

Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit

NYANGA EAST MEN'S HOSTEL :  
THE CONDITION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

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NYANGA EAST MEN'S HOSTEL : THE CONDITION OF MIGRANT WORKERS<sup>1</sup>

PREFACE

The men who live in the Nyanga East Hostel have organised themselves into the Nyanga East Men's Hostel Association. This Association is committed to struggling for an improvement in the conditions of life at their hostels. At the time of writing, plans are in the pipeline to launch the Western Cape Men's Hostel Association. The aim of the latter will be to co-ordinate campaigns by hostel residents in the Western Cape for improved conditions of life in their hostels.

After preliminary discussions between some officials of the Nyanga Hostel Association and Professor Francis Wilson, Reverend David Russell and the author, a letter was received by the Director of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit from the Nyanga Men's Hostel Association which read as follows:

'Despite numerous complaints to the department concerned, very little has been done to improve the living conditions for tenants in Single quarters in Nyanga. The situation has now become unbearable and I have no alternative but to resort to a more influential source. I would like to request the possibility of a survey to be conducted on our behalf by you.

I hope that I have not burdened you unnecessarily but would nevertheless like to thank you in anticipation.'

The letter was signed by S. Nkathazo as Secretary and by J. Mpukumpa as Chairman of the Association.

Subsequent to the receipt of this letter further meetings were held between officials of the Association, Professor Wilson, Reverend Russell and the author. These meetings attempted to isolate the areas of interest which the Association wanted to have investigated. The result was the questionnaire, attached as Addendum A to this report. The first section of the questionnaire is descriptive and concerns itself with the environment of the interviewee, while the second is concerned with the personal particulars of the interviewee, and the third covers the attitude of the respondent to his situation.

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1. The field work for this study was spread between September and October, 1984.

Eight hostels were visited and twelve people per hostel interviewed, 96 people in all. The third part of the questionnaire was administered to twelve people only, who were not necessarily part of the original sample.

Although the Nyanga Hostel Association has resolved to appeal to a more influential source it is necessary to emphasise that neither Saldru nor the author can prescribe ways of dealing with the issues confronting the hostellers. It is essential that the hostellers themselves should determine the pace and direction of their struggle. What we can do is co-ordinate their disjointed complaints into coherent issues and assist them examine these more closely. This is important because, in the words of Mafeje '... clear identification of issues is as important as fighting in the streets'.<sup>1</sup>

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORICO-POLITICAL ORIGINS OF MIGRANT LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA

In order to appreciate the specific condition of migrant workers at the Nyanga hostel, it is necessary to take a brief look at the history of migrant labour in South Africa.

*Wilson*<sup>2</sup> has stated that

'One hundred years ago ... the system whereby men oscillate between their home in some rural area and their place of work was already firmly established as part of the country's traditional way of life.'

It is clear from this that the phenomenon we are studying as manifested in Nyanga is an old one.

How did migrant labour become South Africa's 'way of life?'. *Elias*<sup>3</sup> catalogues all the laws which have ensured this. The earliest law she cites in this regard is the *Masters and Servants' Act* no. 15/1856. Other early laws she cites are: *The Introduction of Children of Natives Act*, 22/1857; *The Certificate of Citizenship Amendment Act*, 17/1864; *The Native Pass Act*, 22/1867; *The Native Locations Land and Commonage Act*, 40/1879. The cumulative effect of these laws was to restrict 'Africans' to certain parts of the country only; to oblige them to obtain permits in order to move from those areas to certain parts of the Cape Colony; to permit this only if their labour was needed in the Colony; and to prevent 'Africans' from bringing their children into the Colony.

Why did this happen? *Budlender*<sup>4</sup> explains the phenomenon thus:

'What we today call the pass laws and influx control have their legislative origins in the Cape in the latter part of the 18th century. The history of the pass laws illuminates two conflicting demands which continue today. On the one hand white people and white governments have wanted what they regard as political security in the "white areas". This had led to attempts to limit the number of black people there to an absolute minimum. On the other hand there is a continuing and increasing demand for the services of black workers in those areas, to keep the wheels of industry and commerce turning. Historically, one therefore see (sic) contradictory patterns emerging. Some pass law legislation aims to keep black people out of the "white" areas; other "pass law" legislation aims to

'bring them in or prevent them leaving ... The whole premise of migrant labour system is to say to workers: you will be here while we need your labour and you will be somewhere else when we don't. In that way, at least in theory, the potential conflict between the two demands for political security and labour is met.'

The problem can therefore be stated briefly as follows:

- (i) Migrant labour in South Africa was established more than a hundred years ago.
- (ii) It was in part a result of the process of land dispossession. (In this connection *Elias*<sup>5</sup> cites a recommendation of the 1903 South African Native Affairs Commission: 'It will be far more difficult to preserve the absolutely necessary political and social distinction if the growth of a mixed rural population of land owners is not discouraged').
- (iii) The migrant labour system was ostensibly necessitated by the need for political security by white people. To this end successive white governments have passed laws purporting to keep African people out of areas which the former have proclaimed white.
- (iv) Despite (iii) above, white people needed and continue to need African people to work for them. To this end other laws have been passed which allow (even compel!) Africans to work in 'white' areas. The 1984 *Glen Grey Act*, cited by *Budtender*, is a case in point. That law imposed tax on all African adult males who were unemployed, thus compelling them to enter the cash economy.
- (v) In view of the four preceding paragraphs, Africans who come to work in the urban areas are considered by the authorities to be temporary sojourners. Therefore, at some time in the future, they must return to their home in some rural area. Therefore they cannot have houses in the urban areas. Hence the Nyanga hostel and many others throughout the country.



## B THE COLOURED LABOUR PREFERENCE POLICY

Any labour-related study in the Western Cape must take account of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy (CLPP). African workers in this area have had to contend, not only with the 'usual' influx control laws governing the whole country, but have also had to contend with the added burden of the CLPP.<sup>6</sup>

In the section on attitudes, the views of the hostellers on the CLPP will be canvassed. A brief historical account of the policy should suffice.

*Goldin* traces the origins of the CLPP to the 18th century and writes that it was calculated to undermine the possible unity between the Khoisan and the Xhosas against white people. It was institutionalised in the 1950s, however, by the Nationalist government. In delineating the area within which the policy would apply, *Eiselen* stated: 'When I use the term Western Province, it will imply the area south of the Orange River and west of Magisterial districts of Gordonia, Hope Town, De Aar, Hanover, Richmond, Murraysburg, Aberdeen, Willowmore, Uniondale and Knysna.'<sup>7</sup> (*Horner* has provided a map of this area - see pp. ).<sup>8</sup>

In its institutionalised form, the CLPP 'is a policy of the National Party government to promote the interests of persons designated as 'coloureds' ... it is seen by the state to fulfil a political function which is integral to the long-term survival of the present government'.<sup>9</sup>

In 1974 the Theron Commission urged the government to apply the CLPP more stringently. *Professor Terblanche*, one of the commissioners, explained the recommendation thus:

'The purpose of this recommendation was to create a situation in which the employers would be "forced" or "convinced" to employ the workshy section among the coloured labourers ... We were of the opinion that if too many black workers were available in the Western Cape, they would ... "wedge in" between the lower and upper class of the coloured community, which could perpetuate and intensify the poverty situation.'<sup>10</sup>

The Commission, therefore, was not concerned with the poverty of 'Africans' in the dumping areas it was urging they should be consigned to, but desperately seeking an alliance between 'coloureds' and the white government which had to be pursued at all costs. Be that as it may, *Loots* found that the CLPP did not protect 'coloureds'.

'At the unskilled level, where the policy was supposed to provide the most protection to coloured people against African competition, unemployment (of "coloureds") was higher ... in the Western Cape than in the "non-preference area" of South Africa where such a policy was not applied.'<sup>11</sup>

*Terblanche* has since been constrained to admit that the CLPP was a fiasco,

'The administrative burden of the coloured labour preference system encouraged employers to employ "illegal" blacks. Many of the big employers are actually budgeting in advance for the possible payment of a fine for employing "illegal" blacks.'<sup>12</sup>

Even *President Botha* has been forced to concede:

'In the light of the recommendations of the Riekert Commission which have been accepted by the government, it is my view that black people permanently in the Western Cape should have the right to compete on an equal footing with others on the labour market.'<sup>13</sup>

*Minister Viljoen* subsequently announced in parliament that the CLPP was to be officially scrapped:

'Administratively - and very soon legally - this policy has been suspended and cancelled.'<sup>14</sup>

In the light of the foregoing paragraph, *Goldin's* analysis of the CLPP appears somewhat off the mark. The government has now abandoned the CLPP and yet itself remains as intact as ever. Argument at a later stage will put it that, as things stand, the scrapping of the CLPP is inconsequential.

## C THE GOVERNMENT VERSUS KOMANI AND RIKHOTO

Reference was made earlier to the legal machinery for ensuring that African workers who are brought from the rural areas to work in urban areas do not acquire a right to remain permanently in these areas. Of special

interest in this regard is the *Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act*, (25/1945) as amended. This Act stipulates that a migrant labourer can acquire a right to remain in an urban area if he works for one employer continuously for ten years in the same area. He can acquire the same right if he works for different employers in the same area for 15 years. This right is commonly referred to as a Section 10(1)(b) right, and is endorsed, in the event of a successful application, on the worker's reference book or on his passport.

In order to ensure that this right is not lightly acquired, the law requires that the migrant worker renews his employment contract annually. In *Rikhoto versus East Rand Administration Board* the court was asked to consider whether this annual 'break' amounted to a termination of service so as to break the continuity required by law. The court ruled that the worker's services were not terminated and that his employment was continuous within the meaning of the relevant law. *Rikhoto* was decided in 1981. The Appellate Division had ruled in 1980 in *Komani versus Bantu Affairs Administration Board, Peninsula Area*, that wives of migrant workers could join their husbands in urban areas without obtaining a lodger's permit.

The Western Cape Administration Board, according to its officials, received administrative instructions about *Rikhoto* in July 1983. Between that date and the end of February, 1985, it had received 10 474 applications for 'Rikhoto' rights. Only 2 226 of these - i.e. 21,3% - were approved. Another 7 230 (69%) were rejected whilst 1 018 (9,7%) are still under investigation.

According to officials of the Western Cape Administration Board (WCAB), 6 896 applications were received between July and December, 1983. Of these 1 758 (25,5%) were granted and 5 138 turned down. In 1984, only 3 230 (30,8% of all applications received since *Rikhoto*) came to the attention of the WCAB. The first two months of 1985 saw 348 applications as against 445 applications made during the same period in 1984.

This suggests that migrant workers showed substantial enthusiasm about the judgement during the first six months of its operation and that interest in the judgement is declining. The attempt to explain this decline will be the concern of the remainder of this section.

Faced with the unfavourable rulings in *Komani* and in *Rikhoto*, the following options were open to the state:

- (i) to treat the two judgements as *pro non scripto* - as if, that is, they were never handed down;
- (ii) to correct the two judgements through legislative declaration

The second option was not immediately desirable since it involved the independence of the judiciary. Many years will pass before the government will make good the consequences of its folly in the 1950s when, during the constitutional crisis issuing from the removal of the 'Cape coloureds' from the common voter's roll, it undid court decisions through legislative power. However, when the chips are down the government can most assuredly be trusted to use its legislative power to reverse unfavourable court decisions.

Initially, therefore, the government settled for the first option in the case of *Komani*. In *Mhlongo versus West Rand Administration Board and Another*, the Witwatersrand Local Division of the Supreme Court commented adversely on this state of affairs. The Legal Resources Centre (LRC) is of the opinion that it is the publicity given to the remarks of the court which dissuaded the government from that course.<sup>15</sup> Even after *Mhlongo's* case, the 1982 LRC report stated:

'... wives entitled to live in urban areas with their husbands are still being ordered out of towns by Administration officials and the LRC has now successfully processed over a hundred cases resulting in the reversal of decisions made by officials contrary to the judgment in the *Komani* case.'<sup>16</sup>

However that may be, *Mhlongo's* case more or less sealed off the first option for the government.

Therefore, with respect to *Komani*, the government passed a law the effect of which, though ostensibly leaving that judgment intact, is to render it nugatory. The *Laws on Co-operation and Development Amendment Act, 102/1983*, effectively precludes the acquisition of 'Komani rights' by wives and children who did not already live with Section 10(1)(b) men lawfully by August 26, 1983.<sup>17</sup>

Regarding *Rikhoto*, the government was and remains able through an interpretative process to frustrate the acquisition of the rights contemplated in that judgment. *Meer* explains:

'The administration boards adopt an extremely narrow interpretation of *Rikhoto*. Unless an application is a carbon copy of that case, the boards refuse to grant Section 10(1)(b) rights.' 18

In its 1983 report, the LRC states:

'The Legal Resources Centre was called upon to handle well over 100 such cases before the obligation to recognise the rights of properly qualified applicants was respected by the boards. Even now, the Legal Resources Centre is required from time to time to handle such cases. The experience of the Legal Resources Centre since the decision by the Appellate Division in the *Rikhoto* case suggests that there may again be a need for legal assistance on a large scale to enforce the judgment in that case.' 19

A year later, the LRC reported:

'A number of supreme court applications were launched, to define the ambit of the judgment (in *Rikhoto*) and to compel administrative compliance with the ruling ...' 20

*Mthiya's* case, on which the Appellate Division was due to give judgment towards the end of March (1985), is an attempt to compel a departure from the restrictive construction placed on *Rikhoto*. The Black Sash Advice Office, according to *Robb*, has advised its clients to hold back applications which are not a replica of *Rikhoto* until judgment in *Mthiya* is handed down.

Its bureaucratic attitude to the acquisition of 'Rikhoto rights' therefore, has stood the government in good stead in ensuring that the number of people applying for those rights, to say nothing of those who acquire them, does not escalate.

CHAPTER TWO

INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOSTEL

A GENERAL

Nyanga lies approximately 20 km from Cape Town. (See Map 2). It is bordered by Lansdowne Road in the south, Klipfontein Road in the north, NY 78 in the west and Mahobe Drive in the east.

Sikwebu undertook a study of the area in 1984 and the following emerged:

- (i) that the township was proclaimed in 1946;
- (ii) that its size is 427 hectares;
- (iii) that the population stood at 24 020 in 1980; and
- (iv) that there are 1 825 state-built and 13 employer built houses.<sup>21</sup>

'On average, therefore, EVERY ROOM provided by the state or employer would contain 3 or 4 people'.<sup>22</sup>

The Nyanga hostels lie in this complex. They are separated from the township by Zwelitsha Drive in the east, Emms Drive in the west, Sithathu Avenue in the north and Ntlangano Crescent in the south. Ntlangano Crescent curves and, together with Sithandathu Avenue (NY3), separates the two hostel complexes from the Nyanga Stadium. Two lines of hostels in the G section defy these boundaries. They fall between Zwelitsha Drive and Suckersdorp Crescent, further east.

Plan 1 shows the overall layout of the hostels. It would be useful to compare this with *Selvan's* sketch in order to grasp the changes which have taken place since 1976.<sup>23</sup>

The WCAB figures for the number of hostels in 1985 are as follows:

TABLE 1  
Hostels in Cape Town

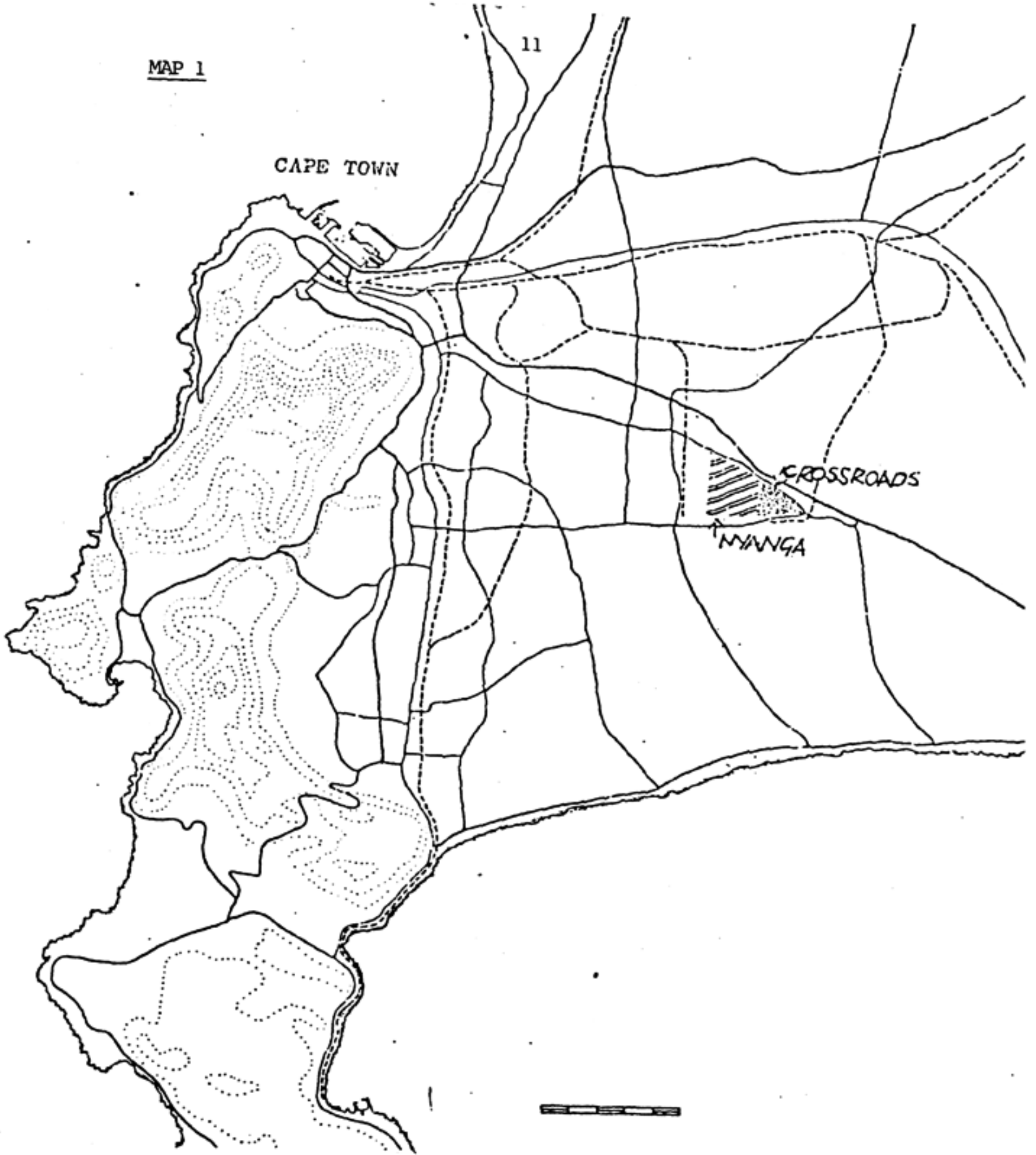
	Gugulethu	Langa	Nyanga	Total
Council-built	172	562	122	856
Employer-built	34	41	212	287
Total	206	603	334	1 143

The situation has therefore changed between 1972, when Wilson wrote that

MAP 1

11

CAPE TOWN



Location of Crossroads and Nyanga in the  
Cape Peninsula.





most hostels in Nyanga were built by the Cape Divisional Council<sup>24</sup> and the present when over 60% of the hostels there have been built by employers.

The official hostel population is indicated by Table 2.

TABLE 2  
Hostel Population in Cape Town

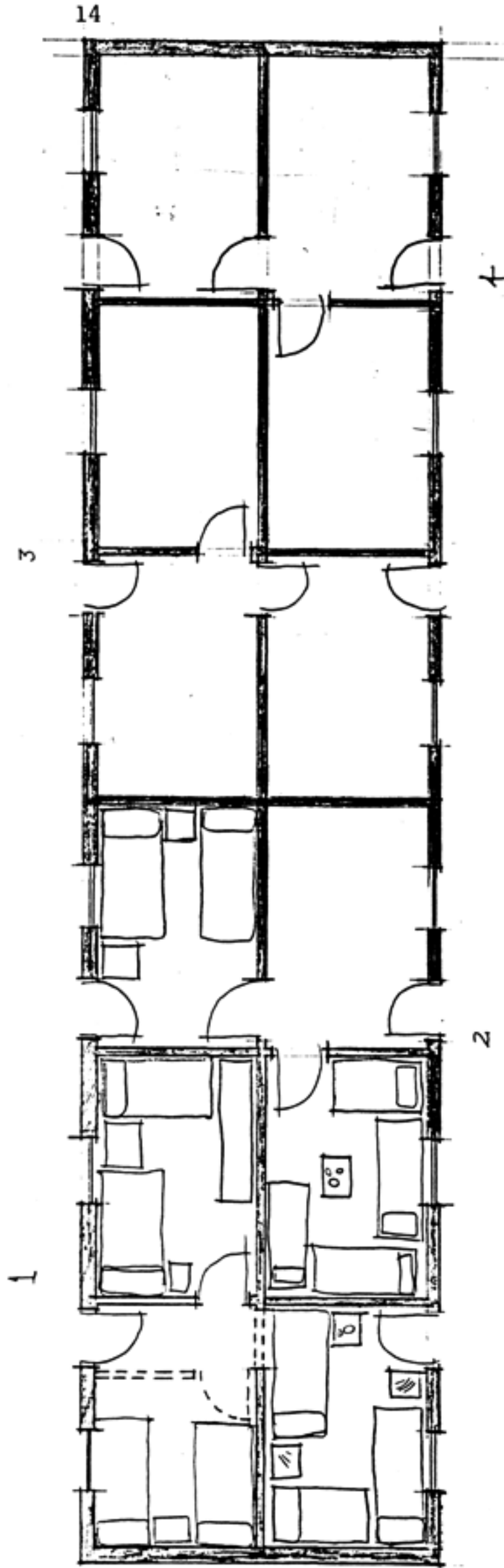
	Gugulethu	Langa	Nyanga	Total
Contract Workers	1 344	474	6 340	8 158
Locals	7 758	7 652	1 804	17 214
Total	9 102	8 126	8 144	25 372

The structure of council hostels conforms to the model represented in photograph A. Some of these are built of bricks while others, as the inside walls of photograph B show, are built of concrete slabs. Each block has four main entrance points, marked as photograph C shows. All figures (written above the door) have an interval of seven. These figures indicate the number of beds per entrance point. Presumably, therefore, there would be 28 beds per block.

PHOTOGRAPH A



PLAN 2



NYGANGA HOSTEL BLOCK 1:100

PHOTOGRAPH B



PHOTOGRAPH C

Opposite each entrance point, almost in a straight line, is usually another entrance point, bearing identical figures. This would be the rear of the block.

Originally the only partition was between adjacent doors. Therefore once you entered the building you would be confronted by a huge open space. The hostellers themselves have partitioned this hall into cubicles, using either ceiling boards or cardboard boxes. Usually there are four of these cubicles. When, later, 'rooms' are mentioned in this paper, these are what would be referred to. The average size of a cubicle is 3,75 x 2,45 metres.

The doors are generally flanked by a window on each side. The average size of the windows is ,99 x ,9 metres. This allows each cubicle a measure of light.

Employer-built hostels tend to differ from council hostels and, to some extent, among themselves. Most are built of bricks but some are pre-fabricated structures. Generally they are provided with better facilities - e.g. electricity, in-door toilets, warm showers and/or baths and cooking facilities. Indeed some have more or less well-equipped dining halls. Photograph D represents the LTA pre-fabricated structures and Photograph E the cooking facilities there. The environment at the employer-hostels is generally a lot better than that at the council hostels - e.g. well-maintained lawns, neatly covered floors and well-maintained ceilings.

PHOTOGRAPH D



PHOTOGRAPH E



High jackal-fences encompass employer hostels. Each company employs a caretaker, whose duties include seeing to it that unauthorised persons do not gain entry to the hostels. Although, therefore, the surroundings may be more agreeable than at the council hostels, these security measures detract from the positive aspects just mentioned. Workers at these hostels complain that it is a lot more difficult for their wives or girlfriends to visit them than at the council hostels. Apart from the caretakers and the jackal-fences, the employers or their representatives occasionally visit the hostels during the day to check whether there are unauthorised persons. When this happens, visitors, more especially women visitors, must seek sanctuary in the nearby shrubs. It follows that freedom of association is considerably hampered at these rather posh hostels. This partly explains why some hostelers rent a bed but live in the townships.

There is a third set of hostels. According to hostel inhabitants these were built by the council and sold to employers to house their workers. The Administration Board denies that any hostel was ever sold to any company.

The structure of these hostels is exactly the same as council hostels except that, like the other employer hostels in the area, they are fenced off. In 1976, *Selvan* wrote that '

'In Nyanga there are only two types of accommodation for men living singly ... One set of hostels was built by the Divisional Council and the other was built according to the same design by employers, both now being formally owned by the Board.' 25

If the statistics on hostels are read together with this, it can be inferred that these hostels were built by employers.

All hostels bear a letter of the alphabet above the figures designating the number of beds. This letter helps to identify sections in the hostel complex. The H section needs a special note. It is also known as Freedom Square, with a history dating back to 1976.

Because of the shortage of houses for 'Africans' in Cape Town, many local young men took advantage of the 1976 uprisings and took over this section. The police drove them out but they returned soon after and all subsequent attempts by the administration board to repossess this section have failed.

One of the men living there explained the take-over thus:

'When you reach a certain age, there are things you would like to do but which custom does not allow you to do in front of your parents. Because our houses are small and the government was not going to build for us, we took over this hostel. We wished to be able to do our own thing away from our parents.'

This section is called Freedom Square for two reasons:

(i) Most people who live there do not pay rent;

(ii) As a hosteler in another section put it:

'Those chaps refuse to bow down to the rules governing other hostelers. The administration board police are simply terrified of that section ... they do not even carry out raids there. If a hosteler in another section is insubordinate, the police threaten to transfer him to Freedom Square.'

By all accounts the relationship between the inhabitants of Freedom Square and those of other sections is amicable. There are sporadic fights among hostelers, but there is no systematic inter-section hostility. A hosteler in another section explained that local gangsters often take advantage of the unfavourable reputation of Freedom Square. In pursuit of their unsavoury plans they pose as inhabitants of Freedom Square and rob other hostelers. The inhabitants of Freedom Square have come out in support of these other hostelers in fighting against such elements because they wish to continue living in peace with their fellow hostelers.

My own encounter with them has suggested that they can be dangerous to intruders: one hosteler called them Mafias. When I visited them for the first time, they were openly hostile, suspecting me of having links with the police. Gradually they opened up and began to talk openly. They took me on a tour of their rooms, one of which is converted into a lounge (see photograph F).

The question 'What is the official attitude to Freedom Square - H-block?' was put to the administration board. Their answer was a curt 'invaded by unemployed youths'.

PHOTOGRAPH F





## B REPORT ON STATISTICAL DATA

### B.1 Distribution of Beds Per Room

The survey of eight hostels showed that 41 rooms had 2 beds each; another 41 rooms had 3 beds each; 6 rooms had 4 beds each and a further 8 rooms had 1 bed each, yielding 237 beds in all.

Of the 8 rooms containing a single bed, 7 were at the H section. The other room with one bed was at the G section. All rooms with one bed housed locals, and this seemed to be a status symbol. One of the interviewees expressed it thus:

'I was born and bred in Cape Town. You don't expect me to share a room with two or more people as if I am a goduka.'<sup>26</sup>

The information suggests, however, that a vast majority of rooms have 2 or 3 beds, while only six rooms had more than 3 beds.

Of the 96 rooms visited, 8 had double decker beds. None of these was at a council hostel. (A double decker bed was counted as one bed in this survey).

### B.2 Distribution of People Per Room

TABLE 3  
People Per Room

No. of People	No. of rooms	Total People
1	8	8
2	23	46
3	24	72
4	20	80
5	8	40
6	1	6
7	6	42
8	2	16
9	1	9
11	1	11
12	1	12
14	1	14
	96	356

Table 3 suggests that there is no necessary connection between the number of beds per room and the number of people per room. If we count a double decker bed as two beds, there were 245 beds in the survey, as against 356 people. The discrepancy between the number of beds per room and the number of people per room arises from the following facts:

- (i) No provision is made for men who wish to live with their wives and children. Yet, as will become clear, some men actually live with their wives and/or children;
- (ii) A number of men provide shelter for their friends and relatives from the Transkei or Ciskei who are looking for jobs.

If it were not an offence to 'harbour' people without permits, and if the authorities and the employers were less vigilant, the discrepancy between people and beds per room would be greater.

Table 3 suggests further that the number of beds is greater than the number of people in certain rooms. Under Section B.2 it was stated that 41 rooms had 2 beds each and another 41 rooms 3 beds each. One might have expected Table 3 to show a similar tendency. It must be emphasised that, in this survey, not a single bed was unoccupied in the sense of not being rented. The discrepancy in this regard, therefore, must be attributed to the tendency of hostelers to rent a bed in the hostel but live with friends or relatives in the townships. So long as they pay their hostel rent, *Selvan* suggests, it is a matter of indifference to the authorities where the hostelers actually live.<sup>27</sup>

Forty-eight interviewees said that the number of people reported as actually living in the rooms is constant. Another 46 indicated that the number increases during weekends and/or public holidays. Two interviewees did not respond. It follows that the number given in the previous paragraph is not inflated by casual visitors.

In Section A of this chapter it was indicated that the average size of a room is 3,75 x 2 metres. An analysis of Table 3 reveals that a room houses 3 to 4 people on average. Overcrowding is the only inference which can be drawn from these facts.

### B.3 The Maintenance of the Rooms

#### B.3.1 General

Generally, rooms are poorly maintained. At the new employer hostels the maintenance is a lot better. At the council hostels, the Board takes such a long time to act when breakages are reported that the hostelers usually mend these themselves. Forty respondents stated that they mend broken doors and windows. Thirty-two said that the Board mends these items while 8 credited their employers for this. Eleven respondents indicated that the Board, the employer and the hostelers have a joint responsibility for repairs. Five did not know who was responsible for repairs.

Of the respondents 80,2% stated that the hostelers themselves pay for repairs even if the Board or the employer fixes them. It was not clear what the basis is for holding them liable for payment but the following answers featured:

- (i) If you have caused the damage, you must pay;
- (ii) if you report that something is broken, you are held liable.

Now, in the nature of things, it would be almost impossible to know who was responsible for damage for the Board and the employers are coping with 8 144 people. It follows that most people would have been held liable because they reported the damage. This is so grossly unfair that the hostelers can be excused if they show some reluctance in reporting breakages. Therefore it is not surprising that the hostels are in such a poor shape.

#### B.3.2 Ceiling

Of the 96 rooms visited, 73 (76%) had a ceiling. Only 13 of these were in good repair and all of them were found in employer hostels. In all council hostels containing a ceiling, it had been installed by the hostelers themselves in order to protect their clothes from dirt falling from the asbestos roof.

#### B.3.3 Curtains

Ninety-four rooms had curtains. In 84 of these, the curtains were put up by the hostelers. In 8 rooms they were put up by the employers and one respondent did not know who put up the curtain in his room.

#### B.3.4 Covering of Floors

Five rooms had carpets; 45 had tiles and another both a carpet and tiles. Of the 51 covered floors, 43 were covered by the hostellers and 6 by employers. The room where the floor was covered with tiles and a carpet was originally covered with tiles by the employer. The hostellers put a carpet over the tiles. One respondent did not know who covered the floor of his room.

Of the 51 floors which were covered, only 18 had a decent cover, six of which were in employer hostels.

#### B.4 Ablution

##### B.4.1 Toilets

With the possible exception of the new employer-built hostels, each hostel has, on average, two outside toilets. It was indicated earlier that 8 hostels were visited and that they house 356 people. Therefore approximately 22 people share a toilet.

Thirty-seven interviewees indicated that one or both toilets in their hostel was out of order. Some of the toilets have been out of order for as long as 5 years. Most of these are at Freedom Square. The hostellers surmise that the Board is penalising them by not maintaining the toilets for not paying rent.

Most toilets which are not in working order

- (i) have a leaking bowl;
- (ii) have no chain and therefore do not flush; or
- (iii) have a blockage.

##### B.4.2 Shower and/or Bathing Facilities

###### B.4.2.1 General

It was pointed out in Section A of this chapter that the new employer-built hostels are equipped with warm shower and/or bathing facilities. When the

PHOTOGRAPH G



PHOTOGRAPH H



old council and employer hostels were built, shower rooms were built outside. The evidence of the interviewees is that only one shower room - in the H section - had warm water. None of these shower rooms has warm water at present. In many of them one does not find a nozzle. What is more, many of these rooms have been turned into toilets and thus rendered unusable for the purposes for which they were intended. If we bear in mind the strain placed upon the toilets, perhaps we can appreciate the plight of those who find themselves driven to such unsavoury conduct.

#### B.4.2.2 Where do the Hostelers Wash Themselves?

Twelve answered that they wash at work; 27 in the shower rooms and 57 in basins or pails inside or outside their rooms. Sixteen of the 27 who use the shower room live in the employer-built hostels while the vast majority of those who live in council hostels shun these facilities. Women who live with or visit men at the hostels wash themselves in the toilets.

#### B.4.2.3 Where do They Wash Their Clothes?

Two answered that they wash their clothes in the township; 29 at the ablution block and 65 in basins outside their rooms. (Some of those who said they use the ablution block use basins and pails at the building rather than the tubs provided). Therefore only 30,2% of the interviewees use the facilities provided by the council or by employers. Sixteen of these live in council hostels whereas 13 live in employer hostels. Once again it is clear that an overwhelming majority of those who live in council hostels keep away from the provided facilities. The reasons mentioned for this abstention included the following:

- (i) that the facilities are far from their rooms - an average distance of 500 metres;
- (ii) that the water is cold;
- (iii) that other hostelers wash meat in the tubs provided and leave them in a greasy condition. Since hot water is not available, it is difficult to remove the fat.

PHOTOGRAPH I





#### B.4.2.4 How do They Dry Their Clothes

At the board hostels and at the old employer hostels the hostelers have put up wires outside and/or twine inside their buildings for hanging wet clothes. The twine lines in the rooms are used when it rains and clothes cannot be dried outside. At some of the new employer hostels, the employers have provided wire lines for hanging wet clothes.

### B.5 Water

#### B.5.1 General

Originally the council seems to have provided one tap per x number of hostels. Therefore inhabitants of some blocks had to walk some distance in order to reach a tap. Freedom Square is still a case in point. At the other hostels the contract workers have taken it upon themselves to remedy the situation. Through the help of some board plumbers living in the hostels, they have been able to install extensions of these taps so that almost every hostel has a tap. Because most of these taps are not official, they cannot be reported when they are defective. Therefore the hostelers find that, having tried to cure the initial defect, they have saddled themselves with a further problem.

#### B.5.2 Distribution of Taps Per Block of Hostels

Twenty-two people said their block had one tap; 39 mentioned two taps; 17 three taps; 14 four taps and 3 eight taps. Taps at the ablution buildings at the old council and employer hostels are excluded from this calculation. The three people who mentioned 8 taps to a block live in the new employer hostels with bathing facilities and sinks fitted with taps for cold and for hot water. It follows that a vast majority of hostels have one or two taps per block.

### B.6 Provision for Cooking

#### General

In section A of this chapter, a description of a block of hostels was given. It was also indicated that the hostelers have partitioned what would have been a hall into cubicles. In the process of partitioning this hall,

a passage has remained, separating the cubicles on the left from those on the right side of the building. At all council and the old employer hostels, this passage is lined with boxes or stands. This would be a typical hostel kitchen.

#### B.6.2 What is Used for Cooking?

The new employer hostels are generally equipped with gas or electric stoves. At the council and old employer hostels, primus stoves are used for cooking.

#### B.7 Fuel

Of the 96 rooms visited, only 7 - i.e. 7,3% - had electricity. All of these were employer hostels. Fifty-one respondents used candles and paraffin lamps for lighting; 20 used paraffin lamps alone; 16 used candles and one a battery-operated bulb. Those who use candles spend an average of R9,98 per month on that item. When one considers that this is for lighting one room only, then it becomes clear that the amount is high. One candle user explained:

' Very often our windows are broken. But even if they are not broken, the wind finds its way easily through these old doors. When it is windy candles get finished quickly. I use three packets of candles per week.'

Paraffin users spend an average of R12,77 per month on paraffin.

In winter or when it is cold the hostellers put a zinc on their primus stoves and in that way warm up their rooms. If the survey had been conducted in winter, the expenditure on paraffin would in all probability be higher.

#### B.8 Street Lighting

Sixty-two people indicated that there were street lamps in their area. Thirty-three said there were no street lamps and one did not know whether there were street lamps. In fact there is no area at the hostel without street lamps. The average distance between consecutive poles is 75m. During the two months in which the interviews were conducted, there was not one night on which these lamps were lit. This explains why hostellers would be oblivious of their presence.

### B.9 Entertainment

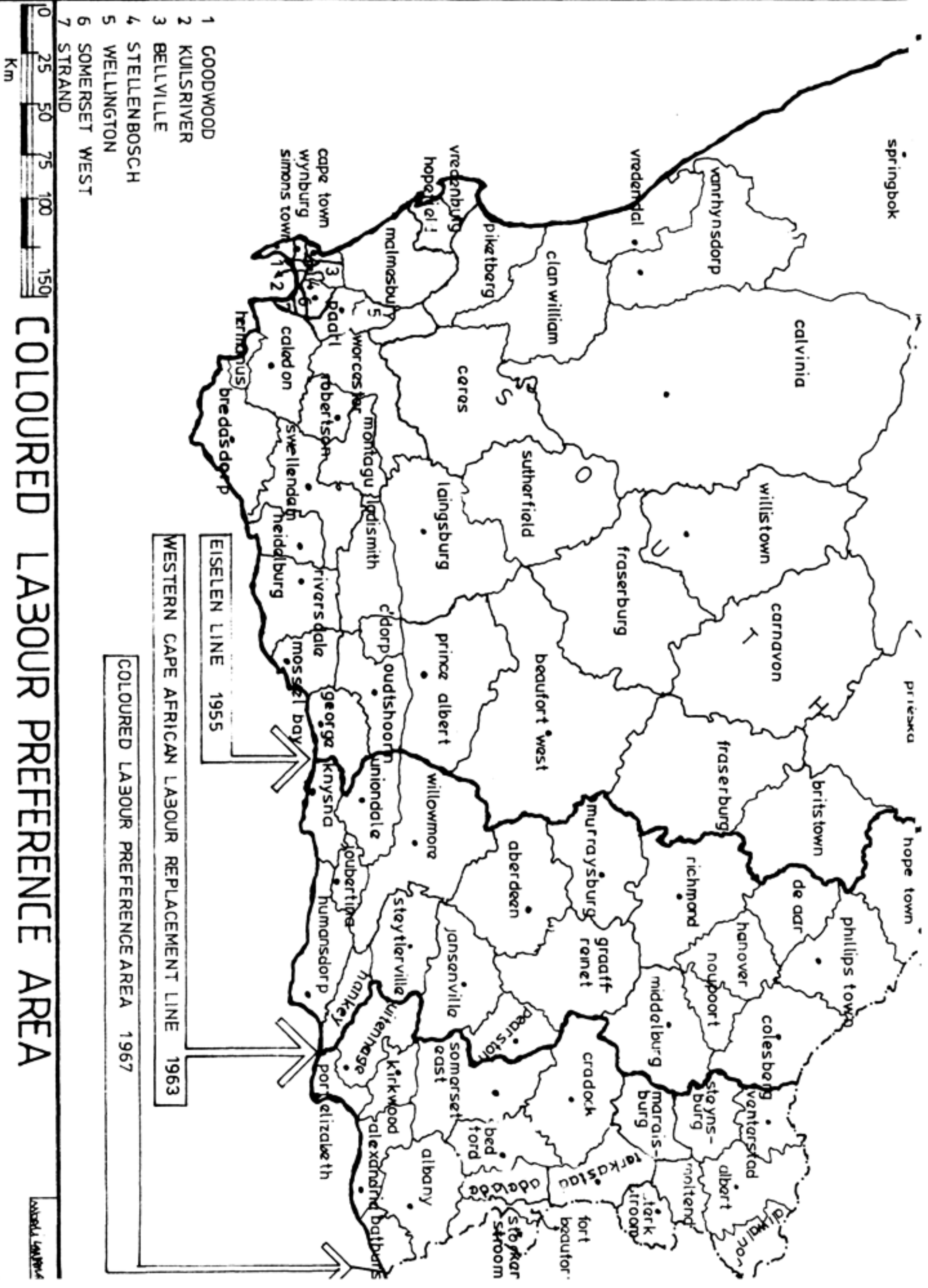
Only 5 people said there were entertainment facilities. All of them referred to the soccer stadium mentioned in Section A of this chapter.

### B.10 Rent

Eighty-five hostelers pay R6,00 per month in rent. Two pay R6,50 per month and one did not know how much his rent was. Another did not answer the questions fully while 7 did not pay rent at all.

No explanation could be found for the two paying R6,50 per month which seems to be an error. The one person who did not know what the rent was, indicated that he was a new-comer and had therefore not paid rent yet. Since there are indications that rent monies are collected in advance his explanation cannot stand. A probable explanation is that he is a job-seeker who is being 'harboured' by a friend or relative and therefore does not know how much rent is. All seven who are paying no rent live at Freedom Square. Therefore the fact of their not paying is understandable.

The survey does not reflect rent in excess of R6,00. It is urged that this should be seen as a limitation of the study rather than a reflection of the true state of affairs on this matter. In an informal discussion with LTA workers, for instance, a receipt showing rent of up to R12,00 per month was produced.



- 1 GOODWOOD
- 2 KULSRIVER
- 3 BELLVILLE
- 4 STELLENBOSCH
- 5 WELLINGTON
- 6 SOMERSET WEST
- 7 STRAND

COLOURED LABOUR PREFERENCE AREA

EISELEN LINE 1955

WESTERN CAPE AFRICAN LABOUR REPLACEMENT LINE 1963

COLOURED LABOUR PREFERENCE AREA 1967

Km



N A M I B I A

B O T S W A N A

NAMAQUALAND

GORDONIA

upington

kenhardt

griqua town

A

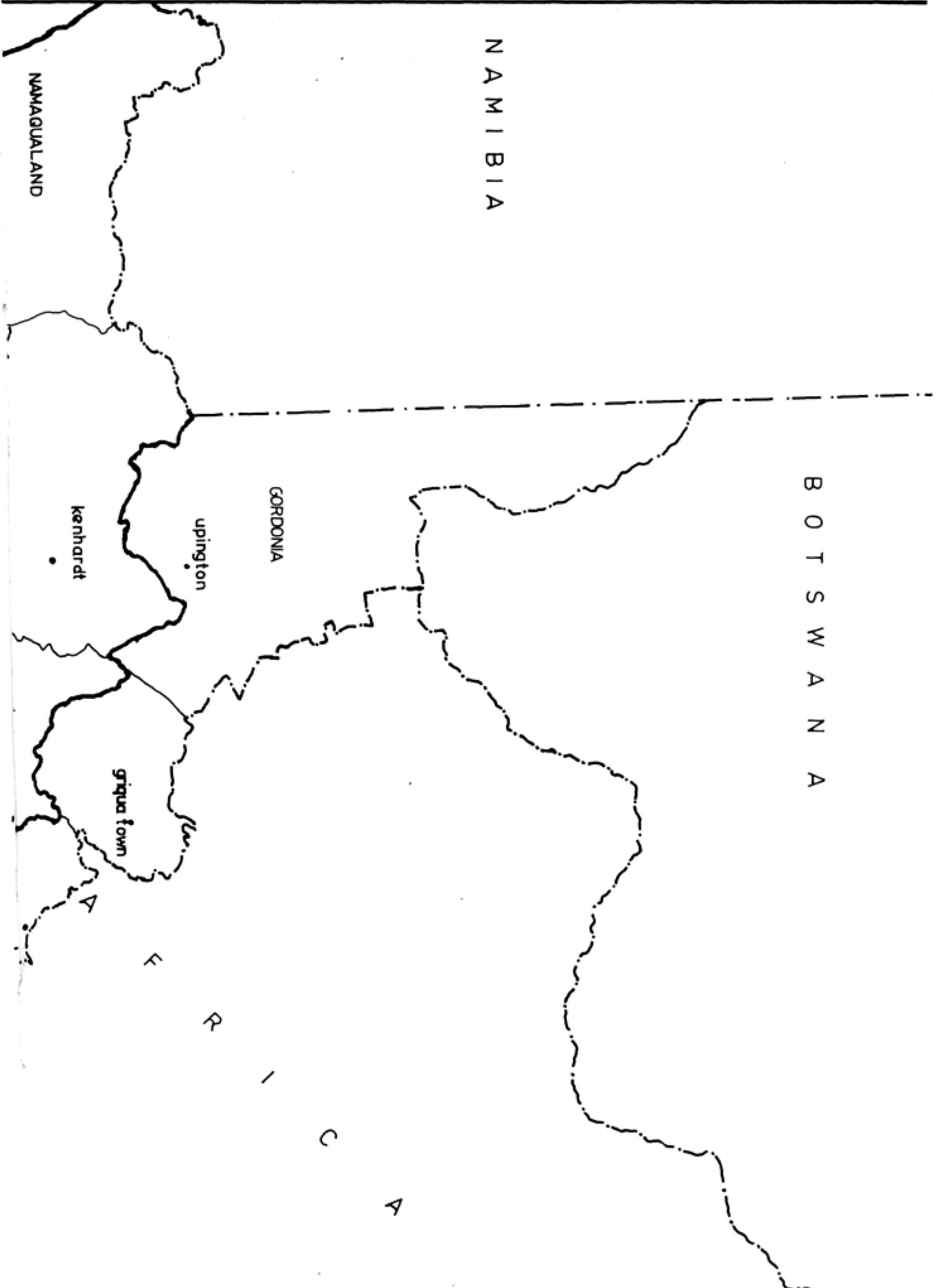
C

I

R

F

V



## CHAPTER THREE

INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOSTELERSAge

TABLE 4  
Age of Hostelers

Age	No.	%
< 20	0	-
21-30	8	8,33
31-40	25	26,04
41-50	31	32,29
51-60	26	27,08
> 60	4	4,16
Not disclosed	2	2,08
Total	96	100

The % column is slightly less than 100 because of rounding off.

Insofar as the < 20 age group is concerned, Table 4 invites comment. The reason people in that age bracket were not interviewed is that younger people tended to defer interviews to their elders or to the longest residing person in the room. One may have expected, however, that if there were numerous people in that age group, living independently of their relatives in the hostels, they would prefer to share a room or rooms of their own, rather than be interspersed among their elders. The fact that they succeeded completely to avoid interviews may well indicate how few of them are in the hostels.

In other respects the figures approximate *Goldin's* findings.<sup>28</sup>

Table 4 suggests that, over the age of 60 years, the number of hostel dwellers declines drastically. In this regard *Goldin* has commented:

'... hostel dwellers are confined to the economically active population ... Old or infirm contract workers are expelled from the Western Cape to the "homeland" dumping grounds. Permanent workers are compelled to find lodgings with friends or face homelessness when no longer fit to work.' 28

## B Training

### B.1 Academic Training

TABLE 5  
Educational Credentials

Highest Std. passed	No. of People	%
No Education	38	39,58
SSA- Std 2	22	22,92
Std 3- Std 6	27	28,13
Std 7- Std 10	8	8,33
Not disclosed	1	1,04
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 establishes the fact that the level of education of the hostelers is very low. *Goldin* has written in this regard that

'The state has only a limited desire to educate contract workers whose role is seen to be one of unskilled labour ... The lack of money for uniforms and books, the need to find work in order to support dependants and the realisation that the labour bureaux system and influx control are unlikely to allow any benefit to accrue from further education all act together to force Africans without urban rights to leave school before attaining high school education.' 29

Ninety-two per cent of the interviewees did not have any occupational training. This compares more or less favourably with *Goldin's* findings.<sup>30</sup>

### B.2 Occupational Training

TABLE 6

Training	No. of People	%
None	88	91,67
Driver's Licence	1	1,04
S.A. Police	1	1,04
Machine Operator	1	1,04
Security	1	1,04
Welding	2	2,08
Not disclosed	2	2,08
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>100</b>

The % column is slightly less than 100 because of rounding off.

Marital StatusTABLE 7

Marital Status	No. of People	%
Never Married	15	15,63
Married	76	79,17
Divorced	2	2,08
Widowed	1	1,04
Not disclosed	2	2,08
Total	96	100

It is evident that an overwhelming majority of the people interviewed are married. Of the married men 9,2% live with their wives in the hostels. Of the married men 71% said that their wives visit them at the hostels. Of the women who visit their husbands in the hostels 46% come whenever their husbands invite them while 48% visit once every year. Six per cent visit once every month or every third month. Of the women who visit their husbands 50% stay for up to 26 weeks per visit, 19% stay for more than six months, while 31% never exceed 12 weeks. These facts suggest that most women who visit their husbands in the hostels stay for extended periods.

Of the married men 66% stated that if the laws were changed, and reasonable accommodation provided, they would prefer to stay with their wives and children in Cape Town. Taking into account the fact that these men live with their wives and that their wives visit them in contravention of the *Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act*, as well as the fact that they are prepared to forego all forms of privacy in order to live as husband and wife, it becomes difficult to accept as a general proposition the view that contract workers are not desirous of normal family life.<sup>31</sup>

Ninety-three per cent of the respondents said they had children. Of the men who have children 19% have some of the children in the hostels with them. In this connection *Reynolds* has written:



'A major theme that runs through the migrants' comments relates to their perception of the role of fathers. Almost all of them cherish an ideal of fatherhood ...'<sup>32</sup>

One of her respondents, when the subject was broached, observed:

'You have struck upon the thing that causes us the most distress in our lives - our separation from our families. That is what we must talk about.'<sup>33</sup>

Of the 89 men with children, 16 admitted to having a second set of children. Eleven of these stated that their second set of children was born in Cape Town, while the children of the remaining 5 were born in the Transkei or Ciskei. It can be accepted then, that a majority of those men who have a second set of children get them largely due to their condition as migrant workers. One hosteler, when asked whether there are benefits in living away from his wife, said:

'There is none. However, I have come here in order to earn my family a living. Therefore I have had to sacrifice a normal family life. This kind of life has led to several men having second families in Cape Town.'

The fact that some men have a second set of children in the 'homelands' where presumably they originated from, should not be overlooked. It suggests that they did not need institutional separation from their wives in order to enjoy extramarital love affairs.

#### D. Women and Children Living in Hostels

TABLE 8

A			B		
Rooms	Women		Rooms	Children	
	No.	Total		No.	Total
18	1	18	8	1	8
7	2	14	3	2	6
6	3	18	3	3	9
			4	4	16
			2	11	22
		50			61

Table 8A suggests that at least one woman lives in every second room. The same information can more or less be gleaned from Table 8B. But if so many women and children already live in these hostels, it becomes a farce to insist on the hostels remaining single quarters.

E EmploymentE.1 Industry Employing the IntervieweesTABLE 9  
Employment\*

Industry	No. of People	%
Building/Construction	11	11,46
Commerce	45	46,88
Engineering	11	11,46
Transport	2	2,08
Government	10	10,42
Docks	2	2,08
Security	1	1,04
Unemployed	12	12,5
Not disclosed	2	2,08
Total	96	100

E.2 Length of ServiceTABLE 10  
Length of Service

Period in years	No. of People	%
< 9	19	22,89
10-15	53	63,86
> 16	11	13,25
Total	83	100

---

\* In Section A of this chapter, *Goldin* is quoted as saying that Not Economically Active people are not housed in hostels. The 12 people recorded as unemployed in Table 9 live at Freedom Square, which was discussed earlier and do not, thus, detract from what *Goldin* says.

Table 10 suggests that 77% of the interviewees have worked for the same employer, in the same area, for a period long enough to qualify for Section 10(1)(b) rights. In this regard *Sheinaz Meer* cautions:

'Workers tend, understandably in my opinion, to exaggerate the length of their service. There is a need to check what they say against their record of employment. A very common problem we encounter in this regard is that they (workers) do not keep track of their breaks and this affects their qualification for Section 10(1)(b) rights.'<sup>18</sup>

An added problem was that all but five respondents assumed that, if one fulfilled the requirements laid down in the *Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act*, Section 10(1)(b), one acquired those rights as a matter of course. This is not correct. The following procedure must be followed:

- i) The worker must obtain a letter from his employer, stating:
  - a) the date on which he commenced duties;
  - b) that he has had paid annual leave not exceeding 4 weeks;
  - c) that he has worked for one employer for the required number of years in the same area.
- ii) Armed with this letter, the worker must make formal application for his reference book or passport to be endorsed accordingly.

Bearing in mind the difficulties discussed in Section C of the Introduction, it may be wiser to call on the assistance of one of the many advice offices in different parts of the country rather than approach the Board as an individual.

CHAPTER FOURTHE ATTITUDE OF THE INTERVIEWEES TO THEIR SITUATIONA Introduction

In grappling with people's attitudes, *Graaff and Maree* advise that

'... attitudes are expressed under certain conditions, but these conditions may change overnight and, subsequently, the attitudes may also change.' 34

Where people are interviewed in the medium of one language and the transcript is in another language, there is an added problem. In this study the interpretation of three other people has been sought in order to minimise the risk of distortion.

In so far as the relations between 'coloured' and 'African' workers are concerned, the views of 'coloured' workers have perforce not been canvassed. The same holds for relations between hostelers and those 'Africans' who live in the township. Hopefully these will be the subject matter of future studies.

Admittedly the number of people interviewed for the attitudinal study is too small to be considered representative. Hopefully, until it is contradicted by a future, more comprehensive study, it will prove useful.

The presentation of this section will follow the form of the actual interview. Twelve people were involved and, therefore, the answers will be marked accordingly. As anticipated, not every interviewee answered every question. The numbers therefore refer to answers, not the interviewees.

B The Coloured Labour Preference Policy

Q

We have heard that the government intends scrapping this policy. What is your attitude to it - i.e. the coloured preference policy?

ANSWERS

1. 'This is an old problem which our forefathers have had to live with also. I was pleased to hear that the government intends to abolish it.'

2. 'If they (white people) say they are committed to improving our lot, then we should have equal rights.'
3. 'That was a bad law. I am here in order to work for my children. Presumably the coloured worker also wants to work for the well-being of his children. So what is this differentiation based upon?'
4. 'That law was so evil that I cannot understand how it came to be passed in the first place.'
5. 'The idea that the Western Cape belongs to the coloureds has never been acceptable to us, for the following reasons.'
  - (a) 'All the beauty and the wealth of Cape Town was produced through these black hands of ours;
  - (b) we were born in and we belong to South Africa. We shall never understand anything which suggests that we are foreigners in the Western Cape. Therefore we were delighted to hear that the government intends to scrap this policy. But we must wait and see that the government fulfils this promise.'
6. 'The Coloured preference policy is oppressive.'
7. 'I am happy that the government has announced that it will be brought to an end because this policy has always been used (by the government) to set "coloureds" against Africans.'

: Attitudes to 'Coloured' workers

Q

How do you relate to 'coloured' workers at your place of employment and when you are not at work?

ANSWERS

1. 'Whites grade "coloureds" one or two above us. They get better salaries than us and coloured workers have come to believe that they are better than us. This comes out clearly from conversations we hold with them.'

2. 'When "coloureds" meet us outside of the working situation, they carry themselves in a way which they think is acceptable to us. We, of course, play along, hoping to build more meaningful bonds of friendship. This is actually a complex situation because there are "coloureds" who want genuine friendship with us. They would even live with us here. But these are only a tiny minority.'
3. 'We relate well to "coloureds" at work. White people are trying to drive a wedge between us, but "coloureds" do not hold anything against us.'
4. 'When not at work, I have met "coloureds" at trade union meetings and we have a similar outlook.'

4.1.Q You use the term 'amalawu'. Can you explain what it means?

4.1.A "coloureds" ... it means "coloureds"

4.2.Q Is it an acceptable term?

4.2.A 'No ... not in these days when we are building unity. It is not acceptable. I should say "abebala"'

5. 'I treat all people I interact with as people.'
6. 'I consider all people to be equal and I am strongly opposed to people seeing themselves in ethnic terms.'
7. '"Coloured" workers tend to distance themselves from us. They undermine us and act out the government's view that we are inferior and that this is not our place.'
8. '"Coloureds", especially those who are artisans, look down upon us. This compromises those of us who are trying to build up unity. At times they use offending words in order to spite us.'

9. 'Whether at work or in the community, the behaviour of "coloureds" towards us is the same: they despise us and are all too conscious of their difference from us. When however, they wish to use us for organisational gains, they put up a friendly appearance. When we attend meetings with them, they preach unity but when the meeting is over we become kaffirs. I don't say all "coloureds" are like this but there can be no doubt that most of them fit this description.'

9.1.Q 'Can you give an example of a case where "coloureds" have used "Africans" for their own organisational gains?

9.1.A 'No, I cannot ... but "coloured" students left "African" students in the lurch during the 1980 upheavals ...'

(The 1980 school demonstrations started in 'coloured' schools in Cape Town. 'African' students joined them in order to express solidarity with them. There is a view in the townships which says some of the grievances of 'coloured' students were met by the state and, thereupon, 'coloured' students pulled out of the demonstrations without regard to the fact that the demands which 'African' students had in the meantime made had not been met. In any case 'African' students carried on the demonstration long after the 'coloured' students had called it off)

9.1.A is developed further thus: '... If "coloureds" really liked us, there would be no need for us to suffer the way we do. They have huge houses and, if they were true to us, nothing stops them from letting rooms to us. If they did this, even the government would know that all efforts to divide us are futile.'

10. 'At work "coloureds" treat us well if we belong to the same rank. If they occupy positions of power, they give directives, but there is nothing wrong with this. I would probably do the same.'

11. 'Apart from work, I have mixed with "coloureds" in meetings and I have visited some of them at their houses. We relate well. Here I have never been visited by a "coloured" but they used to visit me when I lived at Hout Bay.'

D Attitudes with Reference to the Controversy About Section 10 Rights

Q.1

What do you think of 'Africans' without Section 10 rights and what do you think they think about you?

ANSWERS

1. 'I have section 10 rights and there is little difference between me and those who do not have them.'
2. 'I have section 10 rights and I feel that there is a real danger that those who do not have them may have the same attitude towards us as we have towards "coloured" workers - i.e. they may feel that we see ourselves as superior. I think that the feeling would be justified because we tend to fashion ourselves in strata. We at Freedom Square definitely look down upon other Africans in this very hostel. That is the reason contract workers and locals fought against one another in 1976.'
3. 'It is difficult to say. Ultimately it must depend upon that individual's person's depth of mind (*ubukrelekrele bee ngqondo zabantu*). Some think that because they have section 10 rights they are free and they can forget about those who do not have them.'
4. 'If I had my way, all people should have section 10 rights like I do: there should be no differentiation in the extension of rights.'
5. 'I have section 10 rights and I was once tempted to quit the hostel and obtain a house in the township. After consulting with M, I decided to remain here and to assist those at the hostel who must still acquire them. Therefore I am sympathetic and committed to those who do not have these rights yet.'
6. 'I have section 10 rights and wish that they could be extended to everybody.'



7. 'It is difficult to know what another person thinks. However I would imagine that everybody wants to have these rights. And I think those who have them wish that those who do not have them should acquire them also. You see, many people with these rights are harbouring their brothers, relatives or friends with a view to enabling them to acquire those rights.'

Q.2

What do you think about the division of Africans according to section 10 rights?

ANSWERS

1. 'I think that Africans must all fall under the same category. If it is necessary to classify us, then we should all have the same rights under Section 10.'
2. 'I think that section 10 should be abolished because it constitutes persecution of black people.'
3. 'Everyone who works in Cape Town must have section 10 by virtue of that fact alone. Ideally there should be no section 10, since it affects Africans alone. But we can compromise and say all of us should have it.'
4. 'Whites are using section 10 to divide us. There should be no section 10. Why should we be graded as if we were potatoes? We are only interested in human rights and for that there is no need for grades.'
5. 'The very idea of section 10 should be abolished since its sole aim is to divide us.'

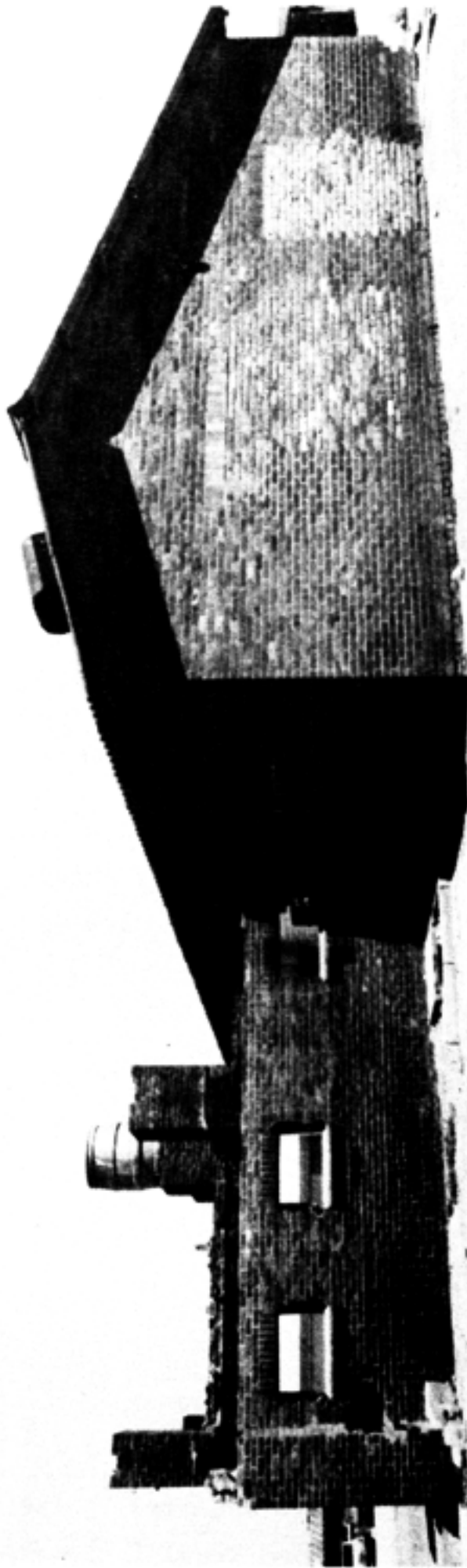
Q.3

How do you relate to people who live in the townships? What do you think they think about you?

ANSWERS

1. 'We have good relations with township dwellers. In 1976 and at other times in the past there have been problems between us

PHOTOGRAPH J



'and them. In 1976 students tried to force people to stop drinking. When hostelers resisted, they burned down our dwellings and in this way we were forced into a conflict situation. When fights broke out between hostelers and the students, parents took sides with their children against us and in this way we were drawn into a fight with the locals. Many people died in these fights, but that belongs to the past now. A spirit of fighting could not, in any case, be protracted for too long because we work together. We found that it made little sense to forge unity in town and then return to bitter fighting in the location. Black people must unite and we can simply not afford these divisions. If I go to the township today, the only risk I run is at the hands of tsotsis, which everyone runs in any case. There is no indication that I run that risk because I am a hosteler. We treat locals in the same way if they have occasion to pass through here.'

Q 'In the light of what you say, if 1976 can happen again, and students declared that nobody should go to work, what do you think would happen?

A 'The problem in 1976 was that no effort was made to involve us in the decisions they took. Before the fights broke out, I asked some student leaders whether it was correct for them to impose decisions on us the way they did. They showed an appreciation of this, but unfortunately they left the country soon after. Those who took over from them took no notice of our views and hence the disaster. We trust that such mistakes will not be repeated because we would still not allow ourselves to be dictated to. We have come here to work and we are not going to allow anyone to tell us not to go to work without consulting with us.'

2. 'I think that people who live in the township have the same problems I have. Chief amongst these is the question of representation. They have community councils, of course, but that has not improved their condition. They have no electricity, no ceiling, nothing you can reasonably expect in a house.'

'When they get into those houses, they find them in exactly the same state as we find these hostels. They must themselves bring about improvements on them: just as we do here.'

3. 'It is not clear what they think about us. I doubt if they have any interest in us. I have attended some community meetings where important things which affect us all were discussed. If for whatever reason they think there is a chance that some improvements may come, they do not take kindly to our participation in such a meeting. They quickly advise us to take up hostel-related issues.'
4. 'We have nothing against people who live in townships.'
5. 'We would like closer relations with them. Some township dwellers see themselves as a class (*udidi*) different from us but we can with fairness ascribe that to ignorance. Just to illustrate a point: imagine that, as a result of our efforts, these hostels got converted into married quarters. A terrible conflict of interests between us and them will follow because they will argue that they have been on the waiting list for houses for several years. If we get bundled up and thrown into the back of trucks so that they can move in here, their consciences will not trouble them even slightly.'
6. 'Whether they stay in hostels or in townships, we are one.'
7. 'They do not like us. When there is a community council meeting, for instance, and a hosteler raises a hostel-related issue, the people from the location will never support him.'

Q. What is your attitude to community councils?

A. 'We cannot deny their existence. But they were not our making and we had no say in the making of the law on which they are based. And it is pointless to make a man dance to a tune he does not understand.'

Q.4 In your opinion, why does the government not want 'Africans' to live in Cape Town?

ANSWERS

1. 'That has always bugged me. If I inquired, I might be locked up for discussing politics. I guess white people just do not like us. I do not know why, for they get everything they have through us. I suspect it has to do with the increasing number of educated black people. Possibly white people are afraid that our people are beginning to see more than they would like us to see.'
2. 'The government is trying to make its homelands system work. That is why they do not want us here.'
3. 'The government wants us to remain in the homelands where it has put us so that we can starve. In this way we are being turned into slaves: when you starve, you are prepared to work for very low wages. When you have rights you will choose the job you want to do.'

Q.5 In your understanding, why does the government not want you to bring your wives to Cape Town?

ANSWERS

1. 'I do not know how the government thinks, because the Bible says quite clearly that what God has joined no man should put asunder.'
2. 'It is for the same reason I have already given when you asked why the government does not want us to live here. If they allowed my wife and my children to live here, my children would acquire section 10 rights. But the government clearly intends that these rights should be extended to me alone. My children will start from scratch as contract workers and earn these rights in the same way that I did. That is what the government wants.'

3. 'I will never understand that. White people are allowed to bring wives from overseas and I cannot bring mine from as near as the Transkei.'

Q.6

We have discussed a few court decisions in which the judges have explained the law with respect to the acquisition of section 10 rights. In that discussion we have seen how the government has tried to get around these judgements. What do you think of this?

ANSWERS

1. 'That is wrong. The government of this country does not take well to being told what to do: it always wants to act according to its will. However, it is not surprising that the government should act in that way since, according to the laws it has passed, we are supposed to be labourers only; live in hostels, have no rights and then, when our energy has been sapped, go back to where we have come from. If we are born here, they send us back where our fathers were born.'
2. 'That is wrong.'
3. 'That sounds like a contradiction. The courts are part of the government. It therefore seems one part of the government wants to relax these oppressive measures and that the other part is against this. That creates confusion.'
5. 'That is completely wrong. Presumably the courts are on the side of law and truth about any matter which comes before them. Therefore I do not understand how the government can stand up against a court decision. The government is clearly abusing its powers. It now seems that the government establishes courts in order to bluff us into thinking that we have something to fall back on, while it is itself not prepared to accept unfavourable court decisions.'

6. 'I am not at all surprised that this government should do that. I should be surprised if it acted otherwise than this.'
7. 'If the government has any respect for humanity it should accept the judgements in Rikhoto, Komani and others. We understand that the courts are an arm of the government and that the government controls them. But when the government does not accept judgements which are favourable to us, it becomes clear that it is not interested in our welfare.'

Q.7

Assuming that you were not born in Cape Town, would you like to return where you came from when you retire. Please give a reason for your answer.

ANSWERS

1. 'No I intend to remain here because there is no sense going back to a place without job opportunities.'
2. 'I intend returning to Mt. Frere because I have arable land there.'
3. 'I will go back to Umtata because I have livestock and arable land there.'
4. 'I am not going back to Cofimvaba. I belong here.'
5. 'I will return to Idutywa because I have a hectare of arable land and livestock.'
6. 'My intention is to retire to Ntabankulu because my family and my roots are there.'
7. 'I have livestock at Lady Frere and therefore I intend to return there when I retire.'



CHAPTER FIVECONCLUSION

In the Preface it was stated that there was a need to identify issues correctly in order to prosecute any struggle meaningfully. It does not matter that, in this case, the concern is with the struggles of contract workers for improved conditions of life at their hostels: the issues must still be identified correctly. The crucial point being made in the Introduction is that the issues are political. Should evidence be required for this, we need only look at the handling by the government of the court decisions in *Komani* and in *Rikhoto*.

A suggestion was made of the possibility that *Goldin's* analysis of the CLPP might be wrong. We may recall that he wrote: 'In part, therefore, it is seen by the state to fulfil a political function which is integral to the long-term survival of the present government'. But this government, as we saw, has now abandoned that policy and yet there is no indication that it has been weakened by that.

It is suggested that the government's abandonment of the CLPP should be assessed in the light of what *Budlender* says: 'As a result of the natural process of population growth, and particularly as a result of the judgments in the *Rikhoto* and *Komani* cases, one would ordinarily expect to see a substantial broadening of the base of people with section 10 rights ... In fact, however, what is happening is precisely the opposite. Instead of seeing a broadening of the base, what is taking place is a narrowing of the base. The reason for that is section 12 of the Urban Areas Act, which ... says that no black person who is a foreigner and was not formerly a South African citizen may ever acquire section 10 rights ... what one therefore sees is a gradual diminution in the number of black people who have a right to remain in the city ... If the policy unfolds to its full conclusion, there will be no black South Africans and therefore no blacks with a right to remain in the cities'.<sup>35</sup>



For as long, therefore, as the government remains committed to the anti-urbanisation policy, the scrapping of the CLPP is inconsequential. According to the anti-urbanisation policy Africans will eventually cease to be South Africans and the CLPP would in fact be redundant. Perhaps, therefore, as E.P. Thompson might say, we must watch this new development for some time before we cut our hedges down.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mafeje, A., The Problem of Anthropology in Historical Perspective : An Inquiry into the Growth of the Social Sciences, in The Canadian Journal of African Studies, Vol. 10 No. 2, 1976. p.332.
2. Wilson, F, Migrant Labour in South Africa, Johannesburg, SACC and SPROCAS, 1972. p.1.
3. Elias, C., A Housing Study : Legislation and the Control of the Supply of Urban African Accommodation, Carnegie Conference Paper No. 157, Cape Town, 1984.
4. Budlender, G., Incorporation and Exclusion : Recent Developments in Labour Law and Influx Control (Unpublished Paper).
5. op.cit., p.18
6. In this paper no detailed study of the CLPP is attempted. The reader is referred to the following literature for a comprehensive discussion of the policy:
  - (a) Horner, D. (ed.), Labour Preference, Influx Control and Squatters : Cape Town Entering the 1980s, Saldru Working Paper No. 50, Cape Town, 1983.
  - (b) Goldin, I, The Poverty of Coloured Labour Preference : Economics and Ideology in the Western Cape, Saldru Working Paper No. 59, Cape Town, 1984.
7. Goldin, I, ibid., p.10.
8. Horner, D., op.cit.
9. Goldin, op.cit., p.1
10. Sunday Times, 26.8.1984.
11. Weekend Argus, 11.8.1984.
12. Sunday Times, 26.8.1984.
13. Cape Times, 26.9.1984.
14. Argus, 13.3.1985
15. The Report of the Legal Resources Trust, 1982.
16. ibid., pp10-11.
17. See Section 4 of the Act.
18. Meer, S. works for the Legal Resources Centre, Cape Town. She stated this in an interview with the author.

19. The Report of the Legal Resources Trust, 1983, p.11.
20. The Report of the Legal Resources Trust, 1984, p.15.
21. Sikwebu, D., Area Study of Cape Town : Profile of Nyanga, Carnegie Conference Paper No. 10(a), Cape Town, 1984, pp1-4.
22. Sikwebu, ibid., footnote on p.5.
23. Selvan, D., Housing Conditions for Migrant Workers in Cape Town, Saldru Working Paper No. 10, Cape Town, 1976. Footnote 22.
24. Wilson, op.cit., p.70, footnote 23.
25. Selvan, D., op.cit., p.6.
26. 'Goduka', literally meaning 'go back home', was originally a derogatory term used by locals to refer to migrant workers. It seems to have lost its derogatory import among hostellers. One hosteler stated the position: 'Originally the term was definitely used as a slur against migrant workers. Today it is used to refer to everyone who lives in a hostel: they call us amagoduka also, although we were born here. I don't feel insulted when another hosteler calls me a goduka.'
27. Selvan, op.cit., pp.5 and 46.
28. Goldin, op.cit., p.55.
29. Goldin, ibid., p.62.
30. ibid., p.66.
31. This view, apparently, was propagated by some companies in their encounter with Rev. Russell.
32. Reynolds, P.F., Men Without Children, Carnegie Conference Paper No. 5, Cape Town, 1984, p.12.
33. ibid., p.25.
34. Graaff, J. and Maree, J., Residential and Migrant African Workers in Cape Town, Saldru Working Paper No. 12, Cape Town, 1977, p.23.
35. Budlender, G., op.cit., pp.5-6.

1.

S.A.L.D.R.U.; UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN.A STUDY OF THE CONDITIONS AT THE NYANGA EAST MEN'S HOSTEL, CAPE TOWN.SECTION A.

1. State the size of the room in METRES \_\_\_\_\_
2. State the number of beds per room \_\_\_\_\_
3. State the number of beds per block of hostels \_\_\_\_\_
4. State the number of people who ACTUALLY sleep  
in the room \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is the number stated in 4 above constant? (i.e.  
does the number remain the same during weekends, e.g.?) YES / NO
6. If not, give an explanation \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Are there double-decker beds in the room? YES / NO
8. If so, state the number. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are there absentee bed-holders in the room? YES / NO
10. If so, state the number. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Are there unoccupied beds in the room? YES / NO
12. If so, state the number. \_\_\_\_\_
13. If there is more than one bed in the room, please an-  
swer the following questions:
  - A. Is there a partition between the beds? YES / NO.
  - B. What is it made of? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Who made it? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Does the room have a ceiling? YES / NO.
15. Is the ceiling in good order? YES / NO.
16. If not, state the defects \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. How many windows does the room have? \_\_\_\_\_
18. State their size. \_\_\_\_\_
19. Does the room have curtains? YES / NO.

20. Who put them on? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
21. Who mends broken things - e.g. windows and toilets - ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. Who pays for the repair of broken things? (if possible please give an example) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. Under what circumstances are the inhabitants required to pay for the repair of damaged things? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. Are the floors covered? YES / NO
25. If so, answer the following questions:  
A. What are they covered with? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- B. Who covered them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- C. Is the cover in good order? YES / NO.
- D. If not, state the defects. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
26. If the floors are not covered, answer the following questions:  
A. Are the floors broken? YES / NO.
- B. How long have they been broken for? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Why have they not been repaired? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
27. State the size of the kitchen in metres. \_\_\_\_\_
28. Give a description of the interior of the kitchen. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
29. Are there people who sleep in the kitchen? YES / NO.
30. If so, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
31. Are there any complaints about the facilities in the kitchen? YES / NO
32. If so, state. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3.

33. How many toilets are there per block of hostels? \_\_\_\_\_
34. Are they all in working order? YES / NO.
35. If not, answer the following questions:
- A. How many toilets are not in working order? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. What is wrong with them? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- C. How long have they been defective for? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Why have they not been repaired? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
36. Where do the inhabitants wash their clothes? (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
37. What provision is made for drying clothes? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
38. Are there any complaints about these facilities? YES / NO.
40. If so, explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
41. Where do the inhabitants wash themselves? (Describe) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
42. Are there any complaints about these facilities? YES / NO.
43. If so, explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
44. How many taps are there per block of hostels? \_\_\_\_\_
45. Are there any entertainment facilities? YES / NO.
46. If so, describe. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
47. Is the room electrified? Yes / No.
48. If so, does the electricity work? YES / NO.
49. If there is any fault, describe. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



5.

SECTION B.

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age : \_\_\_\_\_
3. Highest Academic Standard passed \_\_\_\_\_
4. Vocational Training Received \_\_\_\_\_
5. On-the-job Training Received \_\_\_\_\_
6. Employer ( Name and Industry) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Length of Service in years \_\_\_\_\_
8. What do you do at work? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Is that what you were employed for? YES / NO.
10. How long have you been in Cape Town for? \_\_\_\_\_
11. If you changed jobs over the past 10 (ten) years, how long did you work for your last employer for? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Before you came to work in Cape Town, where did you work?  
(Give name of TOWN) \_\_\_\_\_
13. Marital Status: NEVER MARRIED / MARRIED / DIVORCED / WIDOWED.
14. Does your wife live with you in Cape Town? YES / NO.
15. If not, does she visit you? YES / NO.
16. If so, answer the following questions:
  - A. How often does she visit? \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. How long does she stay per visit? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Do you have children? YES / NO.
18. If so, state the number. \_\_\_\_\_
19. Where are they? (NAME OF PLACE) \_\_\_\_\_
20. Apart from the children you have mentioned, do you have any other? YES / NO.
21. If so, answer the following questions:



A. State their number. \_\_\_\_\_

B. Where were they born? \_\_\_\_\_

C. Where are they? \_\_\_\_\_

D. When were they born? \_\_\_\_\_

22. If you live away from your family, do you send them money? YES / NO.

23. If so, indicate:

A. The frequency. \_\_\_\_\_

B. The amount. R C  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. How many women live in this room? \_\_\_\_\_

25. How many children live in this room? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Are there people who live in this room, who should not be here? YES / NO.

27. If so, state the number and explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

28. If the law permitted, and accomodation were available, would you like your wife to stay in Cape Town with you? YES / NO.

Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

29. When you came to Cape Town, where did you come from?  
\_\_\_\_\_