ownership of the houses, while the land was retained by the local authority. This leasehold tenure in fact lasted less than fifteen years as the government in 1970 clamped down on loans for houses outside the bantustans.

With the establishment of the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly in 1972 and the threatened removal of South African citizenship from all Africans, with the *quid pro quo* of citizenship of a spurious bantustan, African urban rights in Lamontville were undermined even further. The homeownership scheme of the 1950s was a means of 'providing adequate shelter' – of hastening the provision of African housing and defusing the political tensions of the 1950s – at a time when funds were depleted and the housing shortage was critical.

The aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie were articulated through the Native Advisory Boards (NABs), and through the ambitions and activities of traders and other petty entrepreneurs. The council's 'Goodwill Board', established in 1930, was not formally constituted under the 1923 Act. Rather, it emerged as part of the reform programme of the early 1930s designed to ameliorate the conditions of the African urban petty bourgeoisie. The reformers hoped that differential treatment in access to the township and by the NAB would serve to co-opt those members of this class who perceived themselves as separate from the ranks of the African workers.

Increasingly, the members of the working class became distanced from the NAB. The unrepresentative nature of the institution was portended when the number of the ICU *yase* Natal representatives was reduced by half. And the municipal NAD ensured, by nominating representatives, that the NAB would not become a springboard for radical opposition. The NABs' functions were purely advisory: according to R. Bloch and P. Wilkinson, 'they were relatively useless for articulating or solving the demands of the popular masses'. Their powerlessness and ineffectiveness had won for these boards the reputation of 'instruments of the oppressor'. The council was in no way bound to follow the NABs' advice, and rarely did so. The NABs' were chaired by white city councillors, and one-third of the members on each board were nominated by the council. The NABs' were often dominated by the 'most reactionary elements' of the African petty bourgeoisie, and 'generally became the vehicles for the often narrow grievances and aspirations of a disconnected petty bourgeoisie'.[47] This proved to be the case with the Lamontville NAB.

The Lamontville NAB was inaugurated in July 1936. The issues raised by the members demonstrated their petty bourgeois interests. They were particularly concerned with securing trading rights for themselves or members of their class. Internecine conflicts between opposing factions were manifest at the level of the NAB from the outset and, by the 1950s, the alliances became drawn into the Isikhumba and Imbokodwe parties. These factions represented the narrow interests of the NAB members, and the NAB failed to take up the grievances of the township residents.

Champion became a prominent member of the Imbokodwe Ebomvu (Red

Grinding Stone) Party. An amorphous group of residents, opposed to this party, emerged in 1946 under the leadership of W.J. Gumede. This group, known as Isikhumba (Hide or Skin), won the election for the first time a few years later. The Imbokodwe Party was identified increasingly with the municipal NAD in the 1950s, and was referred to as 'izimpimpi' (a derivation of the word 'pimp') or informers.

In the 1940s, dissatisfaction over the workings of the NAB was voiced by a tenant who exclaimed that the residents were 'left in complete ignorance of the things they represent'. In January 1956 certain residents of the township requested that 'the elections of the NAB be discontinued' because the two contesting parties, the Imbokodwe and the Isikhumba, were engaged in such conflict that 'during election time each party broadcasts vulgar and contemptuous language of the [other] party [and] . . . that the village by being absorbed in the struggle find themselves . . . divided in bitter disharmony'. Some residents felt that the tensions, which warranted the South African Police being called in to 'guard against spilling of blood', were not justified since the NAB had no power anyway; 'the power lies with the council either or not to take their counsel.'[48]

Kuper notes that the antagonism was conducted at a level of educated against uneducated. Rightly or wrongly, the Isikhumba Party was regarded as the party of the educated and the Imbokodwe as the party of the illiterate. The superintendent, a man of modest education, favoured the party of the illiterates and used his powers and the service of the indunas to advance their interests. The leaders of the Isikhumba, according to Kuper, were all educated men with middle-class occupations, although nothing suggested that it represented a constituency of the educated. Champion, modestly educated, for instance, belonged to Imbokodwe. Isikhumba's 1959 election manifesto was concerned with very general matters: the position and salvation of home-buyers at Nylon, and economic rentals. Kuper notes that the basis of the division between the parties seemed to be rivalry between leaders: the Isikhumba claimed to have a democratic leadership and organisation in contrast to the Imbokodwe, whom they regarded as having a traditional type of leadership, imposed from above.[49]

However, party political battles were apparently fought at another level. Trading rights constituted much of the underlying tension. In the mid-1950s, the only viable trading rights in Lamontville were in the hands of members of Isikhumba: besides Ntuli's store in the populous Gijima area, I. Alexander's big Ebony Shopping Centre was run by Mda, chairman of Isikhumba. In 1957, members of the Imbokodwe party complained of victimisation and threatened to stop their patronage of the store. These appear to have been manifestations of a deeper grievance: Champion and the Imbokodwe party claimed that 'if S'khumbe could have a store, so could they'.

These conflicts revealed much about the trading class in Lamontville. Competition led to fierce rivalry and efforts to monopolise the limited trading rights in the township. In the 1950s, Isikhumba held this monopoly, and would not allow these rights to fall into the hands of Imbokodwe. Ntuli's store in the densely populated area of Gijima held negligible stocks, but Ntuli held onto these premises while doing no trading himself. Ntuli championed the cause of the Indian traders, whom the NAD attempted to expel from Lamontville in the 1950s. He apparently reached a compromise with the Indian traders, who provided the residents' needs on an informal sector basis and in whose pay he was. This ploy effectively helped to prevent trading rights falling into the hands of Imbokodwe.[50]

The tensions and rivalry were manifest at all levels, particularly since the superintendent, the induna and the security corps did not stand aloof from the political affairs of the township. The Bantu Affairs Commission reported in August 1960 that residents of Lamontville had serious grievances, and noted that the municipal NAD did not consult the duly elected Isikhumba NAB, and undermined its authority by conferring with Imbokodwe.[51]

Imbokodwe, after its defeat in the 1954 NAB elections, attempted to ingratiate itself with the superintendent in order to exploit his position; it tried to override and undermine the authority and prestige of the authorised NAB, and to create a 'harmonious impression with the European staff of the Durban Corporation'. A petition from Imbokodwe in 1963 appealed against the appointment of an ANC sympathiser as induna – 'out of loyalty to the Durban City Council and to the government'.[52]

The differences between the parties were also reflected amongst women's groups in Lamontville. In 1959, when Cato Manor residents, women particularly, demonstrated their opposition to their removal to KwaMashu, increasing unrest occurred in Lamontville. In 1960 a 'women's riot' broke out in Lamontville between women of the Mbogodo party, loyal to Imbokodwe, and the Women's Defence Committee, allied to Isikhumba. The Women's Defence Committee encouraged township residents to take part in the 'strike against the Corporation', breaking the houses of scabs.[53]

During a massive ANC demonstration at Lamontville on 5 April 1960, police took action against a crowd of about one thousand who were waylaying workers during the stay-away week. This resulted in one death and seventeen injuries. The Lamontville NAB distanced itself from the mass mobilisation campaigns initiated by the ANC and the PAC in 1960.

During the 1950s, rising rents and transport costs, poor facilities and onerous administration, had resulted in grass-roots mobilisation around these issues, often in conjunction with broader-based campaigns organised by the Congress Alliance and the individual organisations operating under its aegis. As African petty bourgeois rights were further undermined during the 1950s, as freehold areas were removed, and African trading rights reduced to a temporary status, a popular alliance under the ANC won massive support. In other parts of South Africa the NABs had worked closely with the ANC in articulating local

discontent and to a certain extent mobilising popular opposition around issues such as rents, housing and transport.[54]

In Lamontville, however, the NAB was involved rather with local conflicts between opposing factions in the township. Champion's loss of the ANC leadership in the 1940s and 1950s, and Imbokodwe's increasing identification as collaborators with the Durban corporation, do not make Isikhumba's claims to an ANC alliance any more plausible. No major policy difference existed between the factions – both were concerned with the quest for control of the NAB, through which limited rights could be gained for its members.[55]

Bloch and Wilkinson noted the 'calculated inefficiency' of the boards as representative and consultative channels. The 1949 Programme of Action had initiated intense debate on the question of collaboration with the 'institutions of the oppressor'. The Freedom Charter demanded that unrepresentative bodies such as the NABs should be replaced with democratic organisations. In an attempt to defuse the popular struggle of the 1950s and early 1960s, the state amended the NAB system with the promulgation of the Urban Bantu Councils Act in 1961. In the townships these councils, dubbed 'Useless Boys Clubs' or 'United Bantu Crooks', were viewed as yet another attempt to divide and control the inhabitants of the townships.[56] In terms of the Act of 1961, Community Councils were established for KwaMashu and for Ningizimu later in the decade. The Ningizimu Community Council served the urban residential areas of Chesterville, Dalton Road, Jacobs, Lamontville, S.J. Smith and Umlazi Glebe. The first elections were held in March 1968, when the Lamontville NAB ceased to exist. The Ningizimu Community Council came to be no more legitimate in the eyes of the residents than the NAB had been.

From the outset, an inadequate transport service constituted a serious grievance in Lamontville. Distance and travel costs were major objections to occupancy at Lamontville, and a primary reason why many Africans preferred the shack areas of Cato Manor. Given the average monthly wage of £2 for an adult male, rentals of between 15s. and 17s. 6d. at Lamontville, and a monthly transport ticket of 8s. 6d., little remained for subsistence needs. Women were excluded from engaging in informal sector activities (domestic service, laundry work, or sewing) because of the cost of transport to the white residential areas. Before the first school was constructed in Lamontville in the early 1940s, parents were unable to meet the costs of scholars' transport on a daily basis. By the late 1940s, 2 800 authorised people resided at Lamontville, yet only one private bus owner operated a bus to the township.

In the early 1930s the only public transport service was provided by the South African Railways (SAR). A first step in the direction of the curtailment of small-time private bus operators, was the passing of the Motor Carrier Transportation Act in 1930. The primary purpose of the act was to protect the SAR from competition from road carriers. In Johannesburg before the act, as in Durban, there was little regulation, enabling a number of 'marginal elements' to

invade the transport field during the 1920s and 1930s.[57] In 1930 there were twenty-one black omnibuses registered in the Durban borough, whose services undercut the fares charged by the SAR.

The Motor Carrier Transportation Act, however, not only failed to check, but positively assisted these private operators. The act allowed the holder of a motor carrier certificate, as an existing operator, to oppose the application of any would-be operator who sought to secure a certificate on a route which the established operator already served, thereby limiting competition. The incumbent operator also had the right to apply for additional certificates for new services which might co-ordinate with their existing undertakings.

Stadler noted that in Johannesburg, the act benefited whites who had established themselves as bus operators in the 1920s, and revealed the racial bias of state policy.[58] In Durban, on the other hand, the operators who had become 'established' during the 1920s were mainly Indian. They had attempted to co-ordinate their services and protect their interests through the establishment of the Bus Owners' Association in 1930.[59] By the Second World War, the municipal service had been almost entirely excluded from operating in the southern areas. The report of the Durban Transport Enquiry Commission of the mid-1940s noted that the Bus Owners' Association had withheld statistics from the Local Road Transportation Board in an effort to further reduce competition. The report warned, however, of the 'grave danger of routes being inadequately served and a monopoly created by certain operators, to the detriment of the non-European public'.[60]

Attempts by the city council to break this private owners' association were assisted by the African petty bourgeoisie, because the breaking of the owners' cartel would make way for aspirant African entrepreneurs. In 1939 the Lamontville NAB sought to prohibit Indian buses from entering the township, in an attempt to create some scope for African petty bourgeois interests. The Combined Locations Advisory Board requested in 1941 that a municipal bus service should be introduced in Lamontville and declared that 'they didn't want the Indian buses'. Johnson, the Superintendent at Lamontville, asserted that he was aware of the tensions existing between Africans and Indians over the issue of transport in the early 1940s. After two African operators' applications for certificates had been turned down in favour of an incumbent Indian operator in 1948, Johnson warned 'that the native population were now becoming openly hostile to the Indian bus drivers who entered their location'.[61]

The working class in Lamontville was fundamentally affected by the transport issue, for these people felt the economic impact of high transport costs and were dependent on an erratic service to transport them to and from work. The absence of adequate bus facilities constituted an enormous grievance for Africans forced to live in segregated areas far from the city, and became a central issue in the riots in Durban in 1949. Indian buses became a target of attack and many were damaged. The loss of these vehicles, plus the agitation

against Indian transport, enabled the city council to enter into the field of transport. The 1949 amendment to the Motor Carrier Transportation Act enabled the council to withdraw the licences of 'established' Indian bus operators, and to allow Africans to operate buses and service the routes to African areas.[62]

However, the attempt to shackle the Indian trading class in the interests of an emerging African trading class, amounted to little more than a token gesture. Africans found their entrepreneurial activities heavily circumscribed by their status as 'temporary sojourners' in white urban areas. In the field of transport, African bus ventures burgeoned briefly and collapsed. By 1960 no buses were operated by Africans in the Durban area. With the help of the government, the boycott had destroyed the prerogatives of the Indian bus owners, but had not created a strong alternative African entrepreneurial class.[63]

Fierce competition and jealousy characterised the private black bus operations in Lamontville in the late 1950s. In 1956 two bus companies operated in Lamontville: the Lamontville Omnibus Service under Dass of Isipingo, and the Ebony Bus Company, which belonged to the African trader, Alexander.[64] The Lamontville NAB reported in May 1956 that these two companies failed to provide an adequate bus service to the township. Serious complaints arose from competition between these bus companies: delays were caused as buses traversed the routes in an attempt to find more passengers before departing; the companies employed crews to tout for passengers; and the drivers employed by the respective companies deliberately jammed and hindered opposition buses.

The Durban Transport Management Board (DTMB), established in 1953, planned to expand services to African townships, since 'there are greater potentialities in the transport of non-Europeans than of Europeans'.[65] The DTMB set out to gain a monopoly of the transport routes between the increasingly populous African townships and places of work, as transport for workers was not only economically viable but becoming profitable. The profitability of the DTMB was ensured by the passage of the Bantu Services Levy Act of 1952. In 1954 the DTMB received a subsidy of £23 000 from the government. After the bus boycotts at Evaton and Alexandra during the 1950s, the Bantu Transport Services Act of 1957 made provision for a subsidy, comprising compulsory employer contributions and state funds. This subsidy further strengthened the hand of the local authority over the more competitive and cheaper black companies.[66]

In 1955 the DTMB had a fleet of 38 buses for African passengers, and by 1956 this number had risen to 58. The expected potential of African transport was soon realised, and in 1957, the DTMB increased its profits by £118 340. In 1955 the DTMB obtained certificates to operate to Lamontville and other areas where housing schemes were in operation. By 1957 the DTMB had a secure foothold in Lamontville and was in a position to absorb the businesses of those

private operators who went into liquidation. For example, Alexander's Ebony Bus Company was purchased by the DTMB. The DTMB finally came to monopolise Lamontville transport when it purchased Dass's service in November 1960.

The potential for profit was threatened however, by one factor: the African working class who used the buses. When the DTMB first began operations in Lamontville in 1957, the fares were increased immediately by 3d. In 1959 unrest in Durban resulted in serious financial losses to the DTMB's transport services. In 1959, this loss amounted to £30 000, and in 1960 to £25 000. Nine municipal buses were destroyed as the disturbances spread from Cato Manor to Umlazi and Lamontville. On 22 June 1959 a total boycott of DTMB buses ensued.

The development of an African trading class in the urban areas was slow. Restrictions on African traders which affected their ability to accumulate capital, and their right to own fixed property, were aimed at protecting white petty bourgeois and bourgeois interests. The Urban Areas Act enabled Africans to run shops or trading stores in their townships, but this was made conditional upon the approval of the urban local authority, which in some instances was withheld. Moreover, Africans did not hold monopolies in their segregated areas, as they faced strong competition, mainly from Indian traders. By the 1930s, African traders had not established themselves in Durban, except on a very small basis. In 1929, A. W. G. Champion listed the African businessmen in Durban, but only 'the bigger people, that is to say, those who use scales and weights'.[67]

In the early 1930s, these petty traders were quick to respond to the opportunities which were opening up. First, prospective traders were attracted to seek membership of the NAB by the possibility of securing trading licences through this 'exalted' political connection. Kuper has noted a high correlation between traders and NAB membership.[68] Second, Lamontville was seen as a place where trade could be engaged in. Three months after the township was opened in 1934 there were more applications for trading facilities than for cottages.[69] Members of the council's 'Goodwill' Advisory Board were amongst the applicants for trading licences in the township. The first trader to be granted rights to operate in Lamontville was a member of the Advisory Board, Africa N. Gumede.

The aspirant middle class experienced several difficulties in obtaining the limited facilities to trade from the local authorities. Applicants were screened and those who were accepted were subjected to further controls and regulations, which the superintendent enforced. Moreover, traders at Lamontville were impeded by the presence of Indian traders in close proximity to the township. Soon after the opening of Lamontville, several Indian traders erected stores on the road leading to the township. In 1948 there were two African general dealers and one African butcher at Lamontville, while there were eight Indian trading

stores on the outskirts of the township. Business was further undermined by the competition from and diversity of shops in the city, where many Lamontville residents went to work each day. Attempts to extend the hours of business for traders at the township to 9 p.m. during the week, and 6 p.m. on Saturdays, should be seen against the background of this competition and erosion of business opportunity.[70]

By the late 1940s Indian traders had succeeded in capturing large markets, particularly at Cato Manor. In E. Webster's words, the 'riots' of 1949 were 'structurally determined', in that Indians were viewed by the Africans as having gained concessions while Africans themselves had met with increasing discrimination. Indian stores, like Indian buses, became focal points of attack during the riots. This must be viewed against the rising cost of living and static wages which characterised the post-war recession years.[71] Indian traders were accused of charging inflated prices; in Lamontville the charge of 1s. 6d. for a tin of condensed milk had become a burning issue. The attack on Indian shops can be seen, on one level, as a violent manifestation of the economic rivalry within an embryonic trading class, and as opposition from those Africans who saw Indians as a stumbling block to their economic advancement. In Cato Manor particularly, but also in Lamontville, the aspirant African trading class moved in to fill the vacuum created by the looting and destruction of Indian stores in 1949.

After 1948 the Nationalist government afforded African traders limited opportunities in their 'own areas'; and in the aftermath of the riots of 1949 the Indian traders' domination of the African market was to some extent broken. Between 1948 and 1960 'collective bargaining' occurred between the Durban municipality and African traders. At the end of 1949, six sites were made available at Lamontville for African traders. The Corporation aided traders further by ordering the removal of competing itinerant Indian traders from Lamontville.[72]

During the mid-1950s a huge departmental store, the 'Ebony Shopping Centre', was built by the herbalist and trader, I. Alexander, at Lamontville. The store was erected at a cost of £50 000 on land leased from the municipality for twenty-five years. Despite assistance from the corporation, Alexander's business failed. Alexander, who also traded in Clermont, was unable to make his venture viable and his business was sequestrated a few years later. He was unable to meet the demands of his creditors for £150 000, even though he owned properties to the value of £250 000.[73]

Fourteen months after taking possession of his Ebony Trading Store in 1956, Alexander reported that his business was running at a huge loss. Alexander blamed this on the internecine political conflict within Lamontville: 'One of the parties has instituted a boycott against my shopping centre.' In October 1959, less than three years after the erection of the Ebony Shopping Centre, Alexander was granted permission to sublet, and thereby to retain his

possessions. By April 1960 he had let the building to a group of residents who paid a combined rental of £200 per month. This group of tenants did not thrive: they did not possess the business acumen of Alexander and were more vulnerable to the boycotts and opposition of rival political groups in Lamontville. At the end of 1961 the corporation acquired the Ebony Trading Store from Alexander's insolvent estate for £18 000 and subdivided the building into eighteen separate premises. By 1963 many traders were experiencing difficulties in paying rent and some were going bankrupt and closing down.[74]

African traders in the urban areas were increasingly undermined, and their positions became more insecure. The absence of freehold rights obliged the trader to rent premises from the municipality; this meant that the trader's licence could be terminated with one month's notice. Ownership of the building did not exempt the trader from these regulations. Termination of licences could occur for various reasons, ranging from rent arrears of thirty days, various offences (including failure to pay an electricity bill, which was deemed a 'criminal' offence), or the trader absenting himself from the township for a period longer than that stipulated by the superintendent. Applicants were screened and the local authorities investigated their right to remain in the urban area. After 1960 the government introduced further restrictive regulations for African businesses in urban areas outside the bantustans.

Epilogue

The construction of houses in Lamontville was completed in the early 1960s: since then no new housing has been built in any of the townships that later fell under the control of the Port Natal Administration Board (PNAB).[75] When the PNAB announced, in October 1982, that rents would be increased in the townships under its control,[76] residents objected because no cognizance had been taken either of their level of earnings, taxation, or of the cost of food, transport and accommodation. Nor was there any democratic representation at local level through which these grievances could be articulated. Furthermore, the PNAB had not adequately maintained the township, and houses had become increasingly undermined and dilapidated.

As one of the administration boards set up under the Bantu Administration Act of 1971, the PNAB was expected to be self-supporting, deriving its income from the sale of beer, employers' levies, taxes, fines and rents.[77] No subsidy was received from the government for running costs. By 1982–83 the PNAB faced a huge deficit of almost R7 million. The running of Lamontville alone cost the Board R2 608 197 p.a. to run. By increasing rents by 63 per cent, R1 134 576 could be procured. The rent on a four-roomed house would increase in rental from R25.01 to R40.85.

Lamontville became the scene of serious urban violence in 1983. The crisis

stemmed from the self-supporting nature of the PNAB: in an effort to meet the inflationary prices charged by the bulk suppliers of services, the board passed these charges on to the residents of the townships and hostels under its control at the same rate.[78]

The residents unequivocally rejected the rent hikes. Under the rallying cry of 'asinamali!' (we have no money), they protested that they, too, felt the pinch of the recessionary times. No wage increases had been granted during the recession; many residents had been retrenched, and some were working only three days a week. The cost of basic commodities – bread, milk and maize – had recently been increased; and bus fares had been increased by the DTMB in December 1982, by 12,5 per cent.[79]

The township communities mobilised against the increases. In December 1982 residents from Clermont, St Wendolins, Klaarwater, KwaDabeka, Lamontville and Kranskloof formed the Joint Commuters' Committee to negotiate with the DTMB. A bus boycott was planned for one day on 1 December 1982. In Lamontville the boycott actually lasted for months. On 8 April 1983 the Joint Rent Action Committee (JORAC) was formed, with affiliate members from Lamontville, Hambanathi, Klaarwater, Chesterville, and Shakaville, and representatives from hostels.[80] JORAC adopted a strategy of joint action stemming from common dissatisfaction with living conditions under the PNAB.

The formation of JORAC had significant political implications because it exposed the residents' complete lack of faith in the community councils, which had not been consulted over the rent increases. However, dissatisfaction with the Ningizimu Community Council (NCC) had a longer history than the rent hikes, and in no one was it better personified than in NCC representative and founder member of JORAC, Harrison Msize Dube.[81] Long before the announcement of the rent increases in 1982, Dube had become very popular in Lamontville as a spokesman for the residents, and he had a strong following amongst the youth. As a member of the NCC, he had become disillusioned with its inefficiency and impotence. Moonlight Gasa, the Chairman of the NCC and mayor of Lamontville, felt his position increasingly undermined by Dube, particularly after Dube portrayed the NCC as a body unable to represent the widespread opposition to the rent hikes. Dube cut his ties with the NCC and threw his weight behind JORAC, which had gained widespread support as it called mass meetings and attempted to address itself to residents' grievances.[82]

After a JORAC meeting on 25 April 1983, Dube was murdered. Gasa's complicity in the murder further undermined the credibility of the NCC.[83] Dube's death was seen as an attempt to muzzle all opposition to the rent hikes. Violence broke out in Lamontville after Dube's murder. At his funeral, which was punctuated with ANC slogans, two suspected police informers were killed.

Violence continued in Lamontville in the months following Dube's death. PNAB property and NCC offices became the target of attack by youths in

Lamontville. The township was placed under virtual police siege. Residents reported unwarranted police brutality, general harassment and the indiscriminate use of tear-gas. Affidavits were collected from victims by Progressive Federal Party Members of Parliament, P. Gastrow and H. Pitman, while the issue of the abuse of police power in Lamontville was raised in Parliament.[84]

On 31 August 1984 it was announced that Lamontville and Hambanathi would become incorporated into KwaZulu. Chief Buthelezi and Inkatha attempted to exploit the community's grievances and seize the leadership role, which JORAC had assumed. Popular opposition had by-passed Inkatha and the NCC, on which many Inkatha representatives sat. This represented a direct challenge to Inkatha's legitimacy and popularity. Inkatha, like JORAC, reflected the interests of the African petty bourgeoisie, but it differed from JORAC in that it did not have the support of radicals, especially the youth, who rejected Inkatha's participation in the bantustan system.[85]

A survey conducted in July 1984 by University of Natal academics, M. Sutcliffe and P. Wellings, revealed that 87,2 per cent of Lamontville residents did not favour incorporation into KwaZulu. The greatest fear was that work seekers would become subject to influx control measures as their Section 10 rights would be lost, while the vast majority believed that their quality of life would further deteriorate under KwaZulu authority. Lack of faith in Inkatha was revealed by the finding, among 97 per cent of the residents interviewed, that Inkatha had done 'nothing at all' to help the people of Lamontville.[86]

The move towards incorporation further divided the community in Lamontville. The difference between the popular expression of opposition to increases as articulated by JORAC, and the statutory representation of opposition in the form of the NCC and Inkatha, assumed the form of a clash between the United Democratic Front (UDF) and Inkatha. JORAC was an affiliate of the UDF. Inkatha mobilised its forces against JORAC, and in October 1983 clashes occurred between the youth and Inkatha in Lamontville. An uneasy tension prevailed in Lamontville when Inkatha held a mass rally in a display of strength late in 1984.[87] JORAC mobilised popular resistance to the control of the township by the PNAB and to incorporation into KwaZulu. In so doing, it came to symbolise resistance, and gave voice to the aspirations and grievances of Lamontville residents.

These issues were not new to Lamontville. Popular opposition, as expressed by JORAC, rested upon those grievances which Lamontville residents had held since the opening of the township in 1934. Grievances over everyday issues were heard as early as 1935, when complaints were raised about sub-standard housing and insufficient maintenance. Rent arrears constituted an enormous problem from the outset. Complaints about prohibitive transport costs were voiced in the NAB in the 1930s. The thwarting of attempts by Africans to establish their own, cheaper transport service and the monopolisation of transport to Lamontville by the DTMB caused further discontent. Demands for

homeownership and security of tenure were often voiced in the NAB. The withholding of these rights was met with dismay. Opportunities for trade in the township were thwarted by national policies and the lack of security in urban areas. Dissatisfaction with these conditions led, in turn, to a demand for the improvement of the social wage and in the provision of housing and services. The establishment of JORAC and the popular support that it enjoyed, was a clear indication of the rejection of statutory representation at the local level. Lamontville, which the council established in 1934 as Durban's 'model village' instead became 'a place fraught with problems',[88] but one in which the residents became actively engaged in attempting to resolve and change the 'given' conditions of their everyday life.

NOTES

1. See M. Legassick, 'Capital Accumulation and Violence', *Economy and Society*, 3(3), 1974; 'Gold, Agriculture and Secondary Industry in South Africa, 1885–1970: From Periphery to Sub-Metropole as a Forced Labour System' in R. Palmer and N. Parsons, *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (London 1977); H. Wolpe, 'Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid', *Economy and Society*, 1(4), 1972.
2. P. la Hausse, 'The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902–1936' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1984), p. 45.
3. Durban Town Clerk's Files (hereafter TCF) Housing for Natives, Box 60, File 643J:1, Layman to Town Clerk, 8 January 1926; Ibid.
4. TCF Housing for Natives, Box 60, File 643J:2, Minutes of Markets and Abattoir Committee, 11 December 1928; File 643J:1, Minutes of Public Health Committee, 9 April 1926.
5. TCF Native Affairs in the Borough, Box 48, File 467:1, Report on Health Conditions of Natives in Durban and Districts, 7 September 1928; TCF Housing for Natives, Box 76, File 643J:1, Joint Council Report on the Housing of Natives in Durban and the peri-Durban areas, 9 September 1930.
6. M.W. Swanson, 'The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony 1900–1902, *Journal of African History*, 18(3), 1977, pp. 387–410; see also A. Proctor, 'Class Struggle, Segregation and the City: A History of Sophiatown 1905–1940' in B. Bozzoli (ed.) *Labour, Townships and Protest: Studies in the Social History of the Witwatersrand* (1979), pp. 49–89; C. Saunders, 'Segregation in Cape Town: The Creation of Ndabeni', *Africa Seminar: Collected Papers*, 1 (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1978).
7. La Hausse, 'Struggle for the City', pp. 39, 40.
8. *Durban Housing Survey: A Study of Housing in a Multi-Racial Community*, Natal Regional Survey, Report no. 2 (Pietermaritzburg, 1952), pp. 28, 302; Report of Durban Borough Boundaries Extension Commission, pp. 2, 3, 5, 13, 58; TCF Native Affairs in the Borough, Box 48, File 467:1, Report on Health Conditions of Natives in Durban and Districts, 7 September 1928; M. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban, Part I*, Natal Town and Regional Planning Report, vol. 3 (Pietermaritzburg, 1961), p. 1.

9. In 1927 the ICU *yase* Natal seceded from the parent body under Champion, and devoted much of its attention to matters which concerned a small class of urban African petty traders. Under John Dube, the Natal Native Congress (NNC) seceded from the African National Congress (ANC). Because it became increasingly representative of the interests of a small urban and rural élite with strong traditionalist tribal loyalties, J.T. Gumede split from the NNC in 1926 and formed the Natal African Congress (NAC).
10. P. la Hausse, 'Beer, Social Control and Segregation: The Durban System and the 1929 Beerhall Riots' (unpublished BA Hons. dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1980), pp. 38, 40, 41.
11. E. Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope* (London 1964), pp. 246, 248; La Hausse, 'Struggle for the City', p. 193.
12. D. Hemson, 'Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers: Dock Workers of Durban' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1979), pp. 218, 219.
13. P.R. Maylam, 'Aspects of African Urbanization in the Durban Area before 1940' in *Natal in the Union, 1931–1961*, Department of Historical and Political Studies, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1981, p. 11.
14. M.W. Swanson, 'The "Durban System": Roots of Urban Apartheid in Colonial Natal', *African Studies*, 35, 1976, p. 172; 'The Sanitation Syndrome', pp. 388, 393.
15. TCF South Coast Junction Area Local Administration and Health Board (SCJALAHB) Minute Books, Box 4, File 5: SCJ, Secretary, SCJALAHB, to Secretary, South Coast Area Ratepayers (European) Association, 26 August 1929; TCF Housing for Natives, Box 60, File 643J:1, Jacobs and Wentworth District Association to Durban Municipality, 12 July 1929.
16. TCF Housing for Natives, Box 8, File 643J:6, Chester, Manager, Municipal NAD to Town Clerk, 12 April 1937; TCF Acquisition of Land Outside Borough, Box 41, File 290A:3, Borough Engineer and Estates Manager to Industrial Sub-Committee, 8 October 1929.
17. TCF Acquisition of Land Outside Borough, Box 41, File 290A:3, Borough Engineer and Estates Manager to Industrial Sub-Committee, 8 August 1929 and 8 October 1929; TCF Purchase of Land Outside Borough, Box 53, File 290A:1, Town Clerk to Secretary for Native Affairs, 30 March 1931; *Mayor's Minute*, 1930, p. 10. Wood's Estate was approximately 3 000 acres in extent. The 425 acres set aside for the township represents approximately one-sixth of this area.
18. J.R. Randall, 'Some Reflections on the Financial Policy of Certain Municipalities towards the Natives within their Boundaries', *South African Journal of Economics*, 7(2), June 1939, pp. 162–164, 170; Joint Council Memo. to Broome Commission, 11 November 1947.
19. *Report of the Judicial [Broome] Commission into Native Affairs in Durban*, 1948, p. 93; Oral Evidence to Broome Commission, pp. 58, 59; TCF Housing for Natives, Box 81, File 643J:5, Rodseth and Jameson to Native Administration Committee, 16 September 1936.
20. TCF Native Locations, Box 18, File 49:1, Report of Government Inspector of Urban Locations in regard to Natives in Durban, 12 August 1936; Housing for Natives, Box 76, File 643J:2 and 3, Secretary for Native Affairs to Town Clerk, 22 February 1932; Secretary Central Housing Board to Provincial Secretary, Pietermaritzburg, 3 May 1932.
21. Randall, 'Financial Policy', p. 162; TCF Housing for Natives, Box 76, File 643J:3, Town Treasurer to Town Clerk, 11 December 1933.

22. TCF Housing for Natives, Box 81, File 643J:5, Rodseth and Jameson to Native Administration Committee, 16 September 1936.
23. *Union Gazette Extraordinary*, Act No. 21, 19 June 1923, Section 1(1)b and 7(1)c; *Union Gazette Extraordinary*, Act No. 35, 1920.
24. H. Bradford, 'Mass Movements and the Petty Bourgeoisie: The Social Origins of ICU Leadership', *Journal of African History*, 25, 1984, p. 301.
25. TCF Native Advisory Board, Box 57, File 323A:1, 18 June 1930.
26. S. van der Horst, *Native Labour in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1961), pp. 234–278; G. V. Doxey, *The Industrial Colour Bar in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1961); R. Davies, 'The Class Character of South Africa's Industrial Conciliation Legislation' in E. Webster (ed.), *Essays in Southern African Labour History*, (Johannesburg, 1978), pp. 69–81; D. Innes and M. Plaut, 'Class Struggle and the State', *Review of African Political Economy*, 11, January – April 1978, p. 57.
27. Native Economic Commission, Statements from Durban, p. 6467; Scott (Durban Town Treasurer), to Native Economic Commission, 4 April 1931.
28. D. W. M. Edley, 'Population, Poverty and Politics: A Study of some Aspects of the Depression in Greater Durban, 1929–1933' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1983), pp. 21, 22, 119.
29. D. W. M. Edley, 'Africans in Durban during the Great Depression, 1929–1933', (unpublished paper presented to Workshop on African Urban Life in Durban in the Twentieth Century, University of Natal, Durban, 1983).
30. TCF Judicial Commission on Native Affairs in Durban, Box 58, File 290P, City Council Memo., vol. I; City and Water Engineer to Town Clerk re Judicial Commission – Employment of Native Artisans, 24 October 1947.
31. P. Wilkinson, '"Providing Adequate Shelter": The South African State and the Resolution of the African Urban Housing Crisis, 1948–54' in D. C. Hindson (ed.), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, vol. 3 (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 24.
32. *Mayor's Minute*, 1955, pp. 28, 30. Killie Campbell Files (hereafter KCF) Lamont Extensions: Housing: Planning, Roll 22, File 39:220a, City Treasurer to Town Clerk, 25 October 1949.
33. TCF NAB Mins., Box 1, File 0439:1, 8 March 1933, 17 January 1934. These prerequisites for accommodation at Lamont were as strict as those for Baumannville: only those married according to Christian rites and those whose *bona fides* had been established by the municipal NAD were eligible. Baumannville attracted only the 'best elements' – teachers, clerks, interpreters and those with trades which provided them with sufficient to pay the monthly rental of 15s. La Hausse, 'The Struggle for the City', p. 109.
34. TCF Housing for Natives, Box 76, File 643J:4, Champion to Town Clerk, 20 December 1934.
35. TCF Housing for Natives, Box 81, File 643J:1, Town Clerk to Shepstone and Wylie, Town Solicitors, 31 January 1935. A. W. G. Champion, at the helm of the ICU *yase* Natal, provided some leadership in the popular discontent in Durban in the late twenties. De Waal indicted Champion as an 'agitator' in the riots of 1929; for his misdemeanours, he was deported from Durban in September 1930 for three years. Champion, who owned some property and later became a prominent trader, was not a revolutionary figure. His mercurial position is indicated by the placatory tone he adopted early in 1930 towards Durban's municipal NAD officials, stating that he hoped that the 'misunderstanding of the past years should be forgotten . . . [and] that a clean chapter should have in its pages nothing but the writings of mutual understanding between the native workers and the city fathers'; see La Hausse, 'Struggle for the City', p. 208.

36. J. Rex, 'The Compound, the Reserve and the Urban Location', *South African Labour Bulletin*, 1(4), July 1974, p. 13.
37. KCF Lamont: Administration and Control, Roll 20, File 37:1d, NAD Memorandum, 1954–1958; TCF Judicial Commission on Native Affairs in Durban, Box 58, File 290P, vol. II, Memorandum of Native Locations (Combined) Advisory Boards.
38. TCF NAB Mins., Box 62, File 323A, Regulations for the Management and Control of the Lamont Native Location, 2 January 1936.
39. Municipal NAD Files: Oral Evidence of Combined Locations Advisory Board's Representatives to Broome Commission of Inquiry, 4 December 1947.
40. TCF NAB Mins., Box 62, File 323 A, Regulations for the Management and Control of the Lamont Native Location, 2 January 1936; KCF Lamont: Administration and Control, Roll 21, File 38:2a, Memorandum Lamont NAB, August 1960.
41. TCF Housing for Natives, Box 76, File 643J:4, Layman to Town Clerk, 1 August 1936.
42. Ibid., File 643J:6. Chester to Town Clerk, 12 February 1937, City and Water Engineer to Town Clerk, 13 April 1937; Lamont NAB Mins., Box 1, File 0439:3, 19 January 1937.
43. TCF Lamont NAB Mins., Box 1, File 0439:3, 6 August 1936.
44. TCF NAB Mins., Box 3, File 0439:1, 11 April 1934, 13 December 1933.
45. L. Kuper, *An African Bourgeoisie* (New Haven, 1965), pp. 107, 108.
46. Ibid.
47. R. Bloch and P. Wilkinson, 'Urban Control and Popular Struggles: A Survey of State Urban Policy 1920–1970', *Africa Perspective*, 20, 1982, p. 18.
48. KCF Lamont: Accommodation, Roll 21, File 38:1f, Residents of Lamont to Superintendent, 28 January 1956.
49. Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, pp. 336, 337; Interview with E. Hadebe, 28 November 1984.
50. KCF Lamont: Housing and Planning, Roll 18, File 35:1b, Memo. of Superintendent Keel, Lamont Location, 30 June 1955; L. Torr, 'The Social History of an Urban African Community: Lamont, *c.* 1930–1960' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1985), p. 136.
51. KCF Lamont: Administration and Control, Roll 21, File 38:1a, Memo. Chairman Lamont NAB, August 1960; Ibid., Bantu Affairs Committee, Durban, to Director, Bantu Affairs Department (BAD), 10 January 1963.
52. Ibid., Roll 20, File 37:1d, 'Silver Jubilee' Memo., 1954; *Natal Mercury*, 18 May 1960.
53. KCF Lamont: Administration and Control, Roll 21, File 38:7f, Memo. Township Manager (Southern Areas) to Director, NAD, 10 December 1959.
54. T. Lodge, *Black Politics in South Africa since 1945* (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 78.
55. In the late 1950s and early 1960s a Residents' Association emerged, led by prominent ANC leaders in Lamontville, to challenge the unrepresentative nature of the NAB. These leaders were arrested in the early 1960s and the Residents' Association was dissolved. Interview with Bekisisa Nxasana, 23 January 1985.
56. Bloch and Wilkinson, 'Urban Control and Popular Struggle', pp. 31, 34.
57. A. W. Stadler, 'A Long Way to Walk: Bus Boycotts in Alexandra, 1940–1945' in P. Bonner (ed), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, vol. 2 (Johannesburg, 1981), p. 230.
58. Ibid., p. 232.
59. Report of the Commission to Enquire into the Durban Passenger Transport Undertaking [Scott/Baldwin Report], Provincial Notices Nos. 250–1945 and 332–1945, p. 58. [Hereafter referred to as 'Report of the Transport Enquiry Commission'.]

60. Ibid., p. 60.
61. Oral Evidence to Commission of Enquiry [van der Heever] into Riots in Durban. 1949, Howes, Deputy Town Clerk, pp. 1054, 1055; Johnson, Superintendent, Lamont p. 1093. Similar tensions between Africans and Indians over the transport issue occurred in other townships and locations.
62. E. Webster, 'The 1949 Durban Riots:A Case Study in Race and Class' in P. Bonner (ed.), *Working Papers in Southern African Studies*, African Studies Institute Communication no. 4, University of the Witwatersrand, 1977, pp. 45, 46.
63. Ibid., p. 14.
64. Report of Transport Enquiry Commission, pp. 62, 63; *Natal Mercury*, 21 March 1983; *Daily News*, 21 March 1983.
65. Durban Transport Management Board (DTMB) Annual Report, no. 2, 1954, p. 1.
66. DTMB Annual Report, no. 4, 1956, p. 3; no. 5, 1957, p. 3; no. 2, 1954, p. 17; no. 8, 1960, p. 5; See P. Morris, *A History of Black Housing in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1981), pp. 89, 90.
67. Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p. 263.
68. Ibid., p. 101.
69. TCF Housing for Natives, Box 76, File 643J:4, Layman to Town Clerk, 16 March 1934.
70. TCF Native Locations, Box 18, File 49:8, Johnson to Commission of Enquiry [van der Heever] into Riots in Durban, pp. 1095, 1108; Johnson to Judicial Commission [Broome] on Native Affairs in Durban, 11 December 1947, p. 13; TCF Native Locations Advisory Board, Box 14, File 49A:1, Jacobs and Lamont Advisory Boards Minutes, 27 July 1937; *Mayor's Minute*, 1940, p. 14.
71. Webster, 'The 1949 Durban Riots', pp. 30, 33.
72. TCF Native Locations, Box 16, File 49:14, Havemann, Manager municipal NAD to Town Clerk, 9 November 1949; KCF Lamont: Administration and Control, Roll 20, File 37:1d, Havemann to Superintendent Lamont Location, 30 April 1954.
73. Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p. 267.
74. KCF Lamont: Housing: Planning, Roll 18, File 35:1c, Minutes, Special Committee for Native Housing, 21 April 1960; Extract of Native Administration Committee Minutes and Native Administration Committee Agenda, 20 April 1961; Native Administration Committee Minutes, 5 December 1961.
75. The exception is Hambanathi, where 297 houses were built. In the formal townships of KwaMashu, Umlazi, Ntuzuma, KwaNdengezi and KwaDabeka, only 3 700 houses have been erected during the past eight years, *Sunday Tribune*, 29 July 1984. In 1983 an estimated 400 000 squatters lived in makeshift houses in the Durban area, without water or sanitation. This amounted to 40 per cent of the total African population, or 21 per cent of the total population of Durban, *Daily News*, 28 October 1983.
76. These townships are Lamont, Chesterville, Hambanathi, Shakaville and Klaarwater.
77. H. Hughes and J. Grest, 'The Local State' in *South African Review*, vol. 1 (Johannesburg, 1983), p. 131.
78. See M. Challenor, 'Business Built on Stones: A Case Study of Responses to Service Charge Increases in Port Natal Administration Board Township' (unpublished BA Hons. dissertation, University of Natal, Durban, 1985), pp. 10, 11; B. Dyason, 'Lamontville, JORAC and the Politics of Community Organizations', (unpublished BA Hons. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984), pp. 15–18; M. Fick, 'Township Disturbances: Lamontville 1983', *Indicator*, 1(2), 1983, p. 7.

79. See M. Xundu, 'The Present Crisis in Lamontville', (unpublished paper presented to the Workshop on African Urban Life in Durban in the Twentieth Century, University of Natal, Durban, October 1983), p. 3.
80. Challenor, 'Built on Stones', p. 71; Dyason, 'The Politics of Community Organizations', p. 19.
81. Dube was a court interpreter in Durban and community worker in Lamont. He was educated at Adams College. In 1952 he joined the Defiance Campaign and held an executive position in the ANC youth league in Lamont. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for ANC activities during the early 1960s, and served some time on Robben Island. Throughout its history, Lamont residents have demonstrated a keener interest in political affairs and NAB elections than other township communities. Dube was instrumental in engaging residents' participation in Community Council affairs in the early 1980s.
82. *SASPU National*, 4(2), May 1983; *Africa Today*, 6 May 1983.
83. During March 1984 the assassins and accomplices in Dube's murder were brought to trial. *Daily News*, 24 June 1983, 23 and 18 March 1984; *Natal Marcury* 20, 22, 23 and 28 March 1984; 'Moonlight Gang Head for Twilight', *Drum*, 1 May 1984, p. 14; See Torr, 'Lamont', p. 177.
84. *Natal Mercury*, 23 June 1983; *Daily News*, 30 June 1983, 1 July 1983; *Sunday Tribune*, 3, 10 and 17 July 1983.
85. *Indicator*, 1(3), 1983, p. 6; *Daily News*, 1 August 1983.
86. M. Sutcliffe and P. Wellings, 'Lamontville and Chesterville: Attitudes towards Incorporation', Survey conducted under the auspices of the Built Environment Support Group, University of Natal, Durban, July 1984, pp. 3, 4.
87. *Natal Mercury*, 23 and 25 July 1984; *Daily News*, 23 July 1984.
88. *Daily News*, Property Supplement, 28 January 1977. The Report on Lamont, sponsored by Diakonia, was conducted by Sipiwe Madondo and Sandile Qulu.

The Joy of Proximity

The Rise of Clermont

MAYNARD W. SWANSON

The freehold township of Clermont was founded in 1931 twelve kilometres inland from the centre of Durban, not far from the main highway to the interior and next to the municipalities of New Germany and Westville. It occupies about sixteen hundred acres, in the deeply incised hills and ravines of the Umgeni River valley, once belonging to the Berlin Missionary Society and known as Christianenburg Mission. Clermont's population has been variously estimated in recent years at between fifty and one hundred thousand, most reliably fifty-nine thousand in 1979. A survey in 1977 indicated that the town consisted of 3 800 individual plots with 2 840 houses built to authorised standards and some 3 000 informal structures or shacks. There was no rail service, but two public and several private bus lines and a fleet of 46 licensed taxis supplied transport. There were 59 registered commercial premises, a post office, a medical clinic, a community hall seating 400, a stadium and several other playing fields for 83 soccer clubs and 2 500 players. There were 28 churches; and schools included a day nursery, five primary, one junior secondary and one high school.

In the late 1960s and 1970s a heavy shack settlement appeared in Clermont, reflecting migration from the central area of Durban, the clearance of Cato Manor, and especially the pull of labour to rapid industrialisation in the nearby Pinetown/New Germany area. Studies of informal urban settlement in various parts of the world as well as in South Africa have revealed the creative and viable nature of this phenomenon as a response to social transformations on a large scale. But Clermont's mushroom growth aroused great concern among officials, and objections from neighbouring white communities, with its appearance of disorder, reported crime, and the presumed threat of disease. The central government responded by taking direct control of Clermont in 1974 under the South African Bantu Trust. It also created a new controlled township called KwaDabeka on adjoining land, into which the bulk of the shack population was moved during the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Clermont and KwaDabeka are practically a conurbation, but the contrast in the status and appearance of these communities is striking and significant. In

freehold Clermont the houses, most of them substantial dwellings, are varied in siting, style and finish, reflecting the individual preferences, purposes and means of their builders and owners. Single-family dwellings predominate, with here and there a multi-unit apartment building. The hilltops were occupied first, then the houses spread down the hillsides. The topography of this typical Natal coastal landscape gives the town varied aspects, with houses set amid trees and shrubs. There are open lands still unoccupied, though for the most part under private ownership. To supplement budgets, householders maintain gardens and many keep poultry, while a few goats and cattle wander here and there. Near the entry of the main road from Pinetown and New Germany, a closely built-up commercial district gives Clermont the functions, atmosphere and focal point of a viable, self-contained urban community.

Only half of the Berlin Missionary Society's land was sold in the 1930s to form Clermont township. The rest, lying nearer to the Umgeni River, was the area taken by the government for KwaDabeka. By the early 1980s, 900 houses and an enormous hostel had been built there, chiefly housing people removed from Clermont shacks. From a distance the hostel blocks, with a capacity of 10 000, looked like a fleet of stranded ocean liners minus their glamorous superstructures, and the standardised location houses marched in drab uniformity over bare hills. Immediately across the Umgeni lay KwaZulu territory, where urban development was under deed of grant or site-and-service leasehold. These conditions also obtained in KwaDabeka, which the government intended to incorporate, along with Clermont, into KwaZulu. But Clermont leaders vigorously resisted this destiny, clinging tenaciously to their freehold tenure and tradition of independence. No chiefly regime for them. By the 1980s it seemed that Clermont, like some other freehold townships at the time, under a shift in government policy to promote middle-class stability, was to remain a separate community with its own special identity.

These events and circumstances, with their themes of special identity, community, independence and resistance to paternal control or government appropriation, reflect the history of Clermont from its founding. The Africans of Clermont have a history of taking initiatives. People went there from the beginning to achieve independence and security in a place of their own. Responding to its opportunities and problems, they began to develop a viable community and local governance for themselves. In their first generation they formed a social and political body possessing a documented constitution of their own making. They sought to raise revenue, regulate their community, provide essential services, promote economic enterprises, and to deal with government authorities in a manner suited to the independent nature of Clermont. Eclipsed by the onset of central control, the spirit of independence and the consciousness of a distinctive character and status have nonetheless remained alive to the present day. This is the theme of the following account of the rise of Clermont township.[1]

Clermont was born of the aspirations of urbanised and urbanising blacks to establish a stable and dignified life, of frustration with the failure or refusal of government to provide for it or to allow them to provide it for themselves, and of the schemes of highly placed land speculators linked with the desire of the Zulu élite to rally a following in the urban area around a popular cause. For years the Durban Corporation had been mindful, in the words of its Native Administration Department manager, C.F. Layman, of 'a permanent element of black city dwellers', but its intent was to perpetuate and extend the migrant labour and barrack system financed by the 'kaffir beer' monopoly – the 'Durban system' – which it had pioneered at the turn of the century.[2] By the late 1920s pressure became irresistible to do something definitive. As the city grew, Africans increasingly approached white and Indian property-owners in areas adjoining the borough to sell or lease land, and many were living in informal settlements just outside its boundary. Simultaneously, an attempt to extend to those areas the municipality's beer monopoly became a major cause of the celebrated beer boycott and disturbances of 1929–30.

Ameliorist liberal bodies called for segregationist solutions qualified by property rights. The Durban Joint Council, led by well-known reformer Mabel Palmer, appealed at the end of 1928 for permanent African housing. Further pressure was applied in June 1929, when the Revd A.S. Christofferson of the Natal Missionary Conference called for 'a normal family life . . . in a well-governed township or village'. And in September the Durban Native Church Council asked the city council for a village where 'responsible Natives [could] purchase freehold sites . . . and erect their own dwellings . . . So many natives have no homes elsewhere.' Even C.F. Layman was moved to accord some legitimacy to such an undertaking, perhaps to redeem himself after the collapse of the vaunted order of the Durban system in the riots of 1929. Accordingly, at the instigation of the city council, specific planning was under way by 1931 for a village location south of the city at Clairwood. Named Lamontville, it was opened in 1934. With the priorities of the Durban system in mind, however, the 'barracks-for-blacks' mentality prevailed.[3]

Liberal advocates of a stabilised African urban presence sought to work within the parameters of government agency and the developing controlled location system. Other advocates, however, of a more challenging nature had also emerged by the late 1920s to press for independent African responses to urbanisation. An example is African nationalist leader Dr Pixley Seme's promotion of 'The Native Land and Trust Company of Africa Ltd'. He claimed that this would be 'the best instrument through which our native people may be helped to achieve their economic independence and self-help. Every Native must exert himself with the view of owning some piece of land and building a home for himself . . .' Seme averred that his company would stem the drift of the landless to the white towns where they tended to become demoralised. He called for unity among chiefs and community leaders in the cause of creating a trust fund to buy their country back. The whites would never give it back, and Africans 'must grow with the times . . . If you have land you need have no fear of the future.' Their object must be 'to develop our people and the Native Reserves . . . commercially and industrially, to inspire into our people the spirit of cooperation and self-help, to form model modern townships for the detribalized Natives'.[4]

Some have interpreted these manifestations in terms of an explicit class analysis, seeing the emergent bourgeoisie sensing class war with their own masses and therefore lending themselves to demands for social controls which paralleled or collaborated with white 'capital'. Many African leaders did, indeed, share the negative reactions and aversions of the whites to the apparently deleterious effects of the urban experience on blacks. The conservative John Dube, for example, condemned much of town life, considered it a threat to Africans and warned in *Ilanga* that 'town Natives are out of control and the criminal element is increasing'. He called upon the authorities to break up the 'amalayita mobs': he himself had been victimised by them. These things induced him and others to press for urban townships too, but he wanted them to be independent and free of governmental 'native administration'.[5] Of course, the projects and strictures of people like Seme, Dube and A.W.G. Champion, leader of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), might be to their own advantage, and their rhetoric can be interpreted as self-interested. But to conclude that the apparent acceptance by many Africans of the segregationist ideology of the day explains their behaviour as merely exploitative of their own kind, or dependent upon white patronage, is too limiting to account fully for their motives or their vision of the future. The issue is what categories of explanation are imperative and represent the realities and perceptions of the day? It is not necessary, in accounting for their behaviour, to say that economic development, co-operation and self-help, model modern townships, the desire to reclaim a birthright in the land, and a realm of personal independence, were diminished motives, or purposes inimical to progress and social justice, because they were set forth by an African bourgeoisie.

It seems plain enough that the inception of Clermont can be placed in a broader context of political consciousness that linked the middle-class values and liberal political ideology of the *kholwa* with a form of nationalism that sought to mediate or moderate radical social change. Shula Marks's study of 'the ambiguities of dependence' exhibited by King Solomon, John Dube and A.W.G. Champion as they strove to assert symbols and modes of resistance compatible with their own survival and focusing upon the Zulu monarchy, roughly sustains this view.[6] The point is that African leaders of the day saw a broader social purpose in the realisation of their aspirations. For example, Selby Msimang – pioneer nationalist and union organiser, later colleague and foe of Champion in the Natal ANC, and his fellow trustee of a 'National Fund'

which they ultimately dedicated to a bursary foundation – proposed in 1930 an 'Ideal Industrial Organisation for the African Peoples'. It was a syndicalist plan which he believed would rescue the impoverished masses through the enterprising energy and leadership of their educated class in order 'to regenerate the race'.[7] Such enterprises had a virtually explicit political agenda, the conscious linkage of bourgeois aspirations with 'visions of a *kholwa*-led African nationalist future'. This author has argued elsewhere that such perceptions of African interests embraced socially redemptive and constructive, unifying and mobilising functions, which were neither unintelligently nor abjectly collaborationist, nor were they naïvely or destructively confrontational.[8] In this context, Clermont also offered a means to empowerment and a way to transcend the social fragmentation, political dependence and economic deprivation commonly suffered by blacks.

The ICU under Champion in Durban, besides espousing the cause of industrial labour, also took up the cause of African land hunger, not only to resettle blacks driven off white farms (a cause for which Champion fought Clements Kadalie, his fellow ICU leader), but to give them a place in urban areas too. In his testimony to the De Waal Commission on the 1929 Durban riots, Champion spoke vehemently of his long-standing presentation of this grievance to the Durban authorities and the Union government. More than that, he later claimed that he had instigated the inception of Clermont as a free African town. In 1929 he urged his ICU lawyer, an Afrikaner named J.W. van Aardt, to arrange with J.M.H. Brink, a Pretoria attorney, to purchase the mission lands at Christianenburg, by means of a private company, for resale to Africans. This episode is of considerable interest in that it represents a conjunction of white politicians and speculators with African interests. And it is also ironic that Champion, viewed as an African rabble rouser and held in distaste by most of the respectable advocates for the amelioration of the Africans' plight, and more recently devalued as compromisingly bourgeois, was at least instrumental in the inception of the nearest thing to an independent African village in the Durban area.

The project may have owed something to Father Bernard Huss, a priest at Mariannhill near Pinetown, a sponsor of Catholic African trade unions and co-operatives, and a frequent visitor at Champion's ICU gatherings. Huss could have been aware of the Lutheran Church's disposition to sell Christianenburg. As early as 1926, Durban estate agents approached the Berlin Society's representatives in Pietermaritzburg about its possible sale. Perhaps this activity was sparked by the efforts at that time in Durban to address the question of 'native villages'. At any rate Van Aardt, who had been engaged by Champion in ICU court cases in Bloemfontein in 1925 and who defended ICU Durban rioters in 1929, was well qualified to be a cat's-paw. Champion knew he was a National Party man and that he had been a schoolmate of Prime Minister J.B.M. Hertzog. As Champion later observed, 'He was a Nationalist

. . . When I saw that there was a delicate [i.e. political] question I consulted a Nationalist lawyer.' Champion spoke with and then wrote calculatedly to Van Aardt with an argument that would appeal to the authorities: as a practical means to alleviate a major source of tension, they could 'have advanced Natives buy freehold plots of land . . . security of tenure will create that happy feeling of independence in the minds of Natives and generally make them forget many of the irritative bye-laws . . . that are a source of petty ill-feeling'. The syndicate was styled The Clermont Township (Pty) Limited, with offices in Durban and eventually at the site of Clermont in a house that had belonged to the mission. It was an interesting group of private entrepreneurs and public officials with excellent connections. Involved eventually were Van Aardt and his law partner, J.C. Rossouw; the attorney J.M.v.H. Brink in Pretoria; E.G. Jansen, Minister of Native Affairs (1929–33) and later to be Governor-General of South Africa; Col. William R. Collins, MP for Ermelo, Minister of Agriculture, a well-known land speculator in the Orange Free State and later a member of the Native Affairs Commission; and possibly the unconventional financier, I.W. Schlesinger, at whose Colonial Banking and Trust Company, well known for small loans to Africans, Champion worked during his exile under banning orders in Johannesburg from 1930 to 1933. All told, shareholders numbered fifteen.[9]

At about this time, in 1930, a petition to favour the Clermont venture signed by 164 Africans in Durban, was addressed to the Minister of Native Affairs. Its language challenged the prevailing shibboleths of urban policy and bears repeating:

> We . . . Natives resident in Durban . . . by virtue of our occupations . . . have attained a standard where our only means of livelihood can be made in urban areas . . . We regard ourselves as part and parcel of the Industrial Civilization and advancement of South Africa . . . Although we are regarded as inhabitants of the urban areas and as essential to their welfare, their prosperity, their progress . . . we are not entitled to emulate their good example. We are not entitled to acquire any land that we could call our own and . . . improve our own houses and enjoy our own social and family ties and thereby make our children more adaptable and better citizens . . . We are not given the opportunity to prove what we are capable of doing in advancing our progress as Citizens of South Africa . . . Prove that you indeed appreciate how and in what manner the peaceful advancement of South Africa can take place with the collaboration of both European and the Native Races.[10]

Whether it was inspired by Durban white liberals, the Africans themselves, or the Clermont syndicate is uncertain, but this petition became part of the Clermont Company's approach to government for approval of the scheme. On

25 June 1930, Van Aardt's partner, J.C. Rossouw, appealed to the Minister of Native Affairs, E.G. Jansen (his Clermont partner-to-be), for sympathetic consideration of the petition as a fellow Afrikaner. Rossouw's letter, whether disingenuous or not, resonates poignantly across the decades. He wrote, in Afrikaans,

> An Afrikaner such as yourself will realize how strongly advanced is the feeling among our people to possess our own land, and this feeling has certainly much to do with the orderliness and peacefulness of the Afrikaner people . . . As this is true for our own people, it is surely a sound principle to allow natives, especially near towns like restless Durban, to have their own ground, so that the numbers of peaceful natives always shall increase and also form a bulwark against the vagrants who are allowed to hang about by people who have no real interest in the country.
>
> You have told me that you and the Government hold this opinion and therefore it is surely not necessary for me to bring up all the points in favour of such a plan. Surely no one who has dealt with the native question does not think that a native who has a fixed abode and the prospect of improving that place and of leaving it for his descendants, is an asset to the Country, and as time goes on . . . becomes a more reliable citizen of the State.[11]

The officials of the Native Affairs Department, however, opposed the Clermont scheme from the outset and would have stopped it if they could. The Chief Native Commissioner of Natal anxiously advised the Secretary of Native Affairs that Clermont, 'in the heart of a European area . . . one mile from Pinetown and nine miles from Durban . . . would undoubtedly be strenuously opposed by the Europeans of Pinetown and District'. And Durban looked upon the area as part of 'the future Greater Durban'. The Department prepared a memorandum for Jansen's signature, concluding that, as 'native influx' to urban areas was one of the biggest problems of the day, 'The Government cannot lend its support to any proposal having for its object the acquisition by Natives of further land in the immediate vicinity of European urban areas.' But this message was not sent to the Clermont Company, apparently because a personal interview next took place between Jansen, Rossouw and Van Aardt on 31 July. What transpired was not recorded, but from the subsequent train of events we may at least conclude that a sympathetic understanding had been reached.[12] Meanwhile, the warnings of the Chief Native Commissioner notwithstanding, intimations of official toleration and even support came from Durban itself. J.N. Rawlins, the Durban Native Welfare Officer, wrote to Rossouw that the Clermont scheme 'has my full support'. His reasons were consistent with Rossouw's previous arguments. Rawlins expressed the view of

Durban officials seeking positive controls in the aftermath of the beer boycott, ICU riots and anti-pass agitations of 1929–30. They expected a settlement at Clermont to offer a safety-valve for the grievances of educated Africans (presumably of the likes of A.W.G. Champion) who collected 'a lot of followers, raw natives who really have no grievance' and made trouble with them. Official legal opinion also supported or could not discourage Clermont, as the Secretary of Native Affairs next informed Rossouw that the successors of the Berlin Mission could legally sell plots to Africans even without the consent of the Governor-General, as the land fell under an exemption clause of the 1913 Land Act.[13]

The Clermont promoters were aware that control in the township was also a key concern, and they sought to involve the Native Affairs Department in the planning of and responsibility for its management. Rossouw thought to disarm critics, limit expense and avoid responsibility for the company by proposing a standard location system featuring a manager who would be a salaried official appointed by the NAD, with a native advisory board. The main thing, he said, was to arrange things so that 'only the better class native' would occupy the place, thus avoiding the creation of an agitator's hotbed. The manager's authority would be 'absolute'; he would be 'a servant of the government . . . subject to instant dismissal by you'. But the NAD was even more reluctant to consider the prospect of running Clermont than it was to approve of its existence at all. Since the promoters would profit from it, they must assume responsibility for its management; a government official would be 'out of the question'. The company then suggested that a manager be nominated by the ratepayers and itself, subject to government approval. Even this degree of involvement was rejected by the NAD, on financial grounds, and the opinion was expressed that Clermont was expected to fail as an independent township. The inability of African owners to pay economic tax rates 'would no doubt militate largely against the success of the whole concern'.[14]

Indeed, the financial interests of the Clermont Company were quite apparent in the terms it set for African purchasers. The deeds for Clermont property prohibited alienation to any person not a 'native'. But the company secured agreement that the purchasers must be free to mortgage their properties to 'Europeans' – presumably the company or its partners – and that the 'Europeans' must be able to take the property if the mortgagee forfeited the bond, and then to resell to another African. The reason given for this made plain another fact that would vex Clermont's future: capital would be needed for its development as well as its purchase, and sufficient capital would have to be raised from the whites who, in return, would insist on reaping their own benefit from the transactions.

The question of control and development introduced yet another strongly sceptical, and prophetically cautionary, official voice. The Union Public Health Department received forcefully worded warnings from its Assistant Health

Officer in Durban, G. A. Park-Ross: Clermont must be carefully laid out and regulated from the start. Natives, he said, needed to be controlled 'practically paternally' for this purpose. It was 'essential that adequate powers be vested in the Local Authority . . . for the provision of a proper water supply and sanitation'. The Provincial Secretary agreed, and warned that if the NAD would not provide, Natal would have to set up a health committee such as those under other local authorities. But Clermont was to have no other local authority than the company, for the NAD, unable to scotch Clermont, was determined to have as little to do with it as possible. They put off the Health Department and the Provincial Secretary with the comment that they would some day co-operate to promulgate regulations for Clermont 'when it has sufficiently developed'. They hoped, of course, that it would not develop. Park-Ross in Durban sputtered, 'I think this is utterly wrong and very dangerous . . . sanitary control . . . should have synchronised with the start of settlement at this place, presumably five months ago, when my attention was drawn to its existence by press notices.'[15]

Clermont had indeed already been launched. Government authorisation to sell exclusively to Africans was confirmed in 1931. The old mission land was bought for approximately £10 per acre and resold at four to eight plots to the acre for between £27 10s. and £36 10s. each, with a deposit of £2 and an instalment plan 10s. per month. By 1940, with some 800 acres remaining to be sold, the company valued the land at £250 per acre and charged £80 per plot. The profit would thus be a big one, especially as the company did little to manage the township or supply services.[16]

The prestige of the Zulu establishment was enlisted to promote the venture. The prominent educator, editor and ANC figure, John L. Dube, was enlisted as 'Agent Enkulu' (Agent Extraordinary). King Solomon was prevailed upon to lend publicity to the enterprise and encourage people to buy plots at a Dingane's Day celebration in 1931 at Pinetown, and on New Year's Day 1932 in Johannesburg. Durban newspaper advertisements proclaimed that 'The Head of the Zulu Nation will be in Pinetown to Praise the Black Township, having chosen for himself his own stand':

> It is hoped that everyone who likes the forward progress of our nation will . . . buy for themselves a plot in the Great Bantu Town which is established. It is pleasing to see that the King is supporting by all efforts the uplifting of the 'Black Stem' . . . Find a dog and catch the young one [the quarry: a place in the town]. The dog is money. There will be built a town of rest and you get your stand in it. This town will be the Bantu's town, as Durban and other towns are the white towns. People will come out of the tin shanties of the Indians . . . The good thing is they will choose for themselves a Mayor and Town Council [and have] the joy of proximity of homes and children to those who work in Durban.

Included in the announcement was a letter from King Solomon which said that he was pleased that people now had the opportunity of getting 'clean and healthy places in the country which will always be theirs. The Whites of South Africa earn great wealth by buying places. I desire that our people shall also have this opportunity in our country of origin.'

When Colonel Collins called on Jansen to tell him about the plans for Solomon, the minister, determined to check the slightest activity having political potential, put his foot down and objected to the using of 'Solomon's or any other chief's services to further propaganda on behalf of the Company's interests'. Solomon, too, was warned directly of the government's disfavour and pleaded a convenient illness. Nevertheless, the Dingane's Day dedication of Clermont was a big event. Three thousand Africans and a dozen chiefs were reported present, with John Dube speaking as a kind of royal representative, much to the irritation of the Chief Native Commissioner. Dube said:

> I have waited long for this kind of thing – when natives can have a township of their own. No lover of his people can remain unmoved when the families of his people are mixed with the outcasts of decent living . . . I therefore appeal to all Europeans who bear us goodwill to support us in this and similar ventures.

The *Natal Witness* inaccurately called it 'an occasion unparalleled in South Africa', with the freehold character of Clermont 'a precedent fraught with far-reaching possibilities to both white and black races'.[17]

One informant recalled that despite the interest of the leaders, people tended to hold back at first and sales were slow. He attributed this to the strength of tradition, and uncertainty about what the king or chiefs would do. For this reason the king and others were brought forward. Indeed, a beast was sacrificed with an appropriate ceremony in Solomon's name, presumably freeing the land for private ownership. The story goes on: years later when a large section of Clermont was to be taken for the Durban Umgeni water system, this ceremony was invoked in protest against the land-taking and was instrumental in a decision to divert the construction.[18]

Colonel Collins was an active promoter of Clermont. Towards the end of 1933, as Minister of Agriculture in the new Fusion government, led by Smuts and Hertzog, he called Champion to tell him that Smuts, Oswald Pirow's successor as Minister of Justice (Pirow had banned Champion from Natal in 1930), would not renew Champion's ban and would set no conditions upon him. Collins then offered Champion a job as the company's special agent to help them in Natal. Rossouw, despite an earlier assurance to Jansen that Champion as an 'undesirable person' would not be allowed to have any role in the Clermont scheme, had already offered Champion an agency in Johannesburg. Champion had then declined, but now he accepted. He wrote a long letter for

publication in *Ilanga* announcing his return to Durban and his intention to establish a Zulu investment subscription fund (always a cherished project) and to promote Clermont. In this letter he explained his role and his motives in typically abrasive style:

> I believed it would be a good thing for the natives to build their own village which . . . would be controlled by them and they would be removed from those that loathe them and only come in contact with them at work . . . When we have finished paying for it the owners will have nothing further to do with us; they will take the money and we shall take the land; we shall thank them for having assisted us to cross the river that we could not have crossed without their assistance . . . I intend we should build up businesses of our own by which we shall attract our people to deal amongst themselves at home and in the towns . . . We shall provide our people with higher education who in return will produce good ideas and schemes to carry out the work, the object of this fund being to protect what is ours in every way so that our land should never be taken away from us and bought by foreigners.

The official reception of such a pronouncement was predictably jaundiced. The police, who kept Champion under surveillance, reported it to the Secretary of Native Affairs who noted that 'It is quite evident . . . that his intention is again to exploit the Natives . . . The experience of this Department is that in land transactions the Native purchaser in most cases suffers financial loss.' But Champion's motives, and those of the others, were not merely exploitative. And the Secretary of Native Affairs would have bridled at the counter-suggestion that he himself represented a far vaster system of exploitation. Years later, when the Natal provincial authorities had proclaimed the Public Health Commission to control Edendale and Clermont, Champion would write in *Ilanga* again to protest, quite accurately, that the regulation to be imposed by the commission would smother the independence of the township:

> I advise all the people into whose territory a new health body will be introduced . . . that most of the Whites say that these places are unsatisfactory because they have Blacks who are not under their laws. This body will not go into those areas for the sake of sweeping out the dirt.

Thus it seems that in the rhetoric and political manoeuvres of its inception, whatever mixture of motives may be ascribed to its promoters, can be seen aspirations and objectives that later animated the independent Clermont Township Residents' Committee in 1939 and after.[19]

The Evolution of Clermont

Clermont grew rapidly after 1933. In 1935 the company secretary reported about 250 families in residence, some 200 of them having come from Durban. Many others had purchased plots but had not yet taken up residence for lack of means to build houses. About 1 450 plots were sold by 1937. Population was estimated at 1 100 in 1936, double that two years later, and 2 800 or more in 1939, of whom the surprising figure of 1 500 were thought to be children. The first plot owner was already a resident of the Christianenburg mission, and probably other mission members were also early purchasers. The son of this original owner said that the majority of people who came to Clermont were not well-off members of an African bourgeoisie, but rather labouring people who were seeking some security, a place for their families, and freedom from the chiefs. They sometimes took on more debt than they could handle. Although the majority were Zulu, we are told that it was a mixed community of people from many places: the Transkei, Basutoland, Johannesburg. This suggests a profile not unlike that described in a survey of the late 1970s, which showed a substantial proportion of Xhosa, Mpondo, Sotho and a sprinkling of others besides the Zulu, among the shanty-dwellers of Clermont at that time. The local Lutheran pastor, the Revd P. Regel, observed in evidence to the Thornton Committee in 1939 (a government commission on uncontrolled urban settlements) that most of the male residents were employed in Durban and Pinetown and some on farms in the district, while many of the women were laundresses. Indian buses running between New Germany and Durban supplied transportation at low fares, although there is some indication that many men returned to Clermont only at weekends.[20]

Housing in Clermont was owner-built and varied, in the words of the Pinetown magistrate, 'from shacks to decently built cottages, the majority being of a very poor type and mainly of wood and iron'. He referred to much overcrowding; so we may conclude that Clermont in its early days had the aspect of the squatter camps, or informal shack towns, that were appearing everywhere in the Durban metropolitan region. The crucial difference was that, as time went on, many property-owners began to capitalise on their investment, and on rising land values, by taking mortgage loans to build more substantial houses. By the mid-1940s records show numerous applications for mortgages for sums of £50 to £275 at 5 to 6 per cent for purposes of improving or constructing buildings, or financing shops and other enterprises. Relatively little food was grown on the small plots, nor were many cows kept, with the result that food supplies were largely store-purchased and 'the community thus lives in European style'. Since little milk was available, and half the population were children, the magistrate and other observers expressed concern over malnutrition in Clermont.[21]

The attributes of community life were tentative but developing. The

Lutheran mission school had been continued and was now overflowing with children – 569 according to Pastor Regel in 1939, a number which caused severe sanitary problems and overstressed its nine teachers. A second school was opened in 1939 by the Roman Catholic Church with 170 pupils in its first year. A local residents' initiative was also felt with the beginning of a 'small native school', which was later absorbed by the Clernaville government school built in the 1940s. There may have been significant church activity in early Clermont. The Lutheran mission settlement remained, although Pastor Regel chiefly served the white residents of New Germany. However, the African Congregational Church in Durban established a Clermont branch in 1937. The Independent Methodist Church of Africa acquired property in 1939 and property records show the Anglican and Methodist churches active by 1947, and probably well before then. Pastor Regel mentioned one football team in 1939, with access to a playing field provided by the township company, but for the most part he decried the lack of organised recreation and the consequent idleness, or seeming idleness, of the population. This he equated with drunkenness and disorder, especially at weekends.[22]

This concern introduces the whole metaphor of social pathology (the 'sanitation syndrome') with which whites tended to view the condition of Durban's peri-urban areas, and for which they prescribed urgent government action. Clermont was not unique in this respect but in the Pinetown district it supplied the greatest anxieties and received the brunt of criticism. Nearly every observer commented on malnutrition, alcohol abuse, bad water, lack of sanitation with a consequent health menace, and the security threat to surrounding communities.

Government and Politics

Insistent complaints against Clermont began in 1936, led by public health officials. Durban's Park-Ross warned anew of an impending 'health disaster of the first magnitude' and the Secretary of Public Health once more dunned the Native Affairs Department to carry out his recommendations of 1932. The concern was more than interdepartmental – it was becoming a matter of public concern. Employers as far away as Johannesburg alleged Clermont Company exploitation of their black employees. For example, J.O. Reid, an importer of mining machinery, complained to Durban's Medical Officer of Health, and the Institute of Race Relations, about overpriced and inaccessible plots lacking roads, safe water and sanitation, 'which must inevitably lead to a dreadful epidemic'. Reid's complaint was instrumental in bringing pressure on the NAD, but he observed with more accuracy and unconscious irony than he could have imagined, 'I cannot help feeling this company has a political pull somewhere.' Indeed, during the next year Natal's Administrator proclaimed Clermont 'an approved private township for Africans'.[23]

Meanwhile the Native Affairs Department was galvanised. Native Affairs and health officials, including Park-Ross, met with the Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) of Natal, the magistrate of Pinetown, and company representative Van Aardt. Fred Rodseth, Inspector of Native Urban Locations who became Assistant Secretary of Native Affairs in the 1940s, recalled many years later how the CNC dressed down a furious Van Aardt at this meeting, charging him with 'creating a slum at high profit' and threatening to shut it down. The difficulty in accomplishing this was discreetly suggested by Rodseth in a report at the time, noting that 'Colonel Collins [chief government whip and a member of the Native Affairs Commission] owns a large share in the Township Company and was a director prior to his appointment to the . . . Commission'.[24]

Each of the interested parties attempted to fix responsibility for action upon another. Rodseth's report sought to turn aside Park-Ross's shrill demands by sensibly advising his superiors that they should accept the township as an accomplished fact in the interests of blacks who already owned plots. While individual fixed land tenure might be regretted, he conceded that it met 'a heartfelt want'. Therefore he recommended holding the company to Van Aardt's original declaration of intent to provide planned development and services. He also required them to transfer titles of ownership sooner than they were doing (only 80 thus far), and the Africans themselves would be able and willing to pay rates for adequate amenities. We have the medical officer's description upon which Park-Ross had based his alarmist warning, and we can see that in fact it accorded more with Rodseth's moderate view: Clermont's 300 houses were 'generally quite well built . . . neat and clean'. But Park-Ross, exercising his considerable gifts of imagination and rhetoric in the service of the sanitation syndrome, reacted with near-hysterical hyperbole: the company was concentrating 'several thousands of natives with families . . . under conditions that will make for gigantic slums . . . Houses, some good and some very bad, are going up in shoals.' The company's plan 'would not under any spasm of imagination pass a town planning board . . . Disease . . . will menace Durban, Pinetown and Westville.' Everyone, he said, missed the root of the trouble. No private interest or agency would suffice. Government must take a stronger view – his view. Control must be imposed and substantial capital spent on infrastructure.[25]

The Native Affairs Department countered with emphatic assertions of its legal incapacity to control Clermont directly, arguing that no existing laws could be applied because the Clermont Company was not a local authority in terms of the Urban Areas Act. The tax rating provisions of the Native Administration Act would not provide sufficient revenue, and even though the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act prevented any new such schemes, the former Minister of Native Affairs (Jansen) had assured the company that Clermont land could still be sold under the exemption clauses of the 1913 Land Act.

Rejecting imputations of responsibility, the NAD insisted that it had created neither Clermont nor its condition – in fact, quite the contrary. If the health authorities wanted to follow Park-Ross and have Clermont run as a European township they must apply the Public Health Act themselves or get Clermont incorporated into a neighbouring local authority such as Westville. In rebuttal the Health Department insisted that the Health Act could not stop the growth of Clermont. In exasperation Park-Ross came to the nub of his argument. Put an end to Clermont: 'Strangle the infant at birth. It is a Native custom. I would certainly recommend it to any outside local authority . . . to save itself. It will take over for no other reason.' In fact, in the end no local authority could be persuaded to take over. They all eventually refused: Westville, Pinetown, and even Durban.[26]

The quarrelling departments finally sank their differences in a reinterpretation of Clermont's legal status, followed by a joint assault on the Clermont Company. Means were found to strip away its exemption from the requirement of the 1913 Land Act to have its land sales approved by the Governor-General. Once the company had to refer each transfer of title for the Native Affairs Department's recommendation before getting that approval, it could be disciplined. The NAD now succeeded in arguing that if Clermont were to be a legal African township it must be reproclaimed under the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1937. Even then the company would have to apply for approval of each transfer of land, and approval would only be given if the company provided adequate amenities. Once again the Clermont Company tried to use its influence to escape this net. Attorney Brink in Pretoria wrote to Colonel Collins ('My Dear Willie') to intercede, arguing that the Minister of Native Affairs could not legally prevent registration of deeds. Collins and Brink then went to the Secretary of Native Affairs' office to argue that the 1937 law was being misused and that it had been 'intended to give absolute protection to places like Clermont'. The Secretary refused to agree. From 1938 further transfers of Clermont property were interdicted until, in each case, the company could show that no health menace was involved.[27]

Thus, public and official pressure mounted in the late 1930s to place Clermont and other unregulated settlements near urban areas under formal government control. The company defended the special status of Clermont as a private freehold African township, and tried to get an agreement that it could operate under its own local authority or 'village council'. But the NAD remained unrelenting in its aversion to an independent African settlement. It still hoped Clermont could be taken over by the Pinetown, Westville, or even Durban local authorities, but these bodies just as determinedly refused. It was not only that it would be costly; Clermont was an anomaly in South African law. They discovered that, as a freehold area, it could not be put under the location provisions of the urban areas acts. The alternative seemed to be to create a local health committee. But the local government law required members of such

bodies to be parliamentary voters of the Union of South Africa. *That* was virtually unthinkable. Thus a local health committee could not be established in a 'Native township location'. Finally, early in 1941 a heated meeting of the Kloof, Pinetown and Westville health boards with the district magistrate demanded that the government act on what they declared was its responsibility for the trouble with Clermont. In fact, this was about to take place, as a new provincial ordinance was being created to empower a local health commission to control Clermont and the older independent settlement at Edendale near Pietermaritzburg.[28]

The Clermont Residents' Council and its Constitution

Meanwhile the people of Clermont began to act on their own behalf, a development which indicates that community consciousness had arisen. In 1938 a committee of residents took shape, apparently in conjunction with the efforts of the Clermont Company to preserve its own freedom of action in the face of growing government restriction. Parallel with their assault on the company, the authorities had also moved against Clermont's nascent traders, threatening to withhold or revoke their licences on sanitary grounds. This step, added to the interdict on property transfers, probably also stimulated local efforts to protect Clermont's special status. While the company's defence of freehold rights was essential to its business, and its effort to promote a local authority was calculated to limit its own financial obligations, its posture also worked towards preserving a measure of independence for the community. Thus, in its defence of its own interests, the company also asserted that any incorporation or reorganisation of the township must involve consultation with and the consent of the residents.

In July 1938 a petition, possibly inspired by the company, was sent to the Minister of Native Affairs from 326 residents. It urged that something be done 'to protect the development of the Township', and to give residents a voice in their own affairs through a 'Native Council' whereby they would provide funds 'to ensure sanitation and proper control'. The Secretary of Native Affairs' response was predictably discouraging. Clermont was not a 'Native area' and parliament would not approve an independent council, especially as a government committee was about to look at the whole question of unregulated African settlements in urban areas. This was the Thornton Committee (Sir Edward Thornton was a Health Department official), the report of which a year later would recommend incorporation by Durban (refused), or acquisition by the Native Trust to allow direct NAD supervision.[29]

Despite this rebuff the Clermont Residents' Committee pressed its case. They engaged the Durban attorney, Cecil Cowley, well known as an Africans' advocate and formerly Champion's chief ICU lawyer; he wrote to the CNC on their behalf. They wanted to settle the question of Clermont's government.

Their first proposal was to end the ineffectual designation of the Qadi tribal chief, Mandhlakayise, who actually lived across the Umgeni River in reserve territory, as chief of Clermont. The committee asked for 'a fit and proper person from among themselves' whom they could recognise as a leader. In this way an important characteristic of Clermont was asserted. They were educated men and property-owners they said, and should have at least an educated chief of standing. But they actually had another agenda in mind, for they had provided themselves with a fundamental law entitled 'Constitution of the Clermont Native Township'. It reflected an awareness of all the needs and issues that were exercising the authorities and surrounding communities. It bears summarising: the committee would be called 'The Council of Purchasers and Residents of Clermont Township'. Its objectives would be to gain for itself recognition as Clermont's representative local government; to establish public funds under its own control; to protect property-holders against foreclosure and attachment of their plots – an indication of their struggle to meet their financial commitments; to provide an adequate water supply; to demarcate a town commonage for grazing stock and to supervise dipping; to control public health; to define streets; to promote recreation; to provide a cemetery; to prohibit anyone except an African from engaging in business or trade in Clermont; and generally 'to promote a spirit of co-operation, good citizenship and mutual understanding'.[30]

The Clermont Residents' Council commenced its efforts by creating a Township Bantu Improvement Fund. Money was collected from residents, and a representative was sent throughout Natal, Zululand and the Transvaal to solicit subscriptions from absentee owners and other sympathetic persons, 'to improve the Township by means of constructing bridges, roads and sports-grounds etc., since we are not under any municipality or Health Board' and could not therefore collect taxes. A major objective was to gain official recognition of their claim to govern and speak for Clermont, and so they were careful to inform the judicial and NAD authorities about their activities and to try to involve the district magistrate in their financial administration. Mr Madhlopa, Clermont's 'mayor' or council chairman tended, however, to couch his communications in the following style of proclamation: 'All powers are vested upon me by the Clermont residents to inform you . . .' In response, government officials took at best a sceptical and wary view of what they clearly regarded as irregular.[31]

The interaction that ensued between the Clermont Council and the government makes an interesting example of the circumstances that, despite the inclinations of some officials to tolerate or even encourage its existence, inevitably militated against the success of African initiatives under the South African system. The Pinetown magistrate, M.G. Fannin, later a prominent and highly regarded Natal Chief Justice, was generally sympathetic, but he could not agree officially to authorise the Africans' township fund, nor would the

CNC do so unless a Clermont Company officer was its treasurer. Alternatively, the Residents' Council arranged for Fannin to act as their fiduciary agent for bank deposits and to countersign their cheques. But this put Fannin into difficulty with his superiors. The CNC wrote of this to the Secretary of Native Affairs: 'You will observe that the Bantu Improvement Fund has no official or legal status', to which the Secretary replied, 'A government official should not associate himself officially with the administration of moneys . . . whereof he has no control.' Fannin was careful to advise the council that the NAD might audit their books. His successor, cooler to the independent committee, refused to endorse their proposal to collect funds outside Clermont on the grounds that their authority could be recognised only among the residents of the township. The Clermont Council tried to establish other institutions, such as a produce market. They also constituted themselves as a judicial body to settle disputes between residents, collecting a small fee from each complainant for costs. This effort the district magistrate coolly quashed: 'Whilst there can be no objection to your committee deciding matters which concern your township as such, it must be clearly understood that you are not entitled to hear and decide disputes of a criminal or civil nature, nor are you entitled to charge fees.'[32]

Commercial and Communal Rivalries

The heaviest battle for local control lay on the ground of trading enterprise and economic disabilities generally. The residents were especially resentful of Indian entrepreneurs or labourers in the township. A prominent case was that of Mr Mtungwa, who hired Indian construction workers and had to appeal to the South African Police to protect them against angry residents. The Township Council brought the matter before the Native Commissioner in its authoritative style: 'It is the decision of the Community through the Committee that such transactions be not allowed; therefore we kindly ask you, sir, not to allow those Indian traders.' Presumably they meant builders or artisans, but the term 'traders' would also have had great general significance, since African traders' resentment against competition was becoming a bitter grievance by the Second World War and after. The most dire confrontation came over an issue that would agitate Clermont and other African communities in the future: bus enterprises. Indians had for years operated bus services between Durban and New Germany, much used by Clermont residents. But the new mood animating Africans by the 1940s violently opposed the extension of the Indian operators to Clermont itself. One B. Mtshali, who was also the vice-chairman of the Clermont Council, had applied for a licence to operate a Clermont bus line. The application was refused in favour of the existing Indian operators and one existing African operator. On appeal to the Central Transportation Board on the grounds that African custom should be given to African enterprise, Mtshali was turned down again. The response dripped with irony: 'Under no circumstances could they [the Board] take notice of any differences of race.'

At this, community ire boiled over. Not loath to go directly to the head office, a women's committee delivered a waspish protest to the Minister of Native Affairs in Pretoria, demanding an investigation of the licensing boards and creation of a kind of quota policy to promote African enterprise against entrenched non-African competitors: 'We are the people who have created the need for the buses and our word must be respected . . . We feel that the Department must give us a chance to improve ourselves.' Indians from Durban were resented because 'they interfere with our development in Native Areas'. In effect the women wanted to invoke segregation to their own advantage. After all it was partly in that spirit that the inception and early promotion of Clermont had been couched: 'We want to abide by the Segregation Law, supported by our Deeds of Sale and Deeds of Transfer [these stipulated that only Africans could hold Clermont property] . . . We are looking at this, sir, in a Native point of view, as mothers of Clermont.' The Secretary's reply gave cold comfort. He disagreed flatly with the mothers of Clermont that their businessmen had been victims of discrimination and made no reference to the principle of special treatment they had raised.

Soon thereafter, violent demonstrations broke out in Clermont and a mob of sixty to seventy women stoned an Indian bus, doing great damage. This time the Pinetown Native Commissioner sided unequivocally with the Africans. Fannin reminded the CNC that he had warned of violence if Indians were granted licences and that he had endorsed the application of Mtshali: 'While I will not tolerate mob rule in this district my sympathies are with the natives in this matter and I consider them capable of meeting their own transportation needs.' Eventually African bus lines did business at Clermont, but so ruthlessly did they compete among themselves that they drove each other out of business as effectively as Indians could have done.[33]

Provincial Control

The Clermont Council hoped to become the township's recognised local authority and they had engaged attorney Cecil Cowley to influence the deliberations on the question of local control at Clermont then proceeding at provincial government level. Cowley told the Native Commissioner, Fannin, that the council were alarmed at the possibility of coming under any of the neighbouring local health boards because they were aware of the resentment and hostility of those white communities, and they feared the prejudice that would taint local white administration. They argued that parliament had long ago made provision for self-rule in townships like theirs under Act 23 of 1920. Under that law Clermont could be declared a 'native area' and have a local governing council of its own proclaimed. This they had requested before the Thornton Committee. The council would then consist of blacks, and not outside whites as they feared was going to happen: 'Willing service is likely to be more beneficial than a grudging administration by a foreign body, and the spirit of co-operation is likely to be much greater if the Township is administered by their own people.' Finally the Clermont Committee invoked Thornton's view that Native Councils or 'Ibunga' had been a 'great success' in the Cape, where a form of local self-government had operated since the nineteenth century, and they hoped Natal would take this model for itself.

But that was not to be. Fannin, though friendly to their cause, realised the temper of white government, bureaucracy and public. The solutions that he envisioned were totally unlike those of the Clermont Council. One would be a health committee appointed in consultation with the Native Affairs and Public Health Departments, and consisting of a retired native commissioner, a medical doctor or health inspector, an engineer, a retired businessman, and someone interested in 'native welfare'. Or there could be a committee as above, with two Africans added; and he offered to name suitable candidates from Clermont, 'although I fear such a course does not commend itself to the Provincial Executive'. He was right. In fact, by this time steps to alter provincial law were under way and resulted in the promulgation of the Natal Local Health Commissions Ordinance, No. 20 of 1941, to control 'native areas near urban areas', especially Clermont and Edendale. Under this ordinance the Natal Local Health Commission appointed a health board of white officials to administer Clermont in 1943.[34]

Preparing for the takeover, the commission ascertained that ten years after Clermont's beginning there were now 3 000 inhabitants – 725 families and 600 houses. Despite the popular anxiety about a 'plague spot' (Durban Medical Officer Gunn's phrase), there was no history of waterborne disease at Clermont and only 27 cases of infectious disease had been reported between April 1941 and March 1942, including 19 cases of typhoid. The Clermont Company reported a return of 12,5 per cent to its shareholders, but said no distribution had been made as the profits were locked up in assets, £10 000 having been put in trust pending the Governor-General's assent to transfer of titles. The local Health Commission inherited the dispute between government and company over responsibility for public services. Estimating that an adequate infrastructure would require capital expenditure of £14–£20 000, they proposed to get as much as they could of the company's £10 000 in trust for the purpose of supplying public services, arguing that the company had a moral obligation, if not a legal one, to make a 'liberal contribution'. The company, for its part, complained that the NAD's interdict on land transfers had 'dispossessed' it of its rightful property, and it expected the Health Commission speedily to proclaim Clermont a 'health area' with a consequent end to the embargo. Testy negotiations ensued. Commission chairman T.M. Wadley reminded the company what the alternative to settling with the commission – control by the NAD – would do to their business prospects, and the company settled on rather favourable terms, chiefly £3 000 paid in cash, £500 in lieu of taxes for two years and after that taxes at a regulation rate.

While the NAD's embargo on transfers was partially lifted, the company's constant hope for a free hand was frustrated, as Douglas L. Smit, Secretary of Native Affairs, remained determined to require application for each individual transfer in order to protect the African purchasers financially. It is clear that antagonism had developed as a result of the company's persistent lobbying through the ever-present Colonel Collins, who accused Smit of distorting the intent of the Land Act ('to define areas between white and black') and demanded that he get out of the company's way. But Smit held firm and the NAD would not relinquish the principle that it held a watching brief between Europeans and Africans.

Turning from the Clermont Company, the Local Health Commission attempted without success to secure the balance of its financial needs from the NAD and the Durban Corporation on the ground that low-paid Africans should not bear the burden of the township alone and that in the case of Durban, where they worked, employers, 'who derive the benefit of a community like Clermont', should assist it. Failing in these appeals, Wadley and the commission could only rely on small grants and loans from the province and trim the budget for Clermont accordingly. Clermont was proclaimed a local health area on 1 April 1943, and this dispensation remained in force until the central government took over in 1974.[35]

The Clermont Town Council

The Local Health Commission intended to establish an advisory board for Clermont on the usual location model, but Wadley took cognisance of the Residents' Committee and sought to persuade them of the advisory board's acceptability by writing to the committee chairman, the Revd Abner S. Mtimkulu, a prominent ANC leader associated with John Dube. Wadley had not received a reply before he had to proceed with his recommendation to the provincial executive to proclaim Clermont. Wadley's letter to the company's secretary at the time asked the latter to contact Mtimkulu tactfully in the hope of getting co-operation: 'His silence rather gives me the impression that they are not taking kindly to the matter.' He was right. The available official records do not contain Mtimkulu's reply, but the Residents' Committee's view of the matter may be judged from their subsequent activity.[36] The spirit of autonomy was not eclipsed and the Residents' Committee maintained their claims to local autonomy throughout the 1940s and early 1950s under remarkable leadership. They set up an unofficial 'Clermont Town Council' in 1944 which further elaborated the administrative plan of the earlier constitution, designating departments of local government under administrative heads of their own. In 1948 an extraordinary individual became chairman of the Residents' Committee, one Henry Caleb Sibisi. This account will conclude with a review of the events and developments that Sibisi seems to have inspired.

Here the figure of Dr Pixley Seme, whose ideas of self-help and economic independence provided inspiration at the inception of Clermont, hovers in the background. He maintained a great interest in Clermont civic affairs. The connection was partly familial, as Seme was a maternal uncle of the first plot-owner of Clermont. He advised the Residents' Committee and acted as an attorney for prominent members of the commercial community, in particular A.M. Kuzwayo, a trader who was also a committee member. Seme was probably largely responsible for the Clermont constitution, or at least influential in its creation, and is supposed to have 'masterminded' the emergence of the town council. Sibisi had also been a member of the Residents' Committee from its founding. As an 'ally' of Seme, he probably had a hand in drafting the constitution and developing the council. He seems to have had a remarkable ability to envision projects and enlist people to execute them. His style of leadership was discreet, behind the scenes, and genuinely civic-minded, if a memoir of him by a contemporary and witness to the events presents him as faithfully as it appears somewhat hagiographically to do.[37]

This unofficial town council was still fully operational even after 1948, and it would seem that the official health board, like the local magistrates and native commissioners before it, tolerated this local initiative and had to co-operate with it. Although the health board attempted to stultify the council by establishing the Native Advisory Board with a term of three years rather than the standard one year, the Residents'-Committee-cum-Town-Council apparently retained the true legitimacy in the eyes of the community. Any matters before the Advisory Board would actually be put before the public by the Residents' Committee, whose members had also been elected to the Advisory Board. Or such business was simply referred by the authorities themselves directly to the Residents' Committee for its decision, an arrangement that we are told the Natal Local Health Commission accepted. Mtimkulu even became the first chairman of the Advisory Board but resigned later, as did other members, because the board had no effective power. So difficult was it to find candidates that no further elections were held for more than thirty years after its inauguration.

Meanwhile the Clermont departments of transport and justice seem to have been the most prominent of Henry Sibisi's creations. A head constable and police force were appointed and operated effectively enough to gain the co-operation of the police and magistrate of Pinetown. The local court mooted earlier was reinstituted and held sessions every Saturday to deal with petty disputes and offences. A kind of *de facto* recognition was accorded to this tribunal by the Pinetown magistrate to whom culprits were referred for sentencing after judgement at Clermont. A Clermont department of education contributed to the operation of the Clernaville government school, and a department of social welfare took shape in the form of a local chapter of the Daughters of Africa, which relied on voluntary contributions of time and

money from its members to supply practical help. The memoir of Sibisi relates that the work of this body later came to a frustrated end with the more businesslike but unrepresentative intervention of well-meaning whites.

But Sibisi's most ambitious effort was in schemes to develop registered municipal business enterprises. Thus was formed the Clermont Township Bantu Improvement Company, which proposed to purchase the properties of departing residents for investment and development. Its prospectus called for it to invest in beerhalls, public halls, sports grounds and road building, to tax users of public services, and to engage outside experts for its projects. Linked with the improvement company would be a township improvement fund controlling the treasury, financing business development, and receiving revenue. Produce and craft markets in Clermont were to be placed under the Vukazake Clermont Company Ltd, its directors all women, representative of those having most to do with local marketing. Finally, the Clermont Township Bantu Bus Company was the most prominent, and ultimately most vexed, of Sibisi's nascent community enterprises. After the cataclysmic Durban Afro-Indian riots of 1949, Indian buses left the Clermont routes and the Bantu Bus Company came into its own, with licences for five more buses to join the one existing vehicle of the 'Africans' Own Bus Service No. One'. The Clermont route promised to be good business, but the company ran into difficulties maintaining service, and was later run out by ruthless, indeed crooked, competition from a Johannesburg entrepreneur.

By the early 1950s, the best days of the Clermont Township Residents' Committee had passed as frustration and personal rivalries led to division and confusion. Although it was reborn in another organisation, the Clermont Ratepayers' Association, government control deepened under the Provincial Health Commission and eventually, in 1974, the central government took control. Clermont, however had become an established and viable community, and its special status was to be preserved, both in the eyes of its residents and the considerations of its rulers.

Conclusion

The founding and development of Clermont is an example of one way in which Africans themselves sought, with a significant measure of independence, to manage the experience of urbanisation and to evade or moderate the paternalist and exploitative controls imposed on them by white government. It is also a lesson in the inexorable drive of that government authority to achieve and maintain more or less arbitrary control in the name of a rational social order as well as a racial one. Clermont, anomalous to the structures and modes of control previously established over Africans in the colonial context, was gradually ensnared in a governmental apparatus designed to ameliorate a putative social and medical pathology – the rise of informal peri-urban shack and slum settlements which are so common to urbanising societies. This apparatus was also calculated to limit and check the initiative and local autonomy of Africans aspiring to westernised social norms, liberties and economic opportunities.

The result may be seen as an episode in the modernisation, but not the change, of South Africa's exploitative racial order in the name of public health, safety and administrative rationalisation. The early emergence and encouragement of energetic and locally independent urban black communities such as Clermont could have supplied alternative ways of grasping the nettle of social order, and of meeting the social costs associated with urban-industrial development. The story of Clermont foreshadows a creative and progressive evolution of African urbanism that, though stultified in an earlier day, can be seen re-emerging in the present, free dispensation.

NOTES

1. Author's observations; Gavin Maasdorp and Errol Haarhof (eds), *Alternative Strategies for Low Income Housing in the Durban Metropolitan Region*, Economic Research Unit, School of Architecture and Allied Disciplines (University of Natal, Durban, 1981), pp. 96–110. Cf. Mike Sarakinsky, 'Alexandra: From "Freehold" to "Model" Township' (unpublished BA Hons. dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1984); and T.R.H. Davenport, *Black Grahamstown, the Agony of a Community* (Johannesburg, Institute of Race Relations, 1980).
2. Durban *Mayor's Minute*, 1924; M.W. Swanson, '"The Durban System": Roots of Urban Apartheid in Colonial Natal', *African Studies*, 35(3–4), 1976, pp. 159–76; David Hemson, 'Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1979), ch. 2; see Paul la Hausse's essay in this collection.
3. TCF, 643J, jackets 1 & 2 *passim*; Durban Native Administration Committee minutes; Louise Torr, 'Lamontville: A History 1930–60', in this collection; Paul Maylam, 'Aspects of African Urbanisation in the Durban Area before 1940' in R. Haines and G. Buijs (eds), *The Struggle for Social and Economic Space: Urbanization in Twentieth Century South Africa* (Durban, University of Durban-Westville Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1985); WITS: IRR AD843 & 1433.
4. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 5 April 1929.
5. Ibid.
6. Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism and the State in Twentieth Century Natal* (Johannesburg, 1986).
7. H. Selby Msimang, paper read before the African Methodist Episcopal Church Education Rally, 19 July 1930, Argyle Collection on Voluntary Associations, University of Natal.
8. Maynard Swanson, '"The Fate of the Natives": Black Durban and African Ideology', *Natalia*, 14 (1984), pp. 59–68, esp. 64–7.
9. Author's correspondence and interview with Champion, Durban, 11 October 1974; NA: A1060; WITS: Champion Papers, A922/A, Champion to Van Aardt, 25 October 1929; A.W.G. Champion, 'Time is Longer than Rope in the Life of Every Man', cc author's possession; interview, C.B.S. Makhatini, Durban, 11 November 1974; UNISA: Champion Papers, 23.3.1, Champion to B.B. Cele, 29 April 1967.

10. PTA: NTS,3250/919/307; UNISA: Champion Papers, 23.3.1.
11. PTA: NTS,3250/919/307.
12. Ibid., CNC Natal to SNA, 17 July 1930.
13. Ibid., SNA (J.S. Allison) to J.W. Rossouw, 5 September 1930, and F. Herbst to Rossouw, 26 November 1930.
14. Ibid., Rossouw to E.G. Jansen, 25 November 1930, and Minute, 1 December 1930.
15. PTA: NTS,4450/422/313, February–March 1932 *passim*.
16. Champion autobiographical notes, author's possession; M.W. Swanson (ed.), *The Views of Mahlathi* (Pietermaritzburg, 1982), p.23 n.6.
17. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 27 November 1931, 1 April 1932; *Natal Witness*, 17 December 1931; *Natal Mercury*, 15 December 1931.
18. Interview, Charles Mbutho, KwaMashu, 9 September 1983; WITS: Ballinger Papers, A410/B2.5.16, correspondence Margaret Ballinger and Clermont Property Owners' Association, 29 January and 17 February 1960.
19. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 24 November 1933; PTA: JUS,582/3136/31 and police report, SNA to JUS, 10 December 1933 in same; UNISA: Champion Papers, Champion to *Ilanga*, 1942, quoted in *Ibika* (Clermont 'Messenger'), B.B. Cele (ed.), January 1967.
20. NA: N1,N2,N9 *passim*; TCF,643J, Clermont Co. to Town Clerk, 26 August 1935; Interview, R. Ntsiba, Clermont, 3 October 1983; NA: N1/15/5, Regel evidence to Thornton Commission, 19 June 1939.
21. NA: N1/15/5, Evidence to Thornton Commission; PTA: URU (Prime Minister) land transfer records.
22. NA: N1/15/5, Regel evidence.
23. WITS: IRR B/28, Locations, J.O. Reid to Rheinallt Jones, 17 & 25 August 1936. PTA: NTS 4450/422/313, Park-Ross, 8 May 1936 and following.
24. PTA: NTS 4450/422/313; interview, Fred Rodseth, Johannesburg, 19 September 1974.
25. Ibid., *passim*.
26. Ibid., Park-Ross to CNC Natal, 15 October 1936.
27. Ibid., *passim*, 'My Dear Willie', 31 August 1938.
28. NA: N2/10/3/1, Minutes of meeting of Health Boards . . . 11 March 1941, and *passim*; PTA: NTS 4450/422/313.
29. NA: N2/10/3/1; PTA: NTS 4450/422/313, Petition, Cowley and Cowley to Minister of Native Affairs, 25 July 1938.
30. NA: N1/15/5, N2/10/3/1, Constitution, 1940, and *passim*.
31. NA: N2/10/3/1, Clermont Township Residents' Committee to Native Commissioner, Pinetown, 30 October 1941, and *passim*.
32. Ibid., August–November 1941 *passim*.
33. Ibid., August–September 1941 *passim*.
34. Ibid., Cowley to Native Commissioner, Pinetown, 10 March 1941; Report to CNC Natal, 18 March 1941.
35. NPA: LHC,15/3, March 1942 – March 1943 *passim*.
36. Ibid., Wadley to Clermont Co., 8 January 1943, Wadley to Provincial Secretary, 18 February 1943.
37. Interview, R. Ntsiba, Clermont, 28 November 1983; Charles Mbutho, 'Clermont of Thee I Sing', and 'Important Events and Characters during Sibisi's Leadership at Clermont', in typescript memoirs, courtesy of Iain Edwards; interview, Charles Mbutho, KwaMashu, 9 September 1983.

The City Closes In

The Incorporation of Inanda into Metropolitan Durban

HEATHER HUGHES

Although the most rapid urban development of the area known as Inanda has occurred since the late 1960s, it is possible to trace the city's undermining influences on a rural way of life back to much earlier in this century.[1] One hundred years ago, the name Inanda was associated with entirely rural pursuits, a synonym for successful settler commercial farming. In the 1920s, it was still the better part of a day's journey to the Inanda mission station from central Durban. Nowadays, much of the former Inanda Division has disappeared beneath Indian and white suburbia, African townships and Indian housing estates.[2] The place which continues to carry the name Inanda is but one of the many sprawling informal settlements which ring most of South Africa's towns and cities and which have been a particularly marked feature of Durban's expanding periphery for many decades.[3] It is also one of the biggest and most rapidly growing of these settlements in the country. Today, the Inanda mission glebe is thick with township houses, and the trip into Durban for daily commuters takes barely forty-five minutes.

Of course it is not only the city of Durban itself which slowly transformed rural into urban areas; the rise of a more general city culture in South Africa – from work opportunities to the ever more powerful influence of cities in the central decision-making process (even to the point of defining acceptable rural social orders) – was a direct product of the mineral revolution. No rural area of the subcontinent, however far from a town, has been exempt from this influence. Yet those whose geographical fate it has been to lie close to an expanding urban area have been affected more harshly and directly. Straddling both the inland and Zululand transport axes meant that the lives of Inanda's people would be closely bound to the fortunes of the city of Durban long before it enveloped them in urban sprawl.

The People and their Land in Colonial Times

Very few whites remained in that part of Inanda with which we are concerned after the short-lived boer republic. Boers staked out farms over this whole area, but most were abandoned by 1843 – only the names were left behind, and still

bear testimony to this early phase of apportionment: Buffelsdraai, Piesang Rivier, Groeneberg, Riet Rivier. It was too far inland and at too high an altitude (being in the mist belt) for known varieties of sugar cane, and most of the old farms were acquired by (usually city-based) individual or corporate speculators, particularly the Natal Land and Colonisation Company. As has frequently been noted, they bided their time not by turning their holdings into commercially viable undertakings themselves but by hiring the land out; they were not much interested in their tenants beyond whether they paid their rent or not. Africans who were already settled on this land as independent cultivators were suddenly transformed into tenants, once colonisation gave meaning to private ownership of land. The cost was high: except for the period 1857–75, they were subject to hut tax and of course had to pay rent, which varied between 30s. and £2 per hut, annually.[4] In a few instances, the supply of a young male labourer to the landowner was a condition of tenancy, but mostly Africans were tenants 'pure and simple', paying rent in cash.[5] There were certain advantages to set against the high cost: chiefly control was looser, they were exempt from *isibhalo* (labour service owed to the chief), and markets and transport were more accessible than to those living in the vast Inanda location.

Because the 'necessary' wage labour time[6] of Africans had been so slight up until the 1860s – causing an inconvenience deeply resented by white colonists – Indian workers had been imported to work on the sugar plantations. From the 1870s, they had the option of quitting indenture to farm on their own account. Very few arrangements had been made for those wishing to exercise this option (such as setting aside of plots) and they had to find land to rent as best they could – usually on absentee landowners' holdings. It was not long before they formed one of the firmest pillars of the small producing classes in Inanda. As the Inanda magistrate noted in an annual report, 'The Coolies are the real agriculturalists of this Division . . . But for them, maize would be at famine price, and vegetables would be strangers to our table.'[7] The plots which they rented were relatively small, from three to twenty-five acres,[8] and intensively cultivated by all family hands (except the very young and very old) and, on a growing scale, by hired African workers. Through the 1880s and 1890s, magistrates' reports of their enterprises continued to be favourable. In lean years they did suffer reversals, and some had little option but to reindenture themselves, having no kin or community networks to fall back on.

A common adjunct to farming activities was hawking, especially in the African locations, or keeping small stores which catered predominantly to Africans. By 1894 the number of stores operated by 'freed' Indians was greater than the number run by 'passengers' in Inanda (47 as opposed to 37) – compared to only 20 others in the district, 15 run by whites and the remainder by Africans.[9] The situation was such that the author of one guide to the Colony, designed to attract would-be emigrants, was bound to point out that; 'The free Coolies have become severe competitors with coast farmers in the production

of maize and garden produce for the table, and with those white men who keep small stores for the sale of goods to the Kaffirs.'[10]

It was not long before Indian tenants began displacing African ones. Certainly by the turn of the century, the following attitude was common among landowners:

> – Do you prefer Indian tenants to Native tenants on your farms? – Certainly. – Why? – For the simple reason that I can get my rent from a Coolie, whereas I find great difficulty in getting it from a Native, as a rule.[11]

By the 1890s the process of displacement was far enough advanced for G.H. Hulett to note that 90 per cent of civil cases in the Verulam court were actions for the recovery of rent from African tenants.[12] There is evidence of tenants looking to wage labour, in an attempt to maintain a foothold on the land, a method which by its very nature tended to undermine their position further. To compound matters, Africans frequently resorted to moneylending to cover arrears and legal costs against them – a practice which merely plunged them deeper into debt.

By 1890, a mere 275 acres of land in Inanda was actually owned by Indians. Over the next decade the figure increased sevenfold;[13] the sharpest increase, however, was to come after 1910, due to purchases by city-based entrepreneurs whose investment opportunities in urban areas were being steadily curtailed.

The seemingly unstoppable success of Indian producers unsettled the few African landowners in Inanda, a total of eleven in number who together owned 456 acres in the mid-1890s.[14] As early as 1881, one of them, James Matiwane, had noted with a certain bitterness, 'there seems a prospect that the coolies will elbow us out of the country'.[15] There were a few significant buyers in the later 1890s and early 1900s, perhaps the best-known being John L. Dube who acquired 200 acres on which to establish his Christian Industrial School, Ohlange, as well as to farm, but the Africans' rate of acquisition tailed ever further behind that of Indians.

How does one explain the seemingly greater success of Indians on the land? Indians and Africans were both facing progressively greater discrimination in the 1890s and 1900s, such as onerous new taxes, and this could well have been uneven in its impact. Yet there were also real differences in material circumstances which probably render explanations about different 'cultures of work' – magistrates were fond of noting that Indian families even worked their plots by moonlight, for example – unimportant. Tenants and 'small' owner-farmers must be distinguished from the large town-based owners here. As has already been suggested, Indian producers were relatively isolated, having no ready-made communities to fall back on. These would develop, but somewhat later. Related to this fact was that very little provision – similar, say, to the

locations or mission lands, which were closed to all except Africans – was made for Indian farmers. They had no 'safety net'; their ability to grow and sell produce – and repay any credit extended to them – was all that divided autonomy from wage labour or reindenture. In this sense, their very different point of entry into the colonial framework was a handicap. But they had a certain advantage over their African counterparts: the evidence suggests that on rented lands, Africans were charged per hut and Indians per acre. For the former, more hands in the fields meant more expense; productive expansion was thus restricted in a way not applicable to the latter.

The case of the 'larger' owners was distinct from this. Particularly after 1897, when the colonial state moved in to curtail the business activities of 'passenger' merchants, land purchases in rural areas rose sharply.[16] Many of these merchants were able to command resources from local as well as international trading activities far more bountiful than those of either 'freed' Indians or local African landowners. Few, if any, actually farmed themselves; rather, they subdivided and rented their holdings and engaged in speculative activities. The latter had a marked effect on land prices in the area[17] – again, a most irksome development to African landowners in particular: 'if the policy of the government was continued . . . it was evident the aboriginal natives of Natal would go to the wall', declared John Dube in 1906.[18] While their somewhat depressed class position was more akin to that of 'small' Indian owners, in every other way (educationally, politically, socially), African landholders considered themselves the equals of the larger landowners.[19] The somewhat strained relations between them (notwithstanding the reportedly good neighbourliness of Dube and M.K. Gandhi) were to dominate local politics for many decades.

Closely associated with the African landowners were the 'progressive' African farmers living on the nearby Inanda mission reserve, who could not own their plots (a constant source of agitation amongst them). The 11 500 acres comprising the reserve had been demarcated in the 1840s as one of the American Board's parishes. It abutted the 211 600-acre Inanda location, also set aside for exclusive African use in terms of colonial policy. Under the direction of Daniel Lindley, one of the most influential missionaries in the colony, the Inanda reserve flourished. Slowly, the complexion of agricultural production altered: more upright, permanent houses appeared, as did ploughs, and a more definite fixity of tenure and its concomitant, the fence, followed. The 1886 report of the mission reserves described Inanda as one of the few 'conducted in a very satisfactory manner, and the lands are fully utilised for the purposes for which they were set apart'.[20] The chief cash crop in the reserve was maize, sold either to local storekeepers, or in the nearest town of Verulam.

As in any parish, there were more than Board followers living within it. Most of those living on the reserve were subjects of the Qadi chief, Mqawe. Although they were permitted to reside there free of charge, they were liable for hut tax

and *isibhalo*. There is evidence that, by the 1890s, short-term labour migration was widespread. Mqawe refused to requisition men for *isibhalo* on the grounds that they were away working in Durban and he 'dare not cut them off from their extra pound'.[21] There were strong ties between non-Christians and converts: John Dube was Mqawe's close cousin and, although the chief never became a Christian, he used his position in the old order as a base from which to launch himself very skilfully into the new.

The strong work ethic (and likely also the general lack of liquidity) among the converts dictated that each family, including those of pastors, teachers and artisans, should at least feed itself from its own garden. The men called themselves 'farmers', a description which carried a strong cultural connotation: they were not mere 'native agriculturalists', as non-Christians were usually referred to. Their major complaint was the Board's refusal to grant individual title to land. The Revd P.J. Gumede, a pastor at Inanda in the early twentieth century, described the tenure on the reserve as a 'squatting lease'.[22] Though ejections of converts were unknown, there was a triple reason for desiring a more permanent arrangement. Entrepreneurial farmers knew that agricultural improvements required investment and as things stood, 'a man was laughed at who put up a decent brick house'.[23] Secondly, boundary disputes between converts and Mqawe's people were becoming a source of tension. Thirdly, ever since the white settlers had achieved responsible government in 1893, they had singled out the mission reserves (and the 'disrespectful educated Natives' being encouraged in them) as particular targets of attack. As the possibility of freehold tenure receded ever further after 1903 (the year legislation was enacted to control use of mission reserve land) some converts ventured out onto the open market for land, enlarging the number of African landowners a little.

Years of Hardship: From Union to 1936

Most of the plots belonging to Africans in Inanda were small – between five and ten acres. Many of their owners were heavily mortgaged and, more often than not, seemed to be engaged in a range of entrepreneurial activities to raise cash for their farming ventures. It was noticeable to white speculators (who considered them risky mortgagees) that 'the men have their women and children there; they themselves work in Durban'.[24] For example, W.F. Bhulose, owner of two acres on the farm Piesang Rivier, was described in Mweli Skota's *African Yearly Register* as 'one of the most progressive businessmen among Africans in Durban'.[25] William Luvuno, owner of nine acres at Riet Rivier, ran a vulcanising business in Verulam and was the secretary of the African Co-operative Trading Society, also based in Verulam.[26] It might be argued that these men, and many others like them, were merely keeping their options open. Yet the evidence suggests otherwise: the rapidity with which businesses, co-operatives and the like were opened and shut down hardly indicates a liveable return on their labours. In Inanda itself, they lacked infrastructural

support of any kind, such as decent roads, extension services or credit facilities. On the whole, neither small nor large African landowners were thriving. While the provisions of the 1913 Land Act – freezing any further African land purchases in the area – were restrictive to a handful, to most landowners they merely underlined their inability to expand commercially.

The picture was somewhat better for Indian landholders: the years 1911 to the early 1930s were the peak period of land acquisition in Inanda, as elsewhere on the north coast. Large farms were soon subdivided into lots ranging from five to thirty acres for resale,[27] mainly to other Indian buyer/occupants. By 1936, 52 per cent of the population of Inanda was Indian and 43 per cent African. By then, it was 'regarded traditionally as the home of the Indians'.[28] This was despite the recommendations of the 1913 Land Act and the Beaumont Commission that large parts of the area be demarcated for African occupation – which can be interpreted, therefore, as a direct attack on Indian producers there.

As Shula Marks and others have shown, the 1920s and 1930s in rural Natal were years both of widespread social dislocation and of intense efforts to organise, either to protect privilege or to win the most basic rights:

> The expansion of wattle plantations and sheep farming in the Natal midlands in the 1920s led to the eviction of thousands of labour tenants and the increased exploitation of many more. At the same time, the Christian African petty bourgeoisie were experiencing intensified economic hardships and racial discrimination particularly in the wake of the Labour-National party victory of 1924 and the introduction of its 'civilised labour policy'.[29]

Evicted tenants were expected to find accommodation in the mission reserves or locations (or on other private farms) – an influx most unwelcome to the occupants, whose attempts to maintain a foothold on the land were thus threatened. Over this period there was a flurry of activity as Africans, led by mission converts, began to organise: from the 1920s, there were several attempts to form farmers' associations, one by Inanda-born Pixley Seme. John L. Dube made use of the first occasion on which an African was invited to write the editorial in a white Natal paper to make a strong appeal for assistance to African farmers.[30] On the mission reserve, leading farmers and the Qadi chief's family together turned the advisory-only Inanda Reserve Committee (IRC) into a 'gate-keeping' body: in one quarter in 1922, only one of sixty-five applicants for places in the reserve was accepted by the IRC.[31] To the annoyance of the local magistrate, the IRC was also hearing disputes over garden boundaries and allotting land. The IRC had every intention of keeping those unfortunates evicted from elsewhere out of its own area of operation.

The members of the IRC were also prominent in the organisation of and as

participators in the Inanda agricultural show, held for the first time at Inanda Seminary in 1925 and annually over the following decade. This local show was the product of a coincidence of interests: part of a clear design by those in charge of the mission station and seminary to promote the rural integrity of 'this progressive community',[32] and supported by the Native Affairs Department as part of a general desire to halt townward drift, and by African farmers who felt they needed a platform to demonstrate what they could achieve given the necessary support. All of them wished, too, to beat back the ICU. As *Ilanga* editorialised; 'the only really independent natives are those on reserves and locations where the land is theirs and these do not need the ICU.'[33]

Over the years, the number and quality of entries at the Inanda agricultural show increased steadily. However, it was in the 'home industries' section rather than farming proper that the exhibits were strongest; if the shows projected an image of agricultural well-being, the reality was that it was only a very few of the best-endowed –those who every year captured the top prizes and won the ploughing contests – who were managing to survive. It was these few, in fact, who were well placed to take advantage of the 1936 Land Act as it affected Inanda: several farms were officially earmarked as Released Areas 33 and 34, to be acquired by the state for African occupation at some undisclosed future date. Economic conditions, compounded by drought, were causing the agricultural worlds of the bulk of producers to crumble.

From Landowners to Landlords

Matters were, on the whole, no better for Indian producers, particularly as the 1936 provisions threatened them directly. There was more legislation hostile to their interests to follow: The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act of 1946 applied to rural as well as urban areas, resulting in a decline in the number of farms acquired. Thereafter, the trend seemed to be towards ever more intense subdivision of holdings with a consequent decrease in productivity and increase in population pressure. Already in 1946, the Inanda division contained the second largest Indian population (24 738) in Natal after Durban (115 833).[34]

All round, the decades after the passage of the 1936 Land Act were years of struggle to maintain a foothold on the land. Even though it was ostensibly meant to work in favour of Africans, the act had no immediate effect: the state's acquisition of land, so necessary for territorial segregation, was less than enthusiastic, and only one piece of the old Piesang Rivier farm had been added to the holdings of the South African Native Trust by 1969.[35] In the 1960s there was an even greater squeeze on small producers, with the commercialisation of Natal agriculture, and landowners began to allow human settlement on their properties when the promise of greater security presented itself in the form of 'shack farming'.

There is a sense in which, by virtue of its geographical location, Inanda

would sooner or later have succumbed to city expansion whatever its past. However, the point here is that its landowners were not as favourably placed as, say, larger white sugar farmers whose lands were also in the path of city expansion, and who were able by virtue of their stronger political positions to make profitable deals with planning authorities. The very political and economic weakness of Inanda's landowning classes meant that their transition from rural to urban forms of income was of the type which, while catering for those growing numbers of people who would not or could not be accommodated formally, was by the same token somewhat reactive. Landlords depended on others' needs in order to survive themselves, and were not in a position to charge rents above levels that the tenantry felt to be generally acceptable. Inanda would be always a part of the city for the poor – increasingly so, as the out-of-work proportion of its growing population grew too – lacking in basic infrastructure and services, such as water supply, roads, waste removal and so on.

The clearance of an informal settlement much closer to Durban, Cato Manor, was what led to the direct urbanisation of Inanda. As other essays in this work have shown, shanty towns had mushroomed on Durban's periphery since the 1930s, a product of acute housing shortage and a desire to escape bureaucratic control on the part of residents. When Cato Manor residents were removed to the new KwaMashu township in the late 1950s, the bus service had to be extended to ferry them to and from work every day. This in turn made a nearby place like Inanda a viable option for weekly or (less frequently at first) daily commuting to the city. Those who either rejected or did not qualify for housing in the township were among Inanda's first truly urban tenants. They brought in a steady income for the few 'big' and several hundred 'small' landowners. Moreover, those landlords who were also traders benefited doubly, as tenants were also consumers: profitable new markets began to grow around what had been modest country concerns.

While similar possibilities for African and Indian landowners were opened up in this process, they were divided in other ways. After the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959, some of the Africans within their ranks became more openly racist in their calls for African advancement in African areas. Over the years, those landowners with links to the bantustan authority tended to take on some of the functions of a local bureaucracy in the absence of any formal structures of local government.

Inanda as an Integral Part of Durban

The vast bulk of the growing tenant population of Inanda was, as has already been noted, African, although there were a few hundred Indian tenants too. Most of the earlier tenants had lived in the city all their lives; it was only from the later 1970s, with the onset of severe drought, that people began moving in from rural areas in large numbers.

It has been calculated that the growth of Durban's 'informal' settlements from 1966 to 1979 was 137 per cent.[36] Inanda, as the largest of these, would have been subject to considerable social strain as a result of such rapid incorporation into the city. Yet the rate of settlement after 1979 has been even more dramatic, as the following table shows.

Table 5 Population of Inanda, 1977–85

1977	68 000
1979	88 000
1982	100 000–200 000
1985	250 000

Note: The figures for 1982 reflect the two extremes of the various estimates that have been made.

Source: 'Violence in Inanda, August 1985', *Journal of Southern African Studies*13(4), 1987.

Over the decade of the 1980s, the complexion of Inanda changed from a relatively quiet shanty town, in which households were able to keep small vegetable gardens, to an extremely dense settlement. Tenants were mostly workers in Durban's factories. The more youthful population was handicapped by a generally low level of education (there being pitifully few schools) and a high degree of unemployment. Many found some livelihood in the 'informal sector', selling goods such as food, or services such as panel beating, building, shoe repair and so on. Some resorted to crime to survive, though from the mid-1980s, it became difficult to separate certain kinds of 'crime' from much political activity, which, as in many other parts of the Natal region, took on a violent ugliness.

One can accept the point that it is wrong to view shanty towns as 'problems', characterised by crime and vice, social despair and political instability.[37] Yet it is also true that in the case of such speeded-up urbanisation, pressure on lines of social tension has often resulted in fracture: ethnically, between Mpondo and Zulu people; racially, between Indians and Africans; between those with 'proper' housing and those possessing only shacks, after two blocks of Inanda were set aside by the state for formal township development in 1982; between the youth and their elders; and between tenants and landlords, as each struggled for a more beneficial arrangement. If these forms of tension are 'situational', then looming large in the creation of the 'situation', first by its non-action and then in its method of intervention, was the South African state under the apartheid regime.

Until the typhoid epidemic of 1980, it had taken no responsibility for the area at all, seemingly on the grounds that 'squatters' were illegal and in any case, the land by now so thickly inhabited was private. In that year, however, the South African Development (ex Native) Trust acquired two blocks of land (and their

tenants) and began to threaten mass removals. These blocks became Inanda Newtown, a township built by means of a self-help scheme, with backing from the Urban Foundation. The state also began to squeeze Indian landlords, threatening them with legal action if the 'health hazards' on their properties were not cleared away. Racial tension was fuelled still further with the publication in 1982 of a 'structure plan' for Inanda, commissioned by the Department of Co-operation and Development, which equated 'development' with the departure of the Indian landlords. Their African counterparts were not put under such pressure or made to feel so vulnerable. This climate of growing uncertainty about their future persisted, until, in a week of intense violence in the area in August 1985, Indians were singled out for attack and almost every one fled.[38]

In the wake of the 1985 crisis, the state enlisted the assistance of private sector (including 'public interest') developers in an upgrading programme: large numbers of middle-income homes were built for private ownership, and certain infrastructural improvements were made. However, for the huge majority of Inanda's people, daily existence continued to be a matter of coping without basic amenities. If anything, the situation deteriorated: as more and more people – with no hope of any title to property – continued to seek small corners to erect shelters, there was still no definite forward-looking policy to improve conditions for this vast settlement which formed part of the city of Durban.

NOTES

1. This contribution relies heavily on two pieces on Inanda previously written by me: 'Violence in Inanda, August 1985', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 13(4), 1987, and 'Promoting the Countryside: African Agricultural Shows in Natal, 1925–35' in *Natal in the Union Period* (Department of Historical Studies publication, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1989).
2. These various descriptions of living space reflect the very real differences in the type and quality of housing provided for a racially segregated city population, and hence to some extent the very different experiences of city life of state-ordained 'population groups'.
3. See the work of Paul Maylam and Maasdorp and Humphreys.
4. D. Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation* (Cape Town) p. 195.
5. Evidence of John Swales, Natal Native Affairs Commission 1906–7. p. 489.
6. As defined by G. Arrighi.
7. In Natal Blue Book 1876.
8. J.J. Greyling, 'Problems of Indian Landownership and Land Occupation on the Natal North Coast' unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1969, vol. 1, p. 24.
9. In Inanda magistrate's report, Blue Book on Native Affairs 1984.
10. W. Peace, *Our Colony of Natal. A Handbook for the Use of Intending Emigrants and Others* (London, 1884), p. 63.

11. Evidence of T. Rathbone, Minutes of evidence of the South African Native Affairs Commission 1903–1905, vol. 3, p. 906.
12. Evidence to the Natal Native Affairs Commission 1906–7, p. 942.
13. A.J. Christopher, 'Natal: A Study in Colonial Land Settlement' unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1969, p. 245.
14. Inanda magistrate in Blue Book on Native Affairs, 1894.
15. Evidence to the Natal Natives Affairs Commission 1881, p. 145–6.
16. S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion* (Oxford, 1970), p. 10.
17. G.H. Hulett, evidence to Natal Lands Commission, 1901–2, p. 226.
18. Evidence to the Natal Native Affairs Commission 1906–7, p. 961.
19. It is not relevant to this essay to explore this non-relationship, although in the light of subsequent events in Inanda as well as elsewhere in Natal, it would be an important task to unravel the detail of why it was that these two local groups of 'landed gentry' had so little to do with each other, yet whose organised politics (in the Natal Indian Congress and the Natal Native Congress) were so similar. Also, the role of prominent whites such as George Campbell (instrumental in launching both organisations) as a point of contact has been completely neglected.
20. Report of the Native Mission Reserves, 1886 (GN 488).
21. Evidence to the South African Native Affairs Commission, Natal minutes of Evidence, p. 418.
22. Evidence before Natal Native Affairs Commission 1906–7, p. 899.
23. Ibid.
24. Allison, Minutes of Evidence to Natal Natives Lands Committee U.G. 35–18, p. 292.
25. T.D.M. Skota, *The African Yearly Register 1932* (Johannesburg, 1932), p. 136. It is important to note that financial or commercial success was not necessarily part of the definition of 'progressive'; it meant, rather, Christian refinement, educational achievement, an innovative approach to work, and participation in activities generally regarded as furthering the interests of the African middle class.
26. File 64/31, Box 94, Chief Native Commissioner Papers (CNC), Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg.
27. Greyling, 'Indian Landownership', vol. 1, p. 23.
28. D.S. Rajah, 'Agrarian Patterns amongst Indians in the Inanda Magisterial District' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1966), p. 44.
29. S. Marks, 'Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Cultural Nationalism' in L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London, 1988).
30. *Natal Mercury*, 25 December 1934.
31. File 36/7, Box 40, CNC papers.
32. Letter, Carter to Msimang, 3/6/29, in file 49/8, Box 62, CNC papers.
33. *Ilanga*, 29 June 1928.
34. M.H. Alsop, *The Population of Natal*, Natal Regional Survey, vol. 2 (Cape Town, 1952), pp. 61–2, 103.
35. Greyling, 'Indian Landownership', p. 39.
36. L. Schlemmer, 'Squatter Communities: Safety Valves in the Rural-Urban Nexus' in H. Giliomee and L. Schlemmer (eds), *Up Against The Fences* (Cape Town, 1985), p. 169.
37. See T. McGee, 'Conservation and Dissolution in the Third World City: The "Shanty Town" as an Element of Conservation', *Development and Change* 10(1), 1979.
38. The nature of that anti-Indian violence is more complex than can be conveyed here: for a fuller account, see Hughes, 'Violence in Inanda, August 1985'.

Index

Many of the Zulu words in this index are proper names or titles of books and songs. For the sake of consistency all Zulu words have been entered under the prefix rather than the stem.