

## **Who kept the fire burning? A Comparison of the Durban (Native) Riots of 1929 and those of 1973.**

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### **Background:**

Revolts, Riots and Resistance by the exploited and disenfranchised black population groups in South Africa have a long, a tragic but also a proud and heroic history. Central to the causes of these revolts were the suppression, oppression and discriminatory political and economic policies and practices perpetrated against the indigenous peoples of the country by consecutive white regimes.

The year 1929 stood out for two important events: firstly the Election victory by Genl Hertzog's Nationalist Party due to enormous white support for its "Black Peril" election manifesto and secondly, the so-called Durban Native Riots which claimed the lives of six Africans and injured scores of civilians.

### **Focus of the paper:**

The focus of this paper is to draw comparisons between the Durban Native Riots of 1929 and those of 1973. The author endeavours to probe, examine and analyse these two events through the lens of the abuse of the human rights of the oppressed peoples in general and a clamp down on the rights of the proletariat in particular. The following questions warrant investigation: What were the root causes of those riots? Who organised the riots? How did the white minority government respond to the riots? What were the significances of the riots? These are some of the questions addressed in the paper.

The paper is the outcome of research that was initially done for a doctoral study on the life of JT Gumede, ANC President 1927-30. JT, the then President of the ANC along with Champion played significant roles in the 1929 Revolts. Forty years later, Archie Gumede, continued the work of his late father and also played a role in the 1973 Riots.