

WORKING IN THE APARTHEID CITY :  
WORKER STRUGGLES IN DURBAN, 1959-1979

BY

N T SAMBURENI

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by

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DECLARATION

Unless otherwise acknowledged in the text, this dissertation is an original work by the author and has not been submitted in any form to another university.

## ABSTRACT

Politically, socially and economically, the 1960s and 1970s constitute a crucial period in the history of South Africa in general and that of Durban in particular. It was a period of economic boom, a period of intensive state repression, a period of social engineering unparalleled by any previous government, and a period in which the state intervened in the shaping of the African community and increasingly integrated African workers and their families into the urban economy. This thesis examines the contradictions, conflicts, complexities, failures and successes of the apartheid state's intervention in the economy and in urban African society.

The state's intervention in all spheres of life created a more complex society - a society which was structurally far too complex to be effectively managed by the apartheid state. On the whole, the apartheid state failed to achieve its objects and by the mid-1970s, began to show signs of collapse.

On the economic front, the apartheid state faced enormous challenges from both African workers and employers of African labour, who resisted the state's influx control measures. Furthermore, the state also faced

challenges from the wave of strikes beginning in Durban in 1973 which spread throughout the country. Politically, the state lost the control which it assumed in the 1960s and began to institute reforms.

The greatest challenge facing the apartheid state and its structures were the African workers who developed various strategies for confronting day to day problems at the workplace, the market and the residence. Such forms of struggle were both hidden and open: they were not expressed solely through trade unions, strikes, boycotts, stay-aways and riots, but were expressed in all facets of life. Consequently, conflicts emerged between African workers and the state, between African workers and employers, between employers and the state, and between the state and local authorities.

This thesis argues that the apartheid state was not always successful in achieving its goals; since apartheid was contradictory and conflictual, it was more complex than a simple success story of the state mowing down all its opponents. Apartheid shone and waned, and throughout its existence was often marked by contradictions and conflicts in both content and implementation of its policies; it failed to withstand resistance which began during the 1970s.

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Opinions expressed in this thesis and the conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	African National Congress
ANCWL	-	African National Congress Women's League
BAC	-	Bantu Affairs Commissioner
BAD	-	Bantu Administration and Development
BF	-	Benefit Fund
BWP	-	Black Workers' Project
CASS	-	Centre for Applied Social Sciences
DCC	-	Durban Chamber of Commerce
DSLSC	-	Durban Stevedoring Labour Supply Company
FAWIU	-	Furniture and Allied Workers' Union
GFWBF	-	General Factory Workers' Benefit Fund
GWIU	-	Garment Workers' Industrial Union
ICA	-	Industrial Conciliation Act
ICU	-	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
IDC	-	Industrial Development Corporation
IIE	-	Institute for Industrial Education
ISR	-	Institute for Social Research
KCAL	-	Killie Campbell Africana Library
KCAV	-	Killie Campbell Audio Visuals
MK	-	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NA	-	Natal Archives
NCI	-	Natal Chamber of Industries
NP	-	National Party



NR	-	Natal Room
NTC	-	National Transport Commission
NUTW	-	National Union of Textile Workers
PAC	-	Pan-African Congress
PNAAB	-	Port Natal Affairs Administration Board
PUTCO	-	Public Utility Bus Transport Company
RNLB	-	Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau
SACTU	-	South African Congress of Trade Unions
SACTWU	-	South African Clothing and Textile Workers' Union
SAIRR	-	South African Institute of Race Relations
SALB	-	South Africa Labour Bulletin
SASO	-	South African Students' Organisation
TUACC	-	Trade Union Advisory Co-ordinating Council
TUCSA	-	Trade Union Council of South Africa
TWIU	-	Textile Workers' Industrial Union
UBC	-	Urban Bantu Council
ULPP	-	Urban Labour Preference Policy
UND	-	University of Natal, Durban

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with struggles between the state, capital and African workers over the shaping of the African workers' status and power within the industrial, commercial and residential landscape of Durban during the apartheid era. The 1960s saw both the state and capital endeavouring to fashion a particular type of African worker: they provided certain forms of urban infrastructural amenities and continually remoulded capitalist labour routines. At the same time, African workers sought to gain increasing control over the pace and character of their own urbanisation and status both within the factory and their new residential areas, whether apartheid's townships or new shantytowns.

The thesis also examines the internal dynamics of the relationship between the state, local and central, capital and African labour as they changed over the period of study in Durban. Furthermore, it examines the relationship between the state and trade unions, and between strikes and unions. Various conflictual and contradictory relations existed between the state and capital, between labour and capital, and between the state and local authorities over their differing views of how the apartheid city society was to be restructured and over the nature of African employment in those cities.

Yet the history of the period can only be understood through an in-depth analysis of the daily life of the rank and file of African workers, and their aspirations and constraints at a boom time for the apartheid economy. Having been integrated into the capitalist economy, the African workers' struggle became centred around residential life, market-oriented issues, and the production process itself.

Politically, socially and economically, the 1960s constitute a crucial era for South Africa. The period is important to modern South African history in that it marked the beginnings of high apartheid; it was a period of economic boom - a period when Durban finally became an industrial and manufacturing city of significant proportions. It was during that period that African workers were integrated into the capitalist economy but in ways which prevented the economy from expanding. Furthermore, the period witnessed the suppression of mass political organisations - the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress - and marked a new political character in African urban politics. Once the political organisations were banned, there was a dramatic shift in the 1960s from mass politics to community-based politics in African townships: African proletarian consciousness became community-based rather than dominated by highly structured political organisation.

The 1960s and 1970s constitute an era which has been clouded by generalisations. The period in question was

notable for both exceptionally impressive economic growth as well as the intensification of state repressive policies. Apparently this was the time when "open" political and trade union resistance within the country was crushed, sank into a dull passivity and gave way to an uncompromising state which was geared towards restoring order at whatever cost. In the 1960s, at the height of the repressive period, while the country's economy boomed, the apartheid state took a firm grip on a vast range of fronts; it was determined to demonstrate that the new Republic born in 1961 would not be the scene of revolutionary upheaval. However, the outbreak of riots in 1959 and in 1960 in Durban and elsewhere showed clearly that something urgent had to be done about the African society living in urban shantytowns.

The early 1960s witnessed the construction of African townships near Durban. Yet during the same period, more urban shanties sprouted than ever before. This state of affairs was accelerated by the continued influx of African work-seekers from rural areas. The government's reaction was to enact new influx control, labour bureau and wage determination measures. As the economy began to show signs of growth, militant proletarian political protests escalated within urban areas. In response to that development, the state banned African political parties which had played an important role in the urban disturbances of the late 1950s. Municipal officials and representatives of commerce and industry in Durban raised no objection to

government actions, but further voiced their own major concerns. As Edwards notes:

The high rate of crime, increasing drunkenness and absenteeism, "indifferent output" and the prevalence of shantytowns which were both diseased and assisted in fostering a proletarian culture scornful of full waged employment, impeded capitalist economic growth. Furthermore, employers believed that African labour had become too "political" and had thereby lost confidence in the European.<sup>1</sup>

The boom years also brought about increased demand for semi-skilled and skilled African workers. African wages were raised, although not to the satisfaction of the workers. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 facilitated the construction of schools for African children in various townships of Durban. A sizeable number of African students were enrolled at primary and secondary levels and also at universities during the 1960s. A transport network was provided to cater for the movement of workers between their places of residence and the city. For state, capital and municipal officials, it was necessary to implement such changes in a bid to create a new urban African working class which was totally different from the shantytown one. Such structural changes took place during a time that has been damned in history as the high apartheid era. Some analysts, like Rex, have described the period as "apartheid gone mad"<sup>2</sup>, while others, like Posel, labelled it

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<sup>1</sup> I. Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home: African Shantytown Society in Cato Manor Farm, 1946-1960" (University of Natal, Ph.D 1989), 88.

<sup>2</sup> J. Rex, "The Compound, the Reserve and the Urban Location: The Essential Institutions of Southern Africa Labour Exploitation", South Africa Labour Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 4 (1974),

"the madness of apartheid."<sup>3</sup> Considering the contradictions, conflicts and structural transformation which took place, it is little wonder that the study of South African history during the 1960s and 1970s continues to pose a dilemma to historians.

The development of African housing in Durban during the late 1950s and early 1960s saw the reorganisation of the African shantytown community. The destruction of Cato Manor shantytown was viewed by both the state and employers not simply as a matter of merely clearing shacks within the urban area and relocating Africans to new townships. It was vital for the shackland residents to be reorganised in such a manner that their new socio-economic and political relations differed fundamentally to those previously experienced in the shantytowns. The establishment of new relations in Durban came along with the provision of "decent" accommodation - houses, men's and women's "migrant" hostels and formal housing schemes. The National Party government's model of an apartheid city was born. The new era, however, had its own bottlenecks. Those constrained in the search for urban accommodation found themselves housed in barracks attached to places of employment and in ubiquitous backyard servant quarters in White residential areas. A growing number of African workers were forced to seek rented rooms on the urban

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<sup>3</sup> D. Posel, The Making of Apartheid, 1948-1961: Conflict and Compromise (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991), 5.

periphery where shack concentrations grew.

Living in a period of economic boom, the African working class failed to develop strong trade unions; in fact, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, which had emerged during the late 1950s, began to show signs of total collapse by the early 1960s. Yet the gap left by the absence of a mass political party and workers' unions in the 1960s should not create an impression of non-political and non-union activities by African workers. Certainly, the 1960s are under-researched. Existing research on strikes, for instance, has covered only the dockworkers struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, but very little research has been done on Durban's African workers in general. Durban thus becomes an important area to study in order to explore regional variations in the implementation of apartheid's urban policies and their significance for the rise of an independent African trade union movement in the 1970s. In spite of some important contributions to research, the 1960s has been, for a long time, erroneously conceived as an era of silence and defeat. However, the period is rich in worker activities. Such activities are not solely based at the production line, but are also expressed in the townships, and at market places. The apartheid city was a vital social arena beyond the workplace gates: it was also a place where tension between urbanisation and urban capital took place. Workers' aspirations are always in conflict with worlds created by the state and capital.



Of significance to this thesis is the intense academic debates of the 1970s about the relationship between capitalism and apartheid. The debates are important in that they raise a number of contentious issues: apartheid's labour policies, the performance of the economy, and the integration of African workers into apartheid's booming economy. Much of this thesis attempts to show that the relationship was both functional and dysfunctional. Apartheid was more complex than a simple success story of the state being able to suppress any form of opposition to its policies. Very often the state experienced failures in an attempt to achieve its goals, and wherever the state scored success, such success created unmanageable problems. However, state intervention in African urban life created a more complex society, one that was ultimately structurally far too complex to be administered by the very apartheid state which had been fundamental in its creation. By the 1970s, the apartheid state faced serious challenges from African workers who in 1973 unleashed a strike wave unparalleled to any in the labour history of South Africa. Because of the crisis situation of the 1970s, the apartheid state began to institute reforms, which eventually led to the April 1994 elections.

One distinctive and convincing thesis central to the debate was that concerning cheap labour articulated by radical scholars. Marxist analysts advanced the view that the use of cheap African labour contributed greatly to the high rate of exploitation and the creation of surplus

profit. As far as African wages and the mobile labour system were concerned, the cheap labour thesis has been given credibility in this investigation. In Durban, for instance, from the late 1950s African wages raised concern, especially over the ability of Africans to survive and pay their rents in the newly created residential areas. The "One Pound a Day" campaign was waged by the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) in the late 1950s. In February 1962 SACTU submitted a memorandum to the Minister of Labour calling for a national minimum wage of R2 (one pound) per day. Subsequently, the Bantu Wage and Productivity Association called for a minimum wage of R45 per month for unskilled non-white workers in Durban.<sup>4</sup> A considerable number of industrialists joined the chorus calling for higher African wages during the 1960s. African wages were appalling, particularly those paid to mobile workers or those recruited "at the gate", for instance at Frame textile companies and the Durban docks.<sup>5</sup>

This study will argue that the relationship between capitalism and apartheid was both functional and dysfunctional - "functional for the reproduction of certain relations and class positions and contradictory for others."<sup>6</sup> Particular sectors of

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<sup>4</sup> The Daily News, 13 Dec. 1962.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter Three for an extensive review of African labour and wages in Durban.

<sup>6</sup> H.Wolpe, Race, Class and Apartheid (Paris, UNESCO, 1988 ed), 8.

industrial capital were "hostile to measures which they saw as potentially threatening to an increase in labour supply," while other sectors of capital were "not antagonistic to" apartheid policies.<sup>7</sup> Surely the relationship has to be seen as both contradictory and harmonious to the process of capital accumulation in the manufacturing industries during the 1960s and 1970s. Another central contention of this work, as shall be demonstrated in Chapter Two, is that the accumulation process during the period was chaotic. Different industrialists were involved in capital accumulation in different ways and means which by and large were shambolic. Such an approach allows us to identify contradictions, deviations and conflicts which existed and at the same time to recognise those policies which were functional, supportive and harmonious to certain sections of capital. This form of analysis has greatly served to render researchers, including the present writer, more analytical towards such contentious issues.

One development which is central to the study of African labour history is the level of awareness of African mobile workers and urban-dwellers in their response to an increasingly constraining and exploitative world of capitalism. Discussions of worker consciousness in South Africa in the 1960s have been limited to analysis of trade union activities and class consciousness. It is unfortu-

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<sup>7</sup> M. Legassick, "South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence", Economy and Society, 3 (1974), 278.

nate that most writers have confined themselves merely to those workers' activities which can easily be identified, or are "accessible to measurement."<sup>8</sup> This restriction is especially noticeable among writers working on the period during and after the Second World War, when there was a rapid growth of labour organisations the world over.

Generally, because of what have been thought of as the retardation factors on mobile labour, it has been suggested that "...labour migrant [sic] accordingly delays the process of consolidating Africans into a class-conscious proletariat."<sup>9</sup> Such a view was upheld for a long time on the basis that mobile labour feared to be "deported" or "endorsed out" of urban areas. That perception of mobile labour is a myth which is challenged in this study.

The view that the African worker did not gain a "new world" to replace their "old world" has been perpetuated by Gann, who saw the African working class as dislocated and fragmented in producing collective action :

At present, the black labour force in South Africa is politically too isolated, too heterogeneous in character, too poorly organised and occupationally unstable. Strike action can always be neutralised by the great reserve army of migrant labourers from beyond South Africa and from the bantustans.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> R. Cohen, "Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness", Review of Political Economy, 19 (1980), 12.

<sup>9</sup> H.J. Simons and R.E. Simons, Class and Colour in South Africa, 1850 -1950 (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1969), 616.

<sup>10</sup> L.H. Gann, "Southern Africa - No Hope for Violent Revolution", South Africa International, 3 (1973), 154.

The presentation of the African worker during the period when the leaders of SACTU were driven underground, arrested and gaoled in the 1960s, was a hopeless one. A gloomy picture was painted of the African worker as Hemson writes: "...stunted by the myriad of controls exerted over the working class by the apartheid state, and incapable of class action and consciousness on the scale of the working class in developed capitalist societies."<sup>11</sup>

Marxist scholars in the 1970s began to break down many of these earlier assumptions about the African worker.<sup>12</sup> Among radical analysts, Van Onselen sharply criticised the conventional wisdom of the unsophisticated African rural migrant submerged in the industrial arena. An extensive study of African responses to capitalism, especially hidden and unorganised ones taking place at the day-to-day level, has revealed that there was in fact "worker consciousness" among African workers from the time when capitalism was instituted in various colonies.<sup>13</sup> Re-stated, this means that the neglected aspects of the voice of the voiceless are the "bedrock", "genuine sorts of consciousness" which trade unions and party structures cannot offer.

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<sup>11</sup> See D. Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers: Dockworkers of Durban (University of Warwick, Ph.D, 1979), 703.

<sup>12</sup> See for instance, C.van Onselen, Chibaro (London, 1976); C.van Onselen and I. Phimister, Studies in the History of African Mine Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe (Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1978); and Cohen, "Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness".

<sup>13</sup> See Cohen, "Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness", 21 and Van Onselen, Chibaro, especially the introduction and Chapter 8.

From the outset, such a mode of approach is utilised in this study, though it is inadequate on its own for an analysis of African labour history. Underlying the study of worker consciousness is the view that we should examine the workers' everyday lives not only at the production line but also in the townships where they live and at market places. In other words, one cannot possibly talk about "worker consciousness" without considering the community at large or the challenges faced in the townships and at market places. It is not only the influence of the structure of capitalist production which creates that consciousness and determines the behaviour of African workers, as generally advanced in most South African and Zimbabwean marxist literature. For the city represents not only the centre of the process of production but also the process of reproduction. Having adopted that concept, the urban area becomes a vital social arena beyond the workplace gates; it is also a place where tension between urbanisation and urban capital takes place.

During the 1960s, urban struggles in Durban possessed both a work-place based "class" movement, and a community based "multi-class" movement. The community based protests were part and parcel of race-related inequalities and injustices which gave rise to grassroots movements outside the work places. Issues of concern in the townships of KwaMashu and Umlazi, for instance, ranged from rents, poor social services, buses, school levies, and water charges to other community related matters. The role played by the

social movements, for example, was particularly important in creating bonds of solidarity and cohesion in articulating and defending its interests. This fact is significant in the creation of African worker consciousness because workers are an integral part of the community. This study presents an important theme - the emergence of the African working class, with its own unique ways of responding to problems and crises shaped by the apartheid setting.

This study is about the urban African struggle in the 1960s and 1970s, one not solely based on the dramatic confrontation of strikes, stay-aways, boycotts, riots and revolts, but also on the daily struggles over the details of life in the work-place, the market place, and the residence. The thesis also investigates struggles within struggles - struggles which existed in the African townships of Durban between fractions of classes or community. Various classes of the African community were in conflict, in local politics such as advisory boards, and in the daily life struggle for survival. During the 1960s, for instance, township politics were created by the various contradictory relationships between location residents, the rising petty bourgeoisie particularly the trading class which gained increased prominence within officially recognised local power structures and other forms of civic politics, as well as the aspirations of the proletarian and working class in the urban areas.

While living in an era of economic boom, workers'

aspirations were in conflict with worlds created by the state and capital. Tensions accumulated simultaneously over work and residential issues. After 1970 these were dramatically released in the form of strikes and the formation of African independent trade unions. The formulation of class relationships, therefore, takes place where people live and where they work. In this respect, various social activities in the form of pass burnings, protests, riots and strikes were the manifestations of the extension of a working class struggle into the arena of consumption as well as production. These social and economic activities which project a certain level of conflict in urban centres created the reality of urban life and extended patterns of struggle. It is these conflicts, both within the townships and between African residents, the state and capital which are the central concern of this study.

This thesis is heavily dependent on both documentary sources and oral testimony. To uncover the complexities, contradictions and conflicts of the period, oral testimony is necessary to reconstruct the everyday experiences of the masses. Documentary sources on their own are inadequate to recover that kind of consciousness which is a product of everyday experience. Like any other source material, oral testimony has its limitations, but cannot be side-lined as a source of evidence.

The thesis consists of eight chapters and is divided into two parts. Part One deals with the relationship



between the state, capital, local authorities and African workers, especially over the labour processes, the making of an African worker and the wage structure, and the restructuring process of the African residence. Generally, the state tried to insert itself into the process of understanding and defining what an African worker ought to be, and also played an active role in shaping the apartheid city. Part Two examines the African's struggles in the townships and at the production point; it is also concerned with the study of day to day life, of covert forms of struggle, and of practices on the shop-floor. It is these struggles in African communities, at work and at the market, which are the central concern of this thesis.

## CHAPTER ONE

### CRISIS TO CONTROL TO CRISIS:

#### APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA, 1958-1979: AN OVERVIEW

Hardly any state in the Southern African region has been subjected to so many varying historical analyses as South Africa. Since the 1970s there has been an enormous outpouring of works focusing on the relationship between capital, the state and labour. However, these studies were not supplemented by local, regional or urban case studies, a point of considerable significance, given the debates which took place. Generalisations about the relationship between capitalism and apartheid, between the African working class consciousness and trade unions during the 1960s and 1970s, were thus undermined by the lack of such case studies. The details of everyday life, of covert forms of resistance, of practices on the shop-floor and in the community, at work and at the market, have to be recovered in order for us to enrich our understanding of the complexities of the 1960s and 1970s.

The period is important to modern South African history; it marked the beginnings of high apartheid, apartheid's economic boom years, and a new political character to African urban politics. Furthermore, it is a period when Durban finally became an industrial and manufacturing

city of real proportions.

The majority of works dwelt largely upon the relationship between capital, the state and labour, and were notable for one main hypothesis: capital and the state were viewed as monolithic entities. However, the conventional picture portrayed in the 1970s of an "all powerful capitalist class using an omnipotent state to mow down all that stood in its path"<sup>1</sup> was challenged. While not questioning the fact that capital played a significant role in revolutionising both the economy and African communities in the country, a number of scholars have articulated the role played by workers and the community at large in making their own history.<sup>2</sup> We shall return later to some aspects of the debate, and the external forces which are crucially important to our analysis of contemporary African society, particularly that of Durban.

#### Urban Crisis.

The provision of urban African housing in townships from the late 1950s was undertaken as a method of maintaining a stable African labour force in urban areas. Because of the nature of events and the political situ-

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<sup>1</sup> S. Marks and R. Rathbone (eds), Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa (London, 1982), 13.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance I. Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home: African Shantytown Society in Cato Manor Farm, 1946 -1960 (Univ. of Natal, Durban, Ph.D., 1989); C. van Onselen, Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886 -1914: Volume 1: New Babylon; Vol.2: New Nineveh (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1982) and B. Bozzoli (ed), Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: Capitalist Penetration and Popular Response (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983).

ation, and because of community and worker struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, a number of questions were raised with regard to the very purpose of building African townships. Questions such as why African townships were introduced when they were, need to be examined. One cannot simply assume that the changes which took place were nothing more than social welfare. Although state intervention in the provision of African housing created conflicts between the government and local authorities, nonetheless, during the late 1950s and early 1960s, the state developed massive housing for the African community in a way that cannot be compared to that of any previous government.

The motives behind state, capital and municipal intervention in the construction of African housing in Durban have been analysed by a number of scholars. Notable among them are M.W. Swanson,<sup>3</sup> P. Maylam,<sup>4</sup> A. Mason,<sup>5</sup> and I. Edwards.<sup>6</sup> These scholars have concentrated largely on the period before 1960 and while their works are undoubtedly worth examination, the voluminous literature available for this early period has argued in diverse ways. Some of the works suggest questionable motives behind the intervention. For instance, Swanson's study

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<sup>3</sup> M.W. Swanson, "The Urban Origins of Separate Development", Race, Vol. 10 (1968).

<sup>4</sup> P. Maylam, "Shackled by the Contradictions: The Municipal Response to African Urbanisation in Durban, 1920-1950", African Urban Studies, Vol 14 (1982).

<sup>5</sup> A. Mason, "From Cato Manor to KwaMashu", Reality (Mar. 1981).

<sup>6</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home".

focuses on the so-called "sanitation syndrome", which expressed predominantly White and municipal concerns over health, sanitation and cleanliness as overriding motives in the intervention.<sup>7</sup> A major problem with a number of works is that they provide no space for the analysis of the complex interplay of factors behind the restructuring of African residential patterns in Durban. Amongst scholars who wrote on the period before 1960, Edwards' and Maylam's work and analyses are of fundamental importance. Their work analyses the complex nature of the apartheid city and the conflicts and contradictions which arose in the process. Quite significantly, there are other valuable works dealing with different local case studies, for instance the Rand area. However, we are not going to provide an in-depth survey of all works written so far. To date very little work has been done on the development of the African townships in Durban during the 1960s and 1970s. Because of the lack of research covering this period, this task had to be undertaken more or less ab initio in a number of areas.

Certainly what emerges from the crises of the late 1950s and onwards was that the apartheid state managed to contain them, especially during the 1960s when it assumed distinctive powers. However, from the 1970s, the apartheid state faced economic and political crises which manifested themselves, inter alia, in the Durban strikes of 1973, the

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<sup>7</sup> Swanson, "The Urban Origins of Separate Development". See also the analysis and review of Swanson's work by Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 90.

Soweto uprisings of 1976, and the KwaMashu school boycotts of 1980. These and other related developments were clear signs of the growing crisis in the apartheid state and society.

The Nationalist Party government instituted several reforms which were designed to tore down apartheid to suit new economic and social challenges while, of course, retaining political power. During the 1970s, African resistance became intensified, and so was repression. On the other hand, the state faced mounting pressure from the international community: isolation and economic sanctions began to have considerable impact. By the 1980s, the apartheid state was on the verge of collapse. Yet two decades earlier the apartheid state had enjoyed strong "control"; the economy experienced an unprecedented growth, resistance against apartheid was relatively contained, forced removals were practised, and the state enjoyed increased and unchallenged powers. Such developments impelled new group of historians, who were influenced by a Marxist paradigm, to question the relationship between capitalism and apartheid.

#### Historiography: Aspects of the Apartheid -Capitalism Debate

Significant to our study period are the issues which were raised in the debate concerning the relationship between apartheid and capitalism. Of major importance to this study are the apartheid labour policies, the perfor-

mance of the local economy and African labour. However, what follows is not a comprehensive survey of the debate but an outline which shows significant issues raised in the debate with relevance to the study of African labour during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, some of the aspects of the debate revolving around these issues will be briefly examined.

The debate, which originated in the 1970s, focused on the primacy of class and/or race in explaining the relationship between South Africa's economic development and apartheid policies, and the question whether apartheid was functional or dysfunctional to the industrial expansion of the 1960s. The liberal modernisation theory articulated the view that apartheid was completely independent of, and conflicting with, the logic of capitalism. Apartheid, according to the liberal theory, tended to hinder the economic growth of the country by limiting training skills and labour's mobility. The liberal theory also noted a contradictory, dysfunctional relationship between capitalism and racial domination.<sup>9</sup>

One of the most interesting aspects of the debate is the analysis of influx control mechanisms employed by the

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<sup>8</sup> For further details of the debate, see for instance D. Posel, "Rethinking the Race-Class Debate in South African Historiography", Social Dynamics, 9, 1 (1983); M. Legassick, "Legislation, Ideology, and Economy in Post-1948 South Africa", Journal of Southern African Studies (JSAS), 1, 1 (1974); and D. Hindson, Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat in South Africa (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987).

<sup>9</sup> M. Lipton, Capitalism and Apartheid (Cape Town, Claremont, 1985), 141.

state. Ralph Horwitz's analysis depicted the apartheid state as economically myopic, in pursuit of political power without any consideration of economic costs.<sup>10</sup> Because the state's political agenda resulted in the implementation of some labour policies which retarded the economic expansion of the country, Horwitz argued that South African industrialists were faced with "a hopelessly wasteful and crippling costly system of labour use."<sup>11</sup> The curtailment of free labour movement and the denial of the right to sell labour freely in the market were enforced upon African work-seekers by influx control restrictions. According to liberal modernisation theory, such a situation retarded economic growth in as far as "the lack of competition for white workers led to slackness on the job, high turn-over and absenteeism, while the barriers to job advancement were a disincentive to hard work, motivation and commitment among blacks."<sup>12</sup>

Radical scholars in the 1970s, armed with the Marxian paradigm, have argued the opposite to the liberal modernisation theory. South African Marxist literature, particularly that of the 1970s, characterised the relationship of capitalism and apartheid as mutually dependent on one

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<sup>10</sup> R. Horwitz, The Political Economy of South Africa (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967), 10.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>12</sup> Lipton, Capitalism and Apartheid, 145.



another.<sup>13</sup> Johnstone contended that there was a link between capitalism and racism such that the latter could be destroyed only with the demolition of the former. To Johnstone, the liberalising power of economic growth did not threaten to bring apartheid to its knees but rather "the relations between capitalist development, apartheid policies and the core structure of white supremacy are essentially collaborative ... quite contrary to the prevailing thesis, white supremacy is continually being reinforced by economic development".<sup>14</sup>

While liberals saw capitalism as a beneficial modernising force, Marxists saw it as a class exploitative system. In fact, Marxists such as Johnstone posed a set of key questions:

Who owns what? Who does what? Who gets what? Who does what to whom? Who does what for whom? How are who does what and who gets what linked to who owns what and who controls what? How is all this linked to what is going on in society and history?<sup>15</sup>

To Marxist scholars, the functional compatibility of apar-

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<sup>13</sup> See M. Legassick, "South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence", Economy and Society, 3 (1974); F.A. Johnstone, "White Supremacy and White Prosperity in South Africa Today", African Affairs, 69 (1970); H. Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap Labour-power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid", Economy and Society, 1 (1972); R. Davies, Capital, State and White Labour in South Africa, 1900 -1960 (Harvester Press, 1979); and J. Slovo, "South Africa - No Middle Road", in B. Davidson, J. Slovo and A.R. Wilkinson, Southern Africa: The New Politics of Revolution (Penguin Books, 1976).

<sup>14</sup> Johnstone, "White Supremacy and White Prosperity." See also T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa : A Modern History, (Southern, 3 rd ed., 1987). 574.

<sup>15</sup> F. Johnstone, "Most Painful to Our Hearts: South Africa Through the Eyes of the New School", Canadian Journal of African Studies, 16, 1 (1982), 8.

theid and the development of capitalism needed no mention: apartheid was designed to boost industrial expansion. They further claimed that the apartheid state was an instrument developed by dominant classes to serve their interests.<sup>16</sup>

Central to Marxist analysis was the impact of influx control, the workings of labour bureaux, and the pass system, which intensified in the 1960s during the period of high apartheid and the industrial boom. Martin Legassick, a leading Marxist scholar, saw the use of influx control mechanisms as an extension of the mobile labour policy to manufacturing industries in urban areas and the production of African cheap labour supply to urban industries.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, African labour was cheapened as a consequence of the creation of workers who had "...a limited time to get a job [and were] faced with exclusion from urban employment altogether should [they] get fired."<sup>18</sup> Such a view was further extended by Wolpe who characterised apartheid as a specific mechanism meant to "...guarantee a cheap and controlled work-force under circumstances in which the conditions of reproduction of that labour force are rapidly disintegrating."<sup>19</sup> These scholars placed emphasis on official rhetoric about the intended aims of influx control policies, which led them

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<sup>16</sup> See for instance, R. Davies, Capital, State and White Labour in South Africa, 1900-1960 (Sussex, Harvester Press, 1979).

<sup>17</sup> Legassick, "Legislation, Ideology and Economy", 9.

<sup>18</sup> Legassick, "South Africa: Capital Accumulation", 276.

<sup>19</sup> Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power", 430-31.

to view the entire process as a "...monolithic, smoothly functioning and effective system of labour distribution and control."<sup>20</sup>

In most of the Marxist works, the liberal paradigm that saw capitalism as "...a liberalising and progressive force which has been hampered in its work by the external imposition of racial rule and ideology" was completely rejected.<sup>21</sup> Marxists argued that "the economy determines and produces those racial structures and practices which are conducive to its expansion and reproduction."<sup>22</sup> Accordingly racism was perpetuated in the economy and "...only the economic determination of politics and its economic functions" was advanced. In line with Harold Wolpe's assessment, "politics and the state are merely the means to economic ends."<sup>23</sup> Predominant in Marxist literature are terms such as exploitation, dominant and subordinate classes, onslaught, and accumulation of capital, which are sometimes misleading. Certainly, Marxist writings often portray South African society as divided into two or more insulated worlds, inhabited by self-contained classes, who are connected essentially in the process of material production and exploitation. However, the Marxist mode of approach, like that of the liberal theory, has proved

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<sup>20</sup> Hindson, Pass Controls, 3.

<sup>21</sup> H. Wolpe, Race, Class and the Apartheid State ( Paris, UNESCO Press, 1988), 16.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 16-7.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 17.

inadequate for an overall analysis of such a complicated period.

An important study on influx control policies was carried out by Hindson.<sup>24</sup> In his view, pass controls were instituted deliberately by the state to prevent the dispersion of farm labour into the urban areas.<sup>25</sup> Influx control, it has been argued, was adopted as a mechanism of ensuring that the reserve army of African labour could be removed from apartheid cities and confined to bantustans. Certainly, Hindson saw influx control as a means of accommodating urban capitalists' interests in a differentiated labour market.<sup>26</sup> In the words of Hindson,

...cheap labour was giving way to differentiated labour power, and the reconstruction and extension of influx control barriers under the Urban Areas Act [of 1952] were a means of securing the reproduction of differentiated forms of labour power in the cities in the face of the incoming tide of surplus population from the rural areas.<sup>27</sup>

Hindson's work, which attempted to explain the differentiated labour market only in terms of the interests of manufacturing capital and government institutions, failed to analyse the conception of capitalist interests in terms of its different aspects. Moreover, Hindson's account treated African labour as docile, passive victims of state labour regulations. Certainly, the implementation of pass

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<sup>24</sup> Hindson, Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>26</sup> Hindson, Pass Controls, 10-12.

<sup>27</sup> As cited in Posel, The Making of Apartheid, 16.

and labour bureau legislation during the 1960s and 1970s was rather problematic and complicated. A series of pass and influx control laws were promulgated, and bureaux and courts were established, but these were resisted by both employers and work-seekers. As a disciplinary measure, influx control dismally failed. It was far too explicit and coercive. In a situation of extensive repression and grinding poverty in reserves, breaking the laws offered better rewards than observing them. Hindson's work paid very little attention to the struggles, such as the ones in Durban, which played an important role in shaping employment patterns. In spite of these criticisms levelled against Hindson, his work nonetheless remains one of considerable importance.

A recent study by Posel has shown that state intervention in the sphere of the urban African labour supply was based on the Urban Labour Preference Policy (ULPP).<sup>28</sup> The ULPP was meant to deny urban employers access to mobile labour if local or resident urban labour was available. This policy, Posel argued, was geared towards reducing the size of the urban labour reservoir and creating a situation of near full employment in urban areas, so as not to cheapen African labour.<sup>29</sup> Posel further explains that the policy of influx control was brought into question by labour bureau officials who failed to deter employers from recruiting mobile workers from the far

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<sup>28</sup> Posel, The Making of Apartheid, Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 84.

distant reserves. However, Posel noted that from 1959 to 1961 the policy of influx control was toughened by methods which amounted to curbing the growing demand for mobile labourers by urban employers, thus hindering the process of economic integration.<sup>30</sup> Posel's views differ from Hindson's over the cheap labour thesis and criticises him for neglecting responses from the ground. However, Posel's initial account, though a useful study, has also failed to identify "the uncertainties, conflicts, failures and deviations which characterised both the making and implementation" of apartheid policies.<sup>31</sup>

As rightly noted by Posel, the apartheid- capitalism debate undermined the significance of "struggles from below", which played an important role in the successes and failures of apartheid policies.<sup>32</sup> In Durban, people from the ground have always remained the pillar of African resistance and have been in the forefront of the struggles: firstly, during the Cato Manor riots of 1959; secondly, in the 1973 Durban strikes and the subsequent formation of the independent African trade union movement; and, lastly, in the violence of the 1980s and 1990s. However, with the emergence of a new approach to history-writing, spearheaded by the new generation of social historians, details of social and cultural life, which empha-

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 228.

<sup>31</sup> A.J. Norval, " Searching for a Method in the Madness: Apartheid and Influx Control", South African Historical Journal, 29 (Nov.1993), 239.

<sup>32</sup> Posel, The Making of Apartheid, 13.

sized the perceptions of the rank and file, have been considered.<sup>33</sup>

Such works have shown how ordinary people managed to resist apartheid policies and capital in various ways. Workers were not simply victims of apartheid policies and capital: on various occasions, workers challenged the state and capital through what Van Onselen termed, "silent and unorganised responses".<sup>34</sup> Van Onselen's work contributed significantly to this novel approach in labour history, especially one that examines history from below, one which does not separate workers' responses at work from their culture. Certainly, that novel approach is vital in the sense that it has distanced itself from theoretical abstractions dominant in the 1970s, and instead emphasised the perceptions of ordinary people. As argued by Thompson, workers' "aspirations [are] valid in terms of their own experience."<sup>35</sup> He further wrote that "...all men are philosophers, [and] experience...arises

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<sup>33</sup> See for instance, P. Bonner, P. Delius and D. Posel (eds), Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1993); W. Beinart, "Worker Consciousness, Ethnic Particularism and Nationalism: The Experience of a South African Migrant, 1930-60", in S. Marks and S. Trapido (eds), The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa (London, Longman, 1987); P. Delius, "Sebatakgomo: Migrant Organisation, the ANC and the Sekhukuneland Revolt", JSAS, 15,4 (1989); D. Moodie, "The Moral Economy of the Black Miners' Strike of 1946", JSAS, 13,1 (1986); and B. Bozzoli, Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983 (Portsmouth, NH, 1991).

<sup>34</sup> C. Van Onselen, Chibaro (London, Pluto Press, 1976), 244.

<sup>35</sup> E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1963), 11.

because men and women...are rational, and they think about what is happening to themselves and their world."<sup>36</sup> Consequently, the picture painted by Johnstone of a "downtrodden Black labour army", one that is characterised by "rightlessness, powerlessness" and that is a victim of the state and capital, is questionable.<sup>37</sup>

The analysis of South African labour history during the 1960s and 1970s calls for open-mindedness, which should take into consideration the contradictions, conflicts, failures and successes of the apartheid state and its relationship with the African community, without prior prejudices and bias. This thesis, therefore, makes an attempt to reconstruct and record Durban's African labour history, which has been complex throughout the period under investigation. Certainly, Durban has always been the pillar of African struggles and, no little wonder, it has continued to be a place of both worker struggles and political complexities.

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<sup>36</sup> As cited in B. Bozzoli, "History, Experience and Culture", in B. Bozzoli (ed), Town and Countryside in the Transvaal: Capitalist Penetration and Popular Response (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), 7.

<sup>37</sup> Johnstone, "The Labour History of the Witwatersrand in the Context of South African Studies, and with Reflections on the New School", Social Dynamics, 4 (1978).



CHAPTER TWO  
THE STATE, CAPITAL ACCUMULATION AND THE  
LABOUR CONTROL FRAMEWORK IN DURBAN

The years immediately following the Sharpeville massacre and the banning of African political organisations in South Africa witnessed unprecedented economic growth. The boom conditions which prevailed throughout the world and in South Africa in particular were mirrored in Durban where the rate of industrial expansion was second only to that of the southern Transvaal. Despite this boom, the growth and structure of Durban's economy during the 1960s has hardly been studied. A handful of scholars, namely M. Katzen<sup>1</sup>, D.J.L. McWhirter<sup>2</sup> and I. Edwards,<sup>3</sup> have covered the earlier period while a few scholars provided general surveys of the whole country.<sup>4</sup> While important contributions have been made by various scholars of South Africa's industrial development, case studies which could show the

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<sup>1</sup> M. Katzen, Industry in Greater Durban, Part 3, Natal Town and Regional Planning Report, Vol. 3 (Pietermaritzburg, 1961).

<sup>2</sup> D.J.L. McWhirter, Industry in Greater Durban, Part 4, Natal Town and Regional Planning Report, Vol. 4 (Pietermaritzburg, 1961).

<sup>3</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home".

<sup>4</sup> See for instance H. Houghton, The South African Economy (Cape Town, OUP, 5th ed, 1978).

historical roots of the present economic situation have been neglected.

### The Boom Years and Industrial Production in Durban

The period between the end of the Second World War and the early 1970s saw South Africa and Zimbabwe, for example, experiencing decades of rapid industrial growth.<sup>5</sup> The success story of this period has been noted by various writers and scholars of different persuasions. South Africa experienced an "exceptionally rapid economic expansion" averaging between 5 and 8 percent per annum from 1945 to the early 1970s.<sup>6</sup> Some scholars, for instance Hobart Houghton, speculated that in the 1960s, "The South African economy with that of Japan probably had the highest growth rate in the world..."<sup>7</sup> Such observations have been castigated by Terence Moll's recent studies which concluded that "the apartheid economy grew curiously

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<sup>5</sup> See C. Stoneman, "Foreign Capital and the Prospects for Zimbabwe", World Development, Vol.4, No 1 (1976), 38; and T.J. Stadler, "Some Aspects of the Changing Structure of the South African Economy Since World War II", South African Statistics, (1969), 9.

<sup>6</sup> See T.W. De Jongh, "Review of the Financial Economic Situation in the Republic of South Africa", South African Journal of Economics, Vol.39 (1971); South African Reserve Bank, "Post- War Growth and Structural Changes in the South African Economy: An Analysis of National Accounts and Balance of Payments Data", in the South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin; and South African Commerce and Industry [all volumes], 1960 -1973.

<sup>7</sup> Houghton, The South African Economy, 213.

slowly and can be said to have 'failed'..."<sup>8</sup>.

Nevertheless, this particular study, although confined to Durban, suggests that the period in question was crucial to South Africa's economic boom, precipitating an unprecedented growth in manufacturing, construction and service industry output, especially during the 1960s.

It is not, therefore, an exaggeration to say that the Second World War brought the industrial revolution and the boom conditions which continued after the war, to South Africa at large. However, the South African economy had its own profiles of progress and slumps during the development decade of the sixties. Durban's industrial economy was no exception to this pattern of development.

Statistics on regional industrial production from 1964 onwards were no longer published by the Bureau of Statistics.<sup>9</sup> Limited data from 1964 onwards are available from the various divisional inspectorates of the Department of Labour, who through the provisions of the Factories, Machinery and Building Works Act of 1941, were compelled to maintain a register of factories established and the number of labourers engaged in them.

During the early 1950s the South African economy experienced a downward trend with the industrial sector of Durban suffering a "rather considerable fall in the rate

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<sup>8</sup> T. Moll, "Did the Apartheid Economy Fail?", Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 17, No. 2 ( June 1991), 271.

<sup>9</sup> Natal Chamber of Industries, 57th Annual Report, 1964-65, 39.

of growth, particularly of net output."<sup>10</sup> The Durban-Pinetown industrial complex contributed 12,3 percent of the total gross output in 1950 while southern Transvaal and the western Cape contributed 45,6 percent and 17,1 percent respectively.<sup>11</sup> The following years, particularly from 1953 onwards, witnessed profitability rising gradually for the next ten years and this trend was further facilitated by the annual rate of inflation which declined sharply and remained low until the early 1960s. By 1963-64 the greater Durban industrial complex had attained a 13 percent contribution to the Union's gross output.<sup>12</sup>

During the 1950s, industrial capitalism in South Africa was concentrated largely in the four main industrial areas, namely, southern Transvaal, the western Cape Province, Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, and Durban-Pinetown.<sup>13</sup> In 1954-55 greater Durban had a record number of approximately 1322 establishments with a gross value of output of R166,7 million, representing 12 percent of total industrial output in the Union.<sup>14</sup> Net output of these industrial establishments amounted to R62,1 million, rep-

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<sup>10</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 96.

<sup>11</sup> W.F.J. Steenkamp, "Labour Policies For Growth During the Seventies in the Established Industrial Areas", South African Journal of Economics, Vol 39 (1971), 101.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> South African Industry and Trade, Vol. 56, Mar. 1960, 101.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

representing 11 percent of the Union's total.<sup>15</sup> The greater Durban industrial complex showed a relatively consistent 11 to 12 percent share of the total Union output up to the early 1960s. The same period also saw an increase in capital invested in industrial machinery, redemption charges and industrial development loans.<sup>16</sup>

In its drive to encourage rapid industrialisation in Durban, the City Council provided incentives to potential investors. The City Council charged reasonably low rates for industrial land<sup>17</sup>, continued lifting building re-

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Edwards, " Mkhumbane Our Home", 96.

<sup>17</sup> The Sharpeville shootings of 1960 severely depressed land and property prices and they remained relatively low for almost three years, but gradually picked up during the early months of 1963. From 1965 onwards, industrial land prices in the central area of Durban (the Old Borough North and South) were higher as compared to outskirts areas. [See Table below for comparison purposes]. In 1972 rates in central Durban were 2,25 cents in the rand and 0,25 cents on improvements; compared with 3,24 cents on land and 0,54 cents on buildings in Durban. In Pinetown and New Germany, the rates were: Land , 1,8 to 2,4 cents, and 1,25 cents; buildings, 0,5 to 0,8 cents and 0,75 cents.

Average Price of Industrial Land in Four Areas.  
1965 - 1970 Rates

Year	Durban Old North	Borough South	Durban South	Pinetown
1965	1,76	3,21	0,53	0,10
1966	1,86	2,68	0,67	0,13
1967	1,80	4,45	0,99	0,20
1968	2,41	4,09	1,11	0,30
1969	3,15	6,60	1,34	0,50
1970	4,92	6,49	1,80	0,90
Increase 1965 -1970				
Rands:	3,16	3,28	1,27	0,28
%	180	102	240	800

Source : City Estates Department, "Published Sales

strictions and embarked on a programme of redressing the imbalances which existed in African accommodation. From 1954 onwards, greater Durban tended to concentrate substantially on heavy chemical industries, textiles and clothing, furniture and paper and printing. Such industries, required

large supplies of water for manufacturing processes and for effluent disposal, large numbers of operatives, as well as unskilled labourers, nearness to a port for local and export markets, and some local raw materials,<sup>18</sup>

and gradually replaced Durban's "traditional" industries such as food, paint and fertilisers.

The economic expansion which had begun in the 1950s had its own associated bottlenecks. The consumer market was still relatively small. The African people in the rural areas, who constituted about 40 percent of the total population in Durban's market area, had "but a very low purchasing power"<sup>19</sup> by then. Related to this problem was the geographical location of Durban around a major port. Instead of industries benefitting from nearness to port facilities, they tended to be disadvantaged owing to "state transport tariff rates which negated any local advantage due to harbour facilities and location."<sup>20</sup> Such a state policy long remained a bone of contention amongst

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Schedules", Durban, and For Pinetown Fieldwork, as cited in B.S. Young, "The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region" (University of Natal, Ph.D, 1972), 145.

<sup>18</sup> SA Industry and Trade, Vol 61, Jan.1965.

<sup>19</sup> McWhirter, Industry, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 98.

Durban's industrialists; despite this it was upheld by the state to facilitate the railway and port facilities of East London and Port Elizabeth getting a slice of the transportation business needs of the southern Transvaal industrial complex. In Durban port charges were deliberately increased, as were the rail tariffs between Durban and Johannesburg. The increment in rail tariffs largely benefitted southern Transvaal industries in that the same charge was applied to transport imported raw materials from Durban to Johannesburg as from Durban to Pietermaritzburg.<sup>21</sup> The local industrialists had to battle with such economic bottlenecks during the early years of the development decade.

During the 1960s, Durban's industrial revolution took off along the South Coast, through Congella and Mobeni. These two areas had experienced an industrial upturn in the 1930s and 1940s. Industries were expanded to Isipingo and to Umbogintwini, which was aptly described as comprising a "complex of factories and plants owned by African Explosives, then further along the Coast ... to Saiccor rayon plant at Umkomaas and to...the titanium plant at Umgababa."<sup>22</sup> Related to this industrial take-off in Durban during the 1960s were the major developments in rail and road facilities. The opening of the Southern Freeway and the improvement of roads in the Pinetown-New Germany area,

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<sup>21</sup> Katzen, Industry, 30. See also Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 98.

<sup>22</sup> SA Industry and Trade, Vol.60, Apr. 1964, 45.

Prospecton and Central Durban went a long way to facilitating industrialisation. New railway facilities were established in Pinetown, Verulam and Prospecton. The late 1960s also saw the improvement of telephone exchanges, the extension of sewerage, electricity services and water supplies to Cato Ridge, Hammarsdale and Pinetown.<sup>23</sup> No doubt J. Martin's remarks about London, that "if one looks for the explanation of changes in the distribution of industry...in the last decade, their planning control must be treated as a major factor,"<sup>24</sup> were also applicable to the industrial development of the Durban region.

With the state policy of industrial decentralisation implemented in 1961, manufacturing industries were established in the border areas, for example Hammarsdale, Tongaat, Verulam, Stanger, Isipingo, Glen Anil, Umzinto and in areas such as New Germany and Pinetown (see Figure 2 and 3). Hammarsdale became an important industrial developmental area bordering Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Because of the rail line facility which ran from Durban to Johannesburg, it became possible to launch extensive industrial development in the area. Hammarsdale was also selected due to its proximity to the Umlazi African Reserve from which mobile labour could be extracted, and because it fell in the area where there were already regu-

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<sup>23</sup> Young, "The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region", 114-5.

<sup>24</sup> J. Martin as cited in Young, "The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region", 116.



lated wage agreements for the textile industries.<sup>25</sup>

Through the state's policy of industrial decentralisation, Elangeni Estates was launched by the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) in 1961 to develop a township, and 163 acres were set aside for industrial development. In 1971, the IDC argued that "a well-established textile industry would have tremendous employment potential for semi-skilled operatives, which meant that it could raise the standard of living of the Bantu"<sup>26</sup>; hence the development of textile industries within the area. Notable industries set up at Hammarsdale included the original clothing factory, three textile plants and a sewing machine plant.<sup>27</sup> A considerable number of Durban firms shifted to the new set-up in Hammarsdale which had an unprecedentedly cheap and African wage labour force. Although Hammarsdale experienced industrial growth, it was not part of the expansion of Durban. Nonetheless, the tidal wave of industrialisation gathered momentum along border areas, and in 1964 Humphreys and McCrystal commented that:

The industries at Hammarsdale have been attracted there largely because of the incentives offered by the government and to that extent they are subsidised industries in the sense that the rest of the economy has to bear the burden of reducing their costs below what they would otherwise have been had it not been

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<sup>25</sup> SA Industry and Trade, Vol. 59, June 1963, 45.

<sup>26</sup> Industrial Development Corporation, Report...For 1971, 57.

<sup>27</sup> Young, " The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region", 206.

for the subsidies. However, the natural process of decentralisation to peripheral areas, referred to previously, is taking place in the Region, and the government's incentives are an added centrifugal force. Hammarsdale, being only about 15 miles from Pinetown, may for all practical purposes be regarded as a peripheral area.<sup>28</sup>

By the end of 1971 there were 16 industrial establishments on the Elangeni Estates and its surrounding areas.<sup>29</sup>

During the post-war industrial expansion era, factories began to mushroom in Durban and 4900 acres of its 94 square miles were zoned for industry; by 1965 3430 of these acres were already industrially occupied.<sup>30</sup> As part of its promotion drive, the City Council set aside 750 acres in 1965 to allow for industrial expansion envisaged in the forthcoming 15 years.<sup>31</sup> The City Council allowed an extremely favourable rate structure as well: the gross ratable value of land and buildings in the industrial areas of the City on 31 July 1964 stood at R492,132,780.<sup>32</sup> Whereas the gross and net output for 1954-55 were R166,7 million and R62,1 million respectively, by 1964-65 they had risen to an annual gross output of R600 million from the manufacturing and construction industries of greater

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<sup>28</sup> Humphreys and McCrystal as cited in Young, "The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region", 207

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 207.

<sup>30</sup> SA Industry and Trade, Vol 62, Mar. 1966, 128. See also Figure 3.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. See also Figure 7.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Durban, and a net output of R210 million.<sup>33</sup>

These statistics reveal the accelerated tempo of industrial growth in the Durban metropolitan area. Additionally, by the beginning of 1966, Durban enjoyed a total of 1500 industries in the city, with an employment record of 87500 workers, of which 20,57 percent were whites, 27,42 percent Indians, 5,14 percent coloureds and 46,9 percent Africans.<sup>34</sup> While this growth marked a way forward for industry, familiar challenges of labour, housing, transport and education were experienced. Fundamentally, labour, accommodation and transportation remained linked to each other and received the attention of the state, capital and the local authorities during the 1960s and early 1970s.

A major industrial sector with a substantial increase in production in Durban during the early 1960s was the textile industry (see Figure 5). In 1963 this industry received a financial boost from the Minister of Economic Affairs who allocated the sum of R45 million for textile development, particularly in the border areas.<sup>35</sup> However, Durban's manufacturing industry during the period was also fairly extensive, embracing furniture, printing, timber, hides and skins, farm implements, industrial machinery, office equipment, beverages, fertilisers and breweries,

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. See also Figure 4 which shows employment totals in the principal industrial areas and clusters of the Durban region in 1965.

<sup>35</sup> South Africa Commerce and Industry, Vol.21, 1963, 239.

among other industries.<sup>36</sup> The availability of sugar, timber and coal facilitated the process of industrial development in the city, and the harbour provided conditions conducive to the ship-building industry. Needless to say, it was in these industries that increasing numbers of Africans were employed at low wages. In order to maximise profit, industry relied heavily on cheap, unskilled African labour, while importing white labour for skilled and managerial positions. The textile industry, particularly the Frame Group of Companies based in the New Germany and Mobeni areas, utilised largely African mobile labour.

The textile industry in South Africa has been identified as a leading sector in providing low wages to its workers. The industry has therefore tended to locate itself where there is an abundance of cheap labour. This practice had both international and local implications. Internationally, rising wages in the major western countries led to relocation in less developed areas where cheap labour was abundant, while local industry tended to locate in decentralised areas to take advantage of the state border industries concessions. The textile industry has consistently been protected through tariffs on imported textiles and nurtured through inflows of state capital. The fact that industries located in border areas were exempted from wage determinations and minimum wage legislation clearly shows how the government supported

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<sup>36</sup> SA Industry and Trade, Vol. 62, Mar. 1966, 128.

infant industries in the process of capital accumulation. Interestingly enough, established industry vigorously pointed out the possibilities of "unfair competition" from the emerging border area industries.<sup>37</sup> A conflict of interests arose between those fractions of capital. However, border industries were sited next to African reserves as part of the bantustan policy.

On the policy of industrial decentralisation, various industrialists clashed over the principle of establishing border industries. Even when organised industry initially opposed the policy, disagreements arose among individual members. However, " many industrialists in the proclaimed Border Areas that were able to take advantage of the concessions strongly supported the policy, as did several employers in such labour intensive industries as textiles..."<sup>38</sup>

The Frame Group of Companies, with headquarters in Durban, is the largest textile manufacturing concern in South Africa. This particular company has factories stretching from Cape Town, East London, Ladysmith, and Johannesburg to as far afield as Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia. By 1964, Philip Frame could rightly claim that his industry constituted the largest spinning and weaving

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<sup>37</sup> D.F. Kaplan, "Class Conflict, Capital Accumulation and the State: An Historical Analysis of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa," (University of Sussex, D.Phil., 1977), 320

<sup>38</sup> Kaplan, "Class Conflict, Capital Accumulation and the State: An Historical Analysis of the State in Twentieth Century South Africa", 321

complex in Southern Africa. In 1964 the labour force of Frametex industries, a division of the Frame group, was comprised of 51 percent African men, 19 percent African women and 29 percent Indian workers.<sup>39</sup> In addition, during the 1960s and early 1970s the Frame Group of Companies operated a recruiting organisation in northern and eastern Transkei. This recruitment operation was undertaken to ensure the supply of a cheap labour force but was terminated in 1973 soon after the strikes. It was pressure from the government which led to the collapse of the system.

From 1967 onwards the rate of industrial growth declined. By 1968 even the textile industry, although ideally suited to the border areas, experienced a tremendous decrease in production and suffered greatly from international competition, particularly from Zimbabwe and Japan. In Zimbabwe, for instance, factory regulations were more relaxed and labour cheaper than in South Africa. In 1967-68, the gross output of the textiles for the greater Durban industrial complex stood at 12,7 percent of the Union's total, showing a decline in terms of real production.<sup>40</sup> Overall, the South African economy from 1965 to 1967 was characterised by a lower rate of growth. The lower rate of growth could be explained as an effect of the drought which took place in 1965 and led to lower agricultural production and exports, as well as an effect of the grossly high level of white consumer spending which

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<sup>39</sup> Frame Group Statement, Annual Year Review, 1964.

<sup>40</sup> Steenkamp, "Labour Policies", 101.

affected the local price structure and the balance of payments.<sup>41</sup> Industrialists expressed concern over the slump and remained suspicious about future prospects for industrial survival.<sup>42</sup>

Although the end of the 1960s proved to be somewhat difficult for the industrialists, the boom conditions were not yet altogether over. The launching of new industries continued despite a decline in the total gross industrial output of Durban's economy, which stood at approximately 12 percent of the national gross output in 1967-68 while Natal's regional share had retrogressed to slightly less than 20 percent of the total.<sup>43</sup> During the 1960s Durban's industrial sector consolidated its operations, and returns on capital investment increased. During the period 1961 to 1970 a sizeable number of new firms entered the market so that by 1968 Durban had a record number of approximately 1800 industries as compared to 1500 industries in the region in 1966.<sup>44</sup> By 1971, the number of new firms had increased to approximately 2200 while the Natal region as a whole had a record 4168 industries.<sup>45</sup>

The period between 1965 and 1971 witnessed the estab-

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<sup>41</sup> SA Commerce and Industry, Vol. 24, Dec. 1965, 165.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Natal Chamber of Industries, 64th Ann. Report, 1971-72, 18.

<sup>44</sup> Natal Chamber of Industries, 61st Ann. Report, 1968-9, and see also SA Industry and Trade, Vol 62. Mar. 1966, 128.

<sup>45</sup> Natal Chamber of Industries, 64th Ann. Report, 1971-72, 15.

lishment of 230 new firms in the greater Durban region.<sup>46</sup> However, a sizeable number of these new firms were launched in low cost decentralised areas. A number of them, for example Adorable Footwear, Newman Hender's valve shop, and Air Products, were established in the Pinetown-New Germany area. Other new firms established at Prospection-Isipingo included Isipingo Textile Corporation, the Henkel Chemical plant, Argus Printing and Rheen's Drums, while the large new Mondi Paper Mill was established at Merebank. At Verulam, the Republic Stationery industry was established, while at Tongaat, the David Whitehead Textile factory came into existence. The Coronation Group of companies also established a new brick and tile works at Avoca, and Reindeer Toys and Shield Clothing, as well as a new textile mill were established at Hammarsdale and Umzinto respectively.<sup>47</sup> The new buildings established in the central area of Durban during this period were relatively small businesses and rented premises. Industrial expansion was thus concentrated largely on the outskirts of Durban where land and labour were cheap and readily available.

In this favourable climate, organised industry, particularly the Durban Chamber of Commerce and the Natal Chamber of Industries, made positive comments as to the industrial potential of the region, challenging Durban's manufacturing industry to become "more export conscious

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<sup>46</sup> Cameron as cited in Young, "The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region", 123.

<sup>47</sup> Young, "The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region", 123-4.



and export oriented."<sup>48</sup> This optimistic viewpoint was reflected in the "get out and sell" campaign<sup>49</sup>, promoted by F.W.H Stafford of the Natal Chamber of Industries, in a bid to promote export trade during a period when South Africa was facing international isolation as a result of its apartheid policies. Trade links between South Africa and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) were intensified since the two countries were facing the same fate. Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence from the United Kingdom in 1965 and the resultant imposition of sanctions against it encouraged the two countries to operate more closely. This strategy was a reflection of the 1950s when the Federation of Rhodesian Industries noted that:

We have an amazing opportunity and the expansion of the [South African] market can be developed out of all recognition if we explore the possibilities just now while the Union finds it difficult to purchase from other parts of the world.<sup>50</sup>

In the early 1970s the South African economy suffered from inflation and external constraints, particularly the oil crisis which resulted from the war in the Middle East. The economic implications were that the country's real growth sank to an average 2,5 to 3 percent between 1971 and 1974 as compared to the average annual

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<sup>48</sup> Natal Chamber of Industries, 56th Ann. Report, 1963-4, 54.

<sup>49</sup> SA Industry and Trade, Vol. 62, Sept. 1966, 37.

<sup>50</sup> Cited in N.T. Sambureni, "Industrial Development in Southern Rhodesia, 1930s to 1955" (University of Zimbabwe, History Seminar Paper, 1991). See The Federation of Rhodesian Industries, Our Market Across the Limpopo, 21 Nov. 1950.

growth rate of 7 percent recorded during the 1960s.<sup>51</sup> Despite this unfavourable situation, during the 1970s the rate of capital accumulation increased. R. Davis suggests that this was achieved through "a massive state "offensive" on the living standards of the African proletariat."<sup>52</sup> This perspective has also been articulated by David Kaplan who argued that the apartheid regime promoted "newly-emergent, small scale, undercapitalised [concerns]" by launching an attack on African living standards, lowering wage rates and hence raising the rate of surplus capital and lessening the vulnerability of national capital to intensified international competition.<sup>53</sup> Issues relating to African wages, housing, education and so on in the 1960s and 1970s became centrally important in all meetings of the Durban Chamber of Industries and the Natal Chamber of Industries.<sup>54</sup> Organised industry called relentlessly for an increase in African wages as "the most effective way of reaching optimum productivity".<sup>55</sup> In September 1963, the president of the Transvaal Chamber of Industries criticised the state policy of job reservation and maintained that :

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<sup>51</sup> Durban Chamber of Commerce, Ann. Report, 1974.

<sup>52</sup> R. Davies as cited in Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 100.

<sup>53</sup> Kaplan, "Class, Conflict, Capital Accumulation and the State", 350.

<sup>54</sup> See Chapter Three which deals with African labour and the wage structures.

<sup>55</sup> SA Industry and Trade, Vol.59, Jan. 1963, 41.

The time has come when organised industry must state categorically that...no exploitation of labour should be allowed...and that our recommended safeguard is not to pay a man according to his colour or race but to the job he is doing.<sup>56</sup>

Major concerns of the time, as expressed by industry, were the absence of sufficient skilled manpower, inadequate housing for workers, unnecessary state labour regulations, and the lack of proper training and education.<sup>57</sup>

Industry needed a stable and transformed African urban labour force and this could come about if capital took the initiative in addressing the important issues of wages, accommodation, education and worker representation, and strove to integrate Africans into industrial and commercial life. It is this largely uncharted area that the present study seeks to explore. Durban's industrial development in the 1960s, though presented in an abridged form, presents key facets of the local economy's performance and its role as the main lever of African development.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., Sept. 1963, 45.

<sup>57</sup> See Durban Chamber of Commerce, Ann. Reports, 1965-73.

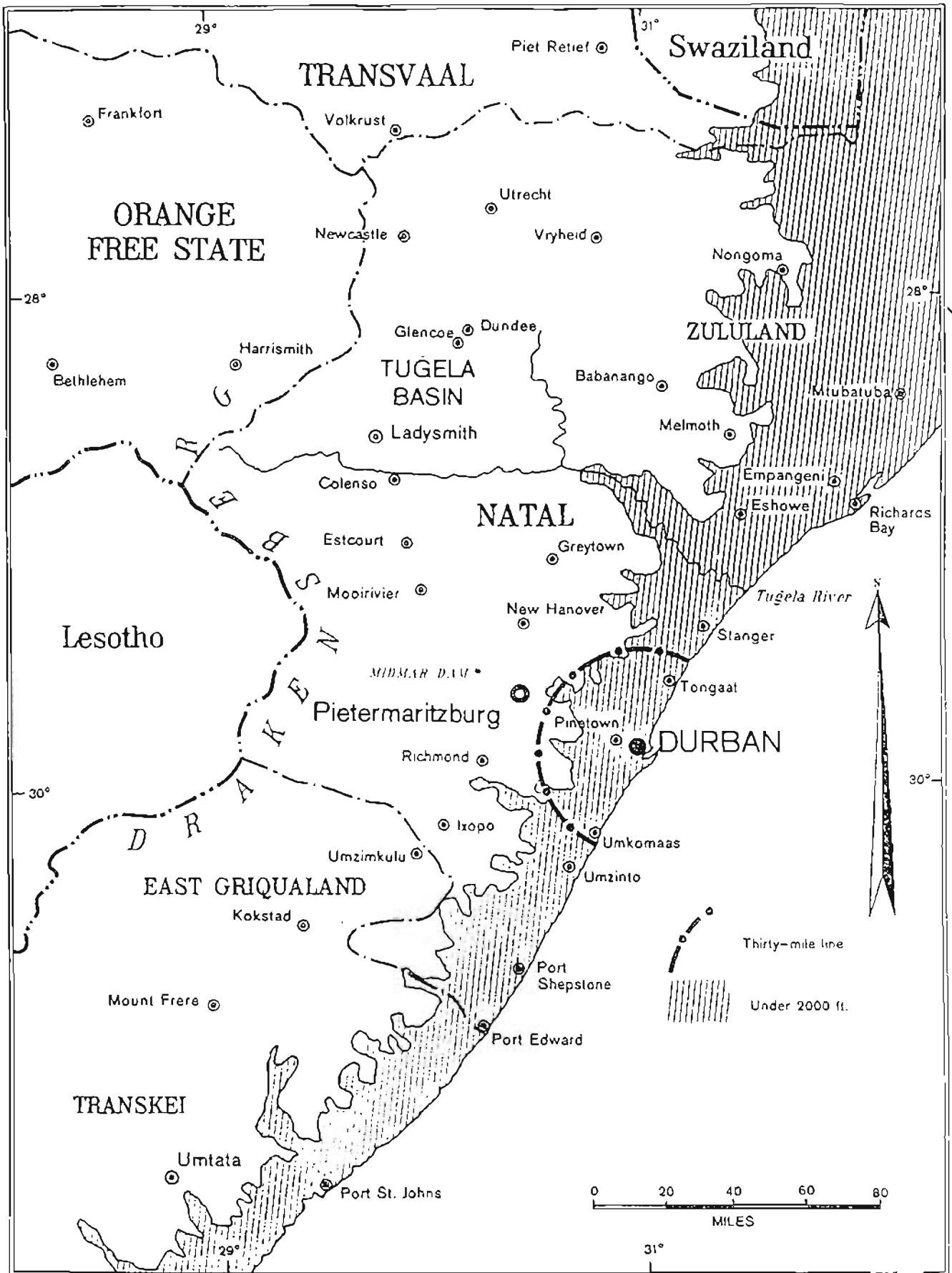


Figure 1 The Durban Region in its wider setting

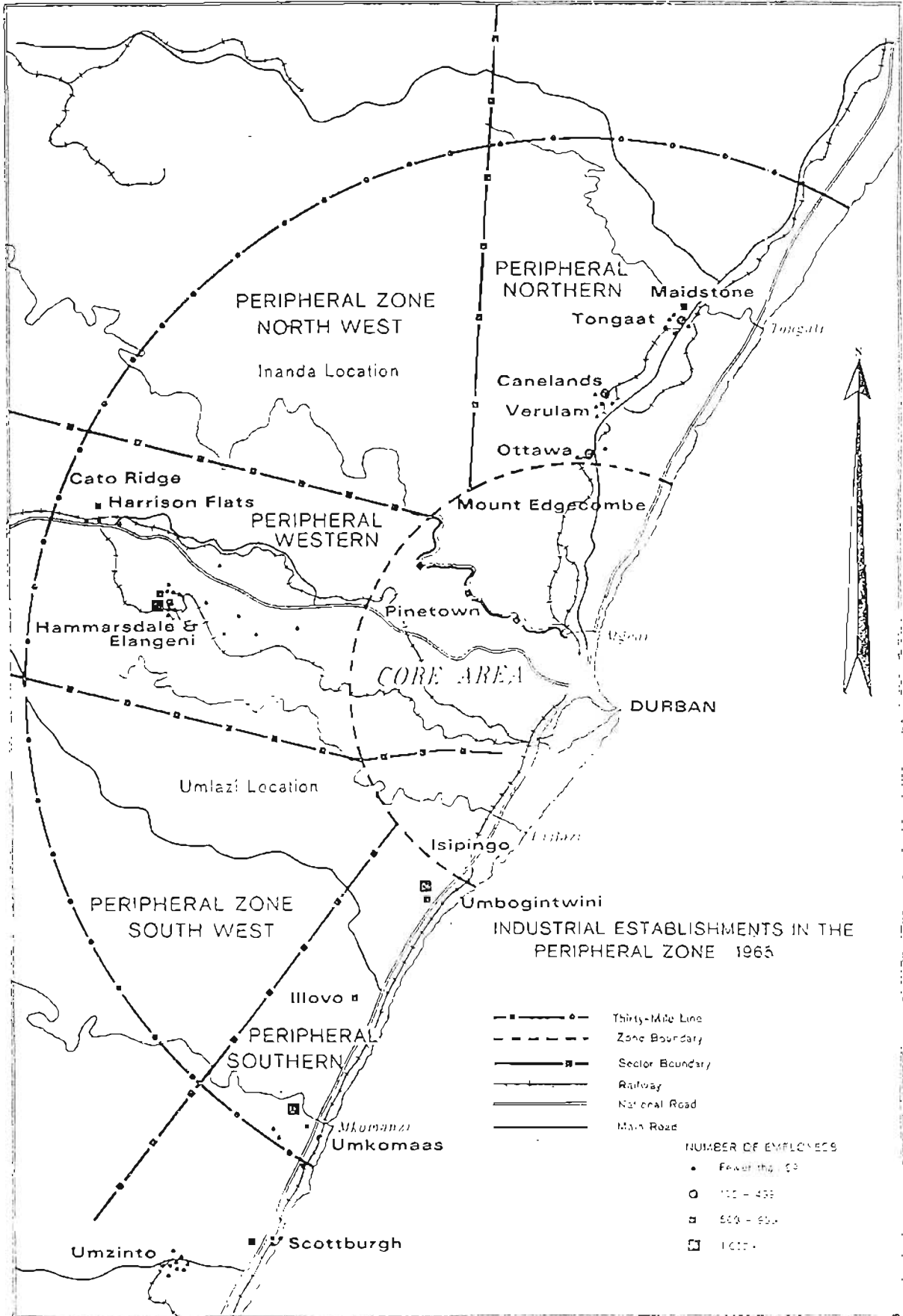


Figure 2 Industrial establishments in the Peripheral Zone of the Durban Region. 1

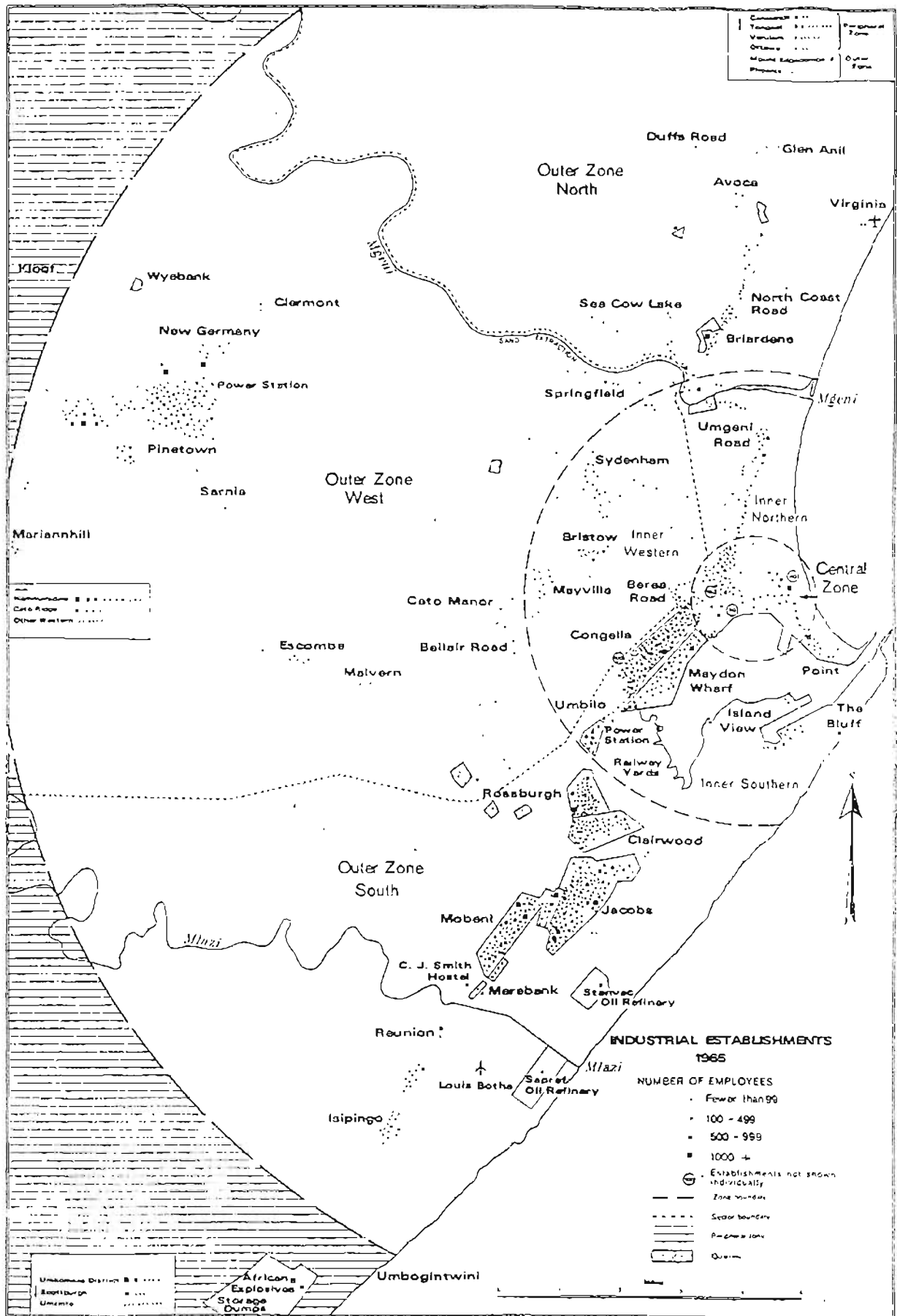


Figure 3 Industrial establishments in the core area of the Durban Region, 1965

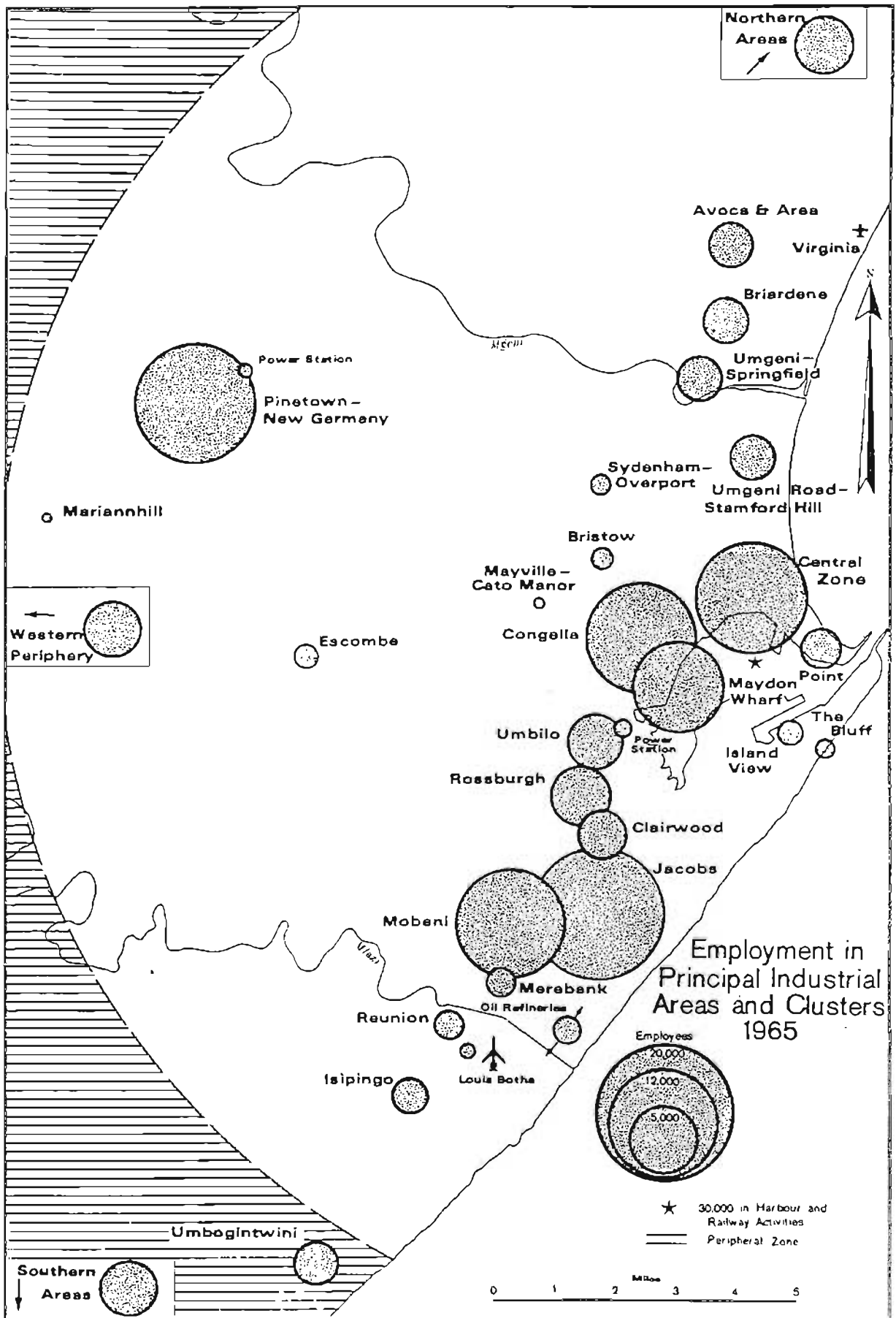


Figure 4 Employment totals in the principal industrial areas and clusters of the Durban Region, 1965

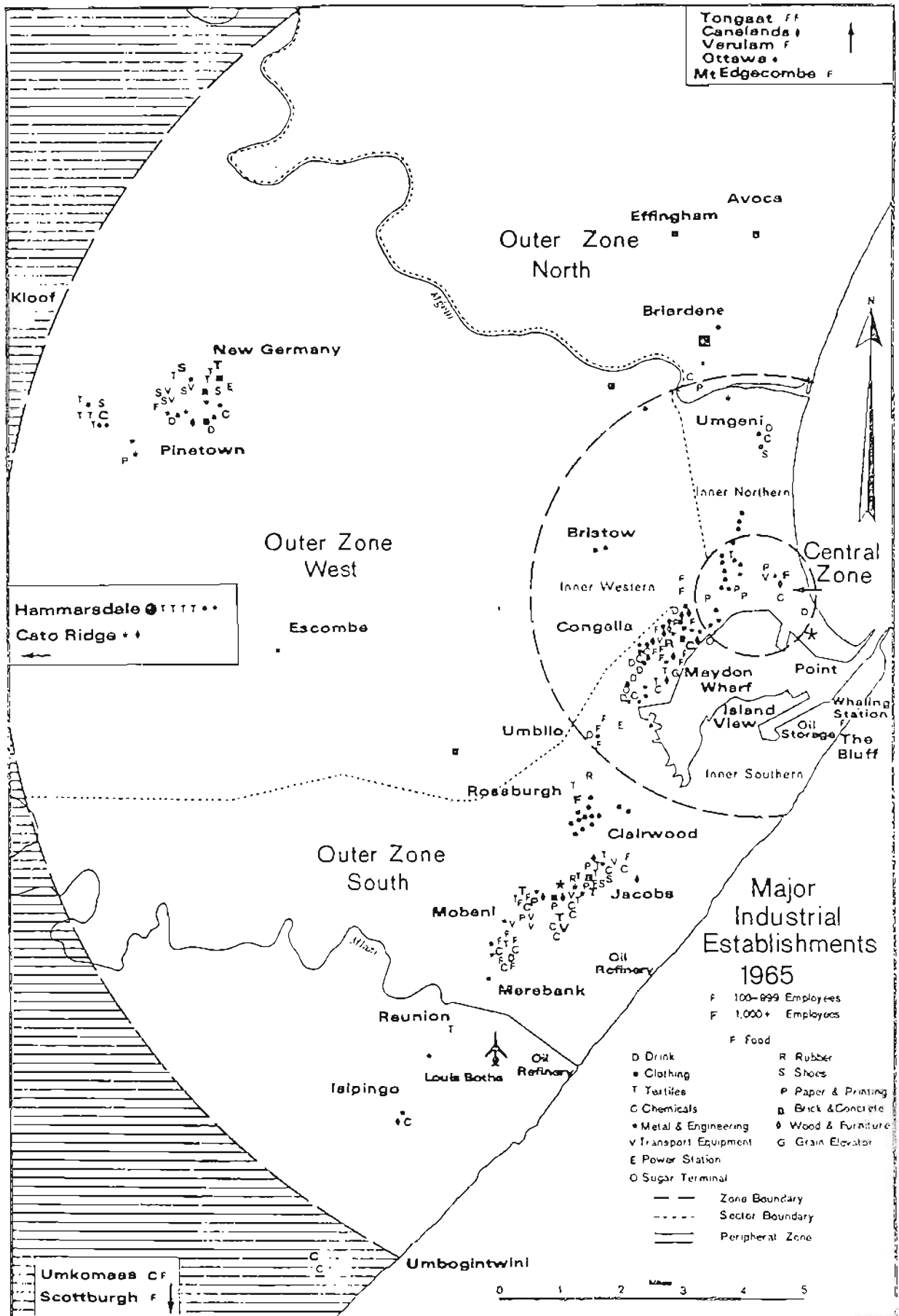


Figure 5 Major industrial establishments in the core area of the Durban Region, with insets for establishments in the Peripheral Zone, 1965



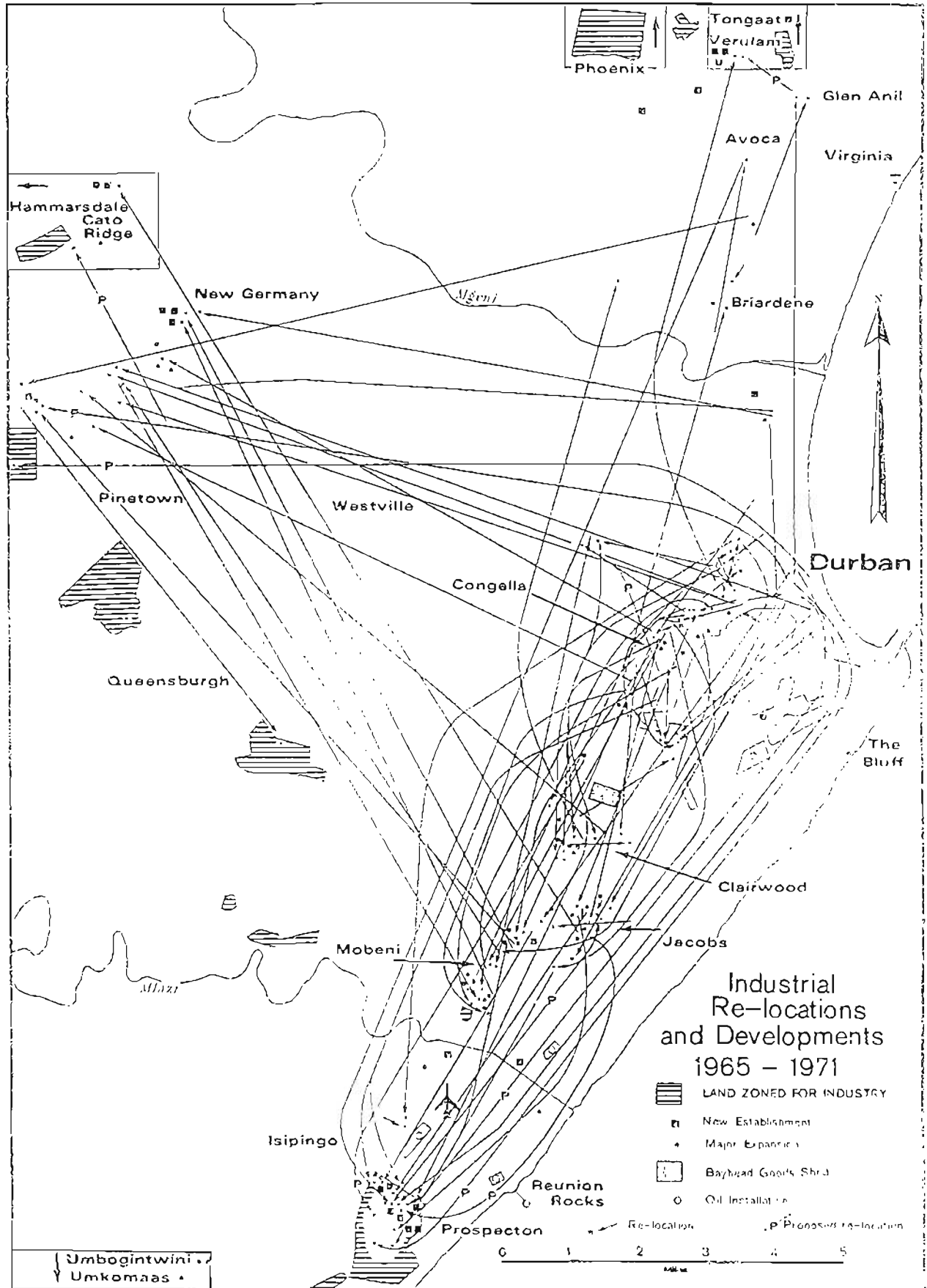


Figure 6 A selection of industrial re-locations, major on-site expansions and new factories in the Durban Region, 1965-1971

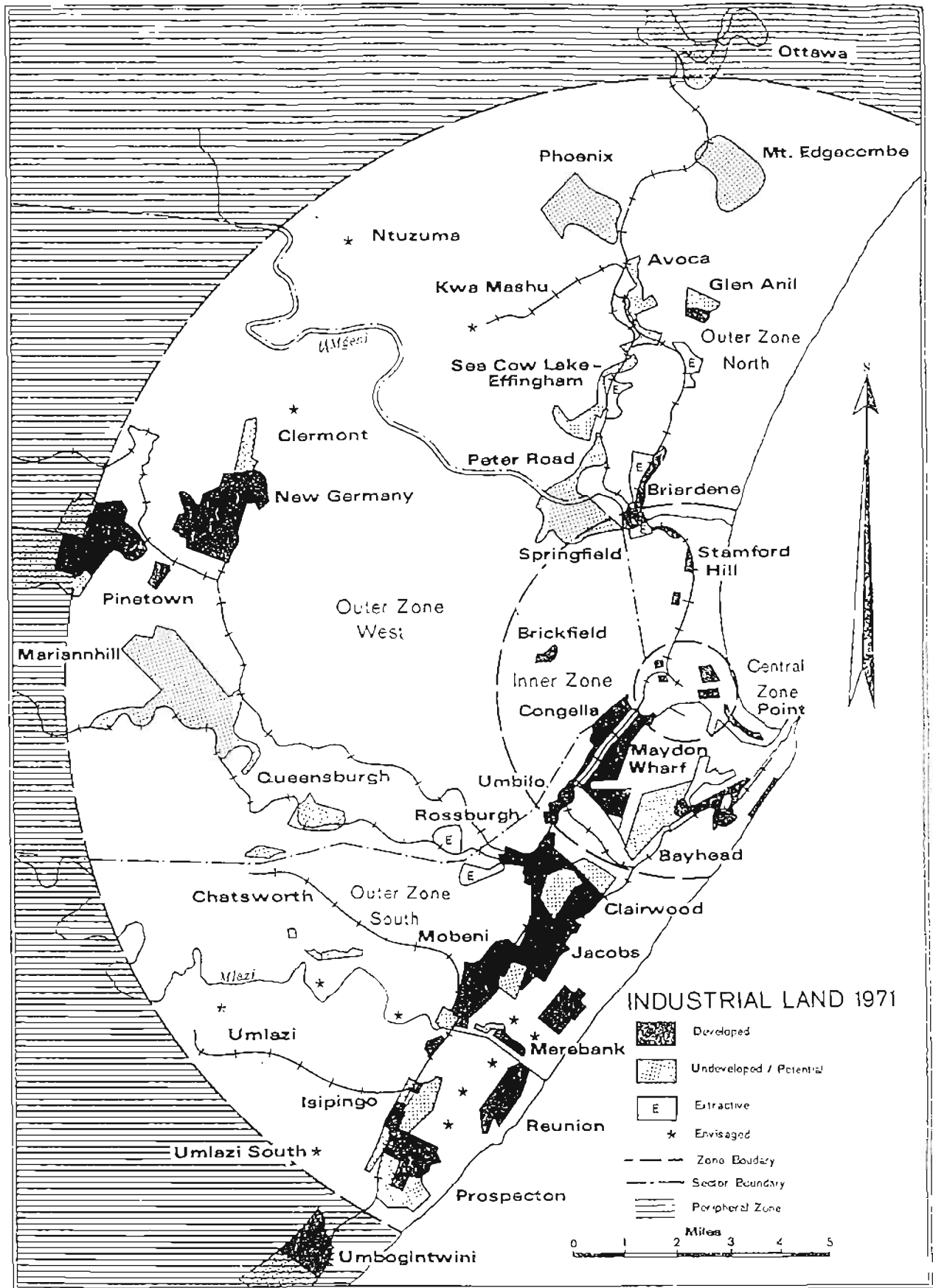


Figure 7 Industrial land in the core area of the Durban Region, 1971

### The State and African Labour Control Mechanisms

The early 1960s marked a new era in the implementation of apartheid laws and regulations. It was a notable period of both exceptionally impressive capitalist expansion and the intensification of state repressive policies. The pass control laws were tightened up particularly after 1961 and their enforcement was greatly intensified. Prosecutions increased for "illegal" entry into white towns. This was the time when the state also embarked on forced removals and pursued its policy of industrial decentralisation and relocating urban populations to the "homelands". Yet interesting ironies emerged in all urban areas of South Africa when large pools of workers emerged despite tough control measures instituted during this period. State officials in the Department of Bantu Administration and Development called for tighter influx controls and the subsequent "elimination of Bantu labour in the white areas" and suggested that, "If the White community cannot continue without Bantu labour, then it must also be assumed that the western lifestyle has an uncertain future in South Africa."<sup>58</sup> The implementation of the labour policies in South Africa has produced enormous contradictions in the labour market which tended to strengthen the African working class in undoing the mech-

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<sup>58</sup> Quoted in S. Greenberg, Legitimizing the Illegitimate (Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1987), 16.

anisms of control.

In a report submitted by the Grobbelaar Committee of Inquiry into rioting in Cato Manor in 1960, it was stated that "the Committee has no doubt whatever that there is, in actual practice, no control over the influx of Bantu who have no right to be in Durban."<sup>59</sup> The year following the Sharpeville massacre saw an increase in the number of people convicted in Durban of evading pass and control laws and regulations. In 1961 alone, 4098 people were prosecuted in Durban <sup>60</sup> and by 1964 7721 were prosecuted for contravening those laws.<sup>61</sup> The state's key mechanism for control over African urban drift and presence was Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act of 1945. Although this section of the act forbade Africans to remain in "prescribed areas" for longer than 72 hours without permission, in reality the state failed to control the movement of people into the urban area. Influx control seems to have been a failed exercise in Durban and in 1962 the Botha report stated that "the existing measures do not further the purposes for which they were introduced."<sup>62</sup> Section 10, which was the key mechanism for control, was constantly challenged by African work-seekers and could

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<sup>59</sup> Killie Campbell Africana Library, University of Natal, Durban (hereafter KCAL), Bourquin Papers, KCM 55224, Extract from Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee of Inquiry...1960, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Durban Corporation, Department of Bantu Admin., Ann. Report for 1961, 4.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Ann. Report ,1964, 106.

<sup>62</sup> As cited in Posel, The Making of Apartheid, 227-8.

not work effectively as "an instrument of control". As correctly noted by Stanley Greenberg, the system itself had managed to create a substantial number of African labourers who were strong enough to undo "the Berlin wall" and "to circumvent the system of labour regulations and shoot straight to Durban..."<sup>63</sup>

The work-seekers exploited a loophole in Section 10 (1) which did not impose restrictions on Africans' entry into White urban areas, but rather gave them the right to spend 72 hours in proclaimed areas without permission from state officials. Armed with this basic loophole, the African workers in most cases pretended to be visiting relatives and never returned to their reserves after the expiry of the 72 hour limit. The Chief Commissioner for Natal noted that "the 72 hour provision had disappeared as such."<sup>64</sup> He went further to observe that the provision was no longer "... being used in Natal."<sup>65</sup> The Chief Director for the Port Natal Administration echoed a similar sentiment when he stated that "72 hours is out."<sup>66</sup>

As noted by Posel, throughout the country, during the 1950s, one striking feature of apartheid was the "resounding failure of the state's urban labour preference policy, which ran aground due to tenacious, informal resistance from hundreds of thousands of workers and employers

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<sup>63</sup> Greenberg, Legitimizing the Illegitimate, 53.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 67

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

alike."<sup>67</sup> The urban labour preference policy could only succeed if properly implemented by labour bureau officials. But the most common scenario that developed, and not only in Durban, was that work-seekers and employers alike by-passed the labour bureaux. The more influx control measures were tightened up, the more they were resisted. Consequently, conflicts arose between employers and the state over labour control policies. As for state officials like W.J.P. Carr, the manager of the Johannesburg Non-European Affairs Department, the implementation of the urban labour preference policies meant "a constant argument every day of your life."<sup>68</sup> The Botha report of 1962 neatly summarised the situation when it wrote: "The anomaly exists, that [African] work-seekers from outside the urban areas are admitted in, despite the fact that there is already a surplus in the towns."<sup>69</sup> Doug Hindson's argument that the state's control mechanisms were designed to accommodate industrialists' demands for a differentiated labour force - both semi-skilled and unskilled - rather than an undifferentiated mass of cheap unskilled labour, does not seem to hold much water.<sup>70</sup>

As soon as they entered white urban areas, the

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<sup>67</sup> D. Posel, "Influx Control and Urban Labour Markets", in P. Bonner, P. Delius and D. Posel (eds), Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1993), 421.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 423.

<sup>69</sup> The Botha Report as cited in Posel, "Influx Control and Urban Labour Markets", 426.

<sup>70</sup> See Hindson, Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat .

workers activated strategic ethnic networks, used relatives or sought employment directly rather than follow local labour bureau procedures. Some industrialists in favour of mobile labour, together with work-seekers, adopted methods which were geared towards circumventing state labour recruitment policies. It was this hostile environment which led the worker struggle to assume a distinctive character. Workers adopted ways to "work the system" and confronted repression in the shadows, "in the nooks and crannies of the day-to-day work situation."<sup>71</sup> Charles van Onselen's remarks about resistance on the colonial Zimbabwean mines are equally important for an analysis of African resistance to labour control framework in Durban :

Ideologies and organisations should be viewed essentially as the high-water marks of protest. At least as important, if not more so, were the less dramatic, silent and often unorganised responses, and it is the latter set of responses, which occurred on a day-to-day basis, that reveal most about the functioning of the system and formed the woof and warp of worker consciousness... It was the unarticulated, unorganised protest and resistance which... the state found most difficult to detect or suppress.<sup>72</sup>

Many African work-seekers bypassed the labour bureaux and on various occasions the state pressurised Durban authorities to implement influx control and afflux measures more strictly. The state urged a total control over the labour market and S.B. Bourquin, the Director of

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<sup>71</sup> Van Onselen, Chibaro, 239.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Bantu Administration of Durban, consistently argued that he was not in agreement with all rules and regulations and their methods of implementation since, as he stated, "mitigation is better than litigation."<sup>73</sup>

Throughout the 1960s, Durban was the weakest area in implementing control measures. Control and repression should not be equated with effective control over the labour market or over the process of African proletarianisation. Nor should it be taken for granted that laws enacted managed to keep down the numbers. The diaspora from the reserves reserves Durban brought rapid urbanisation and the birth of shantytowns. In the 1960s Durban was surrounded by a belt of squatter camps. These squatter settlements present the realities of the control problems in the city.

In its bid to strengthen influx control, the state promulgated the Bantu Labour Regulations (Bantu Areas) Act in 1968. The act paved the way for the establishment of tribal, district and territorial bureaux in the surrounding reserves. The regulations stipulated that work-seekers had to register at their home labour bureaux and could only be employed in urban areas as long as their contracts were attested there. As in the case of Durban, the legal work-seekers were those with permanent residential status in the municipal townships and those who qualified under

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<sup>73</sup> KCAL, KCAV, 987-991, S. Bourquin by I. Edwards, 10 Sept. 1980, 4.



Section 10(1)(b).<sup>74</sup> From 1968 onwards, work-seekers were to be contractually engaged on a yearly basis with the possibility of their contracts being renewed on payment of R1.<sup>75</sup> As for the mobile workers, a new system was created in 1969 whereby those workers who took up employment with their previous employers and engaged to work in the same town were not required to re-register as work-seekers.<sup>76</sup> This procedure became known as the call-in-card system.<sup>77</sup> The major aim of this system was to make sure that mobile workers would not become permanent workers; it aimed to prevent them from obtaining residence rights. Commenting on the system, the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development noted that "the intention was surely to prevent all people signed on after April 1968 from acquiring rights under 10 (1) (b), but not those who at that date were already in service."<sup>78</sup> The call-in-card system was terminated in all urban areas in 1974 under ministerial order except in Durban.

What is evident in the Durban metropolitan area is that the labour bureau system was not effective and in

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<sup>74</sup> Durban Corporation, Ann. Report, 1968.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Bantu Laws Amendment Act 42 of 1964. See also Natal Archives (hereafter NA), Port Natal Affairs Administration Board (hereafter PNAAB), 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Bantu Labour in Prescribed Areas: Placing of Bantu in Employment Policy 12 Nov. 1973 - 6 Dec. 1974, Secr. for BAD to Mr N.P. Smith, 5 Nov. 1973.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., Secr. for BAD to all Chief Directors of Bantu Aff. Admin. Boards, 6 Nov. 1973.

fact had been bypassed by both work-seekers and employers. The employers regarded the whole system as "a cumbersome exercise"<sup>79</sup> and by May 1974 about 41 percent of African workers in employment in Durban were not legally engaged.<sup>80</sup> The control of African labour supply and demand remained a contested area between the state, capital and labour. The employees themselves preferred to be engaged "at the gate" or "off the street", rather than register and apply for work at a local labour bureau. The Natal Employers Association and the Durban Chamber of Commerce constantly reported in the 1970s that it had become a habit for employers to engage mobile workers "off the street", or "at the gate".<sup>81</sup>

From a casual observer's viewpoint, the state's labour control framework seemed like an effective control mechanism of the labour market. During the 1960s and early 1970s a series of laws were promulgated, bureaux and courts were established and that in itself, to many, represented effective and repressive state control of African labour. Added to this form of control was the establish-

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<sup>79</sup> NA, PNAAB 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, R.F.Drew, Convenor of Sub-Committee to the Chairman, District Managers, Labour Officers and the Dept. of Finance of the PNAAB, 29 Oct. 1975.

<sup>80</sup> NA, PNAAB 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Box 53, 22 June 1973 - 5 July 1974. H.D. van Wyk, Manager, North Coast District to the Control Officer, 15 May 1974.

<sup>81</sup> See for instance, NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, 1 Oct. 1975 - 31 Jan. 1976. G.F. Baker, Manager, Central District to the Chief Director, 26 Nov. 1975; and Memorandum submitted by the DCC to the Hon T.R.H. Janson, Deputy Minister of Bantu Admin and Education on the laws Governing the Influx and Employment of Bantu in White areas, 1973.

ment of aid centres in Durban and throughout the country. These centres which came into being in 1971 and were by-products of the Bantu Labour Act of 1964.<sup>82</sup> The aid centres were created to assist technical offenders and to prevent them from being imprisoned unnecessarily. In 1974 Durban had an estimated 80 000 new entrants in the labour market of whom 2109 were prosecuted and sent to the homelands.<sup>83</sup> In 1974 alone over 4000 Africans were referred to the aid centres in Durban. Justifying the establishment of these aid centres, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Port Natal Administration Board observed :

Although legislation has been in effect for years to control influx into White areas and more recently, afflux from the Bantu Homelands, the desired objectives have not been attained, namely a regulation of the supply and demand of labour. The majority of engagements of labour occur on an 'off the street' basis which is indicative of a lack of confidence in the official labour bureaux system or a deliberate avoidance thereof in order not to become enmeshed with the laws and regulations until some assurance of success has been obtained.<sup>84</sup>

By 1975 the number of people prosecuted as "idle and undesirable" in Durban had dropped down to 1795.<sup>85</sup> Aid centres played an important role in circumventing "excess-

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<sup>82</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, 22 June 1973 - 5 July 1974, PNAAB, Minutes of Ad Hoc Committee Re: Aid Centre Meeting Held on 18 Feb. 1974.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., Labour, Box 49, 1 Feb 1976 - 31 Mar. 1976. Inquiry from Parliament from Mrs Suzman, MP, 22 Mar. 1976.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., Labour, 16/2/12/P, 16 Aug. 1973 - 11 Apr. 1975, Report of the Sub-Committee on Bantu Aid Centres, 18 Feb. 1974.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., Labour, Box 49, Inquiry from Parliament...22 Mar. 1975.

ive" court action and had become service centres for African workers. In other words there was a dramatic shift in the 1970s from "excessive" control and prosecution to service. The new challenge in the 1970s, particularly in Durban, was to streamline the movement, recruitment drive and processing of forms for African labour; hence the call by R.F. Drew, the Labour Officer for Durban Central District, to establish manpower development centres.<sup>86</sup> These centres, it was hoped, would "prepare prospective employees for employment and ...offer them guidance in respect of the identification and application of tools and implements used in different types of employment, industrial safety and hygiene, punctuality, dangers of drugs and alcohol etc."<sup>87</sup> The state's intensified effort to effectively control the labour market and the process of African proletarianisation undoubtedly shows that the state apparatus was in fact not effective and completely failed to control African urban drift and the growing urban shantytowns and to normalise economic relations between employers and their workers.

The early 1970s not only produced strikes at the production line and disturbances in the townships but it witnessed murmurings of discontent from both employers and African work-seekers. With the establishment of the administration boards and the take-over of the labour bureaux

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid. , Labour, 1 June 1976 - 30 July 1976, R.F. Drew, Labour Officer, Central District, PNAAB to Employer Organisations, 23 June 1976.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

in the early 1970s, it was anticipated that the labour control system would greatly improve the necessary administration, control and labour recruitment procedures. In Durban employers complained that tribal bureaux did not function properly, charged exorbitant registration fees and were too bureaucratic.<sup>88</sup> Employers in the Harding District noted with dismay the registration fees demanded from the African workers by tribal authorities. The total amount paid to register a worker was approximately R9,50.<sup>89</sup> The amount included the chief's personal fund of R3, registration fees amounting to R3, a monthly contribution of R1,50 to the board and R2 for travelling expenses for the worker. Various employers complained about chiefs who demanded excessive fees for their personal use. For instance, Chief Mageba demanded a payment of R1,50 from each work-seeker who wished to be registered.<sup>90</sup> Falling into this corrupt tendency was Chief Sigidi whose secretary demanded R2,50 from Bongani Febson Ndayeni in order to stamp his registration book.<sup>91</sup> For the African work seeker in the rural areas who followed regulations, the consequences were great. The chiefs wanted their share in

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<sup>88</sup> See for instance, NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Box 51, Chief Dir. to the Deputy Dir., Natal Chamber of Industries, 15 Sept. 1975.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Labour, Box 50, 1 Jan. 1975 - 30 Apr. 1975, A.P. Mynhardt, Town Clerk and Treasurer, Township of Harding to the Manager, 19 Mar. 1975.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., J.P.J. Macquet, Inluku Store to the Manager, PNAAB, 20 Jan. 1975.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., Mine Labour Organisation (NCR) Ltd, Rep to PNAAB, 7 Jan. 1975.

the process although there was no law requiring such payment. As noted by one tribal recruiter: "This is Africa. You don't visit the Chief's kraal without paying."<sup>92</sup> In Durban complaints were lodged with the Chief Director of Port Natal Administration, S.B. Bourquin, by various employers particularly in the Harding area,

regarding certain levies being charged by Tribal Authorities in that district, which must be paid by work seekers before they are permitted to proceed to Harding for employment. In many instances the Bantu are not in a position to pay the relevant fee and it is thus up to the prospective employer to pay the fee in order to obtain labour.<sup>93</sup>

Such corrupt practices tended to invite African work-seekers to bypass their tribal labour bureaux and go straight to the urban areas, risking prosecution under the pass laws.

In addition to these initial problems, African work-seekers greatly resented the medical examinations undertaken at labour bureaux, which they viewed "as being yet another instance of them being regarded as "inferior", and even "dirtier", than members of other racial groups who do not have to submit to such examinations at employment centres." <sup>94</sup> In the Central District of Durban, there were

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<sup>92</sup> As cited in Greenberg, Legitimizing the Illegitimate, 72.

<sup>93</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Box 50, R.G. Wilson to the Chief Dir., 21 Apr. 1975.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Bantu Labour in Prescribed Areas, 12 Nov. 1973 - 6 Dec. 1974, Executive Committee Agenda, Medical Examination of Bantu Work-seekers, 10 Sept 1974. See also NA, PNAAB, Interim Report of Ad Hoc Committee on Friction Points, Labour Supply and Registration, 5 Apr. 1974.

two centres where the African work-seeker was medically examined "visually to see whether he is suffering or appears to be suffering from syphilis, gonorrhoea or similar disease, bilharzia or scabies."<sup>95</sup> In the New Germany area, domestic servants and any workers who handled food were medically checked.<sup>96</sup> However, this practice was stopped in Durban in 1974 soon after the Port Natal Executive Board disapproved such an examination.<sup>97</sup>

#### Women's Labour

African women from the reserves also experienced barriers to labour "migration". In fact, South Africa had the greatest number of women mobile workers because of poverty in the rural areas. Taking advantage of legal loopholes in the pass system, women moved to urban areas in their large droves. It was only in 1956 that South African women were required to be issued with reference books. Ironically, since the 1930s South Africa has remained the largest employer in Africa of women particularly in the garment, textile, footwear and food-processing industries.<sup>98</sup> Generally, by the 1960s, because of the economic boom underway by then, the demand for women workers in the factories increased. During the 1960s in

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> S.B. Stichter, Migrant Labourers (Cambridge, CUP, 1985), 160.

Durban women were largely employed in the textile industries. However, by the 1970s, with the economic boom gradually declining, women's employment patterns began to shift. Those women who lived in Durban could take up employment within the city, but their experiences in the labour market were not pleasant. The requisition of African labour was confined almost exclusively to men. The Port Natal Administration Board officials recruited women specifically for nursing jobs and for domestic service, but only after local labour was exhausted, and only in the immediate areas of KwaZulu.<sup>99</sup> In Durban, women showed resentment over the restricted labour opportunities, gender discrimination and places of recruitment.<sup>100</sup>

Most employers in Durban preferred Mpondo domestic servants from the Transkei.<sup>101</sup> Contract labour, or even any unpopular job, remained a privilege for Mpondo women, considering rural poverty and the rising labour surpluses of the 1970s. The Central District of Durban made several unsuccessful attempts to introduce female labour from the Inanda, Ndwedwe and Umbumbulu reserves. Vacancies for labour remained unfilled in Durban despite the fact that women were ordered out at the rate over 3000 per year.<sup>102</sup> In January 1974 for instance, there were 305 unfilled

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<sup>99</sup> Greenberg, Legitimizing the Illegitimate, 75.

<sup>100</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Bantu Labour in Prescribed Areas, Interim Report... 5 Apr. 1974.

<sup>101</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, 1 Oct. 1975 - 31 Jan. 1976, Graham McIntosh, MP to the Chief Dir., 3 Oct. 1975.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.



vacancies for female labour registered through the labour bureaux of the Central District of Durban.<sup>103</sup> Because of this prevalent problem, the Port Natal Administration Board launched an investigation to establish the reasons why local females refused domestic employment and how they could be motivated to accept this type of work.<sup>104</sup> Local female labour rejected domestic employment on the basis of poor wages.

The shortage in the domestic industry in Durban was countered by the White householders sharing servants. One servant could serve at least two householders at a time as long as that servant was in "the registered employment of, and is accommodated by, the person in whose name the contract exists. Of course, such sharing should only take place with the full knowledge and authority of the registered employer."<sup>105</sup> In this regard, the Central District of Durban had a record of 797 independent contractors in this least remunerative industry.<sup>106</sup> Women became victims of super-exploitation and, because of the system itself, they were assigned a secondary and marginal position.

During the 1970s, there were numerous reports of an ever-depleting labour market. From 1976 onwards, labour

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., Labour, 1 Apr. 1976 - 31 May 1976, Vol 8 Box 49, Dept. of Bantu Admin., Memo from C/O (LIA) to the Chief Dir., 9 Apr. 1974.

<sup>105</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Box 51, Central District Manager to the Chief Dir., 22 Aug. 1975.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

recruitment was on the decline particularly in Umbumbulu, south of Durban, Inkayesi near Eshowe, Mapumulo near Greytown, and Vulamehlo, near Umzinto, as well as other surrounding reserves.

The 1970s was not only an era of decline in the labour market, but it also witnessed escalating African resistance - the outbreak of the 1973 Durban strikes, and the widespread labour unrest and strikes that took place thereafter; school boycotts and uprisings, the formation of strong trade unions and a growing underground organisation in the townships of KwaMashu, Lamontville, Clermont, Umlazi and in the immediate shantytowns. Furthermore, the state's control mechanisms were a dismal failure. In the end, the state lost complete control of the urban drift that had been underway since the 1960s, and the two decades of escalating state repression and intervention were a total failure; in fact they managed to strengthen the African resistance movement.

### Conclusion.

Soon after the Sharpeville massacre, South Africa experienced the greatest economic boom in its history. During the period 1960 to 1973, the economy grew at an average annual rate of almost seven percent. Contributing significantly to the gross domestic product was the manufacturing sector, which experienced an increase in its gross output of more than 70 percent during that period. It was during that era that Durban became one of the

greatest industrial and manufacturing centres; it became Natal's leading manufacturing and industrial centre, and a gateway to the rest of the country. Central to Durban's booming economy was the textile industry, which became well-known for exploitation of African labour, especially from distant areas. However, as the economy expanded, Durban experienced a rapid drift of African work-seekers who threatened the existence of the apartheid city which whites sought to control as their own. In response to that urban drift, the state called for tighter pass and influx control laws in all urban centres. Such control mechanisms conflicted with the interests of certain sectors of capital which preferred to have a free hand in the labour market. The labour needs of industrial capitalists conflicted radically with official rhetoric, and compelled them to evade the law in an attempt to utilise cheap and unskilled labour. Similarly, African work-seekers adopted methods of circumventing state labour policies. Such state labour policies created conflicts between the central state and some sections of capital, between African labour and the state, and between the local state and the central government, especially over the implementation of apartheid labour policies. Undoubtedly, the relationship which existed between capital, labour and the state was both conflictual and complementary. It is clear that the state sometimes failed to achieve its goals - goals, moreover, which were resisted by employers, employees and, to a certain extent, local authorities.

## CHAPTER THREE

### AFRICAN LABOUR AND THE WAGE STRUCTURE IN DURBAN

During the 1960s, African workers were integrated into the capitalist economy, but not as mass consumers and very often not as semi-skilled or skilled workers. Wages remained poor for the African workers in spite of the booming economy, thus undermining them as potential consumers. Ultimately, this type of integration undermined the growth of capitalism. This chapter examines the construction of apartheid African workers and their integration into apartheid's economic boom. The chapter also examines the structure of African wages, especially from the late 1950s to the outbreak of the 1973 Durban strikes.

Writing in 1970, Sean Gervasi stated that "apartheid is... a system of forced labour, and forced labour is cheap labour."<sup>1</sup> Such an argument is quite controversial and debatable. However, Gervasi argues that it is forced labour in the sense that the African worker is coerced by circumstances of declining agricultural production and starvation in the reserves. The system, which earlier on was a monopoly of mining and farming capitalists, was largely inherited by industrial capitalists during the

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<sup>1</sup> S. Gervasi, Industrialisation, Foreign Capital and Forced Labour in South Africa (New York, United Nations, 1970), para. 79.

1960s and 1970s. African mobile workers were pushed and pulled by the economic conditions of the period. It was during this period that the mobile labour system boomed. One of the major characteristics of mobile labour was that of poor wages which generated greater surplus value for the capitalists. More profit was created out of the domination of labour by capital.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, the surplus population available for wage labour increased. By October 1975, the number of African work-seekers registered in Durban numbered 86 116.<sup>2</sup> Influenced by the vast expansion of capitalism and its inherent contradictions during the apartheid era, Johnstone, Wolpe and Legassick developed their cheap labour power thesis.<sup>3</sup> In their distinctive thesis, they articulated the view that the use of African cheap labour contributed greatly to a high rate of exploitation and surplus profit. The pass system, influx control and the "bantustan" system were the mechanisms used by the state in maintaining cheap labour, and such policies were upheld in order to sustain the demands of industrialists. However, the creation of the industrial "reserve army" was seen by liberal scholars as a result of state interference in the labour market.<sup>4</sup> Marxist scholars have argued to the

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<sup>2</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, 1 Oct 1975 - 3 Jan. 1976, R.G. Wilson, Manager to the Chief Dir., 23 Dec. 1975.

<sup>3</sup> Legassick, "South Africa: Capital Accumulation and Violence"; Wolpe, "Capitalism and Cheap labour-Power"; and Johnstone, "White Supremacy and White Prosperity".

<sup>4</sup> See Lipton, Capitalism and Apartheid.

contrary, suggesting that surplus labour in urban areas is the creation of capital accumulation and that the system of

apartheid, as the mechanism specific to South Africa... is an expression of the possibility of maintaining a cheap and controlled labour force, and a high rate of capitalist exploitation, which is in large part a consequence of the character of the industrial reserve army."<sup>5</sup>

Wolpe and Legassick made a tremendous contribution with their thesis, but failed to articulate the response of various fractions of capital to state labour policies, or to recruitment policies and conflicts that took place with the state. Undoubtedly, different fractions of capital in Durban conflicted with state labour policies. Wolpe and Legassick's argument, which views the application of coercive apartheid labour policy not in terms of competing labour requirements of different individual capitalists but in terms of the conditions of accumulation of total social capital, should be rejected. Individual capitalists responded differently to state labour policies. The relationship which existed between the state and capital, as noted in Chapter Two, was both functional and supportive to some fractions of capital, but contradictory and conflictual to others. We can now begin to grapple with the processes of labour and the wage structure in Durban during our period of study.

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<sup>5</sup> See Legassick and Wolpe, "The Bantustans and Capital Accumulation in Africa", Review of African Political Economy, 7 (1976), 103.

Reconstructing the African Labouring Class

In the late 1950s, the apartheid city was born. Aided by the pass laws, the municipality attempted to control African urbanisation by implementing the policy of deporting the unemployed and those who lived by their wits, who were defined as "idle and undesirable." In order to achieve an idealised white urban image, the municipality of Durban implemented forced removal of people from "black" spots in white areas, relocating them in African townships and bantustans.<sup>6</sup> Functionally these removals benefited a minority, through rehousing (for example, the shantytown dwellers in Cato Manor), but the majority of those relocated were grossly disadvantaged through severe social and financial costs and the loss of urban employment opportunities. A fascinating feature of this newly founded apartheid city was that Durban's African labour force comprised both mobile and largely urbanised workers.

In the 1950s, African male labour originated not only from Lower Tugela, Ndwedwe, Inanda, Umbumbulu and Umzinto magisterial districts but from as far as Transkei, Pondoland, Portuguese East Africa [Mozambique], Malawi, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.<sup>7</sup> Until the end of the 1950s, Durban's share from the surrounding African reserves constituted

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<sup>6</sup> These issues are examined in detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>7</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Vol. 8, Box 49, See Monthly Returns from various labour officers.

only 20 percent.<sup>8</sup> As rightly noted by R.H. Smith, the African population within the immediate reserves might still have been sufficiently well off agriculturally or had easy access to cash income, so that there was no need for them to seek work in the urban area.<sup>9</sup> However, the situation gradually changed in the 1960s and 1970s. Once the process of deterioration of African agriculture started, it became cumulative, since the lowered and continuously decreasing agricultural returns for the peasantry in their traditional sector forced an ever growing number of women and men into wage employment.

Competition for unskilled jobs increased. The vast majority of employers preferred mobile workers, and there was a general trend amongst most employers throughout South Africa to recruit mainly from Transkei. In 1968 the total number of male Transkeian workers placed in industrial, mining and domestic service employment in the country stood at 155 329, yet by 1974 the figure had risen to 256 971.<sup>10</sup> In 1974 alone, the labour bureaux recruited 149 224 work-seekers from Transkei who were placed in various regions, with the Western Cape recruiting 43 percent of this total while Natal recruited 10 percent.<sup>11</sup> Within the latter region, the domestic services, civil engineering,

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<sup>8</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 104.

<sup>9</sup> See R.H. Smith, Labour Resources of Natal (Cape Town, 1952), 56-8; and Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 104.

<sup>10</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Vol.7, Box 49, Dept. of the Interior, Transkei, Statistical Labour Report, 1974.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.



building construction and the textile industry sectors absorbed the largest proportion of mobile labour.<sup>12</sup>

More recently, Posel showed that most employers of African labour preferred mobile workers - "particularly those newly recruited from rural areas - for unskilled work."<sup>13</sup> Mobile workers, it was assumed, were "more obedient, harder working, and more easy to satisfy and control."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, this new class of workers was thought to be less likely to be susceptible to the influence of, as Posel notes, "communistic trade unions, being supposedly unaware of industrial legislation and wage regulations [and] content, temporarily at least, to submit to the stipulations and demands of the employer."<sup>15</sup>

The cost benefit of employing contract, mobile or illegal labour in the 1960s and 1970s, was fully appreciated by employers. This kind of labour was prepared to work for a lower wage than were locally registered Zulu work-seekers, and mobile labour had additional cost advantages when compared to the wage demands of local labour. Surplus capital could be generated on a larger scale through the intensive exploitation of mobile labour. Two important employers, namely the Durban Stevedoring Labour

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Labour, 1 Apr. 1976 - 31 May 1976, Vol. 8, Box 49, Central District, Labour Office to the Chief Dir., 12 Apr. 1976; and D.P. de Lange, Western District Manager to the Chief Dir., 15 Apr. 1976.

<sup>13</sup> Posel, "Influx Control and Urban Labour Markets", 418.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Supply Company and especially the Frame Group of Companies, the key to the 1960s boom, were chief players who depended and survived largely on mobile labour. We shall use them as reference points in our discussion of African labour exploitation and the creation of surplus value.

What is clear is that employers of African labour managed to keep wages and labour costs to a minimum in their attempt to maximise profits. Surveys on African incomes conducted from the late 1950s showed clearly that average earnings were below the poverty datum line.<sup>16</sup> The surveys estimated £23 to £24 per month as the minimum urban subsistence income required to maintain at least a family of five. In 1959 most workers who lived in the Cato Manor shantytown earned between £11 and £12 per month.<sup>17</sup> Such wages could maintain workers without a family. This was of course one of the arguments for the reserves and the mobile labour system: families would provide for themselves in the reserves, thus reducing costs to capital. Throughout the 1960s and the early 1970s, wages for the African workers in Durban remained poor.<sup>18</sup>

The mobile labour system was heavily entrenched on

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<sup>16</sup> University of Natal, A Survey of Bantu Income and Expenditure in Durban (UND, Unpub. Interim Report, Dept. of Economics, Dec 1959); and Joy de Gruchy, "The Cost of Living of Urban Africans", SA Institute of Race Relations Journal (1960).

<sup>17</sup> UND, A Survey of Bantu Income.

<sup>18</sup> For an extensive review of African wages in Durban during the 1960s see D.E Pursell, "Bantu Real Wages and Employment Opportunities in South Africa", SA Journal of Economics, Vol. 36 (1968).

the Durban docks.<sup>19</sup> The system was facilitated by the Durban Stevedoring Labour Supply Company (DSLSC) which came into existence in March 1959. The main function of the company was, as its management termed it, "an organised and planned attempt to pool labour resources and to create a stable, experienced, and permanent labour force adequate to any demand."<sup>20</sup> The company depended on mobile workers drawn from distant reserves and never recruited from established local labour bureaux. During the 1960s, the company was granted preferential treatment by the Bantu Administration Department to recruit workers in areas north of the Tugela and in Nongoma, Hlambisa, Mtonjaneni and Mahlabatini.<sup>21</sup> By the 1970s, the company had gone even farther than the original recruitment reserves, going as far as Pondoland, Ixopo, Estcourt, Mtunzini and Port Alfred.<sup>22</sup> Mobile workers from such distant areas were not required to follow the registration procedures demanded by the state. The company was granted immunity by the state to ignore labour bureau laws and regulations. A major consideration was that the company supplied labour to one of the most important ports in South Africa. In addition, workers recruited were to be accommodated in the company compounds and were not there-

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<sup>19</sup> For a detailed study on the dockworkers see Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers".

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 386.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 412.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 416.

fore a "liability" on the already inadequate housing provided in the townships.

What is important about the Durban dock workers is that employers were able to extract surplus profit from "migratory" labour. That was made possible by paying poverty wages to workers drawn from distant reserves who settled for anything, even wages below the going rate of pay. This labouring class was exploited on the basis that it was coming from remote reserves where homestead production had declined considerably and any form of wage employment was acceptable. Moreover, employers preferred mobile labour largely because they were able to work hard for long hours. Workers reliably reported for duty on Mondays since it was costly for them to travel home. Local labour resisted long hours being worked during the weekends, and the rate of absenteeism on Mondays was always high following workers' prolonged visits home. Mobile labour, therefore, benefitted the employer in that it was reproduced under conditions which suited the level of exploitation in the docks. Similarly, some sectors of mining and agriculture, for instance the Natal sugar fields, relied on mobile labour and not on available local labour.<sup>23</sup>

Employers argued that they were forced to engage mobile and "illegal" workers as the locally available labour was "work-shy", "selective" and reluctant to sell

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<sup>23</sup> See A. de V. Minnaar, "Labour Supply Problems of the Zululand Sugar Planters, 1905- 1939", Journal of Natal and Zulu History, Vol. XII (1989).

their labour for "heavy manual work or any work associated with domestic and will not take on any "dirty" work."<sup>24</sup> A sizable number of industrialists and farmers, complained about the "selectiveness" and "laziness" of Zulu labour.<sup>25</sup> It was said that the Zulus "are either unable or unwilling to do [work]."<sup>26</sup> A case in point was the Durban municipality's Cleansing Services where Zulu-speaking people refused to work, regarding it as too dirty.<sup>27</sup> Views of that nature were expressed earlier on in the 1950s, as revealed by B. Pauw's East London study. The study showed that "occupations of the 'rough and heavy' type seem to attract hardly any town males - a finding confirmed by the Federated Chamber of Industries as a national trend."<sup>28</sup> Elaborating on that trend, the FCI wrote: "In the majority of cases, manual or menial work will only be accepted by Natives of the migratory type."<sup>29</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s, commerce and industry expressed similar sentiments. This attitude to the "Zulu Native" was undoubtedly racist.

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<sup>24</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, 1 Oct. 1975 -31 Jan. 1976, G.F. Baker, Manager, Central District to the Chief Dir., 26 Nov. 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Labour, 22 June 1973 - 5 July 1974, Box 53, Natal Agric. Union, Control of Bantu Farm Labour, P.C. Reyburn, Secr., 11 June 1974.

<sup>26</sup> KCAL, PNAAB Microfilm Files, Roll 7, KCF, 24, KwaMashu Township (c), The Future Control of KwaMashu, BA 2/3/3 (ii) 26 Nov. 1968 - 20 May 1969, Dept of Bantu Admin., 15 Nov. 1969. See comments by Mr Noble, the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner for Natal.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Posel, "Influx Control and Urban Labour Markets", 419.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

A more likely explanation of the reluctance of permanent local Zulu labour to engage in these occupations concerns the relatively wide range of market opportunities and the ability of Zulu labourers to command relatively better working conditions and higher wages than mobile labourers could. Durban's toqt (or daily paid) workers in the early 1970s are a classic example. The strategy of these toqt workers was noted by G.F. Baker, the District Manager of the Central Region of Durban, when he stated that "... a new class of toqt workers comes into being, employed when and where it chooses, on the strength of a spurious registration certificate and his reference book..."<sup>30</sup>

Equally affected was the building industry which was hard-hit by the shortage of manpower particularly in the 1970s. It may be valuable to illustrate this point by examining the building sector more closely as a case study.

In July 1974, the personnel manager of Ilco Homes company, C.R.Vial, wrote a letter to the Chief Director of the Port Natal Administration complaining about the "extremely unsatisfactory conditions prevailing as regards the availability of suitable labour for the building industry."<sup>31</sup> The manager complained that labour supplied through the Board labour offices in Durban, Pinetown and Queensburgh, was "not prepared, even for highly competitive wages, to undertake the necessarily strenuous manual

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<sup>30</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Box 51, Central District Manager to the Chief Dir., 22 Aug. 1975.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., Labour, 1 July 1974 - 31 Dec. 1974, Box 53, Personnel Manager to the Dir., 18 July 1974.

work required by the very nature of our business."<sup>32</sup> At one point the company was allocated 11 workers by the labour office and seven of these 11 people refused on their first day to commence digging foundations.<sup>33</sup> Of the four who remained working on that day, three absconded the following day leaving the company on the third day with only one worker.<sup>34</sup> Faced by such a situation the company demanded that they be allowed to recruit on an "off-street basis" or "at the gates," or that they be allowed to engage mobile labourers from outside the surrounding areas of Durban. Thus, mobile workers became the most favoured class of workers in the textile and construction industry of Durban. Indeed, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, attempts by the state and the Durban municipality to promote the recruitment of African labour from within the boundaries of the city, failed.

With the establishment of labour bureau offices in all urban areas, the state's intention was to control the distribution of labour and restrict the movement of Africans into White urban areas. Industrialists were urged to make use of labour bureaux which placed emphasis on the seven major reserves as recruitment areas, and on the townships of Umlazi and KwaMashu as well as on the Durban Central District where labour offices were established. In Umbumbulu reserve, work-seekers were registered by the ten

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

"Tribal" Authorities.<sup>35</sup> During the early 1960s, while the recruitment drive for the majority of Durban's African labour force was concentrated in rural areas of Natal and Zululand, recruitment in the textile industries was slightly different. A similar pattern to that developed by the DSLSC was put into effect.

At Dunlop, African mobile workers were clearly an important feature which developed especially during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>36</sup> Joseph Kelly's study of the employment patterns at Dunlop, for example, showed that the majority of its employees in the 1940s and 1950s were mobile workers. These were recruits from Ixopo, Port Shepstone, Estcourt, Mapumulo and Nkandla.<sup>37</sup> The company established a recruiting network through its factory indunas who engaged mainly their "homeboys" and relatives.

Some industrialists, vigorously opposing state controls over their recruitment practices, responded by employing largely mobile labour. During the 1960s and early 1970s the Frame group operated a recruiting organisation in the northern and eastern Transkei. By 1971, 80 percent

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<sup>35</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Box 51, Labour Officer, Prospecton to Manager, South Coast District, 8 Sept. 1975. The ten Tribal Authorities consisted of Isimahla under chief Mfanawendlela Mkhize, Sobanakhona under Mbondo Makhanya, Toyana under Charles Hlengwa, Umnini under Philip Luthuli, Maphumulo under Xama Maphumulo, Itlafohlo under Mzimandhla Mkhize, Amanganga under Nkosenye Shozi, KwaMukuta under Makhanya, Vumenganje under Simeom Cele, and Vumenkwenza under Mbana Mkhize.

<sup>36</sup> J. Kelly, "Durban's Industrialisation and the Life and Labour of Black Workers, 1920 -1950 (University of Natal, Durban, MA, 1989), 42.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.



of the Frame group's female labour force of 2855 were recruited from the Transkei.<sup>38</sup> This practice of recruiting labour from the Transkei continued until the late 1970s despite continued efforts by state officials to limit the practice. The situation worsened in the 1970s, as local labour began to reject employment with Frame as a result of their low wages. In 1973, soon after the Durban Strikes, the Frame group's recruiting organisation was disbanded, although 20 percent of their labour force was still made up of Transkei citizens. The Acting Manager for the Western District of The Port Natal Board, G.F. Baker, noted that "an employer of this magnitude was encouraged to establish his industry within the confines of a Metropolitan area...and as an economic enticement was granted a carte blanche with regard to the importation of labour."<sup>39</sup> Philip Frame never followed the procedures and regulations stipulated by the state for the local District Labour Bureaux. Baker summarised the situation neatly when he noted that :

... the local District labour Bureau operated by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner's office far from acting as a deterrent actually connives with the illegalities that have taken place in the sense that a call-in-card is issued and the Bantu re-engaged without him having to return to his homeland at the expiry of the 12 month period- the Frame group is and has been the only culprit, but since it is the largest single employer, the effects are probably more damag-

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<sup>38</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, Box 53, 22 June 1973 - 5 July 1976, Baker to the Chief Dir., 26 Mar. 1974.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

ing.<sup>40</sup>

While Frame recruited freely in Transkei in spite of state policy, the work-seekers of Transkei in 1973 were in turn given the right by the state to by-pass the labour bureaux and take up employment on the sugar farms. A temporary measure was adopted to cover the period between 1973 and 28 February 1974 whereby the authorities did not stick to the labour bureau procedures applicable to the Transkei work-seekers and their prospective employers were allowed to register them without any requirement.<sup>41</sup>

A portion of Frame's work-force was made up of "migrants" from areas of Natal and KwaZulu and those with permanent residence status in Clermont and other local townships. Amongst the "migrants" there were relatively few from areas close to Durban such as Umzinto and Inanda; a significant number frequently commuted some 55 kilometres from Mpumalanga near Hammarsdale. Generally speaking, Frame's labour force originated primarily from Transkei and the reserves far distant from the city. It was this mobile class of African workers who played an important role in the economic history of Durban and the massive 1973 Durban strikes. On 9 January 1973, about 2000 workers, mainly mobile, at the Coronation Brick and Tile Works of Durban were on the streets demanding a wage increase. It was this incident which sparked off a three

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Chief Bantu Affairs Comm., Natal to the Secr. SA Cane Growers' Association, 25 May 1973.

month long spontaneous mass action by an estimated 100 000 African workers in Durban. It has been argued that mobile labour was docile and retarded class consciousness. Such perceptions are challenged outright in this work. We will return to this topic in Chapter Seven.

Given a wave of workplace unrest staged by mobile workers in the 1970s on the one hand, and the development of widespread institutionalised labour migration on the other, it seems plausible to speak of the emergence of mobile workers as a social and economic class. Stichter argues that "migrants" can be defined as a social class :

...migrant labour is a distinct form of labour use congruent with labour-intensive, low-wage, low-skill production. The individual migrant is partly involved in two different modes of production. It follows that migrants are in a particular class position, different from that of fully proletarianised workers...<sup>42</sup>

However, any study dealing with this particular class of workers has to examine "the wider economic, social and cultural world of the migrants," embracing not only work but also "life", not only "town" but also the "country-side."<sup>43</sup> What was perhaps most striking about mobile workers in Durban was that they made their presence felt in the urban industrial situation, and the 1960s and 1970s saw an interesting conjuncture of the advent of mass labour "migrancy" and heightened collective consciousness among "migrants." Yet it would be a serious mistake to consider Durban as an emerging "town of mobile workers."

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<sup>42</sup> Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 191.

<sup>43</sup> See Stichter, Migrant Labourers.

The process of "full-scale proletarianisation" of a major section of the urban community had already taken place and the African population of Durban comprised both mobile and largely urbanised workers.

### African Wages

In the early 1960s, the issue of at least compulsory minimum wages for all African workers was extensively debated by economists, industrialists and other interested parties. The Wage Board, which was instituted in the early 1920s to safeguard and improve the position of the white working class, began in 1957 to be actively involved in the wage determinations of African workers. The chairman of the Wage Board in 1962, W.F.J. Steenkamp, saw "a large, rapid and general wage rise..."<sup>44</sup> as a social and political necessity. In his concluding remarks, Steenkamp called for,

a larger rise in Bantu real wages than in European real wages, but it must be a steady and measured advance rather than a sudden general rise that would be certain to affect at least certain industries and parts of the country deleteriously and would, in particular, disregard the long-term employment problem facing us.<sup>45</sup>

The call for higher wages for the African labour force came from various quarters. The African National

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<sup>44</sup> W.F.J. Steenkamp, "Bantu Wages in South Africa", South African Journal of Economics, Vol. 30, No.2 (1962), 114.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Congress and the trade union umbrella body, the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), launched a "One Pound a Day" campaign and the workers adopted the "Asinamali, Sifunamali" slogan from the late 1950s.<sup>46</sup> The Durban Chamber of Commerce, the Natal Chamber of Industries and the Natal Employers Association called for a living wage amongst its African work force.<sup>47</sup>

African workers themselves persistently demanded wage increases during the late 1950s. Moreover, the period immediately following the Sharpeville massacre saw the suppression of mass political movements and trade unions, and there was very limited pressure forthcoming from political or trade union organisations to force wages up. Furthermore, strikes had declined to the extent that resistance was no longer coming directly from the workers themselves or from mass movements. Given a scenario seemingly so favourable, why would employers now support wage increases as proposed by the Wage Board?

It was necessary for wages to be increased in order to increase the buying power of the African workers. That principle is very important if we realise that capitalists saw increases in wages as creating demand particularly for industrial products. If the consumer market remained limited, it would turn out to be, as Marx noted, "produc-

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<sup>46</sup> See for instance, K. Luckhardt and B. Wall, Organise or Starve (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1980).

<sup>47</sup> See The Durban Chamber of Commerce, 1959/1960, Ann. Report of the Council of Directors: Natal Chamber of Industries, 56th Ann. Report, 1963-64, 28.

tion for production's sake" without expanding the basis for profit. The intervention of the state through the Wage Board should then be viewed as a response emanating from both the worker and capital struggles, a necessary step towards halting the decline in African real wages, and proposing increases where the rate of accumulation was relatively high. Capitalists as a class stood to gain although some individual capitalists were opposed to wage increases.

On the extreme right, Dr Verwoerd maintained: "Don't give the poorly paid worker too much or he will become lazy and inefficient."<sup>48</sup> From the early 1960s, the vast majority of African workers, whether mobile or urban residents, participated in the economy as casual, unskilled and semi-skilled labourers. In Durban there is evidence which shows that in the late 1950s industry opened its gates to African workers to take up semi-skilled and skilled jobs. However, the abundance of unskilled African labour largely explains why historically the South African economy has grown through greater inputs of capital and land but without adequately improving the efficiency of these inputs. In his assessment of manufacturing growth since 1963, the Director of the South African Federated Chamber of Industries, Dr H.J.J. Reynders, stated that "the Republic experienced a high rate of growth of total output, but the percentage increase in employment was one

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<sup>48</sup> SA Industry and Trade, Vol 59, Jan 1963, 41.

of the lowest in the world."<sup>49</sup>

During the 1960s there was an outcry among industrialists about the shortage of skilled manpower and most employers took advantage of that in utilising African labour. While job reservation was widely condemned by employers, the state saw it as a measure designed to safeguard industrial peace rather than deprive Africans of job opportunities. The shortage of skilled and semi-skilled workers resulted in a greater use of African labour. In this sphere remarkable power was granted before the 1960s to a section of the white working class, that is to say, salary workers, to control the rise of African competition. Furthermore, white trade unions had earlier on resisted vigorously the advance of Africans into skilled work. Nevertheless, the shortage of skilled workers in the 1960s led to the entry of Africans into skilled operations.

Against this background, we need to examine the African wage structure in Durban to see whether there was any impact at all by the Wage Board which after 1957 became increasingly interested in African real earnings (See Tables A and B).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> H.J.J. Reynders, "Industrialisation and Productivity", Address at the 7th AIESEC Congress, Pretoria, 5 July 1973.

<sup>50</sup> Real earnings refers to actual earnings adjusted to take into consideration inflation. Average real earnings would usually exceed the minimum real wage by definition.

TABLE A: AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS IN DURBAN  
1958-1965 ( In Rand, October 1958 R= 100)

INDUSTRY	YEAR	REAL EARNINGS	REAL MINIMUM	PERCENT INCREASE
<u>GROUP A</u>				
Coal Trade	1964	4.74	5.75	21.3
Quarrying	1962	4.96	5.70	14.9
Heavy Clay	1962	5.40	5.68	5.3
Cement Manufacturing	1962	NA	NA	NA
Road Making	1965	6.00	7.72	28.7
<u>GROUP B</u>				
Cement Products	1962	5.24	6.05	15.4
Mineral Water Manufacturing	1963	5.11	5.72	9.6
Wool Washing	1962	4.74	5.35	12.9
Cordage Manufacturing	1961	6.26	6.10	0.0
Brush and Broom Manufacturing	1961	4.64	6.10	31.5
Rubber Manufacturing	1963	5.95	6.34	6.6
<u>GROUP C</u>				
Metal Containers	1965	6.75	7.21	6.8
Plywood	1963	4.92	5.95	20.9
Chemical Industry	1964	6.67	6.23	0.0
Cold Storage	1963	5.47	5.72	4.6
Wood Products	1958	5.21	4.96	0.0
Match Manufacturing	1961	6.29	5.94	0.0
<u>GROUP D</u>				
Canning	1958	NA	NA	NA
Tobacco Manufacturing	1961	6.21	6.10	0.0
Sweet Manufacturing	1965	NA	NA	NA
Soap Manufacturing	1963	7.61	6.38	0.0
Ceramics	1962	NA	NA	NA
Liquid Fuels	1963	9.04	7.42	0.0
Tea, Coffee, and Chicory Packing	1964	7.51	5.95	0.0

Source: D. E. Pursell, "Bantu Real Wages and Employment Opportunities in South Africa," South African Journal of Economics, 36(1968), 97



TABLE B: AVERAGE WEEKLY REAL EARNINGS FOR UNSKILLED WORK IN DURBAN, 1958-1960 AND 1965-1966 (In Rand, October 1958 R =100)

TRADE	1958-60		1965-66	
	REAL EARNINGS	% INCREASE	REAL EARNINGS	% INCREASE
Market & Commission Agents	5.44	5.1	NA	0.0
Manufacturing or Distributing Gas	6.97	0.0	9.86	0.0
Motor Manufacturing	5.99	2.3	9.86	0.0
Meat Wholesale	5.60	2.1	-	-
Scrap Metal Breaking	5.83	0.0	6.70	0.0
Transporting Goods	5.07	12.8	6.51	0.0
Mending Bags	4.62	23.8	6.54	0.0
Transporting Passengers	NA	NA	-	-
Manufacturing and Distributing Ice-cream	4.34	31.2	-	-
Asphalting	4.73	20.9	-	-
Grease Manufacturing	7.05	0.0	9.19	0.0
Shipping Agencies	5.70	0.4	6.89	0.0
Delivery of Messages	4.51	16.7	-	-
Brewing	6.96	0.0	-	-
Fertiliser Manufacturing	5.02	13.9	-	-
Trunk & Box Manufacturing	NA	NA	-	-
Building Cleaning	4.90	16.7	-	-
Waste Paper Recovery	4.31	32.7	NA	NA
Generation of Electricity	5.26	8.7	6.43	0.0
Dealing in Wools & Hides	4.58	25.0	-	-
Bridge Building	-	-	7.05	0.0
Distilling	-	-	8.18	0.0
Excavation	-	-	7.85	0.0
Letting Offices	-	-	6.89	0.0
Tanning	-	-	6.83	0.0
Timber Treating	-	-	5.42	18.3
Beer Bottling	-	-	8.81	0.0
Distributing Ice-cream	-	-	5.79	10.7
Delivery Services	-	-	NA	0.0
Demolition	-	-	6.23	2.9
Manufacturing Batteries	-	-	NA	0.0

Source: Pursell, "Bantu Real Wages and Employment Opportunities in South Africa," 100-101

On a comparative basis, the real wages of unskilled African workers had remained static since the end of the Second World War, "in spite of virtual full employment and a 74 percent growth of the real national income over the period 1945-46 to 1958-59. Real wages of skilled workers [mostly Whites], on the other hand, have risen steadily since the war."<sup>51</sup> The wages of the white workers rose after the war by almost 40 percent<sup>52</sup>, making them one of better paid working-classes of the world with average annual earnings well above £1200 in the late 1950s. Yet African workers in the Durban-Pinetown area, particularly those in the manufacturing industry, experienced a decline of 11 percent in their wages between 1946-47 and 1953-54.<sup>53</sup> The Wage Board was challenged to address such disparities which existed in the economy and the distinction between skilled and unskilled work came to be "more or less identified with the distinction between the races, and the operation of market forces came in some measure to be replaced by the convention that a white man's wage was usually five to ten times the wage of a black man."<sup>54</sup>

In the manufacturing sector of Durban, the Wage Board prescribed wage increases ranging from 4,6 percent to

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<sup>51</sup> L. Katzen, "The Case for Minimum Wage Legislation in South Africa", SA Journal of Economics, Vol 29 (1961), 195.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Katzen's footnote number 3.

<sup>54</sup> Houghton, The South Africa Economy, 1973, 144,

31,5 percent during the period 1961 to 1966.<sup>55</sup> In 1961 the brush and broom industry was awarded an increase of 31,5 percent, which meant that workers who previously earned R4,64 per week now got R6,10 per week.<sup>56</sup> By 1962 the quarrying, heavy clay and cement producers industrial workers earning wages of R4,96, R5,40 and R5,24 were given increases of wages to R5,70, R5,68 and R6,05 respectively.<sup>57</sup> The rubber, plywood and mineral water manufacturing industries were prescribed 6,6 percent, 20,9 percent and 9,6 percent increases respectively in 1963.<sup>58</sup> For the rubber industry, workers' real earnings stood at R5,95 per week which was increased to R6,34 per week. The plywood workers' real earnings were increased from R4,92 to R5,95 per week and, for the mineral water manufacturing workers, wages were increased from R5,11 to R5,72 per week. In 1964 the coal trade workers' earnings were increased from R4,74 to R5,75 per week, representing a 21,3 percent increase.<sup>59</sup> Similarly in 1965, the road making workers' real earnings were increased from R6 to R7,72 per week, showing an increase of 28,7 percent.<sup>60</sup>

For some industries, the Wage Board did not award any increment because their wages, it was argued, were rela-

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<sup>55</sup> Pursell, "Bantu Real Wages", 97.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

tively higher when compared to others. For example, the workers in the chemical industry earned R6,67 per week and the Board recommended the real minimum of R6,23 per week. The same applied to the tea, coffee and chicory packing industry whose workers in 1964 earned R7,51 per week and the Board's stipulated real minimum was R5,95 per week.<sup>61</sup> Other industries whose workers' real earnings were not increased were the cordage, food products, match, soap and liquid fuels. In these industries where the Wage Board did not grant increases, employers had voluntarily increased workers' wages and the Board did not prescribe minima or raise wages, fearing that such action might jeopardise voluntary future wage increases by the employers.

In 1960 the Board played an important role in increasing workers' wages in the commercial distributive trade, the meat trade and the baking trade. The new wage determinations for these industries came into being in 1961. In the commercial distributive trade, workers earned R26,82 per month and that was increased to R31,97 per month, representing a 19,2 percent increase.<sup>62</sup> As for the meat and baking trades, wage determinations were instituted in six urban centres between 1957 and 1960. The baking industry in Durban was not reviewed but the meat trade workers' wage was increased from R5,02 to R5,15 per week, representing a 2,6 percent increase.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

The Wage Board also considered the hotel trade industry for increases in terms of real earnings in all urban centres except Bloemfontein and Cape Town. In the wage determinations awarded in 1960, the largest average increase was given to Durban "where the Board noted that wages had changed very little during the past twenty years."<sup>64</sup> The real monthly earning for the hotel trade industry in 1960 was R14,23 which was increased to R17,04, representing a 19,7 percent increase.<sup>65</sup>

In 1960 the unskilled workers received a substantial increase in 1960 from the Wage Board determinations that took place. The lowest average weekly real earning for the unskilled workers in Durban was found in the waste paper recovery sector where wages of R4,31 per week were paid while the highly paid unskilled workers were found in the brewing industry who were paid R6,96 per week. By 1966 the industries that paid the highest wages to unskilled labourers were the malt and distributing gas sectors where workers received wages of R9,86 per week. In 1966 the lowest paid unskilled workers under the jurisdiction of the Wage Board were found in the timber treating industry whose workers were paid R5,42 per week.<sup>66</sup>

Between 1959-60 and 1964 most employers in Durban increased unskilled real earnings as much as 20 to 40 percent. During the 1960s, the Wage Board's increase of

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., see 100 -101.

2,3 percent for labourers engaged in market-oriented firms received the lowest wage rise whereas the highest annual rate of increase of 9,4 percent for unskilled labourers was attained in the spirit distillation companies.<sup>67</sup>

As for the textile industry, Philip Frame was well known for paying starvation wages to his workers. The textile industry had its own wage determination procedures different from those of the Wage Board. A general trend developed in this particular industry whereby workers were paid wages which were 20 percent lower than those existing in other industries. The weaving workers, mostly semi-skilled Africans and Indians, in the blanket section earned R11,40 per week, and this wage remained static from 1955 to 1962, with an increase of 10 cents in 1962.<sup>68</sup> By 1966 the weaving section was granted an increase of 50 cents and the wage increment between 1955 and 1969 was almost 13,2 percent while the cost of living in the same period rose by 40,8 percent.<sup>69</sup> At the New Germany complex in 1964, male workers earned a basic wage of R6 per week plus bonus added. By November 1972 workers at that complex were paid R7 per week and R1 attendance bonus. Women workers were paid weekly wages of R5 and R1 attendance bonus as well.<sup>70</sup> From 1966 to 1972 the workers' wages had

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>68</sup> Institute for Industrial Education, The Durban Strikes, 1973 (Durban, IIE in conjunction with the Ravan Press, 1974), 24.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

gone up by R1 only. Some workers at Frame were still paid wages ranging between R5 and R9 per week in 1973.<sup>71</sup>

In 1964 there was a wage strike at Frame's company and barely nine years later, the workers again took to the streets demanding higher wages. No doubt there have been few sites of more frequent strike action by African workers in South Africa than the Frame group's complex of New Germany Textile Mills. The major problem has been that of poor wages.

In 1971 the Natal Employers Association conducted a wage and salary survey which indicated that 10 percent of the unskilled African workers earned less than R9 per week, 50 percent between R9 and R10 per week and 40 percent slightly above R10. About 25 percent of semi-skilled Africans earned over R18 per week while 20 percent of skilled workers earned between R18 and R23 per week.<sup>72</sup> The real minimum wage for unskilled workers in Durban, as published in the Government Gazette of 21 May 1971, was R8,95 per week which indicated an increase of R1,70 from the previous regulated figure of R7,25.<sup>73</sup> The salary scales for white workers were reasonably high compared to

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<sup>71</sup> Jabulani Gwala's personal Files. The author has some of the documents in his possession. See documents relating to the textile industry and the 1973 Durban strikes. Gwala was an active member and a trade unionist at Frame group of companies during the 1970s. Currently he is the leader of the South African Textile Workers' Union, Durban Branch.

<sup>72</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 79, Roll 61, 3 (c), Public Relations, Natal Employers' Association, Aug. 1971.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., KCF 80, Roll 62, Public Relations, SA Institute of Race Relations (Natal Region), Minutes of a Meeting of the Regional Committee, 7 June 1971, 3.

African wages. The average white fitter earned R1,50 per hour and junior clerks appointed with matriculation results earned R157 per month while those without matric qualifications were paid R141 per month.<sup>74</sup>

The sad story of African workers was that the consumer price index figures rose dramatically for all items to 107,8, and for food only to 108,9 which showed a 1,3 and 2,4 increase respectively in a month.<sup>75</sup> Professor Watts estimated, on the basis of figures produced by the Bantu Wage and Productivity Association, that the real minimum income for African workers with a family in Durban in July 1971 was R77 per month which meant that a family of five would need at least R17,91 per week to sustain itself.<sup>76</sup> The consumer price index for all items in Durban had consistently gone up from 1966 to 1973. In December 1961, the consumer price index was 120,8 and by December 1971, it had gone up to 148,6.<sup>77</sup> On that same note, on the basis of research conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Natal, for KwaMashu residents, "after the deduction of expenditure on rent, transport, water and fuel, very little more than 5,5 cents

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., KCF 79, Roll 61, Natal Employers' Ass, Aug. 1971.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Oct. 1971.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., Mar. 1972.



per head remained for the purchase of food and other essential requirements."<sup>78</sup> The extent of such poverty in African townships was measured by the indices of health published by the Durban Medical Officer of Health. The infant mortality rate for 1969 was 103,4 per 1000 live births as compared to 14,2 for Whites. During the same year, tuberculosis claimed 5,9 per 1000 Africans compared to 0,4 per 1000 for Whites.<sup>79</sup>

Because of the unhealthy economic situation prevalent among urban Africans in Durban, the Chairman of the Natal Region of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), L. Schlemmer, commented: "Ultimately all of us will have to pay dearly for this neglect of human needs."<sup>80</sup> Similarly, in 1971, the Director of the Institute of Race Relations, F.J van Wyk, warned of the "explosive discontent building up among urban Africans - a simmering anger, which has not yet been recognised by the Government, or if it has been, is being ignored."<sup>81</sup>

The key issue since the late 1950s has been that of poor wages for Africans. African concerns over wages were precisely expressed in the record "UBokweni" (transliteration of Bourquin's name) by L.Mahlobo :

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., KCF 80, Roll 62, SA Institute of Race Relations, Memorandum Presenting Information Relevant to a Consideration of Minimum Wage Rates for Unskilled Labourers in the Region, Sept., 1970, 2.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> SAIRR, A Survey of Race Relations, 1971, 179.

<sup>81</sup> The Rand Daily Mail, 16 Mar. 1971.

Bourquin is rampant in Durban (Repeatedly)  
 How can I catch him without money (Repeat)  
 Tell him to increase the pay of all  
 Blacks in the country (Repeat)  
 They are all complaining about their  
 pay  
 They say, as it does not satisfy them  
 they don't want it (Repeat both lines  
 several times)...  
 What is he doing in this city?  
 He agrees to nothing  
 When increases are requested he ref-  
 uses  
 Why does he do this when he is a White  
 man with plenty of money, whom we  
 trusted?  
 But he has pushed our requests to one  
 side  
 I see a Whiteman, look at him (R)  
 Who will not agree regarding our  
 pay.<sup>82</sup>

In real terms wages for the African workers in Durban remained low during the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, the wage increase was 38 percent. Moreover, increases occurred only after a decade of economic stagnation. Furthermore, the 1960s were crucially important for African workers: it was during that period that they were relocated to new townships and hence faced new economic demands. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the issue of wages remained one of the areas of conflict between employers and employees. Increasingly during this period, African workers in Durban showed their displeasure over poor wages by resorting to strike action. That eventually led to the great Durban strikes of 1973. While wages alone cannot adequately explain the unpredicted, complicated, unexpected and now most celebrated 1973 Durban strikes,

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<sup>82</sup> KCAL, Killie Campbell Audio Visual (hereafter KCAV), Oral Manuscripts, 987 -991 by I. Edwards, 10 Sept. 1980, 6.

the answer should be sought in a complex of socio-economic and political changes which took place between the boom conditions and the repression in the 1960s and the re-organisation of African resistance in the 1970s.

### Conclusion

The main thrust of this chapter has been to show how the apartheid state constructed an African worker, how the state integrated African workers into the economy but in ways which undermined Africans as potential consumers and the growth of capitalism. The state intervened in the wage structure of the African workers through the Wage Board and consequently wages remained poor, which eventually led to the outbreak of the 1973 strikes.

A sizeable number of employers of African labour in Durban preferred mobile labourers from distant areas or from foreign countries on the basis that they were cheap, docile, hard-working and easily satisfied. Local Zulu labourers were, in their opinion, troublesome, lazy and too selective; further, they demanded higher wages. Quite significantly, a proportion of mobile labourers were integrated into apartheid's booming economy; locally available Zulu labourers constituted another segment of African labour. Many of these workers were integrated into the capitalist system largely as unskilled and semi-skilled labourers, a process which restricted their economic potential as customers since their wages were poor. The boom years and the high growth rate had a significant impact on workers. The per capita income of both white and

African workers rose to a certain extent, though not significantly. However, the booming economy failed to close the wage gap which existed between white and African workers. While South African whites enjoyed a relatively high standard of living, the vast majority of Africans experienced grinding poverty - a point of significance considering the low purchasing power of Africans during the 1960s and 1970s. Yet in spite of poor wages, the 1960s was a decade in which worker strikes were relatively fewer and weaker than in the 1950s or those which were to come during the 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps such a situation could best be explained in terms of the economic stability and the ruthless policy of mass removals which threatened workers with possible expulsion from the urban area.

Wages remained low for African workers despite a general support for higher wages from employers. The Wages Board made some recommendations of wage rises but the latter were not really significant when compared to the cost of living of the day. In any economy the wage level plays an ambivalent role; it is a determinant of consumption levels and the major element in production costs. During the 1960s, there were still some industries for which no minimum had been established. Furthermore, the lower rates generally prescribed for manufacturing industries, and the infrequency of review, produced a considerable lag of wages in most manufacturing industries behind wage levels which could have stimulated greater economic growth during the 1960s. One cannot underestimate

the incentive effect of wage increases on workers: both in the passive sense that at higher wages workers will cooperate with management's attempts to raise productivity, and in the active sense that higher wages will stimulate economic growth.

Some employers who were in favour of the principle of increasing African wages and the establishment of a settled, permanent urban work-force nevertheless preferred, for many of the available jobs, to engage mobile workers rather than urban resident workers for the reason that the former were less demanding than the latter and hence could be paid lower wages. The impact of the economic downturns, which began during the early 1970s, plus the negligence of employers in not taking any decisive action to alleviate poverty among African workers, created the frustration and militancy of the 1970s and beyond - a mistake for which virtually all employers and the state had to pay.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### LIVING IN THE APARTHEID CITY:

#### AFRICAN WORKERS, THE STATE AND HOUSING, 1960-1973

The housing question involves what Harvey terms "the notion of displaced class struggle," a struggle which "has its origin in the work process but that ramifies and reverberates throughout all aspects of the system of relations which capitalism establishes."<sup>1</sup> In South Africa, the state, local and central, and capital created apartheid cities which were modelled on policies of racial segregation. The apartheid city came into being as a response to the urban crises of the 1950s. Such a city was a by-product of the Group Areas Act of 1950, which Lemon analysed as "...produc[ing] distinctive apartheid cities."<sup>2</sup> Lemon further noted that the Act was a "...cornerstone of apartheid, exemplifying the fundamental tenet of apartheid ideology that incompatibility between ethnic groups is such that contact between them leads to friction, and harmonious relations can be secured only by minimising points of contact."<sup>3</sup> The Nationalist Party government had

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<sup>1</sup> D. Harvey, The Urban Experience (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989), 89.

<sup>2</sup> A. Lemon, Apartheid in Transition (Aldershot, Gower, 1987), 215.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

a vision of such a racially divided city, one which coincided with the concerns both of many white urban residents and of municipal authorities, especially in Durban.<sup>4</sup> The entire process of making Durban an apartheid city was quickened by the outbreak of violence in Cato Manor in 1959. The urban riots of 1959 were the most acute expressions of deep-seated shifts in the structure and organisation of urban African society - shifts, moreover, in which the state had been largely responsible through racially defined policies.

This chapter investigates the state's interventionist policy in the process of the making of an apartheid city in Durban. The chapter also examines the socio-economic concomitants of the process, together with the rapid growth of shantytowns during the 1960s and 1970s. These related problems gave rise to the apartheid city which eventually, as Mabin stated, "...created an environment conducive to strikes by African workers, such as those which rolled across the Durban and East Rand industrial areas in 1973."<sup>5</sup>

#### Apartheid's African Housing: Plans and Problems

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<sup>4</sup> D. Hindson, M. Byerley and M. Morris, From Violence to Reconstruction: The Making, Disintegration and Remaking of an Apartheid City (University of Natal, Durban, CSDS, 1993), 3.

<sup>5</sup> A. Mabin, "The Dynamics of Urbanisation Since 1960", in M. Swilling (et al.) (eds), Apartheid City in Transition (Cape Town, OUP, 1991), 38.

Once an imperial port serving both Natal and the Witwatersrand, Durban grew into one of the most racially segregated urban areas in South Africa.<sup>6</sup> During the 1880s, the Durban City Council expressed concern about assaults and criminal-related acts among Africans living in shacks and hovels around the city.<sup>7</sup> It was then that the City Council expressed the view that African "locations...be established at a convenient distance from the towns."<sup>8</sup> By the beginning of the twentieth century the Durban City Council was in the forefront of those institutions articulating racial residential segregation "without compulsion, [but] by attracting people to segregated facilities."<sup>9</sup> As noted by Edwards, various policies implemented in Durban during those early years were taken up by many southern African urban areas; they became pillars "of the Union government's national policy of urban segregation."<sup>10</sup> In Durban, by-laws were proclaimed in an endeavour to control the processes of urbanisation among Indians and Africans. With the coming to power of the Nationalist Party in 1948, existing policies of urban segregation and

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<sup>6</sup> I. Edwards, "Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future" (Paper to be published in the Review of African Political Economy, No.62, March 1995), 1.

<sup>7</sup> Lemon, Apartheid in Transition, 211.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Edwards, "Cato Manor", 1.



spatial management were applied with rigour and vitality.<sup>11</sup> In a bid to secure continued support among the white electorate, the Nationalist Party government enforced removals of urban Africans living in shantytowns to newly established, far-away townships. In Durban, widespread fears among white residents about Cato Manor, which was associated with beer-brewing, disease, violence and crime, were taken into account by the government when the massive restructuring of urban African communities commenced.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, as noted by Edwards, there were extensive debates about the nature of the apartheid city.<sup>13</sup> The government intervened in housing matters, thereby reducing local authorities' autonomy. During that period, as Maylam notes, conflicts arose "between capital and labour, between the state and capital, between the local state and central state, and between Africans and the state."<sup>14</sup> Such conflicts were over the question of financing housing for African employees and their immediate families, and also the shape of the apartheid city. Maylam continues:

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<sup>11</sup> For a comprehensive study on this aspect, see P. Maylam, "Shackled by Contradictions: The Municipal Response to African Urbanisation in Durban, 1920-1950", African Urban Studies, 14 (1989); Hindson (et al), From Violence to Reconstruction; and Lemon, Apartheid in Transition.

<sup>12</sup> See Maylam, "Shackled by Contradictions".

<sup>13</sup> See Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", especially Chapter Six.

<sup>14</sup> P. Maylam, "The Rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid in South Africa", African Affairs, 89 (1990), 71.

The central state, unwilling to burden taxpayers, tended to argue that the responsibility lay with the local state and with capital, both being the chief beneficiaries of cheap labour in any particular urban area. The local state, unwilling to burden ratepayers, claimed that capital benefited most from cheap African labour and should therefore either contribute directly to housing costs or give workers a high enough wage to enable them to pay economic rents. Capital, naturally unwilling to burden itself with these costs if at all possible, and the central state argued together that all ratepayers benefited from cheap African labour and that they should therefore carry the main burden of housing costs.<sup>15</sup>

Such contradictions and complexities were the order of the day, especially in Durban during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>16</sup> As Cooper stated, "the ambivalence and inconsistency that run through the history of urban policy reflect the complexity of the issue of social reproduction."<sup>17</sup> He further noted, "Conflict over work discipline and housing..., over what residence,...and over the values and cultures that could develop inside urban space all shaped the city and further patterns of struggle."<sup>18</sup>

During the 1950s, while the central government's involvement in African accommodation steadily increased, the local urban authority was left with the responsibility for the development of housing. The Department of Native Affairs insisted that local authorities must develop site

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>16</sup> See Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 142-3.

<sup>17</sup> F. Cooper (ed), The Struggle for the City (Beverly Hills, Sage, 1983), 8.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 44.

and service schemes in KwaMashu.<sup>19</sup> In fact, during the 1950s, the Minister for Native Affairs, Verwoerd, assumed distinctive powers over approval and disapproval of housing plans. Commenting on Verwoerd's actions, Edwards wrote:

Having little knowledge of the principles of town planning, being more concerned with the African housing shortage in the Johannesburg area, and unfamiliar with the topographical features prevailing in the Durban area, Verwoerd remained dogmatic that KwaMashu could be developed on a site-and-service scheme.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, the City Council remained adamant that the development of a site and service housing scheme in KwaMashu was completely unsuitable. KwaMashu's hilly terrain and clay soil were impediments to such a scheme.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in 1956, municipal authorities undertook an independent study of African housing schemes in both the Union and colonial Zimbabwe; they came to the conclusion that site and service schemes were a total failure and were unworkable.<sup>22</sup> Formal housing proved to be a better alternative and, finally, after considerable pressure from local authorities and employer organisations, the Department of Native Affairs agreed that formal housing be developed in KwaMashu.<sup>23</sup>

By the late 1950s, new residential zoning plans for

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<sup>19</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 171.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 174.

the entire Durban area were developed. Both local and central state authorities agreed that the success of such a project needed the removal of Africans and Indians from Cato Manor. The plans were also intended to increase, as Edwards writes, "...the capitalisation of inner city land by clearing land of Blacks and allowing for White ownership and residence."<sup>24</sup> According to the Durban City Council Group Areas proclamations, Cato Manor was to become a white area. The entire core city area was reserved for white housing, while Indians were zoned in Merebank and the new township of Chatsworth; Africans were to be relocated to KwaMashu in the north and Umlazi in the south. Durban thus became an ideal apartheid city.

In both the KwaMashu and Umlazi townships, single male hostel accommodation and single-tenant nuclear family accommodation were to be provided.<sup>25</sup> African residents who qualified for nuclear family accommodation were those who were legally married and who qualified to be in the urban area under Section Ten (1)(b). Bachelors were provided with accommodation in the hostels. No women were allowed to own a house in KwaMashu and Umlazi; ownership remained a preserve of married men.<sup>26</sup> In that respect the new

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<sup>24</sup> Edwards, "Cato Manor", 5.

<sup>25</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 182.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. Edwards noted that sometimes marriages of convenience resulted in order for men to qualify for the new house in the township. Sometimes those who were not legally married were "given a short period of time to formalise their relationship, at which time they would be removed to formal housing. If such a couple failed to become legally married, the male would be resettled in the hostel area and the woman

society was fundamentally different from Cato Manor society, where both men and women, whether illegally or legally, owned shacks. Ideal townships, as envisaged by the state were created.

The government, capital and the local authorities of Durban all agreed on the construction of KwaMashu and Umlazi, and later on of Ntuzuma, as sites for relocating the African shack dwellers of Cato Manor. The first houses to be completed in KwaMashu were occupied in March 1958. Despite consensus among employers, local authorities and the government to relocate African shantytown dwellers to KwaMashu, problems of subsidising African housing emerged. The municipality of Durban and the government indicated that they were too constrained financially to subsidise African housing. Employers of African labour were therefore called upon to subsidise indirectly the costs of houses, so that the financial burden did not remain the sole responsibility of the occupants concerned. The new township of KwaMashu brought about some changes in the lifestyle of many African dwellers. With the passage of time, however, some of the workers could not afford the rentals and transport costs which they had to meet in the new township. This fact was backed up by a survey conducted in 1960, which disclosed that 68 percent of the shack dwellers received a monthly income of 8 pounds or less, and such workers could ill afford the rentals and

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evicted from the city."

the cost of transport.<sup>27</sup>

The "Pound a Day Campaign" waged jointly by the African National Congress and the South African Congress of Trade Unions partly contributed to wage increments. From 1959 onwards, employers of African labour, as was seen in Chapter Three, began to offer increases in wages to African workers. The increases were part and parcel of the realisation by employers that Africans were poorly paid and could not afford the cost of living in the new townships.

The development of KwaMashu and its initial growth failed to cater for all the shack dwellers of Cato Manor, Merebank and Chatsworth.<sup>28</sup> As a response to broader crises of the 1950s, the government, which earlier on had been reluctant, began developing further African housing to the south of the city on the Umlazi Mission Reserve. As the agent of the South Africa Native Trust in the development of Umlazi township, the municipality of Durban launched the immediate construction of houses.<sup>29</sup> In 1962 Umlazi township came into being. With the availability of houses in two townships, Africans living in shacks and compounds in the city, despite having legal rights to remain in the

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<sup>27</sup> NA, Senior Inligtings Beampste and Bantoe Kommissaris, Bantu Affairs Commissioner's Files (hereafter BAC), 0/3, BAC, Durban to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner, 1960.

<sup>28</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 64, Roll 47, Monthly Report, 20 July 1962.

<sup>29</sup> NA, BAC, 0/3, BAC, Durban to the CBAC, 11 Dec. 1959, "Proposed Umlazi Township", 1-2. See also SAIRR, A Survey of Race Relations, 1961, 179.

urban area, were nonetheless relocated to one or the other of the townships. An "imaginary line" was drawn to divide the city into north and south.<sup>30</sup> All those Africans employed in areas north of that imaginary line were resettled in KwaMashu, while those employed in the south were relocated to Umlazi township.<sup>31</sup> However, the imaginary line did not really work as it was intended to do.

From May 1962 onwards, the City Engineer of Durban anticipated a monthly completion of 150 houses. In Umlazi township, specific criteria were used by the Bantu Administration and Development in allocating houses. However, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner (BAC), Mr Nobles, gave first preference to families displaced at Umlazi as a result of the construction.<sup>32</sup> The BAC required at least 1000 houses for that purpose. Placed second on the government priority list were those people displaced from Cato Manor who qualified for formal housing at Umlazi and were temporarily moved to KwaMashu. The third priority group were people who resided in Cato Manor whose shacks were destroyed and who were removed urgently under ministerial order and without anywhere to go. The fourth group given preference were those squatter families who were entitled to family housing in Durban and were squatting on municipi-

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<sup>30</sup> KCAL, KCAV 987 -991, Interview with Bourquin by I. Edwards, 10 Sept. 1980.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 64, Roll 47, "Shack Removals From Cato Manor: Number of Persons to be Resettled at Umlazi Township From KwaMashu and Order of Priority for Settlement at Umlazi, 13 Apr. 1962."

pal land and employed to the south of the imaginary line. The last category to be considered were the Zulu-speaking people who were permanently employed south of Durban and who were given preferential accommodation in Umlazi township.<sup>33</sup> The entire process failed to materialise because of differences which existed between the government and the local authorities over priority people to be relocated. The government desired to reserve Umlazi for Zulu-speakers only, thus perpetuating ethnic division among the African people. Heavily influenced by the "divide and rule" policy throughout the 1960s, the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner insisted that Umlazi should be a "homeland" township exclusively for the Zulu ethnic group.<sup>34</sup> Such a policy guideline by the government partly attained its objectives in 1970 when Umlazi was finally handed over to the KwaZulu homeland government.

By 1962, it had become evident that the Umlazi housing scheme, administered by the state, offered lower rentals compared to KwaMashu, and also had an added advantage in that residents became land as well as property owners.<sup>35</sup> KwaMashu residents were not entitled to land ownership since the township was within the boundary of a White city.

The disparities between the two townships, apparent

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., BAC to the General Secr., The Natal Employers' Association, 11 Jan. 1962.

<sup>34</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 24, Roll 7, BA 2/3/3, Part 1, Dept. of Bantu Admin., 15 Nov. 1968.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., The DCC to the Town Clerk, 23 May 1962.



soon after the establishment of Umlazi, created great concern among employers of African labour. Workers employed in the northern areas of Durban and residing in KwaMashu began their movement to the south so that they could qualify for housing in Umlazi.

During the 1950s, however, the increasing pressures of African urbanisation, combined with ecological and agricultural crises in the reserves, signalled to the municipality and local employers the urgency of stabilising a section of the African labour force in the urban area in order to ensure that the new society would be fundamentally different to the kind typified by the Cato Manor shantytown. The entire programme of constructing single-site, single-tenant, nuclear-family housing aimed to restructure African urban society. KwaMashu thus became an ideal township, modelled on western standards.

In KwaMashu, four types of housing were constructed. Those Africans who were well off and were able to construct their own houses, using the standards laid down by the City Council, were allocated a 4500 square foot site for a site rental and rate repayment cost of almost R8 per month.<sup>36</sup> The construction of such houses was boosted with financial loans to the value of R500 (£250) coming from the Native Revenue Account. The second type of housing was the four-roomed detached bungalow which was built on 2800

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<sup>36</sup> SAIRR, Natal Region, File, Townships: KwaMashu, Natal Chamber of Industry, "Housing for the Urban African Population", 26 Sept. 1960. See also SAIRR, A Survey of Race Relations, 1961, 180.

square foot sites. These were bought for a R4 deposit and a monthly payment of R6,24, or rented for R6,48 per month.<sup>37</sup> African residents considered such rentals high; it was more affordable for those workers who earned at least R30 per month or more. The high rental rate partly explains why by August 1961 the Council was owed R73 322 in arrear rentals by the residents of KwaMashu.<sup>38</sup>

In Umlazi, rentals were slightly cheaper than in KwaMashu. Inclusive of all services, the rates for rented or purchased house in Umlazi were R6,45 or R5,75 respectively.<sup>39</sup> As for KwaMashu, the monthly commitment for each house with all service charges included was within the range of R11. Houses constructed in Umlazi township, therefore, remained cheaper and of better quality than those in KwaMashu.

The lowly paid workers were housed in two-roomed, log cabins and provided with a site and service housing scheme development. The two-roomed houses, better known as K2D dwellings, were rented for R4 plus per month, or bought for a monthly payment of R3 plus a deposit of R4. Single-roomed log cabins, in KwaMashu neighbourhood units Two and Four, were rented for R2 per month, while those people who constructed their own housing on the site and service

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 63, Roll 46, Residential Areas, Dept of Bantu Admin to the Town Clerk, 15 Aug. 1966.

scheme paid a monthly site rental of R4.<sup>40</sup>

Hostel accommodation for both men and women was provided. Large dormitories were constructed, each accommodating a minimum of 32 single persons. Hostel residents were provided with a steel bed and mattress and full bed clothes; as from February 1962,<sup>41</sup> a rental of R0,15 per night was charged for casual accommodation, and an economical rental of R2 per month was charged for long-term residents. Employers of African labour were given an option, either to rent hostel accommodation for their workers and then deduct such rent from the workers' wages, or to provide their own accommodation in company compounds.<sup>42</sup>

A sizeable number of firms in Durban preferred African workers to live in company compounds on the factory site. By 1970, for instance, the total number of people accommodated in municipal, government or private compounds and in domestic servant quarters was 61 000.<sup>43</sup> Firms in the forefront in providing their own compound accommodation included Coronation Brick, Defy, Hullet's Sugar Refinery, Kaffrarian Steam Mill, Lion Match, Union Whaling, South African Breweries and Union Flour Mills at

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<sup>40</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 23, Roll 6, Bantu Admin, Monthly Reports.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Extract from Bantu Admin. Monthly Report, 5 Dec. 1961, "Casual Accommodation at Kwamashu Hostel".

<sup>42</sup> Discussion with Mr S.B. Bourquin, UND, History Department, 6 Oct. 1993.

<sup>43</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 64, Roll 47, Residential Areas: Memorandum to Assistant Director (Bantu Areas), 14 Aug. 1970.

Umbilo. In the Mobeni area, Universal Mills was the only firm with a compound. Other compounds were found in the Congella, Maydon Wharf and Jacobs areas.<sup>44</sup> These compounds were, as noted by Van Onselen, "the colleges of exploitation",<sup>45</sup> as employers managed to control workers effectively and monitored their movements; workers did not lose working time since they lived in close proximity to their places of work. This type of accommodation was exploitative particularly among the dockworkers, who lived in barracks erected in the Point and Maydon Wharf areas.<sup>46</sup> Poor mobile workers were exploited in those barracks, which were erected in 1903.<sup>47</sup> The process of capital accumulation within the docks thrived for decades through the use of those compounds.

By March 1962 the municipality had constructed 14 "better class" houses which were occupied by those Africans with a better income and who had important positions in the community.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, 51/6 and 51/7 type houses (as described on previous pages) built by then numbered

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<sup>44</sup> Young, "Industrial Geography", 161, see footnote number 1.

<sup>45</sup> Van Onselen, Chibaro, 157.

<sup>46</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 82, Roll 64, Natal Chamber of Industries, Public Relations, "Accommodation: Stevedoring Labour, General Manager, Durban Stevedoring Labour Supply Company, 4 April 1975", 1.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 23, Roll 6, KwaMashu Township to the Dir., Report for Feb. 1962, Township Manager, 6 Mar. 1962.

4334 and 806 respectively.<sup>49</sup> Thirdly, the K2D type of houses provided numbered 1934, and the log cabins 2501.<sup>50</sup> For those earning less, 85 block houses and 153 site and service stands were provided. The total number of houses provided by March 1962 was 9827.<sup>51</sup> The hostels accommodated 10 944 single persons.<sup>52</sup> Umlazi township, by that time, provided only 865 houses.<sup>53</sup> A large section of the population lived in the compounds, emergency camps and surrounding shantytowns.

With the passage of time, African housing increased although problems of finance were experienced. By 1970 the housing situation in Durban had slightly improved. In KwaMashu township, the local authorities provided family accommodation for 15 404 families and hostel accommodation for 18 900 single men.<sup>54</sup> The location of Lamont accommodated 2763 families; the township was earmarked for Indian occupation as from 1980 onwards.<sup>55</sup> Africans living there were to be relocated to Umlazi, KwaMashu or Ntuzuma township, which was planned for occupation by the early 1970s.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Report for Jan. 1963, KwaMashu Township Manager to the Dir., 11 Feb. 1963.

<sup>53</sup> SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1962, 148.

<sup>54</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/1, S. Bourquin, "Present and Future Bantu Housing Development." To All Board Members, 21 Oct. 1974.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

The Lamont township, through the recommendations of the Hands Report, was developed in accordance with the specifications of the City Engineer of Durban. Also to experience the same fate was Chesterville residential area, which accommodated 1265 families in four-roomed apartments; this area was initially reserved for white occupation.<sup>56</sup> The S.J. Smith hostel provided accommodation for 4412 single men, while the Dalton Road Hostel accommodated 1452 single men. The Dalton hostel was specifically reserved to accommodate security corps personnel and Africans employed in essential services.<sup>57</sup>

At Jacobs, 886 single men were accommodated in the hostel, which catered for employees from the Durban harbour area where most of them, the toqt workers, were employed, mainly on a shift basis. Other workers were accommodated in privately owned compounds. As for women, they were accommodated at Thokoza hostel. This hostel could take only 900 women, particularly those who worked in the central area of Durban.<sup>58</sup> The total number of Africans residing in hostel accommodation, including the Glebe hostel, amounted to 28 158.<sup>59</sup> The compounds absorbed a

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. See also KCAL, KCAV 987-991, S. Bourquin by I. Edwards, 8 Sept. 1980 - 13 Feb 1981. Interview Dated 6 Nov. 1980.

<sup>58</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/1, Bourquin, "Present and Future Housing", 21 Oct. 1974.

<sup>59</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 64, Roll 47, Estimated Population in Bantu Residential Areas as at 18 Aug. 1970.

total number of 61 000 persons.<sup>60</sup> The township of Umlazi offered family accommodation for not more than 16 000 families by 1970.

During the 1970s, the government drastically reduced its funding for the construction of African urban housing. In 1971 the government indicated that it was going to reduce the funds available for the development of African housing during the 1972/3 fiscal year. During that period, Ntuzuma and Umlazi townships, and the Umlazi Glebe hostel scheme, were in the process of development. The City Council, acting as an agent of the South African Bantu Trust, developed these areas. In response to cuts in government funding, the City Treasurer and Engineer were sanctioned by the Health and Housing Committee to negotiate with the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development to reconsider the position.<sup>61</sup> The Secretary for the BAD indicated that the total amount available for the housing projects was limited to R2,1 million.<sup>62</sup> The City Council could only contribute R1,4 million through its Bantu Services Levy Fund.<sup>63</sup> The total available funds for the whole scheme thus amounted to R3,5 million, and yet the estimated amount required for the progress of the construction

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 80, Roll 62, Public Relations, City Engineer's Dept to the Town Clerk, 28 Jan. 1972.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., The DCC Minutes, 10 Feb. 1972.

programme was R8,36 million.<sup>64</sup> The shortfall was enormous, to the extent that concern was expressed by both the City Council and employer organisations.

The desire to restrict government funding of urban African housing projects drew criticism from the DCC and the NCI. The criticism was founded on the fact that government funding was withdrawn at the moment when the Umlazi Glebe hostel project was supposed to be well developed. Hostel accommodation in the Umlazi area was desperately needed, "in the face of an existing backlog of many thousands of housing units."<sup>65</sup> The Umlazi hostel project required a total amount of R5,5 million to ensure that a hostel catering for 19 616 persons was completed.<sup>66</sup> After extensive negotiations between the City Council and the government, the overall funding was increased to R5 million.<sup>67</sup>

In view of government funding problems for urban African housing, the re-introduction of site and service schemes was suggested by the DCC.<sup>68</sup> Instead of utilising the R5 million allocated to African housing, it was suggested that the amount available should be spent on providing initial services on site and service schemes. The services to be provided were roads, water, sewerage,

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., The DCC Minutes, 13 Apr. 1972.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.



street lighting, schools and shopping centres. The occupant of each site was allowed to erect his own shack "on the plot provided, on the understanding that within three years he erected a dwelling to standards specified by the municipal or government authority concerned."<sup>69</sup> Such a policy was accepted by both the municipality and the government. It is fascinating that during the 1950s, the government had insisted on site and service schemes developed "in an orderly and tidy manner..."<sup>70</sup>; these were rejected by municipal officials on the basis that they were going to create further shantytowns. During the 1970s, the municipal officials accepted government proposals. The plan was approved by the Bantu Affairs Commissioner in 1973.<sup>71</sup> Given this scenario, the PNAAB in 1974 acknowledged its responsibility and the acute shortage of housing and "the tremendous need for suitable accommodation for many thousands of Bantu people living under very adverse circumstances throughout its area of jurisdiction".<sup>72</sup>

During the 1960s, squatter settlements sprouted throughout the surrounding environs of metropolitan Durban. The local authorities of Durban had managed to contain the situation in Cato Manor, with only nine shacks

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 173.

<sup>71</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/1, Bourquin, Present and Future Housing, 21 Oct. 1974.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

remaining to be demolished by 1966, but success in controlling squatter shantytowns was short-lived. The housing situation became worse in the late 1960s. Because of the seriousness of the unavailability of satisfactory housing for the African workers in Durban, the Deputy Minister of Bantu Affairs, Dr P. Koornhof, was compelled to tour the area in November 1968. After assessing the situation, the Deputy Minister commented that:

...we cannot have another Cato Manor and we must solve the problems before they get very much worse...It is not possible to separate such questions as labour and housing...This is a matter of cooperation and the difficulty is not that of a political nature but it is a social, industrial and national problem...<sup>73</sup>

It need scarcely be said that the vast majority of Durban's African workers in the 1960s lived in shacks. A sizeable number of employers of African labour reported that their employees who could afford decent accommodation were denied the right "simply through its non-availability and are obliged to live in squatter shacks".<sup>74</sup> Those workers who rented small rooms in the shacks paid as much as R13 per month.<sup>75</sup> In various instances, some of the workers used the "hot bunk" method whereby one single bed was shared by two people who worked on alternate shifts.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/1, Housing, Buildings and Sites: Policy, 27 May 1974 to 15 Apr. 1975, Box 2, Dir, Natal Chamber of Industries to the Honourable M.C. Botha M.P, Minister of BAD, 24 Apr. 1974.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

Such a position constituted a crisis point which deepened as more African mobile workers made their way into urban areas in the 1960s.

During the early 1960s KwaMashu and Umlazi, the main townships, acted as the two dominant "labour lungs" of Durban.<sup>77</sup> However, with the passage of time, the situation drastically changed as the effects of industrial expansion and accelerated urbanisation on the housing needs of the African workers began to be felt. The emergence of shantytowns on Durban's doorstep signalled a housing crisis beyond control, with a conservative estimate of 150 000 people living in the shanties.<sup>78</sup> The shack dwellers, Durban's "secret people",<sup>79</sup> constituted another labour pool although they experienced backward and forward movements from one area to another. To those people, the housing situation remained as critical as before with further promises of curbing the shortage coming from the Deputy Minister of Bantu Affairs in the late 1960s.<sup>80</sup>

Prior to the establishment of the Port Natal Affairs Administration Board on 1 August 1973, the housing situation continued to deteriorate. It would not be a great exaggeration to say that the 1960s spread the industrial revolution to South Africa while boom conditions continued

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<sup>77</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 191.

<sup>78</sup> The Natal Mercury, 3 Apr. 1969.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/1, Dir., Natal Chamber of Industries to the Hon. M.C Botha.

to flourish. Yet a disturbing fact was that African housing lagged behind, with an estimate of 250 000 squatters in Durban in 1971.<sup>81</sup> The resultant deplorable conditions in the shanties, which were chronicled in the newspapers, had become a matter of concern to local authorities.<sup>82</sup> Even the PNAAB, soon after it was launched, admitted that,

As a result of insufficient funds and, to a large extent, lack of expertise and proper planning to provide suitable accommodation for Bantu employed in the areas of jurisdiction of many of the local authorities, the position has been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that, should a super-human effort not be made immediately, the Board as well as the state could quite easily find itself facing a situation far worse in all respects than the Cato Manor debacle.<sup>83</sup>

In that regard, the Pinetown-New Germany and District Divisional Committee saw the labour unrest which rocked Durban in the 1970s as a by-product of unsatisfactory housing circumstances in which the African workers found themselves.<sup>84</sup>

### Urban African Community Facilities

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<sup>81</sup> The Natal Mercury, 21 Jan 1971.

<sup>82</sup> See The Natal Mercury, 3 Apr. 1969, 9 Apr. 1969, 10 Apr 1969 and 21 Jan. 1971.

<sup>83</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/1, Bourquin, Present and Future Bantu Housing, 1974, 2.

<sup>84</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/1, Natal Chamber of Industries to The Hon. M.C. Botha, 24 Apr. 1974.

The construction of African housing created a string of social demands - namely for transport, health services, recreation facilities, schools and welfare amenities. In KwaMashu township in 1961, two schools, twelve shops, two creches, a clinic, a swimming bath, three football fields and three all-weather tennis courts were provided. Furthermore, there were seven lower primary, four higher primary and one post-primary school, two churches, a temporary beerhall and 22 traders.<sup>85</sup> Undoubtedly, social services were provided, but the struggle over such services in general was not merely over their provision but over the very nature of what was provided. For instance, schools were constructed for the African people under the Bantu Education system, but what came from the system itself is best captured by the phrase, "poisoned Black education"<sup>86</sup> - the phrase used by the former Director of Planning for the Department of Bantu Education, Dr Ken Hartshorne, to describe African education. On the whole, more and more students acquired the rudiments of that type of education in the expanded school system, however, as Mabin states, "imperfect their conditions and performance."<sup>87</sup>

It was not long after the occupation of the new houses in the townships that voices of concern began to be

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<sup>85</sup> SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1961, 179.

<sup>86</sup> The Citizen, 19 Jan 1978.

<sup>87</sup> Mabin, "The Dynamics of Urbanisation", 34.

heard. The site and service scheme and the log cabins provided in KwaMashu township were unsatisfactory. Commenting on such schemes, Bourquin recalls that,

We did this by acquiring a large number of pre-fabricated wooden hutments, erected in one corner of a site which was serviced with water and streets...The occupants would then eventually develop a permanent home on these sites. The site and service scheme was condemned by the Urban Bantu Council (UBC) at KwaMashu itself - they regarded this as a festering sore.<sup>88</sup>

The log cabins which existed in KwaMashu neighbourhood units Two and Four were criticised by resident women as "not suitable for human habitation as they were worse than the slums in Cato Manor".<sup>89</sup> Certainly, some sections of the new townships experienced debilitating conditions. C.C. Majola noted that "conditions in KwaMashu were very poor,...there was a feeling at one stage that we were like the Israelites of the Old Testament - it was better in Egypt than here."<sup>90</sup> In Umlazi township, water supplies closely resembled those which existed in the emergency camps. Communal taps in the streets were by 1966 still in use by sections of the resident community. However, a considerable number of houses had their own taps

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<sup>88</sup> KCAL, KCAV 174- 175, S.B. Bourquin by A. Mason and D. Collins, 18 Oct. 1979.

<sup>89</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, 2, Publicity, propaganda and Unrest - General Correspondence BA 28/40, 1954- 1969, R.G. Wilson, Township Manager, KwaMashu to Dir., Bantu Admin. S.B. Bourquin, 23 Feb. 1962. See also KCF 23, Roll 6, KwaMashu Residents' Comm., 18 Feb. 1962, Memo- Grievances Submitted by KwaMashu Women.

<sup>90</sup> KCAL, KCAV 142, C.C. Majola by D. Collins and A. Mason, 20 June 1979, 5.

installed.<sup>91</sup> Pit latrines were utilised in Umlazi. The Department of Bantu Administration acknowledged that such a facility was "causing concern as the position has been reached where it is extremely difficult in many instances to find suitable places on the sites to dig the necessary new pits apart from the other unsatisfactory features of this type of latrine".<sup>92</sup>

The township residents challenged the City Council to remove water-meters since they had become a source of dissatisfaction. In 1966 the Voice of KwaMashu, an organ of the banned ANC, submitted a memorandum to the Mayor of Durban to consider water charges in the townships.<sup>93</sup> As noted by Edwards, "In the log cabin scheme, water and sanitation facilities were shared between two cabins, while in the site-and-service scheme full water-borne sanitation and water facilities were provided on each site."<sup>94</sup> The normal rate charged for water was 18 cents per 1000 gallons. Residents complained that sometimes they paid R2 per month on water alone; they called for a standardised system of water charges at a flat rate of 40 cents per month per household.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 63, Roll 46, Dept of Bantu Admin to The Town Clerk, 15 Aug. 1966.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, 2, The Voice of KwaMashu to the Mayor of Durban etc, 24 June 1966.

<sup>94</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 182.

<sup>95</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, 2, The Voice Of Kwa-Mashu, 24 June 1966.

The removal of waste from the townships came under severe public criticism in the 1960s. Refuse was sometimes collected only once a fortnight. Uncollected garbage lay in piles in the township streets and gave off an unpleasant smell. The reason for the inadequate collection of household refuse, according to the municipal officials, was the shortage of labour force in the cleansing services. However, the main reason was more a matter of finance than a shortage of labour. As for the labour force engaged in the service, most were unskilled and poorly paid and involved in a job with low status; they left the service at a high rate.<sup>96</sup>

With the development of formal housing in KwaMashu, transport agreements had to be finalised between the South African Railways, bus companies and the City Council. Railway service was provided. Furthermore, the Public Utility Bus Transport Company (PUTCO) was contracted to provide the necessary transport for the African workers.<sup>97</sup> While the provision of the railway and bus services marked a way forward, problems associated with fares and with the availability of buses during peak hours were raised by resident workers.

In 1962 the residents of KwaMashu proposed that bus fares should be reduced from 7 cents to 5 cents per jour-

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<sup>96</sup> Interview with Msomi, 16 Oct. 1992.

<sup>97</sup> See Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 186.



ney to town.<sup>98</sup> The fares charged by PUTCO were considered high. Moreover, African workers who lived in KwaMashu but were employed to the south of the city incurred extra expenses from bus and rail termini to their places of employment. Workers complained that those transport costs strained their budgets, unlike transport to and from Cato Manor shantytown. Cato Manor was very close to the city centre and industrial areas and most workers preferred to walk rather than to "waste" their hard-earned money. The distance between KwaMashu and places of work meant a further financial burden on workers.

On 8 February 1962, KwaMashu women marched to the Township Manager's office to present their grievances. They demanded a "reduction of bus fares; that the stage system be introduced to enable passengers alighting or boarding buses along the route to pay less; that reduced fares for children be introduced."<sup>99</sup> The demand by resident women was supported by the banned Congress Alliance in a memorandum submitted to the KwaMashu Township Manager.<sup>100</sup> The Congress Alliance called for a reduction in bus fares to 4 cents. It also challenged the government and the municipality to consider subsidising the costs of

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<sup>98</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, 2, Memo: "Grievances submitted by KwaMashu Women".

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., Dept of Bantu Admin., S.B. Bourquin to the Township Manager, Memorandum of Grievances Submitted to the KwaMashu Township Manager by the Congress Alliance, 14 Feb. 1962.

transport.<sup>101</sup>

During the 1960s, complaints about transport were expressed in each and every African township. In Chesterville residents' complaints about the bus system were submitted by the banned Congress Alliance in 1962.<sup>102</sup> The residents complained that buses failed to operate according to stipulated times. Moreover, passengers along the route were left behind because buses tended to wait until they were full at the main Chesterville terminus. Furthermore, there was an acute shortage of buses at the City terminus particularly during the peak hours that is, between 4 pm and 7 pm.<sup>103</sup> Maureen Mothwa remarks :

Buses were there but few and they used to go at certain times. At Lamontville there was one morning bus which went as early as 5 am. If one would be left by that bus one would be late at work, and your money would be cut and have a bad record of late coming. In the evening, when going home if you were left by a bus you would become a victim of the tsotsis [robbers].<sup>104</sup>

The provision of railway and bus services in the townships was viewed by the government as a major development for the African people. However, in line with government policies of apartheid, the National Transport Commission (NTC) made a recommendation to the Durban City Council to implement total segregation in the transport sec-

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., Memorandum of Grievances at Chesterville Location Submitted to the Superintendent of the Chesterville Location by the Congress Alliance, 14 Feb. 1962.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with M. Mothwa by J. Nala: 1973 Research Project, 3-4.

tor.<sup>105</sup> The directive by the NTC was rejected by the Council on the basis that "the City Council had always applied partial segregation...(and) did not intend to implement full apartheid."<sup>106</sup> The City Council also rejected the idea on consideration of its financial implications. However, in 1968 the City Council reversed its earlier decision and passed by-laws which required total segregation in the transport service. Prior to this, in 1962, the Congress Alliance in 1962 had submitted a memorandum to the City Council opposing any policy which segregated Africans on the basis of race and colour.<sup>107</sup> Generally the transport system was poor and the Chairman of the Ningizimu Urban Bantu Council, A.W.G. Champion, commented:

While our transport is bad, those of us who have motor cars are being charged if found with their friends in their cars on suspicion that they are competing with taxis. This does not apply to other races. Traffic officers are very keen to stop Bantu cars while they allow other races' cars to pass on.<sup>108</sup>

In 1961 there were seven lower primary, four higher primary and one post-primary school in KwaMashu town-

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<sup>105</sup> NA, Durban City Council, 3/DBN 1/1/2/14, 15 Oct. 1953 to 13 Oct. 1976, Minutes of Council-in-Committee, 1 June 1960.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>107</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, See Memo by the Congress Alliance, 1962.

<sup>108</sup> KCAL, File 10, Bourquin Papers, Miscellaneous Cuttings, Reports and Correspondence, KCM 55327, A.W.G. Champion - Urban Bantu Council - Ningizimu Chairman to the Hon T.N.H. Jansen, MP and Deputy Minister of Bantu Admin and Education, 14 Jan 1975.

ship. The City Council's initial plans were to construct one secondary and four primary schools in each respective neighbourhood unit.<sup>109</sup> The plans were sidelined while the City Council concentrated on the construction of houses. However, in response to the City Council's plans on schools, the government, in line with its Bantu Education system, insisted that schools had to be established. Although schools were established in all African townships during the 1960s and 1970s, a general complaint was that there were too few of them. For instance, in 1975 the Chairman of the KwaMashu Urban Bantu Council, Zeph Dhlomo, submitted a memorandum to the Minister of the BAD, Punt Jansen, complaining that in KwaMashu only one high school and three secondary schools existed.<sup>110</sup> That limited number of secondary schools served more than 22 000 families.

African residents resented the compulsory school levy of twenty cents per month introduced in 1962 to assist in financing schools. By 1972 the school levy was increased to 30 cents per month.<sup>111</sup> The school levy was imposed on African residents and they felt that they were "the lowest paid section of the population, being treated unfairly as

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<sup>109</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 187.

<sup>110</sup> The Natal Mercury, 4 June 1975.

<sup>111</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 80, Roll 62, The DCC Minutes, Bantu Education, 13 Apr. 1972, 3.

the only community required to pay such [a] levy."<sup>112</sup> The Congress Alliance called for the complete withdrawal of such a levy which was paid for the advancement of "Dr Verwoerd's poisonous Bantu education."<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the Alliance condemned the Union-wide Bantu Education system :

We wish to place on record that we are opposed to the system of Bantu Education as we would be opposed to any other special system of education decided for any particular section of our population. We are satisfied that there should be one system of education for all and one standard of education.<sup>114</sup>

The use of a vernacular language, Zulu, as a medium of instruction from standard one to six was greatly resented by parents.<sup>115</sup> C.C. Majola explains :

The underlying principle of Bantu Education was that of the medium of instruction which had to be the mother tongue and Zulu had not developed sufficiently to communicate, say a mathematical theory to a student in Zulu...thus lowering the quality of education. You can't teach history in Zulu, actually all the science subjects cannot

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<sup>112</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, Memorandum of Grievances at Lamont Location- Submitted to the Superintendent of the Lamontville Location by the Congress Alliance, 14 Feb. 1962.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Memorandum of Grievances Submitted to the KwaMashu Township Manager by the Congress Alliance, 14 Feb. 1962; and Bourquin to Col. Fraser, Officer commanding, Natal Command, 3 Aug. 1962 - "The Voice of the African National Congress by the Durban Regional Committee of the ANC", 28/9 Apr. 1962.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., Memo of Grievances at Chesterville Location, 14 Feb. 1962.

<sup>115</sup> KCAL, File 10, KCM 55327, Champion to the Hon Janson, 14 Jan. 1975. See also NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/BAB/1, Bantu Advisory Bodies, Central, Box 79, 12 Sept. 1973 to 31 July 1976, Minutes of the KwaMashu UBC, 1 Dec. 1975.

be taught in the vernaculars.<sup>116</sup>

By the 1970s, the absence of adequate classrooms in KwaMashu had reached critical proportions. In KwaMashu township, at least nine of its primary schools were heavily enrolled, with a shortage of classrooms for 2034 pupils.<sup>117</sup> The crisis which faced those schools was countered by the adoption of the "platoon system under which two sets of children and teachers used the school premises at different hours".<sup>118</sup> The crisis in African education was caused by lack of adequate government funding. For instance, in 1972 the budget for African education amounted to R73 392 300 for the whole country including the bantustans, as compared to R395 061 000 for White education.<sup>119</sup>

Health facilities were also totally inadequate in the townships. In KwaMashu, for example, a small polyclinic was provided. Yet even that small polyclinic did not have ambulance services, was hard hit by the shortage of medical personnel and admitted a limited number of patients on a daily basis.<sup>120</sup> The nearest hospital for the African residents in the townships was the King Edward VIII hospi-

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<sup>116</sup> KCAL, KCAV 142, C.C. Majola by D. Collins and A. Mason, 20 June 1979,2.

<sup>117</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 80, Roll 62, The DCC, Minutes, Bantu Education, 13 Apr. 1972, 3.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., The DCC, Minutes, "Financing and Costs of Bantu Education", 10 May 1973.

<sup>120</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/BAB/1, Minutes of the KwaMashu UBC, 23 Feb. 1976.

tal in Durban. Admittedly, residential facilities in all townships were limited, and the City Council was mainly concerned about minimising costs. The residents complained about housing, rentals, education, community facilities, medical services, sanitation, refuse collection, burial fees and crime. One of the residents commented: "The very existence of a township like KwaMashu is itself a problem from which other problems flow".<sup>121</sup>

#### The Future Control of KwaMashu

The future control of KwaMashu township became a heated controversy during the 1960s. Differences of opinion on the whole question of control of KwaMashu were expressed by Durban City Councillors, welfare organisations, the South African Institute of Race Relations, the Black Sash and government officials. The Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, De Wet Nel, welcomed the idea of a take-over by the government, but with conditions attached.<sup>122</sup> The government insisted that the City Council must purchase a strip of land of 825 acres between KwaMashu township and Dalmeny. The area was meant to link the township with the reserve of Inanda, thereby paving the way for its eventual declaration as a homeland. Initially in the 1950s, Verwoerd's Department of

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<sup>121</sup> SAIRR, Natal Region, KwaMashu - A Black Township, Feb 1979.

<sup>122</sup> The Daily News, 13 June 1962.

Native Affairs had demanded that KwaMashu be situated very close to the African reserve areas of Inanda, Dalmeij and Released Area 33.<sup>123</sup> An area of 120 acres was to be purchased for the sole purpose of developing "...an 'umbilical cord' road which would connect the township to the city and a further 480 acres for the buffer areas required by the Group Areas Act."<sup>124</sup>

Resistance to the take-over of KwaMashu came first from Durban councillor, Mrs Jenny Jenkins. She expressed concern over government policies towards African welfare, influx control and labour bureaux, policies which, she argued, would have swept away "the last remnants of autonomy in African affairs."<sup>125</sup> Supporting the opposition to the take-over was the chairman of the Durban and District Joint Council of Europeans and Bantu who felt that the City Council had an obligation to look after its inhabitants irrespective of colour, race or gender. In a strongly worded letter to the Town Clerk, the chairman stated that people should not be excluded

... merely because the inhabitants are Africans, or because the City Council might otherwise be called upon to make a financial contribution to KwaMashu. It is Durban which benefits from the labour of the residents of KwaMashu... and [it] should...be responsible for their welfare. If through neglect of their health, illness or disease arise, it is Durban which will suffer through infection and through loss of

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<sup>123</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 169.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 169 -170.

<sup>125</sup> The Natal Mercury, 14 June 1962.



working ability.<sup>126</sup>

The South African Institute of Race Relations, Natal Region,<sup>127</sup> and the Black Sash<sup>128</sup> also voiced their opposition to a government take-over of KwaMashu. The Black Sash was opposed on the basis that the emergence of "independent administrations would create conditions of irreparable chaos and discord."<sup>129</sup>

A sizeable proportion of councillors in the City Council favoured the government take-over of KwaMashu on the basis that financial responsibilities and rental losses would be shifted to the government. The Mayor of Durban reported an annual loss of approximately R230 000 in arrear rentals and operational costs in the township.<sup>130</sup> Some residents of KwaMashu had embarked on a rent boycott from the time when they were relocated to the new township.

Many residents could not afford the rentals of over R6 per month. The City Council also argued that the control and administration of the two townships would be effective under one authority.<sup>131</sup> However, in 1966, while

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<sup>126</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 24, Roll 7, The Town Clerk to Dir., Bantu Admin., 22 June 1962.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., SA Institute of Race Relations to the Town Clerk, 20 Aug. 1962.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., The Black Sash to the Town Clerk, 28 June 1962.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., Bantu Admin. Comm. Minutes, 24 Oct. 1963.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., Dept of Bantu Admin. to the Town Clerk, 7 Aug. 1962. See also SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1962, 150.

the City Council and the government were still engaged in negotiations over the control of KwaMashu, the state, without notice, seriously cut its funding of African housing projects in the townships.<sup>132</sup> The move by the government was strongly opposed by the Durban Chamber of Commerce, the Natal Chamber of Industries and the City Council.<sup>133</sup> Government actions led to protests from commerce, industry, and local authorities. Cuts in funding meant creating more problems for African housing, which was seriously lagging behind. Protests could no longer be ignored, and the municipality recommended to the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner (CBAC) that the take-over should be postponed until 1970.<sup>134</sup> On 26 August 1968, the Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development, after an intensive review of the reports of the Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner for Natal, suspended the take-over of KwaMashu.<sup>135</sup>

The take-over of KwaMashu by the government remained an issue during the first half of the 1970s. From 1973 onwards, the township of KwaMashu was placed under the administration of the Port Natal Affairs Administration Board, in conjunction with the Durban City Council, and the largely toothless Urban Bantu Council. The Port Natal

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<sup>132</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 80, Roll 62, The DCC, Minutes, 10 Feb. 1972.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 24, Roll 7, Dept of Bantu Admin., 15 Nov. 1968.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

Affairs Administration Board controlled issues relating to leasehold rights, alterations to property, allocation of houses and visitors' and sub-tenants' permits. The take-over issue ceased to exist in April 1977 when the township was finally incorporated into the homeland of KwaZulu.<sup>136</sup>

By the 1970s, the development of formal housing in various African townships ceased, an event which had serious implications for the survival of apartheid. It was a period when influx control measures, which had been less than successful in any event, totally collapsed in Durban. Further migration resulted soon after KwaZulu gained self-governing status, which facilitated greater movement from the surrounding reserves to Durban since "the tribal authorities had neither the means nor the incentives to enforce a system of control devised and administered by the Department of Bantu Administration and Development in the 1960s."<sup>137</sup> Moreover, the apartheid city, as already stated, was riddled with contradictions, clashes and struggles between the central state, local authorities and capital over the issue of African housing.

During the 1970s, shack settlements threatened the existence of the apartheid city, with estimates of three million African residents living in squatter camps in and around Durban by the year 2000.<sup>138</sup> In fact, to date, shack

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<sup>136</sup> SAIRR, Natal Region, KwaMashu - A Black Township, Information Sheet, Feb. 1979.

<sup>137</sup> Hindson (et al), From Violence to Reconstruction, 10.

<sup>138</sup> Maylam, "The Rise and Decline of Urban Apartheid", 81. The three million mark has already been reached.

settlements have become the order of the day in all peripheries of South African cities. The post-apartheid government faces one of its greatest challenges in redressing the housing imbalances created in the past.

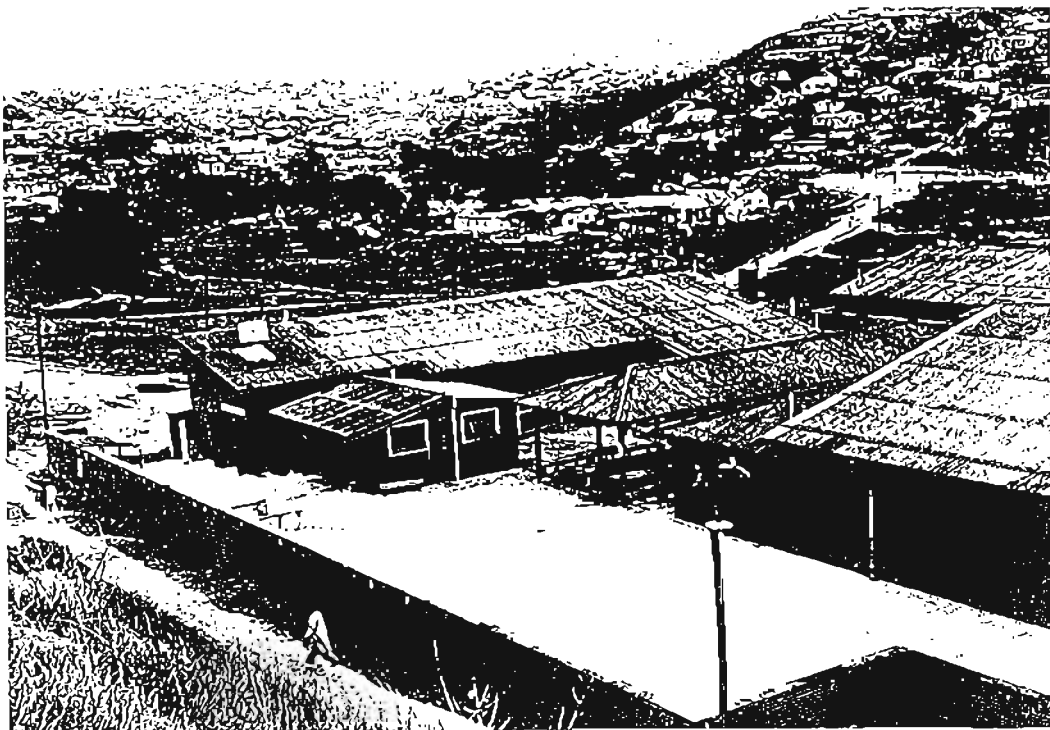
### Conclusion

Essentially, this chapter is about the interventionist role played by the central government in shaping urban African society. Certainly, the 1960s were significant in that they were years of social engineering and massive population removals on a large scale; in this period vigorous attempts were made to uproot African urbanites and destabilise an African proletariat in the apartheid city which whites were claiming to be their own - hence the state's support of the bantustan separate development policy. Yet, paradoxically, the central state was also urging the employment of most of these very urbanites rather than mobile labour. While the state attained success in terms of building houses, schools and other infrastructure for urban Africans, very often such success brought about a string of problems. Ultimately, a complex society came into being which could not be administered by the apartheid state - a state which was characterised by conflicts, contradictions, and failures and successes. It is hardly a surprise that by the 1970s, the apartheid state began to show some signs of collapse-collapse, moreover, engineered by its own policies.



Aerial view of part of Cato Manor, 1961, showing terracing on hillside (towards top left centre) and school (centre of foreground).

*(Photo: Natal Mercury)*



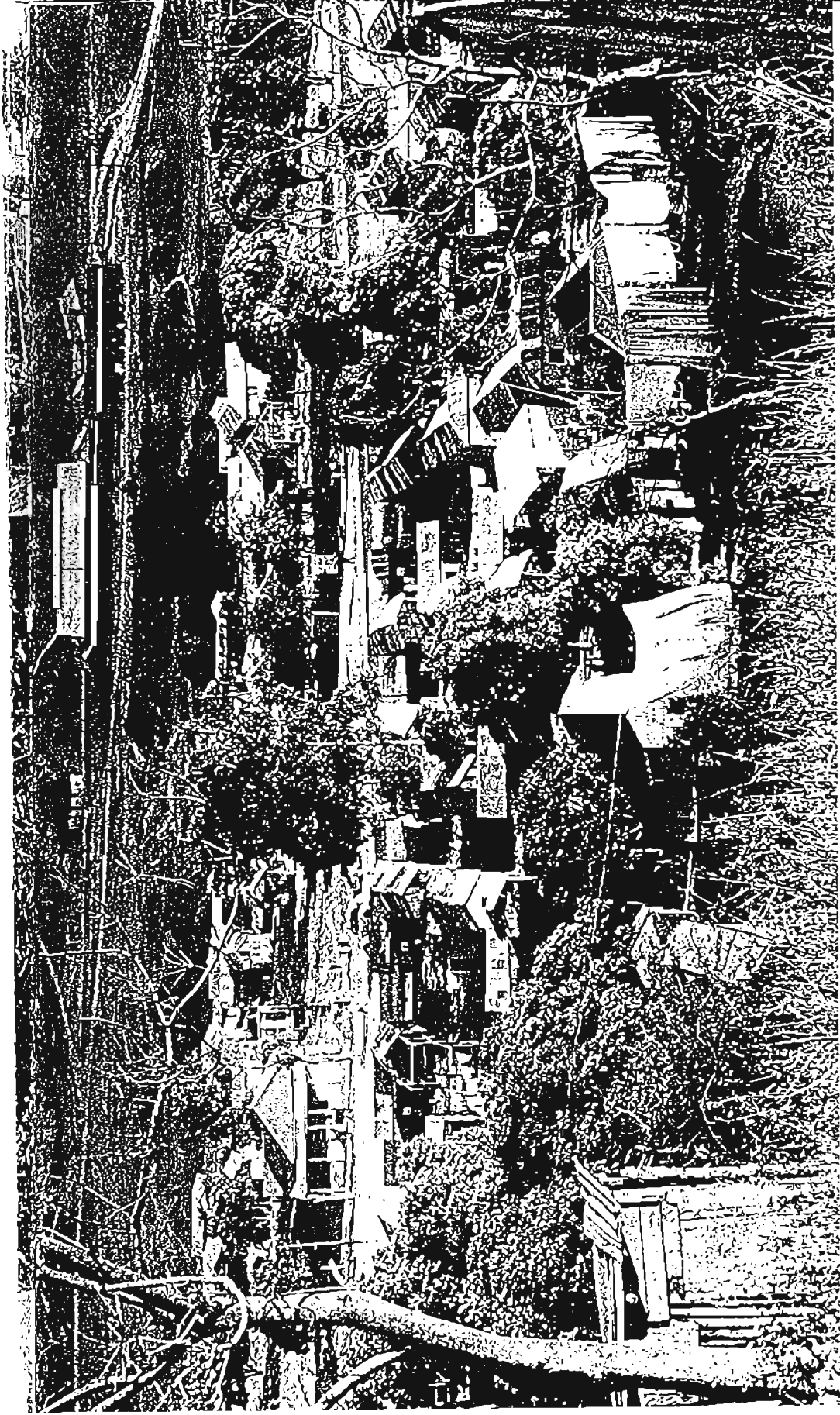
Cato Manor beerhall with shacks in background, 1959.

*(Photo: Natal Mercury)*



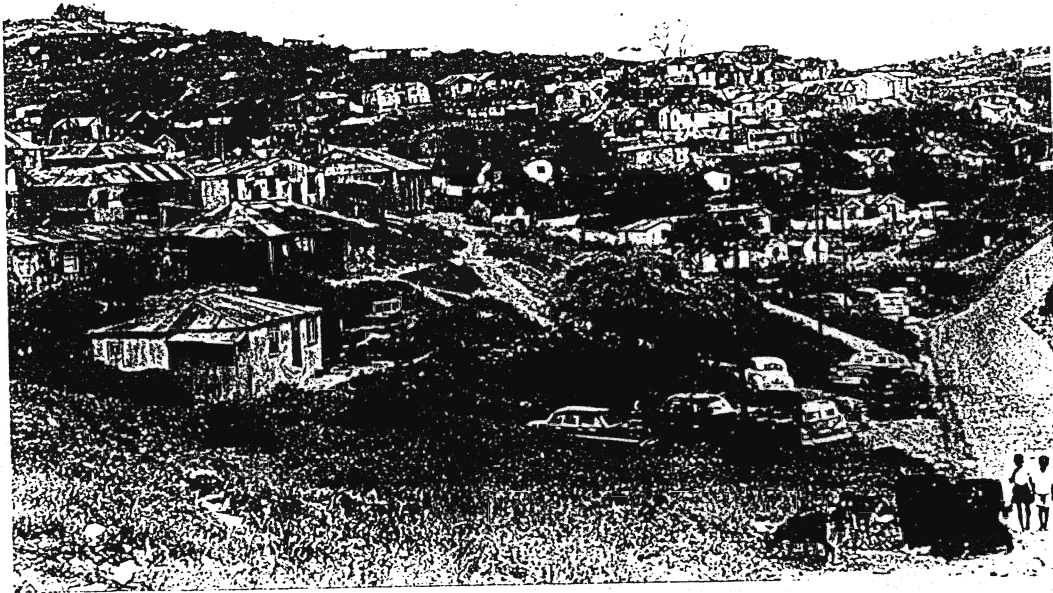
Shumville, Cato Manor, showing dwellings erected with the aid of a Corporation loan for building materials.

(Photo: Colin Shum)



Cabazini, Cato Manor, showing controlled L-shaped dwellings.

(Photo: Colin Stum)



Cato Manor, 1964, showing one of the last areas to be cleared.

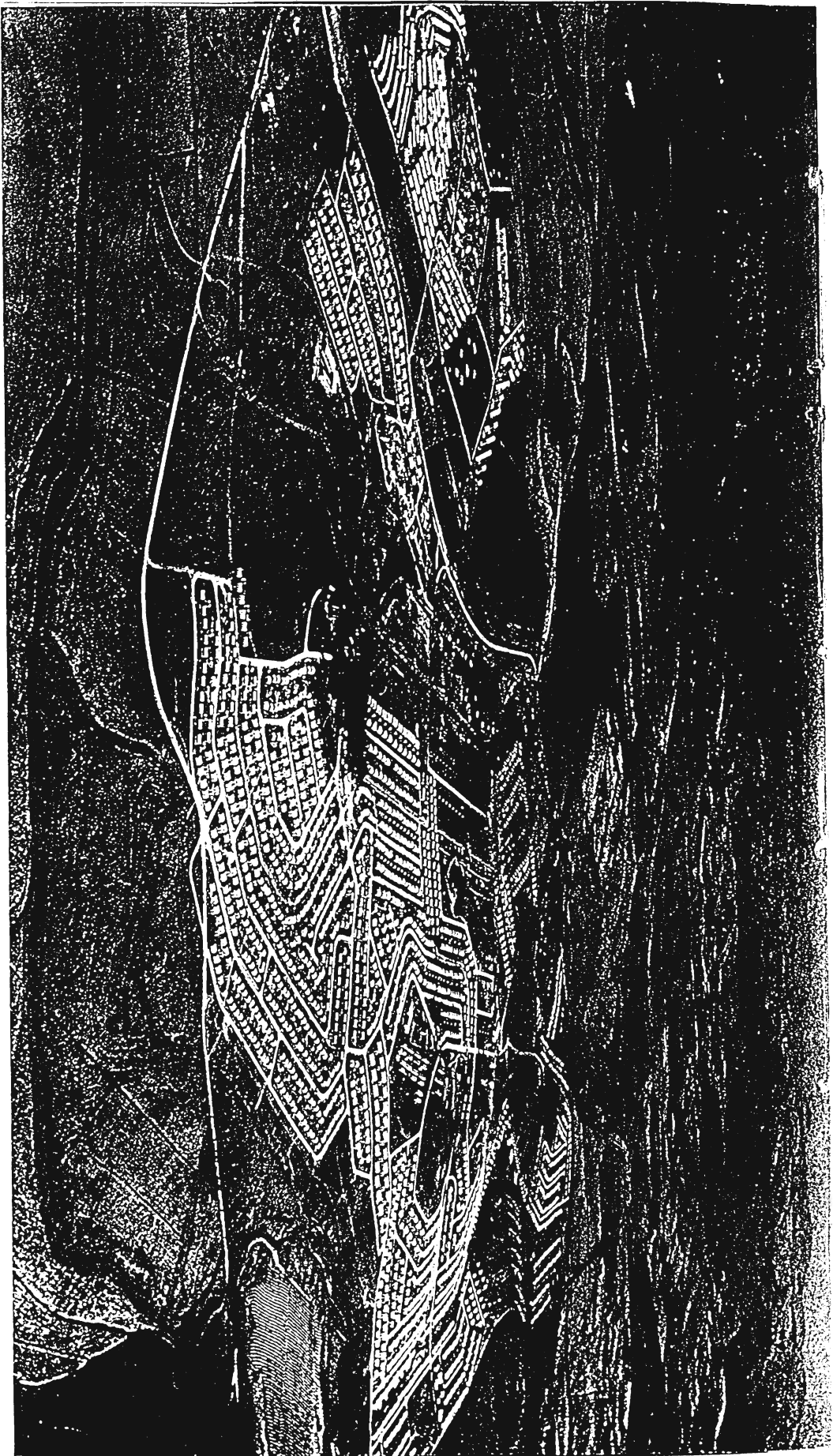
(Photo: Natal Mercury)



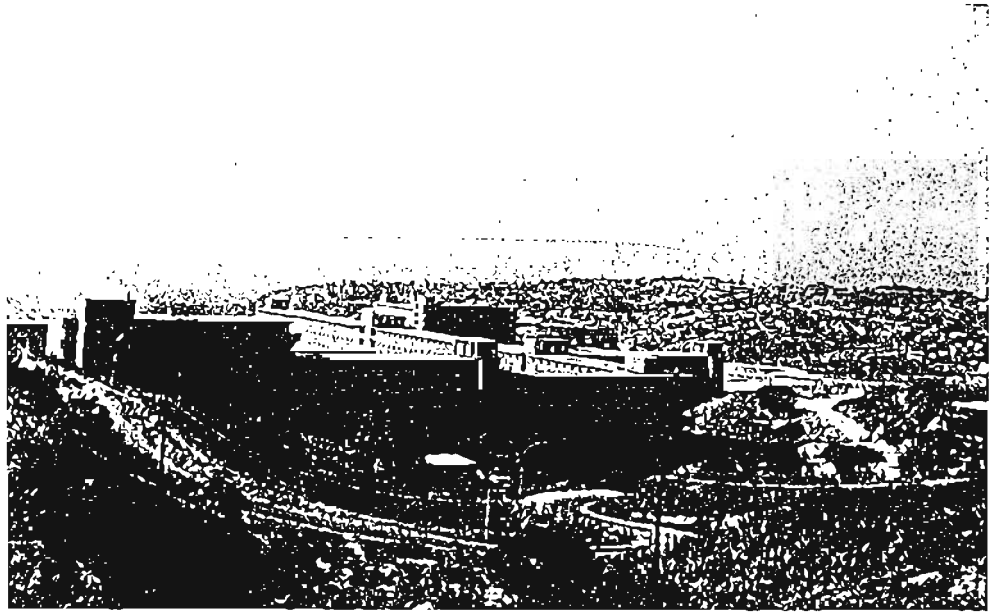
Scene at the Zulu hlanganani sizanani market, Cato Manor.

(Photo: Natal Mercury)



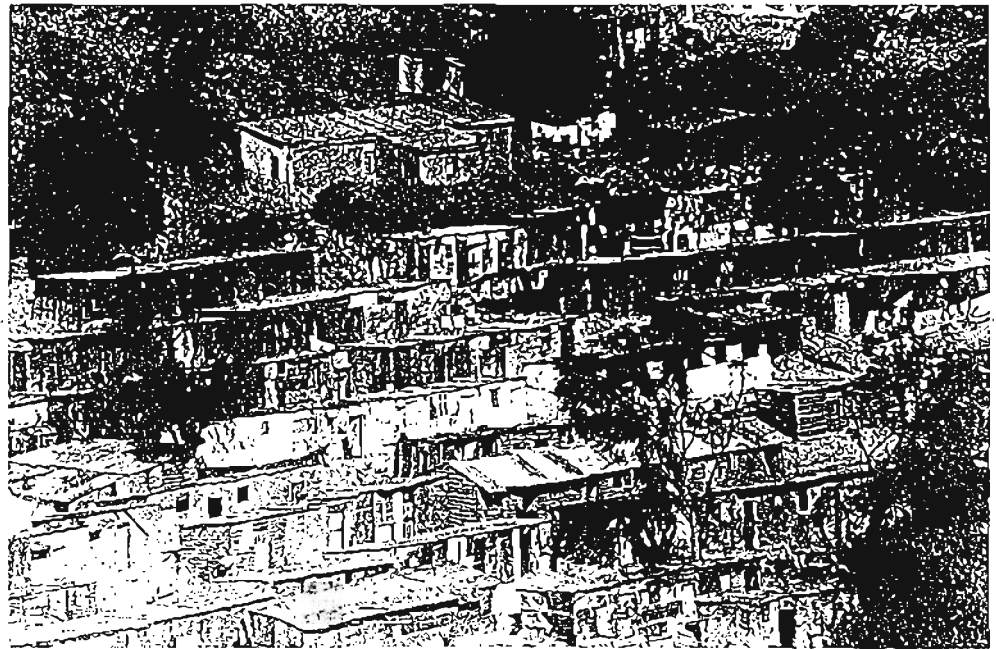


The beginnings of KwaMashu, 1959, showing its location amidst the cane fields.  
(Photo: Natal Mercury)



New hostel for single men at Clermont near Pinetown.

*(Photo: Moosa Badsha, The Graphic)*



New squatter area at Clermont near Pinetown.

*(Photo: Moosa Badsha, The Graphic)*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### "LISTEN, WHITEMAN. YOU HAVE LAUNCHED A WAR YOU CANNOT WIN."<sup>1</sup>: FROM MASS POLITICS TO COMMUNITY POLITICS, 1959-1973

The late 1950s were a watershed in African popular resistance and protest, especially in Durban. The African National Congress became highly influential in shantytown societies, assisting residents resisting removals. A disorganised and fragmented era followed the ban: African nationalists had to adjust to new conditions of illegality. Despite this, the underground ANC remained committed to the transformation of society through carefully monitored sabotage campaigns. However, between 1960 and 1964, the ANC failed to substantially challenge the state; the ANC's sabotage campaigns declined almost to the vanishing point during that period. A new dimension then emerged in African resistance politics: community based politics became dominant. This chapter is primarily concerned with struggles in the townships beginning with the Cato Manor riots of 1959 up to the outbreak of the Durban strikes of 1973. In fact, the chapter is concerned with anti-apartheid resistance carried out by African political

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<sup>1</sup> The quotation has been derived from an ANC pamphlet, "Listen, Whiteman," KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, Pamphlets Distributed in Lamontville, 6 May 1963.

organisations comprising a major worker component. It is somehow controversial to talk about anti-apartheid struggles as worker resistance. Nonetheless, it is important to realise that the participants were mainly workers; workers constituted a major percentage among the recruits of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Furthermore, the African political struggle of the period had an important impact on African workers in general, be it at factory level, or in the townships where they lived. Worker consciousness, therefore, can properly be understood if we examine the political situation of the 1960s, one which led to frustration and largely determined the militancy of the 1970s and thereafter.

### Taking to the Streets

During the 1950s, the municipality of Durban began to remove Africans forcibly from Cato Manor to KwaMashu. The removal process began in March 1958<sup>2</sup> and for a while it did not face any serious challenge from the residents of the area. In August 1958, the municipality made an attempt to demolish the shack settlement of Thusini, where most of the mobile workers had lived for several years. Very little resistance was offered and most people simply moved

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<sup>2</sup> KCAL, Bourquin Papers, File 3, Municipal Native Administration Dept. (Later Bantu Admin Dept): Memoranda, Reports and Correspondence Related to Cato Manor, 1957-1961; KCM 55226, "Memorandum on Certain Matters Surrounding the Cato Manor Disturbances of June 1959", 1. See also Edwards, "Mhkumbane Our Home", 303.

away and re-erected their shacks in another new area. The local advisory board, the Cato Manor Welfare and Development Board under the chairmanship of Isaac Zwane, could not take any decisive action for it was divided over the issue of removals.

During the early removals, the ANC launched an anti-municipal campaign and the Director of Bantu Administration, S.B. Bourquin, was labelled as "the Satan of the Bantu people."<sup>3</sup> The whole issue was viewed by Albert Luthuli, the ANC President General, as an opportunity to gain support, thereby leading to a growth in ANC membership. Although the ANC had support in the shantytown of Cato Manor, some members of the community had remained indifferent to politics. It was only during times of trouble that they tended to rally behind political parties for support.

By March 1958, the municipality began its programme of removals.<sup>4</sup> Trouble began when the municipality attempted to clear Mnyasana, the most notorious shack area in Cato Manor. It was mainly dominated by a large number of Mpondo mobile women, who were well known for beer brewing, illegal trading and prostitution.<sup>5</sup> Most of these women were "illegal" residents. It was these women who championed the struggle against the municipal removals and

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>4</sup> KCAL, KCM 55171, Dept of Bantu Admin., 4 March 1959, "Memo on Events Arising Out of the Clearance of Native Shacks at Mnyasana, Cato Manor, Feb. 1959".

<sup>5</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 309.

they took it to the streets on 23 February 1959, supported by women from other shack areas of Cato Manor.<sup>6</sup> The women staged a demonstration at Bourquin's office and were monitored by Aaron Gumede, A.C. Shangase and J.J. Shabalala, ANC stalwarts and members of the "General Committee" of the Location Advisory Boards.<sup>7</sup> The women demanded an immediate meeting with Bourquin and they informed him that "since Africa belonged to them [his] office was part of it and belonged to them... and that when Africa returned to them they would in any case sack [him]."<sup>8</sup>

The women who demonstrated at Bourquin's office were also led by members of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL). The representatives of the Women's League were Gertrude Kweyama, T. Mazibuko, Dorothy Nyembe, Florence Mkhize, Ruth Shabane, Florence Mwelene and Lucy Mazibuko.<sup>9</sup> The women failed to understand why they were removed from Cato Manor, their home, which "they fought for.. that they have spilt their blood for...and having conquered the Indians they will never give Cato Manor back to the Indians."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> KCAL, KCM 55171, Memo on Events.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>9</sup> KCAL, KCM 55169, "Meeting of African Women Representatives With Mayor, 27 Feb. 1959". The 1949 riots resulted in the destruction of Indian-owned property and the displacement of Indian residents from Cato Manor. The riots were then viewed by the African women as the "liberation" of Mkhumbane - "Cato Manor was now ours through right of conquest". See Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 50.

<sup>10</sup> KCAL, KCM 55170, Bourquin to the Chairman, Bantu Admin. Comm., Councillor A.S. Robinson, 2 Mar. 1959.

Such struggles of the women had far-reaching political implications for the ANC. The ANCWL gained support from those women whose livelihood was on the verge of destruction. As rightly noted by Edwards, shebeen queens who earlier on had shunned politics, saying "this thing with politics", flocked in numbers to join the women's league.<sup>11</sup> Women became a formidable resistance group within and outside Durban during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

In pursuit of their struggle against removals, a sizeable number of shebeen queens invaded the Cato Manor beerhalls on 17 June 1959.<sup>12</sup> The violence which erupted was led by thousands of embittered women who faced deportation to rural areas owing to their lack of legal documents. They chased away African men from the beerhalls. Serious disturbances began the following day when women surrounded the beerhalls, which men were warned not to enter lest serious action be taken against them. Thousands of African women from various parts of Cato Manor, fittingly described as "one of the largest and most horrifying slums on the continent", were armed with sticks, hatchets and pieces of wood. They marched and danced and "shook sticks in dazzling defiance at the whole edifice of

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<sup>11</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 310.

<sup>12</sup> L. Kuper, "Rights and Riots in Natal", Africa South, 4, 1 (Oct-Dec 1959), 20.

white apartheid authority".<sup>13</sup> The ANCWL took an active part in this women's struggle. Dorothy Nyembe and other Women's League members organised marches to the Victoria Street beerhall and the Mobeni area.<sup>14</sup>

The atmosphere created by this revolt was associated with many complex issues and a wide range of emotions. At a meeting addressed by the Director of Bantu Administration, Bourquin, women raised a number of complaints. They demanded that forced removals be stopped and Council beerhalls be closed. They also expressed concern over transport, housing, influx control, the keeping of livestock, the destruction of family life, illicit beer and poor wages.<sup>15</sup> Certainly, a large proportion of women favoured brewing, which was a source of livelihood to them and their children and a way of supplementing the starvation wages paid to their husbands.<sup>16</sup> The Director saw it differently. The crux of the matter, according to Bourquin, was poverty:

I wish to make bold and say that whatever reasons have been advanced are of a purely superficial nature. Even the women who started off the tragic course did not express their grievances in terms of bare, basic and intrinsic facts... The basic and ultimate reason is an economic one. The poverty of the urban Bantu; the dis-

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<sup>13</sup> KCAL, KCM 55178, Cato Manor Riots, June 1959; M. Blumberg, "Durban Explodes", Africa South, 4, 2 (Jan-Mar 1960), 10.

<sup>14</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 316.

<sup>15</sup> KCAL, KCM 55181, Bourquin to the Town Clerk, 23 June 1959; KCM 55204, Memo to the Dir., 8 July 1959. See also Blumberg, "Durban Explodes", 13.

<sup>16</sup> The Natal Mercury, 19 June 1959.



crepancy 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 ways of life; his inability even to meet the barest necessity of life, to feed, clothe, educate and house himself and his family.<sup>17</sup>

While poverty constituted a major problem in Cato Manor, the liquor question was an issue in its own right. Councillor Mervyn Gild saw the area as "an illicit brewer's and a prostitute's paradise"<sup>18</sup> which needed to be cleansed.

The demands presented by the African women were rejected on the basis of being "quite impossible".<sup>19</sup> Meanwhile, the women sang, danced and chanted: "The Boers are using us as a ladder to climb on"; "When you strike the women, you have struck a rock"; "Luthuli, give us Luthuli. His is the only voice we will hear."<sup>20</sup> The presence of the police led to a direct confrontation with the masses. Violence broke out. The "liberation of Mkhumbane"<sup>21</sup> had just started. Large groups of Africans gathered in the streets, erecting barricades.

Violence was shifted from persons to property. The main target was the property of the Corporation - commun-

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<sup>17</sup> KCAL, KCM 55181, Bourquin to the Town Clerk. See also Kuper, "Rights and Riots", 23.

<sup>18</sup> KCAL, KCM 55184, Councillor Mervyn A. Gild to Bourquin, 25 June 1959.

<sup>19</sup> Blumberg, "Durban Explodes", 13.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 316.

ity halls, trading centres and buses.<sup>22</sup> The crowd became jubilant with the collapse of burning buildings. They shouted "Africa, Africa"<sup>23</sup> and attacked all the "the concrete symbols of domination and indeed any of the accessible works of the white man."<sup>24</sup> While the destruction of property was condemned in all circles, Kuper maintained that though "...the behaviour is senseless...it is perfectly intelligible."<sup>25</sup> A similar perspective was adopted, some years earlier, by E.P. Thompson who noted that "behind every such form of popular direct action some legitimising notion of right is to be found".<sup>26</sup> However, four people died during the clashes, while many women and ANC leaders were arrested. The beerhalls were closed down for a number of days.

The other side of the story was that the illicit brewing of illicit beer gained momentum, and the municipality lost the great profits it used to make. During this period, the municipality on average sold 900 gallons of beer per day at all its beerhalls, against the previous average of 14 000 gallons per day.<sup>27</sup> A partial victory was

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<sup>22</sup> The Natal Mercury, 19 June 1959. See also KCAL, KCM 55204, Memo to the Dir., 8 July 1959.

<sup>23</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 317.

<sup>24</sup> Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie, 14.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (London, 1968), 73.

<sup>27</sup> KCAL, KCM 55218, Notes for Meeting With Minister of Bantu Admin and Dev., Pretoria, 3 Aug. 1959.

scored by the shebeen queens who supported "the campaign because they regarded the beerhalls as competitive institutions and a threat to their lucrative business and their existence."<sup>28</sup> The liberation of Mkhumbane was not yet accomplished. The struggle for control over the area continued into the early months of 1960.

Although the main thrust of African resistance in 1959 came from within the urban ghettos, the struggle was "exported" to the rural areas of Natal by the ANC. It was in the Port Shepstone district that the most serious disturbances took place. Women destroyed dipping tanks and complained about new Bantu Authorities Regulations which stipulated the refilling of dipping tanks by the beneficiaries. However, no remuneration was provided for their service.<sup>29</sup> Women also complained against anti-squatter laws and increased taxation. On 21 August 1959 trouble began when Chief Nane banned a woman, Manhlamvu Cili, from his area of jurisdiction, for being a leader and influencing women to fill a dip tank with stones.<sup>30</sup> A large group of women were arrested and fined £25 or 30 months in jail.

On 23 August 1959 men from Chief Nane's area demon-

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<sup>28</sup> KCAL, KCM 55224, "Extract From a Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee of Inquiry in Connection With the Disturbances and Rioting at Cato Manor, Durban, 24 Jan. 1960", 4.

<sup>29</sup> NA, Senior Inligtings Beampste and Bantoe Kommissaris (Bantu Affairs Commissioner's Files) (hereafter BAC), O/3, Cato Manor, Bantu Unrest, BAC to the Chief BAC, 1 Sept. 1959. See also BAC, A/4, ANC, A.J. Luthuli, "Word of the President-General concerning Riots which occurred as a result of the Resistance staged by Women in Natal, 17 Aug. 1959".

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., BAC, O/3, BAC to the Chief BAC, 1 Sept. 1959.

strated in solidarity with their women who had been convicted for destruction of government property.<sup>31</sup> The ANC volunteered to pay their fines but the men resisted the idea: "We don't want the ANC to pay their fines because if this happens, they will be absorbed by the ANC and we will lose our control over them."<sup>32</sup> This illustrates a fascinating point about the struggles of the late 1950s and early 1960s: in Natal, and particularly in Durban, men feared that they had lost control over their women and hoped that they were in the process of regaining it. Most women escaped from the domestic violence and firm control to which they were subjected in the rural areas, and saw the urban centres as providing the needed "freedom". Many women became involved in the ANC's political programmes. Indeed, from June 1959, the ANC gained a considerable number of supporters because of its programme of direct action which addressed the aspirations and frustrations of the African people. For instance, on 27 June 1959 over 20 000 people attended the "Freedom Day" rally in Durban organised by the Congress Alliance.<sup>33</sup>

The struggle between the municipal authorities and the shack dwellers for urban space in Cato Manor continued. By August 1959, most areas of Cato manor - mainly

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> The New Age, 28 July 1959.

Raincoat, Thusini, Dunbar Bar and Tintown - were cleared.<sup>34</sup> About 7000 shacks were demolished.<sup>35</sup> Most of the people who failed to meet the requirements for house allocation in KwaMashu, as well as the illegal residents, re-erected their shacks in other areas of Cato Manor: the masses had resisted the municipal authorities. In the wake of the disturbances, Bourquin called a meeting with the Minister of Bantu Affairs to inform him of the defeat of the local authority in the area. Bourquin stated that:

The authority of the Durban City Council - the civil government for the area - has been challenged and overthrown...the City Council has been defeated at Cato Manor, and cannot restore its authority without the fullest co-operation and most active assistance of the government.<sup>36</sup>

It was not until January 1960 that the Durban local authorities once again recommenced removals from Cato Manor to KwaMashu. The municipality was warned by the ANC that removals would be greatly resisted. The municipality placed notices at vantage points in Ezinkawini and Mnyasana shack areas advising the residents of the impending clearance.<sup>37</sup> The municipality wanted to demolish 100 shacks containing 300 African families in the two areas.<sup>38</sup> The ANC intervened in the removals on behalf of the shack-

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<sup>34</sup> G. Maasdorp and A.S.B. Humphreys (eds), From Shantytown to Township (Cape Town, Juta, 1975), 63.

<sup>35</sup> KCAL, KCM 55218, Notes for Meeting With Minister.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>37</sup> KCAL, KCM 55214, Demonstration by Bantu, 10 Feb. 1960.

<sup>38</sup> NA, BAC, Cato Manor, "Onluste", 1 Sept 1959- 16 Mar. 1960, O/3 Chief BAC to the Secr. for BAD, 27 Jan. 1960.

dwellers; it contacted the Mayor of Durban requesting the suspension of the removal programme.<sup>39</sup>

It was in Ezinkawini and Mnyasana that violence broke out on the evening of 24 January 1960, partly provoked by police searching for and arresting illicit beer-brewers.<sup>40</sup> Many arrests took place and violence was sparked off when Constable Biyela trod on a woman's foot.<sup>41</sup> The seemingly minor incident ignited the already discontented and frustrated people into violence against the instruments of the state - the police.

Women were once again back on the streets with their struggle. The struggle against removals in January 1960 was led and championed by, in Bourquin's words,

people who had an axe to grind or who had certain interests in the Cato Manor area- particularly the illegal traders, the shebeen keepers, the gambling school keepers etc. Now they were going to lose out on this rather lucrative trade, and they agitated against this removal- they knew that they would not qualify, or be unable to continue their activities in a well controlled township...<sup>42</sup>

These were the people in the forefront attacking the police and chanting "Mayibuye Africa" and "kill the Dutchmen".<sup>43</sup> The violence that followed claimed the lives of

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. See also SAIRR, Days of Crisis in South Africa (SAIRR, 1960), 3.

<sup>41</sup> SAIRR, Days of Crisis, 3. See also L.K. Ladlau, "The Cato Manor Riots, 1959 -1960" (UND, MA, 1975), 15.

<sup>42</sup> KCAL, KCAV 174 -75, S.B. Bourquin by A. Mason and D. Collins, 18 Oct. 1979, 8.

<sup>43</sup> KCAL, KCM 55224, Extract From Report, 15.

nine policemen and one resident.<sup>44</sup> A sizeable number of African residents were arrested for murder.<sup>45</sup> In response to this problem, the Minister of Justice banned all political meetings in the locations for four weeks.<sup>46</sup> For a while, the situation was normalised.

During the months of March and April 1960, there were organised demonstrations in the locations against the detention of Chief Albert Luthuli and other leaders. On 31 March 1960, the residents of Cato Manor registered their disapproval of the detention that had taken place, and violence broke out.<sup>47</sup> As usual, government property became the target for destruction. Buses and lorries were stoned. The ANC organised marches into Durban city centre demanding the release of their leaders. On 1 April the residents of Cato Manor, led by the ANC stalwarts and the Protest Action Committee, marched into town and various clashes between them and the police took place.<sup>48</sup> During this period, most of the areas in and around Durban - particularly Clermont, KwaMashu, Cato Manor and S.J. Smith hostel - were rocked with unrest.<sup>49</sup> Violence continued for several days at S.J. Smith hostel and in Lamontville

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<sup>44</sup> NA, BAC, O/3, Chief BAC to the Secy for BAD, 27 June 1960.

<sup>45</sup> For the proceedings of the case, see Supreme Court Records: Manor 158.

<sup>46</sup> SAIRR, Days of Crisis, 4.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>48</sup> The Natal Mercury, 2 Apr. 1960.

<sup>49</sup> SAIRR, Days of Crisis, 23

township. It was only after the arrest of the leaders that the resistance movement was greatly weakened.

Meanwhile, the municipal authorities avoided further criticism from government circles who felt that the city fathers were failing to implement tougher influx control measures.<sup>50</sup> They re-launched the removal programme, and the residents of Mnyasana, who earlier on had resisted by simply re-erecting their shacks after the demolition, were served with notices.<sup>51</sup> The demolition of shacks remained in force, with some women opposing it although they were fighting a losing battle. Some women spread propaganda about KwaMashu in order to persuade others to continue resisting the removals. They said that KwaMashu was deliberately constructed on a swamp that was likely to subside and drown all the African people<sup>52</sup> - a somewhat contorted story. Nevertheless, some residents defied the myth and made their way to the newly developed houses of KwaMashu township. Even the Sotho women from Matatiele district who were based in Cato Manor offered very little resistance. In the late 1950s, the Sotho community was known for fierce resistance to the removals, but this time they simply volunteered to move out and they erected their shacks in the Newlands area.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> See the debate which took place soon after the Cato Manor June riots in The House of Assembly Debates, 25 Jan 1960.

<sup>51</sup> The Daily News, 16 Feb. 1960.

<sup>52</sup> KCAL, KCAV 174-75, S.B. Bourquin by Mason and Collins.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 9.



Yet the survival of the apartheid city was threatened by the explosion of shantytowns which re-emerged soon after the removals from Cato Manor. By the 1960s vast shack settlements had emerged around the Durban metropolitan area. Workers who felt that they could not pay the rentals in the new township, together with illegal residents, made their way to the newly created shantytowns of Malukazi and Magabangenjubane<sup>54</sup> and built themselves different cities.

The new Mkhumbane, Tintown, was erected in the Malukazi area in 1960.<sup>55</sup> The area had fallen under the jurisdiction of the Makhanya tribal authorities in the beginning of the nineteenth century and had become part of the urban squatter fringe of metropolitan Durban. It was located on the southern border of the Umlazi township and fell within the decentralised industrial zone, which attracted a drift of mobile workers to the area. The tin shacks were erected on Indian land and the shack dwellers paid a rent of one pound a month.<sup>56</sup> Most of the people who erected shacks in the area, particularly the Mpondo of Transkei, were from Cato Manor. It was estimated that 10 000 African dwellers lived in Malukazi shantytown in 1961 and a large proportion were legally employed in Durban and

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<sup>54</sup> See Ilanga Lase Natal, 17 Sept. 1960, 25 Nov. 1961, 12 May 1962.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 17 Sept. 1960.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

qualified for house allocation in the townships.<sup>57</sup>

The residents of Malukazi formed a Residents Association and were organised at grassroot community level by leaders who, having mobilised a large following, organised invasions of the "unoccupied lands". The Association was led by David Gasa.<sup>58</sup> Though the Association was not recognised by the local authorities, it presents an important point about the way in which the residents collectively defended their integrity as urban residents. During these years, residents intensified their group activities as people affected by government policy: they coped with the hardships of urban-cum-industrial life by forming associations. It was in this respect that Malukazi emerged as a major shack area in the 1960s.

In 1961 the BAD suggested that the squatters of Malukazi should be allocated houses in Umlazi township. Those who qualified for the allocation were the residents who had previously been shifted from the area to pave the way for the construction of a township, and also all the Zulu people in the squatter camp who were employed in the southern part of Durban.<sup>59</sup> The remaining residents who did not qualify were to be evicted from the area.

Despite the accelerated construction of houses in the townships, the housing shortage remained critical and that in turn led to the growth of the African population in the

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<sup>57</sup> SAIRR, A Survey of Race Relations, 1962, 150.

<sup>58</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 17 Sept 1960.

<sup>59</sup> SAIRR, A Survey of Race Relations, 1962, 150.

squatter camps. By 1962, a new shantytown had come into existence on the outskirts of the Umlazi-Glebe areas. Magabangenjubane, the new shantytown, fell under the leadership of J.B.Matonsi.<sup>60</sup> The area was occupied by almost 10 000 people but it was a shantytown dominated mainly by women. In June 1962 the area faced demolition orders from the local authorities, with those people who were legally employed being temporarily accommodated in Cato Manor emergency camp and KwaMashu township.<sup>61</sup> There was no resistance to the removals and most women who were illegal residents moved away quietly and re-erected their shacks in the Malukazi shantytown.<sup>62</sup> But their stay in Malukazi was to be short-lived: by January 1963 that shantytown was also demolished. The municipal authorities had succeeded in clearing most of these peri-urban shantytowns for a while. However, the struggle for shelter in the urban area continued throughout the 1960s. These squatter struggles are crucially important in the history of South Africa for they represent the birth of modern urban townships and the sort of industrial proletariat which they accommodated.

The demolition of shantytowns by the municipal authorities intensified in the 1960s as new shacks emerged on the borders of the townships, with access to water facilities and other resources. Conflict arose between the township residents and the shack dwellers. By 1963, Cato

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<sup>60</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 9 June 1961.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 30 June 1962.

<sup>62</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 20 Oct. 1962.

Manor had a squatter population of 20 000 Africans who were still to be resettled in the townships.<sup>63</sup> This process was immediately followed by the demolition of the Benoni, Kumalo and the Dabulamanzi areas of Cato Manor in mid-1963. The residents of these areas who were regarded as illegals made their way into the valleys and re-erected their shacks. A new squatter belt was erected in the Mariannhill-Thornwood-Dassenhoek area extending to the Umgeni River and Inanda district north of KwaMashu.<sup>64</sup>

The murmuring of the masses in the late 1950s did not last for long. After the massacre at Sharpeville in March 1960 and the consequent banning of the ANC and the PAC,<sup>65</sup> urban removals became frequent and were aggressively executed all over South Africa. From 1960 onwards, the state employed considerably expanded repressive powers in an attempt to suppress any form of resistance, particularly from the African people. In Cato Manor, removals continued under police protection and the municipal authorities did not face any challenges. It was during this time that Verwoerd called upon the National party leaders to stand "like walls of granite" in the implementation of apartheid policies.<sup>66</sup>

The municipality of Durban was pressured by circumstances to intensify the removal programme. By July 1960,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 23 Mar. 1963.

<sup>64</sup> Maasdorp and Humphreys (eds), From Shantytown, 70.

<sup>65</sup> SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1959 -60, 72.

<sup>66</sup> Hansard, 12, 1961, Cols 4191-3.

all the scattered settlements in Cato Manor were demolished.<sup>67</sup> The total number of shacks demolished by then stood at 1 972 and the Cato Manor Emergency Camp created by the municipality as transitional accommodation hosted almost 55 000 people.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, the ANC's Emergency Committee worked underground and attempted to influence people from the emergency camp not to leave Cato Manor. The banned ANC operated through Ruth Shabane who in March 1960 had been elected as the chairperson of the Cato Manor Advisory Board.<sup>69</sup> Pamphlets were distributed by ANC stalwarts, urging people to continue with their resistance. But the resistance movement was already fragmented and disorganised; very little support was given by the remaining people in the camp. This was the biggest disturbance yet in Durban city, and was essentially about the state's new plans for them. However, lacking a clear organisational structure and facing a state determined to proceed, it fizzled out.

#### African Political Organisations and the Crisis in Durban

On 8 April 1960, the African National Congress and

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<sup>67</sup> KCAL, Bourquin Papers, File 11, Municipal Native Admin Dept., Ann Reports 1953 -69, KCM 55339 -55351, Durban Corporation, Dept of BAD, Ann Report for the Municipal Year Ended 31 July 1960. See also The Daily News, 21 Oct. 1960. Some shacks remained intact in 1960.

<sup>68</sup> KCAL, File 11, Dept of BAD, Ann Report for the year ending July 1960.

<sup>69</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 12 March 1960.

Pan-Africanist Congress were banned. It was at this time that the popular struggle, particularly that waged by the ANC in Durban, which had flourished during and soon after the Cato Manor riots of 1959, suffered a severe blow. The 1959 riots had given the Congress Alliance the upper hand in rallying African mass support, especially from illicit entrepreneurs and women who were threatened by shack demolitions and relocations to new townships. However, the process of creating political consciousness among African workers and the community at large was weakened by the events that followed in 1960. The massacre at Sharpeville on 21 March and the subsequent state bannings of the ANC and PAC led to the two organisations abandoning the policy of non-violence and resorting to the armed struggle.

In 1960, the political situation in South Africa, which led African political organisations to operate underground and to embark on the policy of sabotage, marked the beginning of a new era. The adoption of sabotage activities by the ANC arose out of a debate about the pros and cons of the armed struggle and/or non-violence as alternative ways to bring change within South Africa. Party cadres and Marxist and liberal scholars became involved in the armed struggle debate throughout the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>70</sup> However, this debate is not going to be elab-

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<sup>70</sup> For an in-depth debate on the armed struggle see for instance, C. Bundy, "Around Which Corner?: Revolutionary Theory and Contemporary South Africa", Transformation, 1 (1986); A. Leruno [M. Harmell], "Forms and Methods of Struggle-The South African Democratic Revolution", African Communist, 9 (Apr/ May 1962) ; and Wolpe, Race, Class and the Apartheid State.

orated in this chapter since our major focus here is on community politics among African workers.

The "Year of Africa," 1960, was a year in which the slowly growing wave of African nationalism reached tidal proportions, with President de Gaulle of France granting independence to 14 former African colonies. It was during this period that African national consciousness in South Africa grew apace with the "wind of change... blowing through this continent", and as Harold Macmillan went on to explain, "whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact."<sup>71</sup> What is fascinating about African political struggles in Durban is that the roots of support for the ANC on the part of the people of Cato Manor shantytown "... lie not in the years of Mkhumbane, but in the destruction of Mkhumbane and the early years of life in KwaMashu: that period immediately prior to and then the years after the ANC was banned."<sup>72</sup>

At its annual conference in 1959, the ANC decided to launch an Anti-Pass Campaign. Demonstrations were to be held on 31 March, 15 April and 26 June 1960.<sup>73</sup> Should the government fail to respond to their demands, all Africans were called upon to burn their passes in the "no bail, no

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<sup>71</sup> The British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan's address to the Parliament in Cape Town in 1960 as cited in A.J.C. Daniel, "Radical Resistance to Minority Rule in South Africa, 1906-1965" (State University of New York at Buffalo, Ph.D, 1975), 267.

<sup>72</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 196.

<sup>73</sup> R. Lambert, "Political Unionism in South Africa: The South African Congress of Trade Unions, 1955-1965" (University of the Witwatersrand, Ph.D, 1988), 427.

defence, no fine campaign."<sup>74</sup> Sobukwe, the leader of the PAC, hijacked the ANC programme of action and announced that supporters and the entire leadership of the PAC were to surrender voluntarily for arrest on 21 March 1960. The ANC was invited to participate in the PAC's campaign but turned down the invitation.

On Monday, 21 March 1960, 69 African supporters of the PAC were massacred by the South African police at Sharpeville. In reaction to the massacre, the President-General of the ANC, Chief Albert Luthuli, called for a day of mourning, to be held on the following Monday. In Durban, the African people observed a day of mourning. Indian shops were closed down; few workers reported to their workplaces, particularly in the Mobeni area where SACTU had enormous support.

Following the government's declaration of a State of Emergency, many leaders and supporters of the Anti-Pass Campaign were arrested on 30 March. This prompted further strikes and demonstrations, which rocked Durban for almost ten days. Cato Manor shantytown dwellers emerged once again and took centre-stage in demonstrations. The shantytown dwellers marched to the Bantu Affairs office where they demanded the release of their leaders. These residents were later joined by the residents of Clermont, S.J. Smith Hostel and Lamontville.<sup>75</sup> While the rolling mass action was in process, the state responded on 8 April

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 9 Apr.1960.



by an act of parliament, banning the ANC and PAC. The government's actions dampened the people's spirit; they lost hope of "freedom in our life time." Despite this, African political activities in Durban, expressed mainly through the ANC, continued underground in African townships. This time new ways and methods of resistance were adopted.

The months immediately following the declaration of the State of Emergency in the country saw ANC activities wane. Strikes and demonstrations were called for by the underground ANC, but very little support was forthcoming. For instance, on 19 April 1960, the ANC called for a week-long stay-away, but that did not receive mass support. For the majority of people, continued open activities were no longer feasible under the State of Emergency. New tactics had to be developed.

The ANC's organisational structure in Durban was rechannelled through civic and trade union organisations. In KwaMashu, Chesterville, Umlazi and Lamontville, resident associations were formed.<sup>76</sup> In Cato Manor where there were some remaining shack dwellers, the Advisory Board was placed under the leadership of Ruth Shabane, a well-known member of the ANC Women's League.<sup>77</sup> These associations and boards were instituted to articulate the people's grievances and represent their interests at community level. We shall return later to these associations.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 19 Nov. 1960.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 12 Mar. 1960.

The other platform utilised by the ANC was the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), which was not banned. Various trade unions affiliated to SACTU provided a forum for ANC activities to take place. It was speculated that the General Workers' Union in Durban was the ANC disguised.<sup>78</sup> The union's meetings were addressed by prominent ANC members and "symbols associated with the ANC were adopted by the union, the salute... resembled that of the ANC and a new cry, 'Amandla Ngawethu,' replaced 'Mayibuye i Afrika.'<sup>79</sup> A sizeable number of meetings of that particular nature took place in Durban, organised by SACTU. For example, in 1961, Vuyisile Mini, an underground organiser for the ANC, called for a bus boycott, or a stay-at-home strike, for June 26, which apparently was observed and indeed became violent.<sup>80</sup> Another union meeting worth citing was the one addressed in Durban by George Mbhele, organising secretary of the banned ANC. At that meeting, Mbhele read a message from Chief Albert Luthuli and went on to call the people to "smash and render unworkable Bantu Authorities both in rural and in urban areas."<sup>81</sup>

In another development, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the Congress Alliance, was formed in

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<sup>78</sup> E. Feit, Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960 -1964 (Evanston, North-Western University Press, 1971), 163.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> New Age, 2 Feb 1961 as cited in Feit, Urban Revolt, 164.

<sup>81</sup> New Age, 26 Oct 1961.

1961. It was believed at that time that the pre-1960 forms of resistance were no longer applicable to the new situation. In his remarks on the birth of MK, Ben Turok stated:

...Even mass action seemed impossible because of the repression - we had to show that we could hit back - that it's possible. There comes a certain point where repression is so overwhelming that the masses are in danger of demoralisation. The Vietnamese situation was the same. At a certain point they launched groups inside the rural areas. Their job was to inflict a blow on the local tyrant. This was not a local group, it was a group from the outside. This was the detonator effect. This was the conception of MK. Inflict a blow on the tyrant and show him he's vulnerable. The morale of the people will rise and they will get the message and begin to inflict blows.<sup>82</sup>

The regional command of Umkhonto in Durban consisted of the entire leadership of SACTU, the Communist Party and members of the unions affiliated to SACTU.<sup>83</sup> Meetings of Umkhonto were conducted in Billy Nair's office at SACTU headquarters.<sup>84</sup> Local cells were established in November 1961 under the leadership of Curnick Ndhlovu, Billy Nair, M.P Naicker and M.D. Naicker.<sup>85</sup> From that time, the regional commander of Umkhonto in Durban was Curnick Ndhlovu, who by 1962 had established sections in Durban,

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<sup>82</sup> Interview with Ben Turok as cited in Lambert, "Political Unionism", 446-7.

<sup>83</sup> Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1990 ed), 235.

<sup>84</sup> See Bruno Mtolo, Umkhonto we Sizwe: The Road to the Left (Durban, Drakensberg Press, 1966).

<sup>85</sup> Feit, Urban Revolt, 93-4.

KwaMashu, Clerwood and Hammarsdale.<sup>86</sup>

The established cells in the townships embarked on political "study groups" - whereby they were "to learn and teach politics in a secret method so that each and every one would in the future be in a position to teach others."<sup>87</sup> Such study groups were part and parcel of the Mandela Plan (M Plan). The M Plan, as noted in the Congress Voice, the news sheet of the Congress Alliance, was meant to ensure that "... members [should be] aware of the immense task facing them and the grave responsibilities resting upon them. To start a house-to-house propaganda campaign for the purpose of raising the political consciousness of the masses..."<sup>88</sup> The M Plan was firmly implemented in Lamontville township where "people ...were already schooled in Congress politics."<sup>89</sup> S.K. Ngubese, an ANC Lamontville branch chairman in the 1960s, recalls:

Mandela's plan... came about during the banning of public meetings where people found standing in the streets could not exceed the number of four. So it was at this stage that Nelson Mandela decided that three would constitute a meeting and the three would go out and organise three others... The number grew. By the end of the day, you have spoken to more than 1000 people. That is what they called M Plan, so if there was any message to be conveyed to Africans then it would be conveyed that way by dedicated people who would work the whole day, holding meetings of threes, right round. People of La-

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<sup>86</sup> The Natal Mercury, 14 Feb 1964 ; and Feit, Urban Revolt, 93.

<sup>87</sup> Feit, Urban Revolt, 223.

<sup>88</sup> Congress Voice, Vol 11, 2 (May 1960).

<sup>89</sup> KCAL, KCAV 184 and 185, S.K. Ngubese by A. Mason and D. Collins, 28 Nov. 1979, 7.

montville knew about this, but this was not just told to everybody.<sup>90</sup>

State repression during the State of Emergency created an impression among Africans that the popular struggles of the late 1950s were over. Even SACTU, which had continued organising at factory level during the State of Emergency, felt that the existing political climate was no longer conducive to proper worker organisation. Because of this, SACTU's educational programmes undertaken by factory leaders were "moved into the townships, where shop stewards themselves ran the classes at factory level. The shop stewards met together in the townships because it was safer."<sup>91</sup> Despite state bannings, arrests and detention of SACTU members and officials who were linked to underground activities of the ANC, the union movement survived the Emergency still intact.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Lambert, "Political Unionism", 451.

<sup>92</sup> For those SACTU members who were banned between 1960 and 1965, a short list could be helpful for our study purposes. The names were: Elizabeth Abrahams (1964), Phyllis Altman (1963), Moses Bhengu (1964), Nontembu Lucy Dlamini (1963), John Ferris (1964), Melville Fletcher (1961), John Gaetsewe (1964), Leon Levy (1962), Elijah Loza (1963, 1968, 1976-77, died in detention), Moses Mabhida (1963), July Makaringe (1963), Lot Malane (1963), Zolile Malind (1960 -1973), Livingstone Mancoko (1963), Shanti Naidoo (1963), Billy Nair (1961), Muzuvikile Ndhlovu (1963), Lawrence Ndzanga (1963, died in detention in 1975), Rose Schlachter (1963), M.W. Shope (1962), Archibald Sibeko (1960), Miriam Sithole (1963), Daniel Tloome (1963), and Shadreck Tole (1963). For a comprehensive list, see Dudley Horner (et al), The Wiehahn Commission: A Summary (Workshop Organised by the Southern African Labour and Development Research Unit [SADRU] and editors of the SALB, May 1979), 77-9.

While unions organised and recruited workers to join Umkhonto, the beginning of sabotage campaigns in Durban brought about new hope. As a SACTU organiser recounted :

There was generally speaking a new confidence, despite the repression of the state. People were tremendously inspired. We always had messages conveyed to us. They always said, tell the boys that they are doing a damn good piece of work... Once the lights went off in Durban for about 15 minutes. We had hit three important power lines leading from the Umgeni power station... People sent messages, 'Give it to them.' They were inspired - the state had gone too far, workers needed a boost to their morale. These responses made us realise that our actions were really an expression of the will of the people at that time. You had to understand the period and ordinary workers' feelings...<sup>93</sup>

Sabotage activities by Umkhonto cadres were widely reported in and around Durban. In December 1961, an increasing number of bomb attacks and the burning of sugarcane plantations were reported.<sup>94</sup> This marked the beginning of a sabotage campaign "...of economic installations and targets of symbolic political significance"<sup>95</sup> that lasted for almost three years. The sabotage activities which took place in December 1961 were masterminded by two members of the Natal Regional Committee, Bruno Mtolo and Ronnie Kasrils.<sup>96</sup> During this period, Solomon Mbanjwa, a recruiting organiser of Umkhonto, an official of SACTU and a member of the

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<sup>93</sup> Interview of Unnamed Activist, 19 May 1986 as cited in Lambert, "Political Unionism", 452.

<sup>94</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 30 Dec. 1961.

<sup>95</sup> Lodge, Black Politics, 234.

<sup>96</sup> Mtolo, Umkhonto we Sizwe, 19.

underground Communist Party, was chosen to lead Umkhonto's Natal Regional Committee. In January 1963, Justice Mpanza, an MK cadre, bombed the offices of the Nationalist newspaper in Durban, Die Natalier.<sup>97</sup> Municipal beerhalls, the long-standing enemy of women in Cato Manor, became targets as well. In February 1963, a bomb exploded at the Bell Street beerhall, injuring three people.<sup>98</sup> Furthermore, houses belonging to residents defined as government stooges or collaborators were bombed. On 12 December 1962, three houses belonging to Charles Mbutho, L.S. Makhwaza and W. Dladla, all members of the KwaMashu Residents Committee, were bombed.<sup>99</sup> Attacks of that nature, as Feit writes,

were designed to intimidate those who were in any way collaborating with the government - not only informers and policemen but also representatives of chiefs or members of Advisory Boards... Those who were suspected of collaboration were identified, often in ANC leaflets or in graffiti scrawled or painted on the walls of washrooms and other public buildings.<sup>100</sup>

Throughout 1963, the Durban branch of Umkhonto remained active in sabotage activities, despite an increased informer network. In 1963, the south railway line was blown up, and a bomb exploded at the Bantu Affairs Commissioner's office.

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<sup>97</sup> Daniel, "Radical Resistance", 354.

<sup>98</sup> Ilanga lase Natal, 16 Feb. 1963.

<sup>99</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, D.H. Cockburn, Deputy Township Manager, KwaMashu to the Dir., 14 Dec. 1962. See also Ilanga Lase Natal, 22 Dec. 1962.

<sup>100</sup> Feit, Urban Revolt, 193-4.

By the beginning of 1964, the activities of Umkhonto in Durban had declined. Through a network of African informers, the police were able to penetrate the ANC underground structures and activities. Even before the state banned the ANC and PAC, African informers existed in townships and shantytowns in and around Durban. Reverend T.W.S. Mthembu of Durban, a Lutheran pastor, born around 1915, recruited informers on behalf of the government.<sup>101</sup> The new recruits were encouraged to join the ANC or any African political organisation so that information could be obtained. Cases in point were Mzamane Mavundla and C.B. Makatini, who were recruited by Reverend Mthembu.<sup>102</sup> Mavundla and Makatini were "urged...to join the ANC, so that we may get all the truths."<sup>103</sup> Because of the money paid to informers by the state, many Africans were willing to give information on what was going on in the townships with regard to underground activities of the ANC.

In 1960, G. Kumalo, a Durban resident musician, requested the government to pay him at least five thousand pounds in order to enable him to launch a Music Peace Campaign.<sup>104</sup> In his correspondence with the Chief Native Commissioner in November 1960, Kumalo wrote:

...I can see terrible things taking place in this country if the present spirit of racial

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<sup>101</sup> NA, BAC, P/2/M, Reverend T.W.S. Mthembu to the Senior Information Officer, 30 Mar. 1958.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> NA, BAC, P/2/K, G. Kumalo to the CNC, 15 Aug. 1960.



prejudice is not overcome, and a spirit of racial goodwill and harmonious co-operation introduced in our everyday lives...I appeal for 1000 pounds to launch out the Music Peace Campaign against the underground resistance and defiance campaign... They must be exposed and destroyed.<sup>105</sup>

In Durban, a considerable number of individuals were employed by the state as informers. A case in point was that of T.J.B. Kunene who indicated to the government information officer his willingness to work as an informer.<sup>106</sup> Another person employed by the state to tap information was P.M. Khaula.<sup>107</sup> Some arrested Umkhonto cadres showed their readiness to divulge information about the underground activities of the ANC. Bruno Mtolo was a case in point in Durban. Mtolo was involved actively in Umkhonto's sabotage campaigns from 1961 till the time of his arrest in August 1963. Mtolo even went beyond giving evidence at crucial trials and revealing information about the underground ANC and Umkhonto activities: he wrote a book in which he excoriated the ANC leadership.<sup>108</sup>

During the period when the ANC was banned, it never ceased to function as a political organisation. Between 1961 and 1964, the ANC continued to articulate the people's grievances through underground activities; underground ANC officials wrote a number of memoranda to

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., Kumalo to the CNC, 23 Nov. 1960.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., T.J.B. Kunene to the Information Officer, 24 Feb. 1961.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., P.M. Khaula to the BAD, 28 July 1960.

<sup>108</sup> See Mtolo, Unkhonto we Sizwe.

various location superintendents - the representatives of the apartheid structures. Memoranda to location superintendents of Chesterville, Lamontville, KwaMashu and Cato Manor were handed over by the Congress Alliance.<sup>109</sup> The issues raised in the memoranda ranged from housing, destruction of the people's shacks, rentals, education, community facilities, medical services, sanitation, and wages for the African workers, to politics in the townships. These issues have already been dealt with in Chapter Four. However, when the police uncovered the underground activities of the ANC in 1963, in particular of Durban's Umkhonto regional commanders: Curnick Ndhlovu, Billy Nair, Ronnie Kasrils and Eric Mtshali, the organisation was forced into exile.<sup>110</sup> While the sabotage campaigns carried out between 1961 and 1964 failed to "go very far towards fulfilling its aims",<sup>111</sup> this did not mean the end of the struggle in the African townships. The ANC continued to function in the guise of a variety of civic organisations and trade unions affiliated to SACTU. A new dimension in African politics then emerged in the townships: community based politics became dominant during

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<sup>109</sup> See KCAL, KCF 30, Roll 13, Memorandum of Grievances at Chesterville Location Submitted to the Superintendent of the Chesterville Location by the Congress Alliance, 14 Feb. 1962; Memo... to the Superintendent of the Lamontville Location, 14 Feb 1962; Memo... to the Superintendent of Cato Manor, 14 Feb. 1962; and Memo... of Grievances Submitted to the KwaMashu Township Manager by the Congress Alliance, 14 Jan. 1962.

<sup>110</sup> The Natal Mercury, 21 Jan 1964.

<sup>111</sup> Lodge, Black Politics, 235.

the period of our study.

### Making Political Communities

Before the Urban Bantu Councils Act of 1961 was passed in parliament, some form of machinery existed for consultation between a local authority and the African people in the shantytowns and townships. The Advisory Boards were constituted under Section 21 of the Bantu (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945, but such bodies "were purely advisory, except that it was a statutory obligation for a local authority to consult them on all matters of concern to the Bantu in urban areas. They enjoyed no executive powers."<sup>112</sup> The establishment of African townships saw the transformation of Advisory Boards into Residents Committees with similar powers and functions. Through the Urban Bantu Councils Act of 1961, residents committees were to be replaced by Urban Bantu Councils, but these only came into being in 1968. Such structures were opposed totally by the ANC. The ANC called on all African people

...to fight the government policies of apartheid and oppression - not [to] co-operate with the Nationalist government policies of Bantu Authorities and Urban Bantu Councils... Urban Bantu councils give us power to oppress ourselves, fight one another, leaving the government at peace. Under the UBC Act, we shall oppress our people with pass laws, rentals, influx control, water metering and school levy

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<sup>112</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/BAB/1, Bantu Advisory Bodies, Central, 12 Sept 1973 to 31 July 1976, Urban Bantu Councils, 9 Feb. 1976.

which is [sic] paid for Dr Verwoerd's poisonous Bantu education.<sup>113</sup>

The ANC recognised neither the Residents Committees nor the Urban Bantu Councils established later, launching in their stead people's Residents Associations, albeit as disguised community vigilante organisations such as the Isolomuzi (Vigilante Committee).

In 1960, the KwaMashu Residents Association was established and in the chair was H. Msomi.<sup>114</sup> Soon after its inauguration, the Association called for the disbandment of the KwaMashu Residents Committee, the official organisation recognised by the municipal authorities. A group of ANC members and trade unionists, disillusioned with the Residents Committee's collaborative action, launched the Residents Association as an alternative form of community organisation.

The Residents Committee members, among others, were Charles D.S. Mbutho, L.S. Makhuvaza, W. Dladla and Simon Z. Conco. These members were urged on various occasions to resign from the committee since it was regarded as an extension of the apartheid policies and had no credibility as far as representing the interests of the community was concerned. From 1962 onwards, the new leadership of the KwaMashu Residents Association, headed by F.T.R. Dhlamini

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<sup>113</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, Bourquin to Colonel Fraser, Officer Commanding, Natal Command, 3 May 1962, "The Voice of the ANC", 28/9 Apr 1962.

<sup>114</sup> Ilanqa Lase Natal, 19 Nov 1960.

and Curnick Ndhlovu,<sup>115</sup> launched a full-fledged campaign against members of the Residents Committee. The Residents Committee members were regarded as "sell-outs" - "Wilson's useless boys,"<sup>116</sup> who represented only their own political and economic agendas. As noted earlier on, houses belonging to Committee members were bombed.

Such a campaign was waged not only against Committee members but against anyone who co-operated with government officials. One such victim was the Reverend Mthembu who, in September 1960, was found hanging from a tree with some documents in his possession - "What is Communism?" and "South Africa's Siege."<sup>117</sup>

An increasing number of terror campaigns within African townships, particularly in KwaMashu, compelled E.G. Jakins, the Assistant Director (Bantu Areas), Durban, to write :

It appears that the number of agitators pursuing their activities in locations on a full-time basis, particularly at KwaMashu, is increasing by reason of the fact that they are able to register as being employed by various bodies and persons which have no recognised lawful status or business and for whom they either do not actually work at all or only perform token duties for an hour or two per week. For instance, Curnick Ndhlovu is registered as being in the employ of some Railway Workers' Union and spends all his time in furthering the aims and objects of the KwaMashu Residents' Association

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<sup>115</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, E.G. Jakins, Assistant Dir (Bantu Areas) to Dir, Bantu Admin, 29 Aug 1962.

<sup>116</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 17 Feb and 16 June 1962. Mr Wilson was the KwaMashu Township Manager during the 1960s.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 10 Sept 1960.

which is merely a nom de plume for the banned ANC.<sup>118</sup>

The continued campaign against Residents Committee members led to the resignation of Simon Z. Conco. In his letter of resignation, Conco denounced what he termed "the role of 'boy' to KwaMuhle officials" and further indicated that "KwaMashu residents have lost the confidence in the...Residents Committee."<sup>119</sup> Tension and conflict remained the order of the day, particularly between the two resident organisations.

One interesting point about the members of the Residents Committee was that a sizeable number of them were either prominent or aspiring business people. For instance, the Committee members who were elected to office in 1964, namely H.C. Sibisi, C.D.S Mbutho and Wilson Mhlongo, were business leaders. For such individuals, the Residents Committee was a necessary entity in protecting their own trading interests. The same individuals were instrumental in launching the Natal and Zululand African Chamber of Commerce in December 1964. This new organisation was founded by S.Z. Conco, a former Residents Committee member, H.C. Sibisi and J. Mnguni.<sup>120</sup> By 1966, a pro-apartheid business organisation called The Africa Foundation of South Africa was established in KwaMashu and

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<sup>118</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, Jakins... to Dir, 29 Aug 1962.

<sup>119</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 16 June 1962.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 31 Oct and 26 Dec 1964; and see also 11 May 1963.

Umlazi. T.D. Zulu and A.P. Ngcobo spearheaded its formation in the townships.<sup>121</sup>

The national president and founder of The Africa Foundation of South Africa was Bishop W.G. Dimba, a controversial bishop of the Federation of Bantu Churches;<sup>122</sup> he formed The Africa Foundation together with P.T. Makhene, the vice-president, Lloyd N. Ndaba, the secretary-general and B. Nxumalo, a member of the steering committee.<sup>123</sup> Basically, the organisation was "aimed at propagating ideas on territorial separate development which must lead to ethnic autonomous republics of southern Africa."<sup>124</sup> As stated in Africa South, the mouthpiece of the Africa Foundation that used the same name as the liberal/left-wing journal of the time, the aim was: "an alternate which offers a fair deal to all racial groups and that alternate is territorial apartheid on confederation and common market of southern Africa."<sup>125</sup>

In 1968, Dimba and his executive committee members formed the Zulu National Party with branches in Umlazi,

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 3 Sept, 8 Oct 1966.

<sup>122</sup> For a in-depth account of Bishop W.G. Dimba, see Paul la Hausse, "So Who Was Elias Kuzwayo? Nationalism, Collaboration and the Picaresque in Natal", in P. Bonner (et al), Apartheid's Genesis, 1935- 1962 (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand Press, 1993), 215 -217.

<sup>123</sup> Africa South, Vol.1, No 1 (Dec 1966).

<sup>124</sup> La Hausse, "So Who Was Elias Kuzwayo?", 216.

<sup>125</sup> Africa South, (Dec 1966), 4.

KwaMashu, Durban Central and Lamontville.<sup>126</sup> It was during the same period that a spate of pro-apartheid parties, opposed to the ANC, PAC and SACP, were formed. The Swazi, Venda, Tswana, Sotho and Ndebele National parties were launched in their respective bantustans.<sup>127</sup> Amidst this kind of development, Dimba called upon all Africans to join any one of the parties. As Paul la Hausse notes: "...not only was Dimba a stooge but ... he was, like [Simon Simpson] Bhengu and Sibisi, at some stage on the payroll of the state. Apparently Dimba's partner, Lloyd Ndaba, derived part of his income from the Bureau of State Security."<sup>128</sup> The Africa Foundation organisation supported fully the idea of separate development and the creation of bantustans and was in total conflict with members of the KwaMashu Residents Association.

The KwaMashu Residents Association derived much of its support from members of the Zulu Hlanganani Co-operative and Buying Club, which comprised traders and also former shack-shop owners.<sup>129</sup> These traders had prospered in Cato Manor but the relocation to KwaMashu resulted in many of them being denied trading licences. The blame for that was levelled against Residents

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., Vol 2, No 2, 1967, 2-3. The members of the various branches were : Umlazi - P.P.S. Zulu, D. Mnyende, J.M. Maphumzana and R. Mhlongo; Durban Central, A. M. Mpangose; KwaMashu, Dr P.W. Tusini; and Lamontville, E. Mduli and F. Ngwenya.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>128</sup> La Hausse, "So Who Was Elias Kuzwayo?", 217.

<sup>129</sup> Ilanqa Lase Natal, 12 Aug 1961.



Committee members who made attempts to monopolise the new market through their positions as officially recognised municipal representatives of the African residents. The spokesperson for the Zulu Hlanganani trading society, Mr Mabaso, lambasted the municipal authorities and the Residents Committee members for denying members of his association trading licences.<sup>130</sup>

At several meetings of the KwaMashu Residents Association, the interests of traders' and business persons were raised. In a bid to secure trading licences, in 1964 the Zulu Hlanganani Society renamed itself the KwaMashu Bantu Investment Company.<sup>131</sup> The "newly" inaugurated company, through its secretary, J. Manyoni, challenged the Durban municipality to stop harassing and arresting traders in KwaMashu who did not possess the necessary licences. In contrast, KwaMashu Residents Committee members and well-known political personality and businessman A.W.G. Champion, the chairman of the Combined Advisory Boards, intensified their campaign against "illegal" trading in KwaMashu, S.J.Smith Hostel, Chesterville and Lamontville.<sup>132</sup>

Champion who, since the 1930s had made attempts to enrich himself through politics and business adventures, believed that capital could be created within African

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 21 Mar 1964.

<sup>132</sup> See Ilanga Lase Natal, 13 Apr 1963.

townships, where minimal competition was expected.<sup>133</sup> Champion was intolerant of Indian capitalism and competition within African townships, and also - especially - from Africans who were unlicensed. In 1963, he launched a complaint to Mr Huntley, the Deputy Manager of KwaMashu township, that his business enterprises had "lost hundreds of rands through illegal shops...- many of these shops...[were] backed by Indians."<sup>134</sup> No wonder that to Champion the policy of separate development provided the necessary shelter for capital accumulation. He supported the creation of bantustans: "The beauty of this policy to me is our obtaining a way to build up industries in the area where we live. It may prove to be a blessing in disguise to us. Apartheid is no doubt to the advantage of the African businessman..."<sup>135</sup>

A considerable number of the people who participated in the Advisory Boards and Residents Committees during the 1960s were mainly interested in enhancing their trading privileges. During the 1970s, the pro-apartheid trading class forged ties with bantustan authorities and through

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<sup>133</sup> For a detailed study on the early history of A.W.G. Champion, see S. Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1986), 74-109.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.; see also Ilanga Lase Natal, 9 Jan 1965.

<sup>135</sup> Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie, 285. See also University of Natal, Natal Room, Papers SI, Ari Sitas, "Durban Unrest Notes", 1985; and for interesting information on Champion's business ventures, see M.W. Swanson (ed), The Views of Mahlathi, Writings of A.W.G. Champion, A Black South African (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1982), see especially Section V, 163- 174.

that kind of alliance, a complex patronage system was developed. With the formation of Inkatha by Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi in 1975, African businessmen and traders, who in the past had supported the bantustan system, tended to identify themselves with Inkatha and the KwaZulu government authorities. In fact most of them became Inkatha officials and members.<sup>136</sup> To these African traders, Inkatha was the only vehicle through which they could exercise power and protect their economic interests. Their role in the Urban Bantu Councils (UBCs), which came into existence in 1968, was legitimised by Inkatha, which went along with the policy of separate development.

However, the period 1975 to 1976 witnessed an acute conflict between Chief Buthelezi and the Inyanda Traders Association. The Inyanda Association, born in 1965, contested vigorously the idea of starting companies (big white chain stores in joint ownership with African aspirant entrepreneurs) in the bantustans. Buthelezi supported the formation of such companies and strongly warned the Inyanda traders "not to attempt to create a split between the government [KwaZulu] and African traders..."<sup>137</sup> The conflict escalated until 1976 and, finally, the Inyanda traders had no option but to join Inkatha.

Chief Buthelezi and his Inkatha party's politics in

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<sup>136</sup> See KCAL, KCAV 168 and 169, C.D.S. Mbutho by A. Mason and D. Collins, 25 Oct 1979 and 1 Nov 1979, 53-4.

<sup>137</sup> G. Mare as cited in Sitas, "Durban Unrest Notes".

KwaZulu have always being controversial. As for the conflict between Chief Buthelezi and the Inyanda Traders Association, it was quite clear that Chief Buthelezi managed to manipulate events in KwaZulu, and demonstrated his capacity to direct political events in KwaZulu to his own ends rather than those of the African middle class whom Kuper refers to as at the "apex of subordination"<sup>138</sup> who were in any case neither fully bourgeois nor fully proletarian. The local African petty- bourgeoisie had to dance to his tune or perish. Chief Buthelezi also rejected the preferences of the South African state to go for "independence", but often collaborated with the state to gain control of patronage and the territory of KwaZulu. Shula Marks uses the notion of "ambiguity" to characterise such strategies adopted by Chief Buthelezi<sup>139</sup>. Certainly, Chief Buthelezi was, to use Marks' words once again, "...a man who embodie[d] in his contradictory position all the ambiguities of a Solomon, a Dube, a Champion" and "constantly face[d] the state with his contradictory presence both as critic and collaborator extraordinary".<sup>140</sup>

During the 1960s, Chesterville and Lamontville residents were represented through the Durban Joint Advisory Boards. For a number of years, Champion played a significant role as the chairman of the Joint Boards.

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<sup>138</sup> Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie, 7.

<sup>139</sup> Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence, 124.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 116 and 123.

However, African residents were opposed to such boards, whose members they labelled as impimpis (sell-outs).<sup>141</sup> An interesting scenario developed in the two townships: all Board members were elected on a party basis. Champion founded and led the Imbokodo (grinding stone) party, while A.R. Ntuli and Simon Duma led the Izikhumba (skins) party.<sup>142</sup> These were the two parties which contested the Advisory Board elections. From 1965 to 1967, Champion's Imbokodo party was defeated in the elections by the Izikhumba party.<sup>143</sup> Imbokodo recorded one of its heaviest defeats in the Advisory Board elections in 1967, when it polled only 146 as against 1062 of the Izikhumba party.<sup>144</sup> Although some residents of Chesterville and Lamontville were totally against Advisory Board politics, the Izikhumba party, which was founded to challenge Champion's participation in apartheid structures, enjoyed an enormous base among resident supporters of the banned ANC. The ANC was still alive in the townships and remained active in community politics. The process of politicisation of the African people was also carried out through the distribution of pamphlets, which urged the people to continue resisting apartheid policies.<sup>145</sup>

By 1968, a new development emerged in as far as

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<sup>141</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 7 Mar 1964.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 25 Sept 1965.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 1 Oct 1966; and 30 Sept 1967.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 30 Sept 1967.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 6 July 1968.

African representation at community level was concerned. The Residents Committee and Advisory Board structures were terminated, thus paving the way for the establishment of the Urban Bantu Councils. Under the provisions of the UBC Act of 1961, the Durban City Council established the KwaMashu UBC, which catered for KwaMashu residents and the Ningizimu UBC, which represented the interests of residents in Chesterville, S.J. Smith, Dalton Road, Jacobs, Lamontville and Umlazi Glebe.<sup>146</sup> Each of the UBCs comprised 11 wards, with a 19-member council. Of the 19, 13 were elected by the township residents and the remaining six were appointed by the urban representatives of the African chiefs.<sup>147</sup>

In the UBC elections that took place in March 1968, H.C. Sibisi won convincingly, to become the first chairperson of the KwaMashu UBC.<sup>148</sup> Of humble origin, Sibisi was born in 1904 in the Paulpietersburg district of Northern Natal, to parents who were poor labour tenants on a farm.<sup>149</sup> Sibisi was educated at Adams Mission, where he

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<sup>146</sup> City of Durban, Mayor's Minute, 30 Sept 1968, 18-20.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>148</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 30 Mar 1968. Edwards claims that Sibisi was the first vice-chairperson of the KwaMashu UBC under the chairmanship of Prince Sithela Zulu. However, all my sources indicate the contrary. In fact Sibisi was the first chairperson in 1968 and Prince Sithela Zulu became the chairperson only in 1969. See Edwards as cited below.

<sup>149</sup> I. Edwards, "'I am a Nobody, But in Another Country We would be the George Washingtons': Leadership, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Class in the Career of Henry Caleb Sibisi, 1945-1980" (Paper Presented to the Conference on Regionalism and Restructuring in Natal, University of Natal, Durban, Jan 1988), 1-2.

qualified as an agricultural demonstrator. While working in Swaziland and then later in the Ndwedwe reserve in Natal, Sibisi developed the idea of entering into a private trading business. During the 1940s he settled in Clermont township where he interacted with A.W.G. Champion and prominent ANC members of the Youth League. In 1948 Sibisi was elected chairman of the local Isolomuzi.<sup>150</sup> During this period, Sibisi made various attempts to raise capital through the establishment of the Clermont Bantu Bus Company, the Clermont Bantu Improvement Co-operative (which sought to acquire land in Clermont) and the Vukuzake Clermont Co-operative (a co-operative dominated entirely by women, one which specialised in market gardening and home crafts).<sup>151</sup> All such ventures failed.

While living in Cato Manor, Sibisi became involved in shady deals - selling shares in non-existent companies - and provided information to the South African Police and Mr S.B. Bourquin about leading ANC activists in Mkhumbane.<sup>152</sup> In 1957, soon after the installation of Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi as Chief, Sibisi became involved in the revival of the Inkatha movement of the early 1920s. Because of his clashes with Buthelezi and the various members of the Bantu Affairs Commission and the Department of Native Affairs over the issue, the revival idea collapsed. It was during that period that Sibisi was

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<sup>150</sup> Paul la Hausse, "So Who Was Elias Kuzwayo?", 215.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Edwards, "I am a Nobody", 11.

allocated a house in KwaMashu "E" Section and was also granted a trading licence. His life was mainly dominated by cheating, as Iain Edwards notes :

In fact Sibisi had, from his arrival in KwaMashu, established a range of highly lucrative ventures, which ranged from the selling of shares in non-existent companies, through fraudulent dealings in Burial Clubs, to the selling of marriage certificates to those legally allowed to either rent or purchase a house in Durban, but who were not legally married... In addition, having made friends with the then township manager, Mr R.G. Wilson, who was notorious for being extremely dictatorial, hence his Zulu name Mbatl, the stinging nettle, Sibisi was well placed to again operate as a 'bush lawyer'... Throughout the 1960s, Sibisi's shops, first at "E" Section and then at "C" Section, were always in financial difficulties. However, it was quickly established that Sibisi was 'nothing short of a thief.'<sup>153</sup>

The recognition of the power and influence of chiefs by the Durban municipality, especially in its area of jurisdiction, led Sibisi to become a member of the structures of chieftainship. The Durban municipality relied on the influence of the Zulu paramountcy, particularly during those days of trouble. During the Defiance Campaign era, for example, the Paramount Chief was invited to Durban to encourage the non-involvement of the Zulu people in the campaign, and in 1973, during the Durban strikes, King Goodwill Zwelethini was called to intervene in the labour disputes that rocked the entire metropolitan Durban area. From the late 1950s, the Durban authorities established a Paramount Chief's Council, the

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 12-13.



Ibandla Lenkosi, on which Sibisi served as a member.<sup>154</sup> The Durban municipality utilised such a council "...to bolster up their own administration within Durban."<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, in 1973, Sibisi and other UBC councillors pressurised the PNAAB to change their status to that of tribal chiefs to enable them to bring perpetrators of crime to justice through tribal courts.<sup>156</sup> The idea was totally rejected by the PNAAB officials.

Soon after the announcement of the KwaMashu UBC elections of 1968, women from "B" Section of the township demonstrated at the Township Manager's office to express their dissatisfaction over the election of Congo Majola over their favourite D.C. Mtshali. The women accused the Township Manager of deliberately "cooking" the results to enable his stooge Majola to become a member of the UBC.<sup>157</sup> The elections were highly politicised, with some members being elected to office on ethnic grounds. For instance, M.M. Pamha and H. Mdingi, both Xhosas and members of the Xhosa National Unity, were elected to office on ethnic tickets.<sup>158</sup> Apart from ethnicity playing a role in the elections, many of the members were elected on the basis of wealth, occupation and education. The KwaMashu UBC

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/BAB/1, Minutes of the KwaMashu UBC, 3 Dec 1973, Executive Committee Agenda, Status of Urban Bantu Councillors, 14 May 1974.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 18 May 1968.

consisted mainly of business persons and traders.<sup>159</sup> The same could be said of the Ningizimu UBC.<sup>160</sup> This corresponds to a general pattern most fully analysed by L. Kuper whereby the selection of leaders for both the Location Advisory Boards and the African political parties of the 1940s and 1950s was done in terms of occupation and education.<sup>161</sup>

The first KwaMashu UBC meetings were mainly concerned with trading issues in the township. In July 1968, the KwaMashu UBC set up a commission of enquiry to investigate the allegations that most shops in the township were Indian-owned.<sup>162</sup> The commission resolved that African townships were "no-go" areas for Indian capitalists. The KwaMashu UBC and particularly the KwaMashu Licensed Traders Association, under the chairmanship of Ambrose Africa, took exceptional interest in ensuring that the resolution passed by the enquiry was implemented.

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<sup>159</sup> The members of the KwaMashu UBC were: F. Biyela, Z. Dhlomo, M.V. Duma, M.B. Legwate, C.C. Majola, K. Makhanya, G. Maphumulo, C.D. Mbotho, M.W. Mhlongo, E. Mkhwanazi, W.T. Msomo, G. Mzimela, M.P. Ngidi, M. Pamha, S. Shange, H.C. Sibisi and Mutwana S. Zulu. See KCAL, Bourquin Papers, File 8, KCM 55309- 55313, Urban Bantu Councils, Minutes and Agendas, City of Durban, KwaMashu UBC, 10 Apr. 1968.

<sup>160</sup> The members of the Ningizimu UBC were: M.W. Zikaka (chairman), H.S. Msimang (Vice-Chairman), A.W.G. Champion, Rev A. Dhlamini, M. Kweshube, M.P. Magudelela, M.F. Magwaza, Mkhize, W. Msane, P.V. Mthembu, M.M. Mwelase, F.J. Ngobese, Mrs E. Ntuli, M.J. Shezi, M.H. Shinga and Muntwana Sithela Zulu. See KCAL, Bourquin Papers, File 8, Minutes of Ningizimu UBC, 2 Apr. 1968; and also City of Durban, Mayor's Minute, 1969, 20.

<sup>161</sup> Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie, 99.

<sup>162</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 20 July 1968.

Apart from showing interest in trading issues, the KwaMashu and Ningizimu UBCs raised a number of grievances with the local authorities. On various occasions, the issue of additional security personnel, particularly at Dalton Road Hostel, was raised.<sup>163</sup> Concern over the residents' security emanated from an unprecedented spate of criminal activities within the townships. Both UBCs highlighted the plight of persons such as widows, the problems facing institutions such as cemeteries and schools, and the socio-political problems of inadequate accommodation, the absence of proper health facilities, and arrests and detentions of the African people.<sup>164</sup> However, in spite of their representations, the UBCs failed to proselytise the "people's" Residents Associations and other dominant classes of the African petty bourgeoisie - the professionals and intellectuals.

In September 1973, the Umlazi Residents Association (URA), an informal body exactly like the KwaMashu Residents Association, was formed.<sup>165</sup> Soon after the establishment of URA, dubbed "the voice of the people", an attack was launched against the UBC councillors, who were

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<sup>163</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/BAB/1, Minutes of the Ningizimu UBC, 20 Nov 1973.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., Minutes of the KwaMashu UBC, 20 Nov 1973; Minutes of the Ningizimu UBC, 22 Jan 1974; B. Huntley, Manager, Central District to the Chief Dir, PNAAB, 22 Mar 1974; and Minutes of the KwaMashu UBC, 23 Feb 1976.

<sup>165</sup> IIE, The January Strikes (Durban, IIE in Conjunction with Ravan Press, 1974), See the section on community affairs, Umlazi.

described as "too busy to listen to the people."<sup>166</sup> Even Councillor C.C. Majola of the KwaMashu UBC admitted that although URA was inaugurated in a "clandestine manner, residents [were] frustrated by the fact that councillors [could not] communicate with [the] KwaZulu government."<sup>167</sup> A simmering spirit of discontent with the UBCs from the late 1960s existed in the townships, and the KwaMashu UBC noted with regret: "Many people had already made known their unwillingness to co-operate with the councillors. They claim that the council was a toothless body with no executive powers. They therefore see no reason why it should exist."<sup>168</sup> Throughout the 1970s, the UBCs were challenged, ostensibly by the various Residents Associations and other related organisations.

More significantly, the 1970s witnessed a new shift towards political struggle, which was expressed through the emergence of the black consciousness movement in African schools and universities and the creation of a new force in Durban, especially from 1972 onwards - the independent African trade union movement. These emergent forces culminated in mass political activities - the outbreak of the 1973 Durban strikes, the creation of African trade unions, and the 1976 Soweto uprisings, apparently an expression of student opposition to

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/BAB/1, Minutes of the KwaMashu UBC, 9 Dec 1974.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., Minutes of the KwaMashu UBC, 24 Nov 1975.

Afrikaans as a medium of instruction but essentially a rejection of the whole apartheid system.<sup>169</sup> The African struggle entered into a new and momentous phase.

### Conclusion

Central to our analysis in this chapter has been an attempt to demonstrate the varying content of opposition to apartheid policies and structures. Undoubtedly, during the 1960s, when mass political organisations and activities were suppressed, politics shifted from the broad national struggle to civic politics at the community level. But this is not to suggest that ANC activities ceased to exist. The ANC in Durban remained active in a disguised form, though in a limited manner, and continued with illegal meetings, leaflet distributions and sporadic acts of sabotage. An interesting phenomenon, co-existing with the underground activities of the ANC, is the existence of the African petit-bourgeoisie - the traders-cum-councillors - whose survival depended on the apartheid state structures. Because of their narrow and selfish economic interests, this class of the African people collaborated politically with the state, especially in the Residents Committees and Urban Councils.

Certainly, some of those were the petty bourgeois picaroons in Natal, the "upwardly-aspiring sell-outs"<sup>170</sup>, who often collaborated with the state. This particular

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<sup>169</sup> For an in-depth study on the Soweto Uprisings see Magubane, South Africa: From Soweto to Uitenhage.

<sup>170</sup> Bonner, Delius and Posel, Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962, 18.

class of people benefitted from the policy of separate development. During the 1960s, the apartheid state encouraged the formation of such classes, in spite of being dependent on apartheid capital and loans as a means of co-opting them within local apartheid structures and policies. The idea was to paralyse broad mass movements through the creation of such collaborators, whose survival was dependent on tribal identity - an important point which has a bearing on Natal politics.

It is quite clear that Chief Buthelezi and his Inkatha party managed to manipulate events in KwaZulu, and demonstrated his capacity to direct political events in the region to his own ends rather than those of the African middle class whom Kuper refers to as at the "apex of subordination"<sup>171</sup> who were in any case neither fully bourgeois nor proletarian. The local petty-bourgeoisie had to dance to Chief Buthelezi's tune.

Chief Buthelezi also rejected the preferences of the South African state to go for "independence", but often collaborated with the state to gain control of patronage and the territory of KwaZulu. Shula Marks uses the notion of "ambiguity" to characterise such strategies adopted by Chief Buthelezi.<sup>172</sup> Chief Buthelezi was, to use Marks' words once again, "...a man who embodie[d] in his contradictory position all the ambiguities of a Solomon, a Dube, a Champion" and "constantly face[d] the state with

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<sup>171</sup> Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie, 7.

<sup>172</sup> Marks, The Ambiguities of Dependence, 124.

his contradictory presence both as critic and collaborator extraordinary".<sup>173</sup> Chief Buthelezi and his Inkatha party's politics in KwaZulu have always being controversial. Consequently, the relations which existed between the African community, the middle class, and the state were conflictual and ambiguous.

African political struggles were married to worker struggles. One could not divorce politics from the day to day struggles of workers, ranging from anti-apartheid resistance to frustrations created by the economic downturns of the era, that led to the upheavals of the 1970s and 1980s.

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid, 116 & 123.

## CHAPTER SIX

### STRUGGLES IN THE SHADOWS:

#### COVERT FORMS OF RESISTANCE

As industry expanded in Durban, employers patterned their work forces and recruitment practices, structured their work opportunities and managed their establishments in ways that compelled African workers to accept the new challenges of formal wage labour. Both the state and capital instituted ways and methods of ensuring both the availability of labour and the active involvement of African workers in longer periods of continuous employment.

While industrial capitalists required a work pace that was sufficient to accumulate profit, that work pace was "constantly challenged, defended and reshaped."<sup>1</sup> From the early 1880s, African workers have responded to capitalism in various forms and patterned their struggles according to their traditional work culture; they had their own notions of work, time, leisure and sexuality.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> P. Harries, Work, Culture and Identity: Migrant Labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, 1860 - 1910 (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1994), 41.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 228. For an intensive study on struggles expressed in cultural terms and social networks, see Atkins, The Moon is Dead, especially chapters 3 and 6; D. Moodie, "The Moral Economy of the Black Miners' Strike of 1946" JSAS, Vol. 13, 1 (1986); Moodie, "Social Existence and Practice of Personal Integrity: Narratives of Resistance on the South African Gold Mines", African Studies, 50, 1 and 2 (1991); and Harries, Work, Culture and Identity, especially chapter five.



From such a perspective, a number of scholars have examined such notions, especially on the gold mines, among mobile workers. Dunbar Moodie's studies on the moral economy constructed by African workers on the gold mines are useful for an understanding of such notions.<sup>3</sup>

During the 1970s, Durban's African workers challenged capital through strike action. This particular type of worker struggle has received a considerable amount of attention from academics. There is a tendency in many writers' works to confine worker "consciousness" to the analysis of trade union consciousness, strikes and class consciousness. Such a tendency has been perpetuated by scholars because of the accessibility of data on overt forms of consciousness such as strikes, boycotts, unionisation and open political militancy. This has led them to neglect the appraisal of disguised, silent, unorganised and unarticulated responses of African workers. The African worker, it has been assumed, will always respond to his environment in a pre-determined manner. This study does not negate the importance of trade unions, strikes and class consciousness but also examines that form of consciousness which employers found it difficult to detect or suppress. Indeed, the capitalist form of accumulation calls into being open and explicit class struggle between labour and capital, and this topic will be discussed in the following chapters. Because of the

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<sup>3</sup> See Moodie, "The Moral Economy of the Black Miners' Strike."

ever-widening gap between studies on overt and covert forms of worker militancy, this chapter will try to examine "hidden forms of consciousness" which trade unions and political party structures could hardly offer. To understand worker consciousness, it is necessary to penetrate worker reaction arising from a particular situation in which the individual finds himself enmeshed.

The struggles of African workers against capital and the state can be understood in many ways. Any student of African labour history who seeks to understand worker consciousness should search not only for dramatic responses but also for what Robin Cohen calls "hidden forms of consciousness... a 'bedrock', 'grass roots', genuine sorts of consciousness."<sup>4</sup> These disguised forms of struggle have always been difficult to detect by employers, for such expressions tend to be hidden and silent rather than dramatic and articulate. Charles van Onselen's argument that African workers developed strategies of confronting poor wages and debilitating work conditions in the shadows, "in the nooks and crannies of the day-to-day work situation",<sup>5</sup> has relevance to our understanding of the dynamics of African awareness in Durban.

Broadly speaking, the above perception is challenged by Marxist scholars who believe that the individual worker

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<sup>4</sup> R. Cohen, "Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness", RAPE, 19 (1980), 21.

<sup>5</sup> Van Onselen, Chibaro, 239.

is powerless to resist capitalist onslaught. Because the capitalist form of accumulation practises violence upon labour, Marxist belief has been that workers should constitute themselves as a class and formulate collective action to resist the depredations of capital. It is undeniable that the capitalist form of accumulation calls into being open and explicit class struggle between labour and capital, but that does not negate the fact that individual or covert forms of struggle are vital to our understanding of the accumulation process and of how workers reacted to that process.

Theft has been a powerful form of response to exploitation. Karl Marx called this form of response "the earliest, crudest, and ...most primitive form of protest".<sup>6</sup> In classical Marxist terms, such activities represent a clear case of "false consciousness" which would have to be stripped away to allow a "true" political consciousness to emerge. Though a "blunt and stupid form of protest" it might have been, Engels admits that "many workers doubtless sympathised privately" with this kind of resistance to the exploitation of labour power by capitalists.<sup>7</sup> It cannot be denied that theft is a form of resistance and has been used world-wide by all workers who faced the challenges of capital accumulation. But, as Engels further noted :

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<sup>6</sup> K. Marx, Collected Works, Vol.4, (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1975), 502-3.

<sup>7</sup> F. Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1958), 243.

The workers soon realised that crime did not help matters. The criminal could protest against the existing order of society only simply as one individual; the whole might of society was brought to bear upon each criminal, and crushed him with its immense superiority.<sup>8</sup>

Theft as an individual form of struggle has always given way to collective organisation that is more directly in conflict with capital. Why then study theft and other individualised forms of struggle? W.B. Freund states that: "...it is precisely at the points when and where working-class organisation has failed that a study of theft may prove to be of most interest."<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Freund saw theft as providing "...an effective vehicle of protest when and where conventional forms fail. Far from being crude or fruitless, theft can be an effective economic response by proletarians to the totalising surplus demands of corporate capital."<sup>10</sup>

Before attempting an analysis of the forms of struggle embarked upon by workers in Durban, let us recapitulate the South African state's labour control mechanisms and how these were resisted. African workers have a long history of resistance and this has been manifested in their resistance to state labour control mechanisms during the 1960s and 1970s. Chapter Two demonstrated how the state created a comprehensive system employing both efflux

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>9</sup> W. Freund, "Theft and Social Protest among the Tin Miners of Northern Nigeria", in D. Crummey (ed), Banditry, Rebellion and Social Protest in Africa (London, James Currey, 1986), 49.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

and influx controls. These mechanisms of control proved unworkable. African workers utilised a loophole in Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act of 1945 which gave them the right to remain in proclaimed areas for 72 hours without permission. Pretending to be visiting relatives, they never returned to their respective reserves after the expiry of the 72 hour provision. In Durban the provision that individuals could remain in proclaimed areas was extended to seven days in 1962.<sup>11</sup> That extension made it easier for African work-seekers from the surrounding reserves to undo the system. While the state used tough control measures to regulate the flow of workers into White urban areas, its inability to control this movement revealed a distinctive form of resistance by African workers. The relaxation of state labour control mechanisms during the late 1970s should be viewed as a victory for the resistance movement rather than reforms initiated by the state.

An abridged consideration of patterns of resistance by mobile mine workers of the southern Africa region is necessary at this stage. It is important to realise that the southern African examples provide a useful background to worker struggles and covert forms of protest in coercive economies. Van Onselen's remarks about colonial Zimbabwean mine workers' labour protest and action could be broadened to embrace our understanding of everyday forms of consciousness and resistance to exploitation, be

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<sup>11</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 22 Sept. 1962.

it in the mines or industry. Occasionally the workers' experiences on the mines were reinforced through the transfer of "beliefs and practices founded on village society" to new industrial settings. Van Onselen writes:

Retiring workers would inform those in the villages of their experiences and this would in turn affect the labour flows in subsequent seasons...returning parties took considerable care to warn new workers of bad employers and in case they missed anybody making their way to Rhodesia, they took the precaution of pegging notices to various trees en route. Sometimes written in Swahili, these notes, addressed to Africans in general or individual workers in particular, warned of mines to be especially avoided... The African names (for mines) were (also) rich in meaning... The total absence of generosity in food and wages at the Ayrshire mine was reflected in the name Chimpadzi - meaning small portion...And while Chayamatako - "hit on the buttocks" - was hardly a name to make the Masterpiece mine popular, the fact that the Celtic mine was known as Sigebenga (a murderer or cruel person) made certain that the manager there was never plagued with work-seekers.<sup>12</sup>

In colonial Zimbabwean mines, worker struggles assumed distinctive characteristics. Reports of 'batches of boys' who assembled outside the Herald newspaper office waiting for a literate co-worker to read news of the "no-pass" and "desertion" cases were documented.<sup>13</sup> The Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) faced mounting problems of desertion and had to request "Native Policemen" to be deployed to the mining companies in order to prevent desertions.<sup>14</sup> Once the worker was employed and confined to

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<sup>12</sup> Van Onselen, Chibaro, 234-35.

<sup>13</sup> See I. Phimister and Van Onselen, Studies in the History of African Mine Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe (Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1978), 23.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 31.

compounds, which Van Onselen described as "colleges of colonialism"<sup>15</sup>, other hidden forms of protest came into existence. Quota restrictions, time and efficiency bargaining, job-hopping, go-slows, deliberate wastefulness, the destruction of mine property and equipment, and loafing became common characteristics of early mining compounds in southern Africa.

The nature of such protests can be equated to slave resistance in the southern United States where "...ordinary loafing and mindless labour went with deliberate wastefulness, slow-downs, feigned illness, self-inflicted injuries, and the well-known abuse of livestock and equipment."<sup>16</sup> Sabotage and theft were common in mines throughout the southern African region. African workers slowed down the production process to reduce the level of their exploitation or to "jinx" the machinery to show its limitations as a substitute for labour-power. Mining property was frequently destroyed, compound huts were set on fire, and cattle belonging to the company maimed.<sup>17</sup> Namibian mine workers made a distinction between "theft" from colleagues and "taking" from the company.<sup>18</sup> The same workers also argued that their wages were deliberately set low because the management assumed that they would steal.

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<sup>15</sup> Van Onselen, Chibaro, 157.

<sup>16</sup> See E.D. Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery (New York, Pantheon Press, 1967), 74.

<sup>17</sup> Van Onselen, Chibaro, 237-242.

<sup>18</sup> R.J. Gordon, Mines, Masters and Migrants: Life in a Namibian Mine Compound (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1977), 4.

Commenting on the issue of theft, one of the workers noted, "I am just paying myself," while another said: "This is in fact our money which was withheld by the Boss."<sup>19</sup>

The hidden forms of protest practised by miners were also used by the industrial workers. Similar cases documented from the industrial workers of Durban should not be seen as something new in the worker struggle for survival in a coercive economy.

#### Working for Apartheid's Boom

In 1949, the government deliberately withheld unemployment insurance benefits from African wage labour in order to compel workers to remain in continuous employment.<sup>20</sup> The pre-1940 era had also witnessed the institutionalisation of compounds, flogging, jails, fines, and passes not only for the purposes of controlling time, but as a means of driving home new notions of time, idleness, discipline, punctuality and productivity.<sup>21</sup> Continuous employment and productivity was also enforced through the Masters and Servants Acts, which defined insolence, refusal to work, drunkenness and "gross misconduct" as criminal offences punishable by twelve lashes, one month in prison, and a five pounds fine.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 284.

<sup>21</sup> Cooper, The Struggle for the City, 19.



During the 1950s, employers of African labour pressured the government to enact laws that prevented African workers from "job hopping". Section 29 of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1952 defined a category of people in an urban area who could be considered as "idle and undesirable".<sup>22</sup> African work-seekers who turned down three employment offers or terminated their new engagements in less than a month, as well as workers who were often dismissed for misconduct, faced expulsion from the city. Such workers lost their right to permanent residence in the city.<sup>23</sup>

The 1952 Act was intended to mould Africans, as Atkins writes, "...into a European image of what workers ought to be like."<sup>24</sup> A capitalist construction of the worker was to replace the racist stereotype of a "...lazy kaffir with not a care in the world except to kill time," one who would not "undertake long work engagements"<sup>25</sup>, with the notion of productive labour units. From the 1850s, Natal Africans were viewed as "lazy kaffirs",<sup>26</sup> "a fickle race"<sup>27</sup> with "unconquerable laziness."<sup>28</sup> Such crude

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<sup>22</sup> See Hindson, Pass Controls, 69.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> K.E. Atkins, The Moon is Dead! Give Us Our Money: Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843-1900 (Portsmouth, Heinemann, 1993), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 4.

and racist perceptions of Natal African workers continued to be expressed by some employers even as late as the 1960s; nonetheless, the ethic of productivity was enforced.

"Native" productivity, as it was often called, increased with the gradual acceptance of work by the African working class. As Harold Nxasana recalls of the 1950s:

[At a textile firm wages were not that] bad... Now we are working on a production system. For instance the minimum blankets, say you are supposed to make twenty five blankets a day. They were calculated in such a way that those twenty five blankets are making you a day wage. Now whenever there was a wage increase, Mr Schult [the supervisor] increases the number of blankets - making it very difficult for you to reach that minimum. And in some cases he will increase the quality of the yarn so that the yarn makes it not easy for you to actually cover the score.<sup>29</sup>

During the 1960s and 1970s, the textile industry applied the piece-rate system as a means of setting the pace of production.<sup>30</sup> Each piece had a price, pegged at a 100 performance level,<sup>31</sup> which was what a worker should produce at a machine working at 100 percent efficiency.

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<sup>29</sup> H. Nxasana as cited in Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 285.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Msomi, 16 Oct. 1992. See also an interesting account of piece-rates at the Red Star Tractor factory where M. Haraszti worked, in M. Burawoy, The Politics of Production (London, Verson, 1985), 167 - 183.

<sup>31</sup> Burawoy, The Politics of Production, 170; Bob Lange and J. Lange, "Organising Piece-Rate Workers in the Textile Industry", Science for the People, Vol. 16, 3 (May -June 1984), 12.; and A. Hirsch, "Ducking and Weaving: Problems of Worker Organisation in the Textile Industry of Durban -Pine-town-Maritzburg" (University of the Witwatersrand, B.A Hons, 1978), 56.

Some textile industries required a 102 percent loom efficiency.<sup>32</sup> At Afritex, an Andrea piece of cloth of 230 cm by 250 cm size was worth a wage of 38 cents while a Jabula piece of 100 cm by 110 cm was worth 6 cents.<sup>33</sup> Also at Wentex, a Basuto piece of 152cm in width was paid at a wage of 34 cents per unit, while a Demon, 180 cm by 200 cm, was worth 22 cents.<sup>34</sup>

The actual pay for the day's work was determined by the number of pieces of cloth handled. At Frame, for instance, if a worker failed to attain the pre-set norm, s/he could be penalised through a deduction of wages; if the work was continuously below the norm, the worker risked dismissal.<sup>35</sup> The norm was set at a reasonable level, but was open to abuse by management who could change it depending upon production circumstances. The supervisors were there to enforce discipline and to keep production up. Buraway saw the role of such supervisors

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<sup>32</sup> H. Dickenson, Work Study Department, 10 January 1964. Author's personal collection.

<sup>33</sup> J.H.J. van Leen, Afritex to Head Office, Jacobs, 19 Feb. 1976. Author's personal collection. A Number of cloth pieces for instance, a Belge 450 of 150cm by 200 cm was worth a wage of 14 cents, Classique of 150 cm by 230 cm was worth 31 cents, Imbali, 150 cm by 200 cm was worth 16 cents, Monalisa, 180 cm by 230 cm was worth 18 cents and Swallow Stripe of 150 cm by 200 cm was worth 15 cents. All prices here are rounded to the nearest cent. For a comprehensive study on the various pieces and rates which were paid to workers, see Leen, Afritex to Head Office, Jacobs, 19 Feb. 1976.

<sup>34</sup> Consolidated Textile Mills Limited: Wentex Mill, Piece-Rates, Jan. 1976. See various pieces and their prices as tabulated in the document. Author's personal collection.

<sup>35</sup> Hirsch, "Ducking and Weaving", 56.

as: "...emperors ... They hold us all in their hands. They dole out favours as they feel like."<sup>36</sup> Supervisors could enforce discipline at work by placing recalcitrant workers onto less productive machines, thus lowering their wages.<sup>37</sup> Management also had some methods of maintaining worker productivity. It had a wide variety of rewards and punishments it could dole out almost at will, from granting and withholding overtime, to issuing warnings and promotions, firing, and decreeing dismissals.

Productivity, among women textile workers was maintained through the coerced intake of contraceptives so as to avoid work stoppages due to pregnancy.<sup>38</sup> Jean Westmore and Pat Townsend commented that:

A sexual stereotype is being manipulated here: management does not want a stoppage of work due to pregnancy, but the reproduction function of women is used as a rationalisation for keeping women amongst the unskilled and low paid workers.<sup>39</sup>

Most textile firms hired women to do work that was usually done by men, simply because women were cheaper. During the 1960s the woolwashing industry, for example, paid women wages which were 30 percent less than those of

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<sup>36</sup> Cited in Burawoy, The Politics of Production, 177.

<sup>37</sup> Hirsch, "Ducking and Weaving", 56.

<sup>38</sup> J. Westmore and P. Townsend, "The African Women Workers in the Textile Industry in Durban", SALB, Vol. 2, 4 (1975), 24.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

men.<sup>40</sup> In 1966 women constituted about 25 percent of the woolwashing labour force, with a gradual increase to 60 percent in 1973.<sup>41</sup> Wages for the woolwashers in 1973 were as low as R5,10 per week for new recruits.<sup>42</sup> Despite low wages paid to women, their work experiences were similar to men's in important respects, especially in doing the same work. But their experiences also differed, because of the various ways that gender distinctions shaped work.

The 1950s showed some signs of the growing general acceptance of formal employment by the African working class of Mkhumbane shantytown. According to Edwards, workers developed new songs about "courage", "strength" and "the way we were working", all pointing to an acceptance of work.<sup>43</sup> Once the ideology of work was accepted, gender distinctions at the workplace began to surface. Men castigated the women who accepted the formal employment that the men wanted by implying that women worked to earn money for frivolities.<sup>44</sup> As one woman remarked: "They suppose that it is the males who support families and that women only work for fancy clothes and other pretty things,

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<sup>40</sup> The Woolwashing Industry, Report by the Research Officer of the Textile Workers' Industrial Union (SA), David Hemson, Mar. 1973, 2. Author's personal collection.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Msomi, 16 Oct. 1992.

<sup>42</sup> The Woolwashing Industry, Report by the Research Officer, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 285.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Msomi, 16 Oct. 1992.

but our expenses/needs are the same."<sup>45</sup> Working women responded by charging that the men squandered their money on liquor.<sup>46</sup> On several occasions, men spoke about work that was ideally "suited to women's nature",<sup>47</sup> and as one respondent remarked, "Women work with cloth, this is a suitable job for them."<sup>48</sup> Some men became jealous of women who earned money; it reflected badly on their male status as the breadwinner. These were the growing signs of a community that accepted the capitalist world of production and its ideology of work. Schlemmer and Rawlins noted that since the industrial and economic ties to the land were largely eroded, "South Africa's African workers ... overwhelmingly...display[ed] commitment to industrial work."<sup>49</sup> By the 1960s and 1970s, African workers were to a large extent integrated into the capitalist system of production, yet their involvement led to struggles against that same process.

Certainly some forms of struggle were embedded in culture but that does not suggest that they were caused by culture. Belinda Bozzoli identifies songs, phrases, motifs

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<sup>45</sup> Westmore and Townsend, "The African Women Workers", 22.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Msomi, 16 Oct. 1992. See also Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 171.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Msomi, 16 Oct. 1992.

<sup>48</sup> Westmore and Townsend, "The African Women Workers", 30.

<sup>49</sup> L. Schlemmer and C. Rawlins, Black Workers Who Leave: A Study of Factors Relating to Labour Turnover Among African Employees in Decentralised Timber-Processing Plants (UND, Centre For Applied Social Sciences, 1977), 75.

and flags as obvious symbols of resistance<sup>50</sup> or what Tom Lodge calls an "accumulated heritage of resistance."<sup>51</sup> Slogans such as "Amandla Ngawethu", "Hebe Usuthu", and phrases such as "Songoba Simunye," were often chanted and expressed by the workers. A popular song, for instance, that criticised employers for exploiting African workers was sung: "We have donated our blood long. We have donated our energy long. We now say our energy must be paid for. Our energy must be paid for."<sup>52</sup> This song became popular in the 1970s and was sung by rank and file workers during union meetings. Although this chapter does not examine the cultural expressions of the 1960s and 1970s, it accepts the importance of workers' culture in understanding some of their struggles with capital. However, the major focus of this chapter is on the disguised, silent and unorganised forms of the struggle of African workers with capital.

### Terrains of Struggle

Court cases of theft by Durban workers were chronicled in the Ilanga Lase Natal newspaper. The large number

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<sup>50</sup> B. Bozzoli (ed), Town and Countryside in the Transvaal (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), 32. The term resistance is used in this chapter to refer to hidden and silent actions developed by ordinary workers in an attempt to survive and as a way of expressing their discontent over wages paid by employers. This sort of resistance or struggle takes an individual form which denotes that African workers were not passive entities of the capitalist system.

<sup>51</sup> Lodge as cited in Bozzoli, Town and Countryside, 32.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Msomi, 16 Oct. 1992. See also Gwala's papers. Author's personal collection.

of convictions for theft of Africans in magistrates' courts shows the extent of individual forms of resistance; these have remained in place as a way of survival. On 2 January 1960, for example, Mfiseni Dhladhla was sentenced to an effective four months in prison and in addition was whipped four times with a sjambok for stealing from his Indian employer.<sup>53</sup> In another related case, David Mcakumbana, a Durban court interpreter, stole an exhibit of £487 and was sentenced to one year in prison.<sup>54</sup> Occasionally employers complained of items missing from shops that would have been pilfered through back doors and sold in townships. As Mr P.M. Faya remembers: "Clothes, eatable goods and anything that could be taken from industries and shops were stolen and sold during the weekends in the townships. This was a way of living because our wages were too low."<sup>55</sup>

Daily, theft took place which was directed at creating a balance between the ever-rising cost of living and African wages. In a society in which inequality was rampant, with wealth on one side and poverty on the other, theft offered a viable path of redress and redistribution or, at least, a way in which profits are shared. Small items wrapped in paper were thrown in dustbins and collected after working hours. Several metres of cloth at a time were stolen from Frame's textile industry through the

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<sup>53</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 2 Jan. 1960.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 25 Feb. 1961.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Mr P.M. Faya, KwaMashu, 1 Sept. 1992.



connivance of security guards and workers. Security guards pretended to be searching workers when in fact they had concluded prior agreements to share the spoils.<sup>56</sup>

Exploitative employers were avoided at all costs by work-seekers. Vacancies reported by the Labour Bureau offices sometimes remained unfilled for a considerable number of months. Despite the unemployment situation, the KwaMashu Township Manager's monthly reports indicated that African work-seekers refused to be employed in certain jobs. For instance, from March to November 1970, the total number of reported unfilled vacancies at KwaMashu labour bureaux was 283.<sup>57</sup> In 1975 the total number of reported men and women's unfilled vacancies from all labour bureau offices in Durban had soared to 5979 and 1558 respectively.<sup>58</sup>

Employers of domestic labour in the Central District of Durban complained of the shortage of women workers. In August 1973 there were 84 unfilled vacancies in the domestic labour market whereas in 1974, in January alone, the number had risen to 305.<sup>59</sup> While the number of unfilled

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> KCAL, PNAB, KCF 24, Roll 7, Township Manager's Monthly General Reports, KwaMashu, R.G. Wilson, Memos to the Dir., Mar. to Nov. 1970.

<sup>58</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/9, Labour, 1 Oct. 1975 to 31 Jan. 1976, G.F. Baker, Manager Central District to the Chief Dir., 26 Nov. 1975. See all reports from various Labour Officers, 1975.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., Labour, 1 Apr. 1974 to 31 May 1976, Vol.8, Box 49, Dept. of Bantu Admin., Memo from C/O (LIA) to Chief Dir., 9 Apr. 1974

vacancies in domestic employment increased every year, women were ordered out of the urban area at the rate of over 3000 per year.<sup>60</sup> Super-exploitation of women, which took place through poor wages, was countered by avoiding particular industries as a whole.

Domestic workers in Durban stole small items which would not be noticed by their employers. Foodstuffs such as rice, sugar and salt were packed in boxes and collected by relatives over weekends.<sup>61</sup> In Umlazi township, cases of domestic workers who disappeared from their employers after looting household goods and money were frequent in the 1960s.<sup>62</sup> Cohen writes : "In White settler societies any club room conversation will reveal the elaborate charades domestic workers play with their employers - watering down the gin, removing the mark on the bottle, putting flour into the sugar and rice, etc."<sup>63</sup>

Eleanor Preston-Whyte's study on African women in domestic employment has shown that theft of household items took place.<sup>64</sup> A major proportion of domestic workers

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Judith Msomi, 16 Oct. 1992.

<sup>62</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 3 Oct. 1964.

<sup>63</sup> Cohen, "Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness", 20-1. See also Van Onselen, Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 2, New Nineveh, 43. Van Onselen also notes that "...household disinfectant or fly poison were added to the tea or coffee of white women who had insulted, assaulted or dismissed 'houseboys'."

<sup>64</sup> See E.M. Preston-Whyte, "Between Two Worlds: A Study of the Working Life, Social Ties and Interpersonal Relationships of African Women Migrants in Domestic Service in Durban" (Univ. of Natal, Durban, Ph.D, 1969)

were Zionists who relied on "...confession of misdemeanours...[and] the relief of forgiveness and the blessing of pastor or prophet are extremely important to emotional well-being and stability."<sup>65</sup> On Sundays, confessions of stolen items from employers were made to the prophet and such followers were told not to do it again. Van Onselen's studies have shown as well that both men and women domestic servants were involved in petty theft, regularly taking foodstuff, clothing or alcohol from their masters and mistresses.<sup>66</sup> Despite Zionist teachings of the good and bad, the process continued, with more confessions being made. Worker theft, undoubtedly, has remained a form of labour protest, a means of survival and a method of wage supplementation.

Forgery was also on the increase: jackpot ticket numbers were altered by workers involved in gambling in order to "work the system", as for instance in the case of Mnyandu Mtengwa of Durban who was jailed for five months for altering numbers on a jackpot ticket so that he could claim £1200.<sup>67</sup> It might also be added that some African workers were engaged in abusing equipment, and in sabotage. Industrial machinery was deliberately destroyed, while buildings and farm fields were set on fire. In November 1961, a living room at the King Edward VIII

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 346.

<sup>66</sup> Van Onselen, Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 2, New Nineveh, 42.

<sup>67</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 25 Feb. 1961.

Hospital was set on fire by two African nurses.<sup>68</sup> Their major complaints were those of poor wages and food, poor living conditions and mistreatment of nurses by White matrons.<sup>69</sup>

Sabotage activities increased in Durban during the early 1960s. Workers set fire to sugar-cane plantations in and around Durban.<sup>70</sup> On these White plantations, class struggle was both silent and open. The agricultural employers of African labour had always minimised expenditure on labourers, which left the plantation workers with very little space in which to defend themselves. Sabotage was one of their many alternatives. Sometimes the plantation workers in and around Durban resorted to non-cooperation with their supervisors, particularly during the harvest period. The Maputans employed by the Natal farmers were well known for slowing down the rhythm of plantation work. They deserted work towards harvest time, which compelled William Campbell to write: "It was an unbearable evil, frequently 30 or 40 or more [Maputans] will [sic] leave in a night without notice... They kept their engagements at first, but soon found it was easy to abscond."<sup>71</sup> Such forms of passive resistance led to the ruination of some employers.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 18 Nov. 1961.

<sup>69</sup> See the strike that followed the sabotage, SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1961.

<sup>70</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 30 Dec. 1961.

<sup>71</sup> Harris, Work, Culture and Identity, 43.

A considerable number of working days were lost when workers deliberately avoided going to work. Absenteeism was rife in many industries and the Frame company; in particular, complained that a large section of its work force did not report for duty. Some workers at Frametex inflicted injuries on their hands during the "cut and trim" process in order to avoid work. Others pretended to be ill; of these, the weekly average ranged between 40 and 70. In one week, ending 29 April 1978, 489 out of a total workforce of 3630 were reported absent.<sup>72</sup> Of these, 46 workers were ill;<sup>73</sup> the remaining 443 workers merely abstained from going to work. The most affected department at Frametex was the Suzler Number 9 section which recorded 58 and 70 absentees for the weeks ending 24 June and 1 July 1978 respectively.<sup>74</sup>

As a response to absenteeism, the Natal Chamber of Industries (NCI) formed a sub-committee of its Labour Affairs Division in 1971 to investigate the problem and suggest possible remedies.<sup>75</sup> Absenteeism tended to be rife in what the Natal Chamber of Industries termed "a labour hungry environment."<sup>76</sup> The withdrawal of labour-power by

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<sup>72</sup> Frame Labour Officer, Weekly Absentees List, 29 Apr. 1978. [All minutes of the Comm. in the 1970s are with the author. These were given to the author by Mr Jabulani Gwala.]

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Labour Officer, Frametex, 24 June 1978 and 1 July 1978.

<sup>75</sup> KCAL, PNAB, KCF 80, Roll 62, Natal Chamber of Industries, Labour Affairs Division, Minutes, 20 July 1971.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

African workers in industry was not understood by the NCI. They speculated that it was a direct consequence of the "shortage of housing for Bantu workers who return to their homes over weekends and are often absent on Mondays due to the distances which they have to travel home."<sup>77</sup>

While distance may have been a possible explanation for absenteeism on Mondays, it could not be a sound reason for workers to absent themselves for the other working days of the week. Workers have always expressed their grievances or dissatisfaction in disguised ways, including absenteeism or restriction of output or labour turnover.

During the 1960s and 1970s, high labour turnover among textile workers was a common phenomenon, especially in the 1970s. At Hammarsdale Textile Company, a record of 100 percent labour turnover was experienced.<sup>78</sup> In 1974, at Pinetex Textiles, it was reported that there was a 45 percent labour turnover.<sup>79</sup> Frame Textiles also experienced about 55 percent labour turnover in the form of resignations and dismissals.<sup>80</sup> Because of the widespread nature of labour turnover in various industrial establishments, it is hardly possible to isolate it from other forms of response, whether such response was initiated by workers

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>78</sup> Discussion with David Hemson, UND, History Department, 22 June 1994.

<sup>79</sup> See Wiseman Mbali's case as cited in Chapter 8. State Versus Mbali, 137.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with J. Gwala, Bolton Hall, SACTWU Offices, 27 Sept. 1993.

or management.

Commenting on worker resignations and dismissals, Schlemmer and Rawlins wrote:

Management may initiate a termination by dismissal or workers may do so by resigning or desertion, but these actions represent different sides of the same coin of conflict. Thus, for example, a refusal by management to negotiate a grievance may result in a worker resigning because he sees himself as having no other alternative. On the other hand, a worker's failure to co-operate or make concessions may lead to a situation when management has no alternative but to dismiss. Then again, a worker may even deliberately provoke a dismissal either because of his own or management's desire not to compromise or negotiate.<sup>81</sup>

Resignations tended to be the initiative of the employees and an indicator of the African labour force's attitude towards what Roger Allen called "the demeanour and disposition of employees" in industrial settings.<sup>82</sup> Of course, several factors account for resignations of African employees from their employers. Allen's study on the timber industry has shown that drivers, for instance, took up employment in that specific industry as a stepping-stone to employment opportunities in other industries.<sup>83</sup> Since drivers were skilled operators "with a licence", they used their special status and competitiveness to job hop from one employer to another.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Schlemmer and Rawlins, Black Workers Who Leave, 11.

<sup>82</sup> R.D.J. Allen, Ambivalence and Commitment in Work: Labour Turnover and the Stability of African Employees in a Transvaal Border Industry (UND, CASS, 1978), 44.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

Recounting his experiences of the 1970s, David Hemson opined that some African workers took the first employment opportunity with the hope of changing it as soon as they found better employers.<sup>85</sup>

Resignations were also a by-product of low wages and wage-related complaints such as the payment of wages on different days of the month and changes in monthly wage packages, especially when wages decreased.<sup>86</sup> Racist statements and attacks by white supervisors on African workmates caused great resentment which led, to some extent, to resignations. As one worker recalled: "For any minor mistake you may be sworn at and then kicked. I cannot do that even to my child."<sup>87</sup> High labour turnover was also partially a result of what Allen termed "poor or inefficient administration, or disorganised work-procedures, in the employment situations."<sup>88</sup>

The practice of workers claiming to have been admitted to hospitals or consulting private doctors was widespread, for example among workers of the Port Natal Administration Board. Several cases were reported to S.B. Bourquin, the Chief Director of the Board, of workers who took

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<sup>85</sup> Discussions with David Hemson, UND, History Department, 22 June 1994.

<sup>86</sup> Schlemmer and Rawlins, Black Workers Who Leave, 64.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>88</sup> Allen, Ambivalence and Commitment in Work, 44.



self-proclaimed "off-duties" - "laziness and disobedience"<sup>89</sup> - and claimed to have been consulting doctors.<sup>90</sup> Various case studies of the employees of the Board may be enlightening.

S. Sithole, an employee of the Board, was reported on several occasions in 1975 for not reporting for duty. He was absent from work for two months in the same year, only to return in January 1976. Sithole's main excuse was that of continuous illness. He claimed to have been consulting a doctor for two months. It was discovered after consultations with his doctor that he was supposed to report for duty a month earlier. Sithole's services were terminated on the basis that he was dishonest and that wages were paid continuously on the understanding that he was ill.<sup>91</sup>

Other cases of workers who failed to report for duty for an extended period were recorded at the Kwamashu Works Depot of the Port Natal Board. The records of employees M. Biyela, A. Khuzwayo and F.A Ndimande showed constant absence from work.<sup>92</sup> In January 1975, Biyela worked for only three days during which he collected two pairs of overalls and disappeared. As for Khuzwayo, he absconded for the

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<sup>89</sup> NA, PNAAB, Strictly Confidential Files (hereafter SCF), Dept of Business Undertakings to the Chief Dir., 3 Nov. 1975. See the case of M. Mpongese [ Files cannot be quoted at this stage. According to state officials they contain sensitive material. For inspection purposes, see the author.]

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., Dept of Business Undertakings to the Chief Dir., 21 Jan 1976. See the case of S. Sithole.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> NA, SCF, T.H. Ellis to Control Officer (Staff), 20 Feb. 1975.

whole year, the last day for reporting for duty being in February 1974. In a similar case, Ndimande was absent from work for almost three months.<sup>93</sup> In other similar cases, workers, for instance S. Mkhungo, had a record number of more than 73 days of sick leave within two years of service.<sup>94</sup>

There is enough evidence to demonstrate that workers developed other sophisticated ways of "beating the system". Slow-downs were common and some workers refused to do certain tasks "because it was a hard job."<sup>95</sup> Others adopted the strategy of "wandering around" or "loafing" as a way of wasting time. M.E. Zulu, a former employee of the Board based at Congella Brewery, was well known for "causing trouble" and "loafing around" the Brewery grounds.<sup>96</sup> The practice of "loafing" on the job, though not always the case, was another way of avoiding work and that in itself was a conscious form of protest against poor wages and conditions of service. Despite the existence of factory indunas, supervisors and foremen in various establishments, workers deliberately wasted time in toilets. At Frametex company, this was a common practice and later led to the removal of toilet doors, particularly

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Ellis to the Dir. of Admin., 14 May 1975.

<sup>95</sup> NA, SCF, Dept of Business Undertakings to the Chief Dir., 3 Nov. 1975. See the case of Mpongese when he also refused to stack empty crates.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., General Manger, Congella Brewery to the Chief Dir., 18 Sept. 1975.

in Mill number 11, by the management.<sup>97</sup> Because of the absence of a smoking lounge in the same mill, workers walked at a pace which suited them to Mill number 9 where the facility was available.<sup>98</sup>

Apart from avoiding work or pacing it to suit themselves, African workers engaged in part-time jobs during self-proclaimed off-duties as a way of raising money. This device is best illustrated by the case of G. Nxumalo, a former cinema doorman or usher employed by the Port Natal Board.<sup>99</sup> Occasionally, G. Nxumalo absented himself from work without permission, especially in 1975. On two occasions, Nxumalo was caught officiating at soccer matches at KwaMashu Soccer Stadium while supposedly on duty. On the 12 July 1975, Nxumalo was warned by Cameron, the supervisor, not to officiate as a linesman during a soccer match at the stadium since he was the only usher on duty. In response Nxumalo indicated that he had made arrangements with another official to replace him as a linesman, but was later seen by Cameron at the stadium.<sup>100</sup> Once again, on 6 September 1975, Nxumalo took an unofficial half-day's leave and officiated as a linesman at the stadium. He was caught by Cameron and was dismissed for misconduct on 31

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<sup>97</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Frametex Works/Liaison Comm., 4 Oct. 1977. See also Minutes of Meeting..., 6 June 1978.

<sup>98</sup> Minutes of Meeting of the Frametex Works Comm., 6 June 1978.

<sup>99</sup> NA, SCF, Manager, Central District, G.F. Baker to the Chief Dir., 15 Oct. 1975.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

October 1975.<sup>101</sup>

Certainly, the tactic undertaken by Nxumalo involved risks of detection by officials. Nonetheless, other workers managed evasively and passively to "work the system" unobserved. As with Nxumalo, and similar cases recorded by the Board officials, African workers developed strategies which were aimed at supplementing their wages by involvement in part-time jobs. Most reactions of this nature to exploitation were rather silent and in most cases it was very difficult to detect and control this form of protest. There were many days when African workers avoided work, embarked on go-slows and were "disobedient" - behaviour which capital interpreted as "laziness of [the] Zulu labourer." <sup>102</sup>

A sizeable number of workers resorted to "wastefulness" - as in the case of D. Mbambo, who was caught several times spilling beer all over the yard at Congella brewery.<sup>103</sup> Many more found it expedient to direct their frustrations by simply "over-supplying" orders. In March 1973, P. Shangase of the Port Natal Board over-supplied an order for packed "Bantu" beer, and the management took it as a mistake.<sup>104</sup> In this, and similar cases, the supplier would be given some money privately. It was a series of

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>103</sup> NA, SCF, General Manager, Dept. of Business Undertakings to the Chief Dir., 21 Oct. 1975.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., G.F. Baker, Acting Manager, Central District to the Chief Dir., 17 May 1974.

over-supplies which prompted the Board to conclude that "Shangase.. be transferred to Kwamashu Labour Bureau...[due to his]...dereliction of duty..."<sup>105</sup>

With regard to reported "drunkenness" at places of work, employers associated it with "laziness of [the] Zulu labourer", while for workers it represented a means of "ironing out emotional peaks and troughs."<sup>106</sup> Cases of workers coming drunk to work and drinking over lunch-time are well documented by the Port Natal Board; the phenomenon will be illustrated by a few cases (see below). Such actions could not be understood by employers but for workers it was another form of relaxation from unrewarding and tiring work. Psychological adjustment or escapism, such as drunkenness, is a powerful form of resistance at the work place itself. Ambler and Crush noted that drunkenness is a "...set of cultural and social responses to the harsh experiences of industrial employment, urban residence, impoverishment, and racial segregation."<sup>107</sup>

Ambler and Crush are of the opinion that the interpretation of beer drinking among Africans has been expressed by and large within a white colonial discourse.<sup>108</sup> In contrast, Ambler and Crush view drinking

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Cohen, "Resistance and Hidden Forms of Consciousness", 19.

<sup>107</sup> C. Ambler and J. Crush, "Alcohol in Southern African Labour History", in J. Crush and C. Ambler (eds), Liquor and Labour in Southern Africa (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1992), 2.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 11.

"...not simply as a weapon of domination but also as a relatively autonomous form of cultural expression, and thus a potent form of resistance."<sup>109</sup> It was Charles van Onselen's pioneering essay, "Randlords and Rotgut," that marked a complete break with earlier assumptions about the use of alcohol in southern Africa.<sup>110</sup> According to Van Onselen, liquor drew men to the gold mines and helped mining capitalists to secure a cheap labour force and hold them there by meeting their consumer needs.<sup>111</sup> As long as mine productivity was maintained alcohol was tolerated by the mining authorities, but as soon as drunkenness seriously hampered production it became the worst enemy of mine employers. Even the officials of the National Union of Mine Workers in the 1980s came out strongly against drunkenness as retarding worker solidarity.<sup>112</sup> Also condemning widespread drunkenness among workers were the radical youth of the 1970s who saw it as a betrayal of the liberation movement.<sup>113</sup> Despite such wide-ranging condemnation of alcohol use, workers found it a means of escape and relief from their tiring work.

One of the most fascinating examples of a worker who

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>110</sup> See C. van Onselen, Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914, 1, New Babylon.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>112</sup> D. Moodie, "Alcohol and Resistance on the South African Gold Mines, 1903-1962", in Crush and Ambler, Liquor and Labour in Southern Africa, 163.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 179.

was always drunk and gave his employers "headaches" was Z. Ngema.<sup>114</sup> Ngema worked at the KwaMashu Maintenance Depot of the Port Natal Board from the early 1970s. On several occasions, it was alleged, Ngema reported for duty drunk and was "unwilling to do work...[he] refused to carry out instructions given to him by both European and Bantu supervisory staff."<sup>115</sup> On 10 December 1974, he was drunk to the extent that he could not perform his duties and as a result was given a half-day off. For three days in a week, Ngema reported for duty drunk and was sent home. During the same month, he refused to accompany a gang of workers who were assigned to cut grass in the township. The reason for his refusal was that that "work was beyond him ... a stomach complaint made it difficult for him to carry out his work."<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, from 18 December onwards, Ngema was assigned light duties of sweeping at the Depot but only worked for a few hours and then disappeared from work. As a result of his actions, he was dismissed by the Board in February 1975. This particular case shows another form of resistance by workers: drunkenness went hand in hand with poor performance at work, with refusal, in some instances, to perform duties and the denial of labour-power to the employer. The latter is clearly illustrated in the case of Ngema when he was given off-days on several occasions due to his state of

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<sup>114</sup> NA, SCF, Ellis to the Dir. of Admin., 18 Feb. 1975.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

drunkenness.

Drunkenness was widely reported by Port Natal Board officials. It was rife among Maintenance Service workers<sup>117</sup>, and Brewery workers, to mention but two.<sup>118</sup> Ijuba beer tended to be used as a means of courage-gathering to resist instructions from supervisors. Refusal to carry out certain duties becomes in itself a form of resistance. Such resistance can best be illustrated by the case of M. Sibisi, who worked at the Leicester Road Depot of the Port Natal Board.<sup>119</sup> Sibisi was on record for constantly refusing to carry out instructions from his African supervisor, Tabete. He was transferred to the refuse removal gang to prove his willingness to work because he had, as the management put it, "become insolent to seniors and ...[was] having a bad influence on the rest of the task force."<sup>120</sup> Sibisi continued with his resistance and when requested by the management to terminate his services, he agreed.

### Women

Without undermining the role played by women in wage labour, we need briefly to examine women's consciousness

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<sup>117</sup> NA, SCF, Control Officer, (Technical and Building Services) to Dir. of Admin., 13 Nov. 1974. See the case of M.M. Mkwayana.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., Ellis to Dir. of Admin., 18 Feb. 1975.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., Ellis, Ass. Dir. Tech and Building Services to Dir. of Admin. (Staff Section), 19 May 1975.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.



in the South African textile industry. Brief though such an examination may be, we would avoid "the same mistake for which Van Onselen chided historians writing about male labourers."<sup>121</sup> Undoubtedly, women's struggles, just like men's, were varied and ranged from hidden and silent to open forms of response. A close examination of the textile industry reveals that women workers were involved in sexual activities with foremen or supervisors in order to get promotion or wage increments. One of the duties of the supervisors was to recommend wage increments to specific workers who had excelled in their work. As Maureen Mothwa recalls :

Some of us saw it necessary to fall in love with these foremen so as to get a fair treatment and better pay... It was because a woman would not love him for the sake of loving, they were forced to do it, like going to bed with these foremen in order to secure their jobs.<sup>122</sup>

Mothwa's sentiments reflect a particular recognition that sexual harassment was and still is a problem for labouring women in all industrial establishments and various places of work. It is a pointer to men's abuse of power by making sexual demands on working women. Justifying feminist outcry against sexual harassment, M. Bularzik opens her analysis thus:

As in many forms of violence against women, the assertion of power and dominance is often more important than the sexual interaction. Sexual demands

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<sup>121</sup> Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 164.

<sup>122</sup> Interview with Maureen Mothwa by Junerose Nala : 1973 Research Project. Interview translated by Peace Cele, 19 Oct. 1993.

in the workplace... become even more coercive because a woman's economic livelihood may be at stake.<sup>123</sup>

While the practice itself constituted women's sexual exploitation by men, it could also be interpreted as women's way of "working the system" in order to get much-needed wage increments.

At Frame, for instance, where women worked alongside men, they frequently received lower wages for the same work. While poverty wages were paid to both men and women, it was women who bore the main burden and it was their labour which increasingly became marginalised. In their continued struggle against exploitation, another manifestation of women's ability to raise money was the adoption of the tactic of selling food to workmates during lunch-time at the expense of factory canteens.

The consequence of large numbers of female employees at Frame's textiles was the frequent excuse by women who avoided work that their children were sick. Women's actions in this regard were not without justification. During the 1960s and 1970s, Frame was well known for subjecting women to degrading and exploitative conditions. Pregnant women were discharged and denied maternity leave.<sup>124</sup> Their re-employment depended on the available vacancies. As a result of this unjust labour practice, many women workers at Frame refused to divulge their preg-

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<sup>123</sup> See M. Bularzik, "Sexual Harassment at the Work - Place: Historical Notes", Radical America, 12 (1978), 25-6.

<sup>124</sup> Minutes of the Frametex Meeting..., 2 Aug. 1977.

nancies, as the Frametex Liaison Works Committee minutes show:

Many girls were afraid to reveal their pregnancies as they were not sure that they will be able to be re-engaged after being away from pregnancy leave. It was the policy of the Company to advise a female when she left whether she will be suitable for re-employment or not. However, an ex-employee would only be re-engaged provided there were vacancies in their departments.<sup>125</sup>

After giving birth, women reported to work within a week and the reason advanced for the absence was illness: women's workmates notified the relevant supervisor to that effect during the period of absenteeism in order to avoid her dismissal.

Another tactic developed by women in the textile industries was the avoidance of heavy work on the grounds that they were women. Some women who were called upon to do heavy tasks found ways of avoiding such jobs. Maureen Mothwa explained such a situation:

I used to work harder, for example, taking blankets out of the machines to somewhere to be weighed. They were heavy without anyone to help...From the storeroom, we had to ...take the yarn ourselves...It was heavy. Some women fell in love with men in order to be helped.<sup>126</sup>

Because of the meagre wages paid to their husbands, women who were excluded from formal employment often engaged in other activities such as the sale of beer, food and sex. Writing about women on the Zambian Copperbelt, Sharon Stichter notes :

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 14 Nov. 1978.

<sup>126</sup> Interview with Maureen Mothwa: 1973 Research Project.

The commercialisation of services such as food, beer and sex has been for many women quite a successful way to get access to the collective pay check, both in Zambia and throughout Africa. And on the Copperbelt in the 1940s even adultery paid: women were in such high demand that married women sometimes sold sexual favours on the side in order to get a little extra cash.<sup>127</sup>

The problems faced by working women are not unique to South Africa alone, but are world-wide. For instance, in Zimbabwe, the sex for job issue became widespread during the 1980s, and compelled the government to enact a law prohibiting such a practice. While the workplace remains a place where workers play gender games with each other, women's problems cannot continue to be sidelined.

### Social Banditry

There were groups of workers in Durban who resorted to urban "social banditry",<sup>128</sup> combined with criminal activities, as a form of supplementing their wages. The activities of such workers, though carried out beyond the work place, remain crucially important to our understanding of the African working class struggle in the 1960s and 1970s. The subject itself raises a number of difficulties. It is generally claimed that the actions of such people do not deserve any sympathy at all, for they are villains. It is undoubtedly true that some of the people involved in

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<sup>127</sup> Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 167.

<sup>128</sup> See E.J. Hobsbawm, Bandits (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1969),

"social banditry" were simply criminals who victimised innocent people. At the same time, such gangs, especially during the early twentieth century, were known sometimes for avenging injustices

suffered by domestics at the hands of white masters or mistresses. They might jostle an employer off the sidewalk during the day, or make "filthy remarks" at a white woman: in one celebrated case, they raped a white mistress against whom they had a grievance.<sup>129</sup>

As Hobsbawm suggested, we must differentiate two forms of banditry: criminal and venal, and social banditry. Social bandits are those who act "...as protectors, redistributors, and avengers",<sup>130</sup> or, as Austen suggested, the self-helping frontiersman.<sup>131</sup>

Apart from their criminal behaviour, the activities of such gangs should be viewed, as rightly noted by Sharon Stichter, "as a form of worker economic protest."<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, Van Onselen extracted a deeper psychological meaning in what they did when he labelled them as a "houseboys' liberation army, fighting to reassert its decolonised manhood."<sup>133</sup> Justifiably, such gang activities become relevant to study, as Van Onselen stated:

To the extent that its activities were directed

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<sup>129</sup> Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 141.

<sup>130</sup> D. Crummey, "Introduction: The Great Beast", in Crummey (ed), Banditry, Rebellion, 6.

<sup>131</sup> R.A. Austen, "Social Bandits and Other Heroic Criminals" in Crummey (ed), Banditry, Rebellion, 89.

<sup>132</sup> Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 141.

<sup>133</sup> Van Onselen as cited in Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 141.

away from members of the black working class, and towards white property, the organisation saw itself as redressing the balance between the exploiters and the exploited, the haves and the have-nots, the powerful and powerless in a markedly inegalitarian and racist society.<sup>134</sup>

This study is particularly interested in what Hobsbawm termed "noble bandits"<sup>135</sup> or what Van Onselen termed the "houseboys' liberation army" - the African workers' gangster activities beyond the work gates. Certainly, their activities are part of the worker history which generates interest to us, more generally so than better-known forms of worker struggle.

The new arrivals, the lowly-paid domestics and dockworkers, and those who failed to find employment in this coercive economy, developed ways and means of surviving. Their response cannot be ignored since they were a creation of the development of capitalism which required large pools of cheap labour. Their response exemplifies a genuine struggle for survival and cannot be brushed aside simply as the activities of "social bandits". It is the system which forced them to be what they are. Therefore, to confine research solely to silent struggles in the factory alone or to various places of employment would be to fall into the same trap as those scholars of African labour protest and worker consciousness who have narrowly confined their studies to overt worker militancy at the expense of covert responses. Hence this particular study

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<sup>134</sup> Van Onselen, Studies in the Social and Economic History, 2 New Nineveh, 195.

<sup>135</sup> Hobsbawm, Bandits, 41.

also views the formation and development of tsotsi gangs in Durban and any other town as a response to capitalism and its inherent contradictions. It is a response which the state, capital and urban communities cannot ignore.

Gangs modelled after the Amalaita<sup>136</sup> and Ma-Rashea of early Durban<sup>137</sup> ruled the streets by night during the 1960s and 1970s. As industry expanded, so did crime in Durban. Tsotsi groups which existed in Durban consisted of working men who responded to an urban, industrial and capitalist mode of production simply by organising themselves into different groups defined on the basis of common rural, ethnic and workplace ties.

During the 1960s and 1970s, every African township was infested with tsotsi gangs. In Clermont, the "home boys" from Nqutu who were employed on contract by a clothing factory along the border area banded together to find alternatives for surviving in a hostile economy.<sup>138</sup> Domestic servants, who were among the underpaid in Durban, had their own gang known as the "Russians".<sup>139</sup> During the 1960s, the Ama-Russians were led by a certain Mr "Spishi"

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<sup>136</sup> P.la Hausse, "The Cows of Nongoloza: Youth Crime and Amalaita Gangs in Durban, 1900 -1936", JSAS, Vol. 16,1 (1990).

<sup>137</sup> J.Guy and M. Thabane, "The Ma-Rashea: A Participant's Perspective" in B. Bozzoli (ed), Class, Community and Conflict: South African Perspectives (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987).

<sup>138</sup> KCAL, Bourquin Papers, File 21, KCM 55413, Social Disturbance and the Ningizimu Community Council and Juvenile Delinquency and the Urban Black Youth, 1977, 7.

<sup>139</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 19 Nov. 1960.

Dakha.<sup>140</sup> However, in 1969 Dakha was killed by Johannes Khanyile, leader of a rival faction - the "Lions."<sup>141</sup> The "Lions" consisted mainly of dockworkers. Apart from stealing from ships arriving at the Durban docks, these workers were also involved in gang activities as a way of survival.

The young and unemployed youths of KwaMashu and Lamontville townships had their own gangs known as the AmaDamara - Black Power - and Kwayitos respectively.<sup>142</sup> Another gang at Lamontville was known as the "Commodores" while a notorious one in Umlazi was known as the "Hurricanes".<sup>143</sup> These lumpen-proletarian gangs were mainly dominated by low-paid workers who had to survive by all possible means in the interstices of a coercive economy. While labelled "unruly, anti-social elements"<sup>144</sup>, these groups were by-products of the contradictions of capitalism. The development of these tsotsi groups in Durban was regarded by township residents as an "evil" which needed to be uprooted.

During the 1960s, township residents banded together to form "vigilante groups". In 1961 in KwaMashu, the Um-

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<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 30 Aug. 1969. See also KCM 55413, Social Disturbance, 7.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid. See also Ilanga Lase Natal, 5 Nov. 1966.

<sup>142</sup> KCAL, KCM 55413, Social Disturbance, 7.

<sup>143</sup> KCAL, KCAV 320, Interview with B.B. Makhatini by E.N. Yengwa, 27 Sept. 1981, 21.

<sup>144</sup> See the views expressed by the editors of Africa South, Vol.2 (1967), 8.



bumbu organisation came into existence, headed by a prominent businessman, H.C. Sibisi.<sup>145</sup> The main function of this organisation was to fight crime in the townships. The ever-increasing assault and robbery gave birth to the Qonda movement in almost every African township in Durban.<sup>146</sup> Qonda organisations were established in KwaMashu, Chesterville and Umlazi. An exception was Clermont, where the Isolomuzi formed earlier on at the beginning of the twentieth century opposed such action.<sup>147</sup>

### Conclusion

Cognisance of the passive forms of protest remain fundamental to an understanding of the material history of the African working class under capitalism. Such struggles, though confined to the individual consciousness and without many publicised victories and concessions won, nonetheless have their own impact. The hidden forms of resistance will always remain a "bedrock" and a "genuine" form of consciousness. This chapter has focused on one of the most interesting themes of African labour studies. The intention of the chapter was not only to show the continuity of African resistance to exploitation during the apartheid era, but to serve as a reminder to historians,

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<sup>145</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 25 May 1963.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 27 July 1963. Qonda meant 'straightening the wayward.'

<sup>147</sup> See Ilanga Lase Natal, 11 Nov. 1967. For an in-depth discussion on the Isolomuzi, see la Hausse, "The Cows of Nongoloza". Isolomuzi's main function from the time of its inception was to discipline youths who directed "bad language" and "unfit words" at African women, and also to curb the growth of tsotsis in Durban.

writers and scholars of different persuasions that various modes of struggle were embarked upon during the 1960s. The fact that the apartheid state policies of the 1960s virtually abolished the legal rights of the African people to political and trade union activities does not negate our argument that covert forms of struggle continued unhindered.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

"WE ARE NOT CHILDREN. WE ARE ASKING FOR THE MANAGERS TO LISTEN TO OUR PROBLEMS."<sup>1</sup> THE 1973 DURBAN STRIKES

African workers in South Africa, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, were governed by a wide range of oppressive legislation designed to paralyse them. The most important laws in this respect were the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 and the Bantu Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act of 1953, which, respectively, restricted trade union activity and stipulated heavy penalties for striking workers. Such restrictive laws were meant to intimidate African workers not to challenge the established accumulation order. But the capitalist form of accumulation in South Africa tends to bring into being open and explicit class struggle between labour and capital, particularly in the workplace. African workers' struggles have always varied in form, if not in extent, and hence have ranged from hidden to open forms of resistance. One viable form of struggle has been the strike: strike action undertaken by African workers became an important aspect of what was defined as worker "consciousness". If we were to confine ourselves to covert forms of resistance, as analysed in

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<sup>1</sup> S. Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today: African Workers in Trade Unions, 1970-1984 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987), 46

Chapter Six, we would have an incomplete analysis of worker struggles.

Strike actions by African workers in 1973 challenged the whole oppressive system of poor wages, pass laws, residential segregation, the denial of political and trade union rights and the Bantu Education system under which all Africans suffered - men, women and children. The wave of strikes of 1973 is very important in that it assumed a new and distinctive character not possessed by any of the previous general strikes called by nationalist leaders of the 1950s. It was spontaneous, and it shook the apartheid state which had enjoyed relative industrial "peace" since the banning of the ANC and PAC in 1960.

### Workers and Strikes

Several writers have analysed the role of strikes in furthering the aims of the working class. N. Petryszak argues that working class action has been devalued as grossly economistic, presenting demands "easily manageable" and "quickly dealt with" by employers and the state.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, he views strike action as a useful weapon in the struggle between workers and capital. Lenin, sharing much of the thoughts of Marx and Engels, stated:

Every strike brings thoughts...of the struggle of the entire working class for emancipation from the oppression of capital....A strike teaches workers to understand ... the[ir]

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<sup>2</sup> N. Petryszak, "The Dynamics of Acquiescence in South Africa", African Affairs, 75 (1976), 452.

strength ..., teaches the workers to unite; they show them that they can struggle against the capitalists only when they are united...<sup>3</sup>

tensive industrial unrest in all the metropolitan areas. The strikes also saw the advent of unprecedented growth of independent African trade union movement, which forced the state to institute legislation that, for the first time,

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<sup>3</sup> V.I. Lenin, "On Strikes" in Collected Works, Vol. 4 (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977 ed), 313-17.

<sup>4</sup> See V.I. Lenin, What is to be Done? in Collected Works, Vol.5 (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1961), 375 - 408. Lenin did not give unqualified support to strikes. He stated that unless worker action has a political dimension, it is limited. He realised that some strike activity worked in favour of capitalism, even if it was successful. Failed strikes might deter workers; successful strikes might lead to workers accepting their lot or even the capitalist ethos, especially in the United States of America. Arguably, successful strike action in South Africa over the past 15 years has led, at one level, to a tacit acceptance of the capitalist ethic. Forcing the state and capital into reform has been in the long-term interests of capital.

<sup>5</sup> B. Magubane, South Africa: From Soweto to Uitenhage (New Jersey, Africa World Press, 1989), 21.

allowed African workers to be recognised as "employees"; African trade unions were legally recognised, as was their right to strike.<sup>6</sup>

Under the Industrial Conciliation Act (ICA) of 1924, African workers were not regarded as "employees" in terms of its provisions. Consequently, African workers were automatically excluded from any participation in the crucial machinery of industrial relations in the country. Just as in colonial Zimbabwe, African workers in South Africa were subjected to discrimination under the Industrial Conciliation Act, which enforced the colour bar by simply defining an "employee" as a White worker. The example of colonial Zimbabwe is not surprising since most of its legislation was borrowed from South Africa (although there were significant divergences in the 1950s). Since Africans were not defined as "employees" in either country, their trade unions could not be registered. In fact, unregistered African trade unions were never made illegal, but they were excluded from participation in the industrial labour machinery which was a preserve of Whites, Coloureds and Asians. The fact that such unions could not be registered was an obvious discrimination which cried out to be challenged. In Zimbabwe, for instance, a spate of labour unrest beginning in the 1940s, as well as pressure from various quarters, forced the state in 1959 to recognise the legality of African trade

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<sup>6</sup> Such changes took place soon after the release of the Wiehahn and Riekert Commission Reports in 1979.

unions and also their right to strike. In South Africa, the same rights were granted in 1979. It is in the light of these developments that we must view the significance of the strike weapon as used by African workers to force change in South Africa.

Background: 1960 ~ 1972

The African workers of Durban have a long history of industrial experience, worker action and organisation. These early years, from the inception of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) in the 1920s up to the heyday of SACTU in the 1950s, had their own distinctive problems in terms of union organisation and workers struggles, but a culture of labour militancy and mobilisation was set in motion. The innumerable strikes that took place and the number of worker organisations that were formed in the pre-1960 era have been examined in detail by a number of scholars.<sup>7</sup> For that reason, this chapter will concentrate on strike activities which took place in the 1960s which, in retrospect, have been neglected. Existing research has covered only the dockworker struggles of the

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<sup>7</sup> See for instance, B. Hirson, Yours For the Union: Class and Community Struggles in South Africa, 1930-1947 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989); Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home"; P. la Hausse, "The Message of the Warriors: The ICU. The Labouring Poor and the Making of a Popular Political Culture in Durban, 1925-30", in P. Bonner (et al) (eds),  Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in the 19th and 20th Century South Africa (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989); and T.A. Nuttall, "Class, Race and Nation: African Politics in Durban, 1929-49" (Oxford University, D.Phil, 1991).

1960s and 1970s, but very little research has been done on Durban's African workers in general.<sup>8</sup>

In spite of some important contributions to research, the 1960s has long been erroneously regarded as an era of "silence and defeat, almost without a history."<sup>9</sup> The impression frequently held of the 1960s is that, with the banning of African political organisations and the subsequent demise of SACTU, workers failed to challenge capital and the state through labour action for almost a decade. The general belief is that after the mass arrests of the ANC and a number of SACTU officials, workers' protests were completely paralysed. Certainly, the recruitment of SACTU officials into MK structures weakened the trade union movement. Feit's analysis of the relationship between the ANC and SACTU, which he characterised as "harnessing workers to an ideological chariot driven towards political goals", is overstated. Nevertheless, the relationship did weaken the union movement during the 1960s.<sup>10</sup>

However, politically, socially and economically, the 1960s and 1970s are decades rich in worker activities. As rightly noted by Magubane: "...In spite of all the handi-

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<sup>8</sup> See for instance, Luckhardt and Wall, Organise or Starve. In the case of Lambert, "Political Trade Unionism", the period covered does not go beyond 1965. The only work so far that has examined African dockworker activity during the 1960s and 1970s is Hemson's thesis, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers".

<sup>9</sup> G. Bloch, "Sounds in the Silence: Painting a Picture of the 1960s", Africa Perspective, 25 (1984), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Feit, Workers Without Weapons, 174.



caps, the African working class has from time to time put down its tools..."<sup>11</sup> It is within such a context that both unions and strikes should be studied.

During the late 1950s and the early months of 1960, strike action remained the pillar of the Congress Alliance's resistance against the apartheid state. This form of strategy was clearly enunciated by Nelson Mandela in 1956 when he argued,

...in a country such as ours a political organisation that does not receive the support of workers is in fact paralysed on the very ground on which it has chosen to wage battle. Workers are the principal force upon which the democratic movement should rely.<sup>12</sup>

Certainly, the Congress Alliance relied on workers' strike action and on SACTU's role in galvanising support among their members. In March 1960, during the anti-pass campaigns, stay-away protest actions were called for by both the ANC and SACTU, and workers were responsive to the call.

Soon after the Sharpeville massacre, strikes broke out throughout the country. In Durban, Chief Albert Lutuli called for a day of mourning as well as a general stay-away. The day of mourning was observed, and ended up in extended strike actions, demonstrations and riots. In the Mobeni industrial area, the strike action was a success with only a fraction of workers attending work. Let

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<sup>11</sup> Magubane, South Africa, 22.

<sup>12</sup> Nelson Mandela as cited in Lambert, "Trade Unionism, Race, Class and Nationalism in the 1950s Resistance Movement", in Bonner (et al) (eds), Apartheid's Genesis, 1935-1962, 275.

us examine the evidence.

On 30 March 1960, leaders of African organisations were arrested, together with a sizeable number of supporters of the anti-pass campaign. Such actions were met with demonstrations and strikes. Workers were once again out on strike, demanding the release of their leaders. In Durban, strikes and demonstrations continued for almost ten days: from 1 April till 10 April workers from Cato Manor, Clermont, S.J. Smith Hostel and Lamontville were involved in strike actions. On 8 April 1960, the ANC and PAC were banned. Workers returned to work but their leaders remained in jail. A State of Emergency was declared and the townships were surrounded by the armed forces.<sup>13</sup> "Freedom in our lifetime" suddenly became a dream which workers thought would never be fulfilled. While these events marked the end of politically inspired strikes, workers in Durban continued to resist exploitation through limited strike action.

In November 1960, 60 African workers of the KwaMuhle department, working at KwaMashu, went on strike.<sup>14</sup> They demanded that their workmates, allegedly dismissed unfairly, be reinstated. Some workers returned to work after a day but the remainder were fired. In December of the same year, about 2000 African and Indian workers of the leather industry went out on strike.<sup>15</sup> This strike was necessi-

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<sup>13</sup> See SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1960.

<sup>14</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 19 Nov. 1960.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 10 Dec. 1960.

tated by a dispute over wage increments, a dispute which arose after workers in a related field at the Bata factory had received a wage increase. When the leather workers were awarded an increment, they returned to work.

Meanwhile the underground ANC and its alliance counterparts planned a stay-away against the declaration of South Africa as a Republic on 31 May 1961. The national stay-away began on 29 May and was to last till 31 May. In Durban, as a SACTU survey showed, workers' response to the call was limited:

The clothing industry closed down for the three days. In organised factories, there was a two day stay-away of 50 percent to 70 percent of the workforce in textiles; 30 to 80 percent in furniture; 50 to 70 percent in sheet metal; and 40 to 80 percent in the twine and bag industry. The entire workforce in the organised sweet factories stayed away for three full days, while 60 to 70 percent of the workers at Bata Shoe company stayed away for three days. There was only a one day stay-away of 50 percent of the workforce in the distributive trade; 60 percent in milling and 50 to 60 percent in chemicals.<sup>16</sup>

Generally, the stay-away was a success, as reported in the Ilanga Lase Natal newspaper.<sup>17</sup> Despite the call for a stay-away, workers went to work, especially among the Durban municipal workers, the dockers and the railway workers. The strike was uneven on a national level, although Durban remained a leading centre of worker action. Nelson Mandela admitted that the strike was a limited success - a contention which was highly disputed

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<sup>16</sup> A SACTU survey as cited in Lambert, "Political Unionism in S.A.", 457.

<sup>17</sup> See Ilanga Lase Natal, 10 June 1961.

by Natal activists. He went further, calling on the workers to return to work, as the national strike was "not the national success I had hoped for. This closes a chapter in our methods of political action."<sup>18</sup>

The passing of the controversial Nursing Amendment Act of 1957, with its naked racist policies, implanted bitterness among professional African nurses. Since 1958, the government had used the provisions of the Act to demand passes for African nurses "in order to spearhead the imposition of passes on women more generally."<sup>19</sup> Apartheid was implemented in the nursing profession through the Act, which "marked a major turning point in the organisation of nurses in South Africa: all previous legislation relating to nurses and midwives had made no distinction on racial or other lines."<sup>20</sup> The new Act had a provision for separate representation of African nurses on purely advisory committees of the mainly White South African Nursing Association.<sup>21</sup> The South African Nursing Association objected to African nurses forming an independent association since it would become a "communistic body".<sup>22</sup> The Act of 1957, then, saw the launching of the

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<sup>18</sup> The Natal Mercury, 30 May 1961. The local success in Durban did not sufficiently influence or impress the ANC.

<sup>19</sup> S. Marks, "The Nursing Profession and the Making of Apartheid", in Bonner (et al), Apartheid's Genesis, 342. See also Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie, 220.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Kuper, An African Bourgeoisie, 220.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

Federation of South African Nurses and Midwives Association which, together with the ANC Women's League, opposed and protested against the implementation of apartheid within the nursing profession. It is within this context that, in Durban, SACTU established the Health Workers Union, which engineered strikes and demonstrations at major African hospitals in the 1960s.

In August 1961, 300 African nurses and general workers at King George V Hospital went out on strike.<sup>23</sup> The main cause of the strike was mistreatment of African nurses by White counterparts and, in particular, by the matron, Mrs Malan. The strike was led by women leaders such as Mate Mfusi, Queeneth Dladla and Doris Mnyandu with the help of SACTU officials.<sup>24</sup> Other reasons expressed by their spokesperson, Mr Stephen Dhlamini, ranged from lower wages, inadequate and badly prepared food, uniform allowances, promotion and annual leave, to passes.<sup>25</sup> The industrial action taken by nurses in 1961 was in response to "...inadequate education, unequal access to training facilities, discriminatory pay and the appallingly overcrowded conditions in black hospitals...."<sup>26</sup>, but was also tied to the general political upsurge of the time.

Once again, in October 1966, 74 African nurses at the Umlazi Mission Hospital staged a walk-out protest against

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<sup>23</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 9 Aug. 1961.

<sup>24</sup> Luckhardt and Wall, Organise or Starve, 312.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Marks, "The Nursing Profession," 355.

unfair dismissals of eight workmates.<sup>27</sup> The dismissed nurses were leaders of a hunger strike which had begun at the hospital in response to what they referred to as "poor quality food." It was only after their union member, C. Madhladhla, intervened in the dispute that they returned to work.

The dockworkers of Durban, although under rigorous control from their employers in the 1960s, also challenged the authorities through strike action. These workers' strikes were initiated and led by togt, or daily-paid casual labourers. In December 1961, workers employed by Consolidated Stevedoring and Forwarding Agency, a component of the DSLSC, went on strike.<sup>28</sup> The workers' demand of an annual bonus had been turned down by the employers. Their demand was supported by SACTU which offered the services of R.I. Arenstein, a left-wing lawyer, during the subsequent court trials. All accused workers were acquitted.

In January 1964, a strike broke out at the Pinetex plant of the Frame group of companies. The strike began on 22 January when at least 140 night shift spinning workers refused to perform their duties. They demanded increases in the higher grade and the long service workers' categories. The company had only awarded a R1,50 increase for the basic starting wage, which left the rest unchanged.

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<sup>27</sup> The Natal Mercury, 26 Oct. 1966.

<sup>28</sup> The Daily News, 4 Jan. 1962 as cited in Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers".

The other shifts joined the strike. As usual, the employers threatened workers who were either to return to work or face dismissals. After two days, the strike had spread within the plant to include nearly all its 1550 workers.<sup>29</sup>

On the fourth day of the strike, workers gathered outside the plant and negotiated as a group with the management. Apart from wages, workers raised what the management referred to as "trivial complaints", suggesting that the complaints were more than just over wages. The negotiations ended up in a deadlock and consequently the management dismissed 443 workers, of whom 43 were never reinstated again at the plant.<sup>30</sup> The strike was broken and workers returned to work without winning any of their demands. During 1964 as well, the Clover Dairies' ice-cream vendors went on strike over a wage dispute. The ice-cream vendors complained that they were exploited over commission and were required to pay for the ice-cream that, due to the nature of their work, got damaged in the process of selling.<sup>31</sup> The basic wages for the ice-cream workers were R5 per week. Clover Dairies recruited their vendors from outside Durban, especially mobile workers from the Pietermaritzburg area.<sup>32</sup> The Clover Dairies

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 25 Jan. 1964.

<sup>30</sup> Gwala's papers on the 1973 Durban strikes. Author's personal collection.

<sup>31</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 8 Feb. 1964.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

management agreed to look into their grievances and to make the necessary adjustments to their wages. The strike came to an end after two days.

In 1965, about 70 African painters employed by a Durban firm of painting contractors, went on strike over a wage dispute.<sup>33</sup> The 1965 strike took place over the weekend, and left some ships which were being painted with "a fresh coat of paint, high and dry."<sup>34</sup> The workers demanded a wage increase from R1,60 to R2,50 for a day shift and from R1,90 to R3 for a night shift.<sup>35</sup> Increases of R0,20 were granted to each respective shift and workers returned to work.

In December 1965, a strike broke out at the C.G. Smith company in the Maydon Wharf area. About 117 African workers demanded a wage increase, a tea break, overtime and overalls.<sup>36</sup> All workers were fired and arrested and appeared in the Durban magistrate's court, where each was fined R25 for participating in an illegal strike.<sup>37</sup> The state's response to the strikes was that of severe punishment, through state prosecution, of employees who challenged their employers. The anti-strike measures adopted

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<sup>33</sup> The Natal Mercury, 12 Apr. 1965.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. See also Ilanga Lase Natal, 1 May 1965.

<sup>36</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 18 Dec. 1965. See also The Daily News, 10 Feb 1966.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. The case was postponed on several occasions and the sentence was passed only in August 1966. See The Daily News, 14 Mar. and 28 Aug. 1966.



by the state were applied to prosecute mainly African workers on strike, and to reassert coercive authority at the production point.

The year 1969 witnessed a spate of strikes being waged by African workers in Durban. Prominent among these were the African doctors' protest at major hospitals which began in April and ended in May, and the dockworkers' strike which took place during April.

The African medical doctors understood that the widening pay gap with their fellow White doctors would not be closed voluntarily; they needed to fight for it and hence the protest. About 130 African doctors at King Edward VIII Hospital submitted their resignations on 1 April 1969.<sup>38</sup> The dispute was centred on salary discrimination whereby African doctors were paid under half of what White doctors received. The protest that began at King Edward VIII Hospital spread to other hospitals, such as Clairwood and Edendale of Pietermaritzburg. The doctors' protest was fully supported by the South African Medical Association, Dr E.G. Malherbe, the former principal of the University of Natal, and the Acting Dean of the Medical School, Natal, Professor Barry Adams.<sup>39</sup> They called on the government to implement equal salaries for all races and demanded that, in the words of the South African Medical Association, "...salary differentiation among full-time medical personnel should only be on the basis of grading,

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<sup>38</sup> The Natal Mercury, 1 Apr. 1969.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 2 Apr., 3 and 15 May 1969.

service and merit."<sup>40</sup>

The immediate response from the government to the crisis was to announce that the salary discrepancies would be revised in the "foreseeable future." In fact what the government implied was, according to the Minister of Health, Dr Carel de Wet, that "...equal salaries for white and non-white doctors could never be considered because it would be in conflict with the declared policy of the government."<sup>41</sup> The crisis deepened until the government revised the salary scales in mid-May. On 17 May, new salary scales were announced which indicated that the African doctors were to be paid between 70 and 90 percent of the White scales. Before the increases were granted, African doctors' salaries ranged from 48 to 60 percent of White doctors'.<sup>42</sup> Their protest had not been entirely in vain: the African doctors called off the protest, and all who had resigned were reinstated.

In 1969, the dockworkers, who had demanded a wage increment in 1961, once again went out on strike. The dockworkers of Durban have a strike history behind them. There were strikes in 1941-42 and 1949, and during the 1950s, there were strikes by the dockworkers. The most prominent feature of the dockworkers' struggles in Durban was the leading role of the toqt workers. In fact most strikes began in the toqt barracks, a fact which led David

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<sup>40</sup> The Natal Mercury, 3 May 1969.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 17 May 1969.

Hemson to write that such workers "...were probably the only group of [African] workers in Durban who provided leadership from among their own ranks without relying on non-labouring educated strata..."<sup>43</sup> The prominent figure who led the dockworkers during the 1940s was Zulu Phungula, a mobile worker from Ixopo district. Phungula was elected as the leader sometime in 1939 and became an influential person especially during the 1941-42 strikes.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the dockworkers of Durban experienced an employment crisis together with a decline in wages. In July 1969 the DSLSC's employment figures dropped from 2923 to 2211.<sup>44</sup> During the same period wages declined within the industry. Workers also complained of taxes imposed on their meagre wages. Underground structures were thereupon established and pamphlets were distributed demanding wage increments and rejecting the imposition of taxation on earnings, especially on their daily allowances, overtime and Sunday time.<sup>45</sup>

On 5 April 1969, the dockworkers went out on strike. Their demands were centred on the basic wage increment to R14 per week as against R6 which they were paid. The DSLSC management did not accede to the workers' demands, and the workers in turn expressed their willingness to "...go back

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<sup>43</sup> Hemson, "Dockworkers, Labour Circulation, and Class Struggles in Durban, 1940-59", Journal of Southern African Studies, 4, 1 (Oct.1977), 92.

<sup>44</sup> Hemson, " Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers", 512.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 517.

home to Zululand."<sup>46</sup> About 1043 workers were dismissed and were replaced by casual labour recruited from the townships. The strike caused shipping congestion at the Durban port and a number of shipping agents publicly expressed their concern.<sup>47</sup> The DSLSC management stood firm with their decision not to increase wages; instead they recruited back some workers whom they had fired. The militant leaders of the dockworkers were never re-employed. The strike was broken for a while.

The 1969 dockworkers' strike marked the end of the 1960s and significant conclusions can be drawn from the decade. The decade witnessed a decline in industrial struggles as compared to the 1950s, but that is not to suggest that it was "silent". In fact the decline could possibly be described as follows:

It is not that they [the workers] do not have plenty of reason for striking: it is because they know that if one group of workers came out on strike on their own, all the forces of the state and the police will be brought in to hammer them, to arrest them, to victimise and deport them.<sup>48</sup>

P.M Faya remembers the situation during the 1960s:

We all wanted to strike because there was no money. Our wages were bad as compared to the cost of living. But, all our leaders were in jail, our trade union officials were being harassed every day by the security officials and some were imprisoned...it was then impossible to

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 519.

<sup>47</sup> See the details of the strike in Ilanga Lase Natal, Apr. 1969; The Natal Mercury, 8 and 9 Apr. 1969; and The Daily News, 7 Apr. 1969 and 23 Jan. 1970.

<sup>48</sup> Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers", 523.

take such a risk of striking. If a person such as Mandela was imprisoned, can you imagine what could have happened to us. These were difficult times for us.<sup>49</sup>

Various factors account for this dramatic decline in industrial battles of the 1960s. The banning of African political organisations, the apartheid state's suppressive machinery, the economic boom and the premature entry of SACTU into conflict with the state at a time when it needed to consolidate itself, and its subsequent collapse during the mid-1960s, were crucial factors which can explain why there were relatively few strikes during the decade.

By the beginning of the 1970s, there was a gathering momentum of labour unrest in Durban. Disputes which took place before 1973 were largely influenced by the activities of the newly established General Workers' Factory Benefit Fund (GWFBF), the University of Natal Students' Wages Commission, and also the re-emergence and regrouping of former SACTU officials who had survived the 1960s. The Wages Commission was formally established at the University of Natal by White students in order to help African workers by presenting evidence to the Wage Board, encouraging working class organisation and campaigning for higher wages. They also launched a local newspaper. Printed in Zulu, Isisebenzi/Industrial Worker provided key information on the poverty datum line and it carried strike news on any industry that was affected. On 8 June

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<sup>49</sup> Interview with P. M. Faya, KwaMashu, 1 Sept. 1992.

1971, about 10 000 pamphlets were distributed in Durban by the Wages Commission, soliciting support from workers for a meeting to protest against the Wage Board's recommendation for unskilled workers in Durban, and pressurising for a wage of at least R7,97 a week.<sup>50</sup> A sizeable number of workers attended the meeting and made a demand of R20 a week. The following day, at the McWillaw Iron and Steel Foundry, about 200 African workers went on strike, demanding higher wages. They used the pamphlets which were distributed by the Wages Commission to bargain for higher wages. The management of the steel foundry first fired all the workers but later re-employed some, although refusing to rehire the leaders of the strike.<sup>51</sup>

While the struggle for wages continued in Durban, the issue of worker organisation became central, especially among the officials of the Garment Workers' Union of Natal and the Furniture Union. These two unions represented Indian workers and were led by Harriet Bolton, who offered assistance and guidance in the establishment of the Benefit Fund. The Benefit Fund was formally launched on 9 September 1972 to provide medical and death benefits for workers and their families; particularly those of the clothing and furniture industries.<sup>52</sup> As noted by David

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<sup>50</sup> Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers", 552.

<sup>51</sup> See The Natal Mercury, 10, 11 and 16 June 1971; and The Daily News, 10 and 17 June 1971.

<sup>52</sup> SALB, "Report on the General Workers' Factory Benefit Fund", SALB, 1,3 (July 1976), 52. See also Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today, 43.

Davis, administrative officer of the Fund, "The BF ... agreed to provide the members of these unions with funeral and medical benefits, thus serving to attract workers into unions."<sup>53</sup>

By the time the Durban strikes broke out, the Benefit Fund had recruited thousands of workers from different industries. The Benefit Fund also managed to organise workers' committees, which in a few cases were recognised under the law in various industries, as a form of protection for its representatives.

Another development which took place in 1972, immediately prior to the mass strikes of January and February 1973, was an attempt by trade union officials of the 1950s and 1960s<sup>54</sup> to revive SACTU. As recounted by B. Nxasana, a shop steward in the SACTU-affiliated African Textile Workers' Union:

When Albert Dhlomo [a SACTU activist] came off Robben Island in 1970 after serving a prison sentence for being an ANC member, he had the idea that we [fellow activists] should revive the unions. We started off in 1972 by issuing out pamphlets to workers in certain factories. Workers responded spontaneously by calling to the office to join in the afternoons. They were former SACTU union members who brought in new members to join...<sup>55</sup>

The impact of the revived SACTU was not as much as had been expected, since the activists were absorbed into the

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<sup>53</sup> D.L. Davis, "Report on the GWFBF", as cited in Webster, Cast in a Racial Mould, 133.

<sup>54</sup> Webster, Cast in a Racial Mould, 132.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with B. Nxasana as cited in Webster, Cast in a Racial Mould, 151, note number 16.

General Factory Workers' Benefit Fund.

Certainly, pamphlet distribution became a way of communication between various organisations and the African workers. The South African Students' Organisation (SASO) and the Black Consciousness Movement were involved in worker education and organisation, processes which were realised through the distribution of pamphlets to workers. At its conference in July 1972, SASO instructed its organiser to consider the viability of establishing a Black Workers' Council to enable "...workers to negotiate in a united voice for those conditions regarded as essential to their survival."<sup>56</sup> Thus the role of the Workers' Council was

...to serve the needs and aspirations of [African] workers, to conscientise them about their role...to run clinics for leadership, in-service training and to imbue them with pride and self-confidence as people and about their potential as workers.<sup>57</sup>

In order to realise its objects, SASO formally launched the Black Workers' Project (BWP) in 1972. However, very little was achieved. In fact, it would be misleading to suggest that SASO and BWP exercised a strong political influence leading to the outbreak of the 1973 Durban strikes. The activities of SASO and former SACTU activists were extremely limited and not very influential among African workers.

Like any other organisation seen as communist and

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<sup>56</sup> As cited in Toli, "The Origins of the Durban Strikes, 1973", 219.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.



dangerous in the eyes of the state, the BWP experienced state hostility and harassment. On 5 February 1973, the Minister of Labour, Marais Viljoen, accused the BWP of being "one of the instigators" of the 1973 strike, indicating that letters were posted to various organisations in 1972 for distribution to the workers so as to advise them not to be "pushed around by whites."<sup>58</sup> This kind of accusation was used by the state as justification for the arrest of five members of the Black Peoples' Convention and SASO for distributing pamphlets to African workers at the Warwick Avenue bus terminus in early February 1973.<sup>59</sup> But there was nothing new about state arrests, bannings and harassment. It had become a way of life, especially during the 1960s. Both white and black activists became victims of state repression in general.

The stirrings of discontent continued in Durban, once again involving the dockworkers. The dockworkers went out on strike on 23 October 1972 and demanded R18 a week, "voluntary overtime, shorter working hours, and complained that their living conditions were...unhygienic."<sup>60</sup> Some of the complaints advanced were that, since there were no payslips, workers felt cheated by the company through unknown deductions for income tax and compound fees.

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<sup>58</sup> South African Observer, 18, 1 (Mar. 1973), 9. For debates in the Parliament over these issues, see House of Assembly Debates, 19 Apr. 1972.

<sup>59</sup> The Sunday Tribune, 4 Feb. 1973 and The Star, 7 Feb. 1973.

<sup>60</sup> Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers", 648.

Workers rejected indunas as their representatives and some complained of the lack of bunks in the compounds, since most of them slept on the cold floor. The food was bad and beer sold in the compounds was diluted with water.<sup>61</sup>

On the second day of the dockworkers strike, Dreyer, the Compound Manager, informed all workers that they were to return to work or risk losing their jobs. The police were called in and workers had no choice but to return to work. Commenting on the strike, the Wages Commission noted that: "Force has resolved the issues for the present. The underlying causes remain - workers dissatisfied with very real conditions: long hours, low wages, hard and dangerous work, and separation from families."<sup>62</sup> In fact there was general sympathy among sections of White society for the conditions of African workers. A similar sentiment was shared by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Natal:

We identify with the workers in their basic demands and protest the actions of the employers in forcing them back to work without meeting any of their demands. The facts of their working and living conditions run against the church's teachings on social justice and are an affront to christian conscience.<sup>63</sup>

The dockworkers strike of 1972 failed to achieve the desired wage increments or to redress workers' varied grievances and demands: issues which have always ranged

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> The Wages Commission Statement as cited in Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers", 651.

<sup>63</sup> As cited in F. Ginwala, African Workers Strike Against Apartheid, (United Nations, Unit on Apartheid, Dept. of Political and Security Council Affairs, June 1973), 9.

from workplace oriented matters to grievances about where they lived. In fact, the workplace conditions of the dockers, poor wages and the poor living conditions fostered their militancy throughout their history. Their militant actions were developed in the compounds which, Van Onselen argues, acted as "total institutions" for the suppression of collective mass action. In contrast, Hemson argues that the dock compounds facilitated effective communication and kept the spirit of informal networks alive, especially during the strike period.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, the dockworkers' strikes were highly influential in the outbreak of the 1973 Durban strikes. As correctly noted by David Hemson, dockworkers

have shown a remarkable ability to organise themselves...to transform their conditions of work and society in which they live. For over a century the dockworkers have shown by their actions that they were conscious of their exploitation and oppression and determined to make changes in their interests... The dockworkers of Durban...have had a decisive part in the initiation of mass working class resistance in South Africa.<sup>65</sup>

Undoubtedly, the dockworkers' strike spurred industrial unrest in other sectors of the economy. The Daily News quoted one of the Coronation Brick workers as having said: "We are determined to go home if we do not get our R20. We know what happened to the stevedores and we will not go back if we are offered less."<sup>66</sup> Various lessons

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<sup>64</sup> Hemson, "Dockworkers, Labour Circulation", 123.

<sup>65</sup> Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers," 719.

<sup>66</sup> The Daily News, 9 Jan. 1973.

were learnt from the dockworkers' strike, namely that mass united action was possible and that worker representatives should not be elected in order to avoid victimisation of particular identified individuals. Workers were, therefore, prepared to speak with one voice.

### The 1973 Strikes: Coronation Brick and Beyond

Usuthu, "a Zulu war cry which originated as a reference to raided cattle, in a homestead of the Zulu prince Cetshwayo ka Mpande more than 140 years ago"<sup>67</sup>; Filumuntu ufe usadikiza, "Man is dead, but his spirit lives"<sup>68</sup>: these were the slogans which the Coronation Brick workers chanted as they entered the football stadium in Durban on 9 January 1973. At about 3am, the Coronation Brick workers at the Number One and Avoca plants marched in two columns towards the stadium, thereby beginning what is popularly known as the Durban Strikes. About 2000 workers participated on that night, demanding a minimum wage of R30 per week. The Coronation Brick workers were out on strike for two days. After some negotiations, workers accepted a R2 rise and a new minimum wage of R11,50 per week. The news of the Coronation strike spread throughout Durban and the whole country, with newspapers documenting as much as possible about the striking workers (quite a significant

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<sup>67</sup> J. Guy, The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom ( London, Longman, 1979), 246. See also IIE, The Durban Strikes, 1973, 96 -7.

<sup>68</sup> See for instance, IIE, The Durban Strikes, 1973, 10.

change in attitude by the press).

The Coronation Brick strike is important in that it ignited unrest throughout the province of Natal. The main issues raised by the 2000 mobile workers at Coronation were the general problems faced by each and every African worker in South Africa - the failure of wages to keep up with the cost of living, and other related socio-economic and political problems. Once the strike broke out at Coronation, it began to spread to almost every corner of the Durban metropolitan area. One of the focal points of the strike wave was the struggle of the most exploited, poorly paid textile workers from the Frame group of companies. In fact the textile industry experienced some prolonged strikes during this period.

For our purposes in this thesis, we are not going to examine each and every detail of the strike. The wave of strikes was well-documented in the newspapers and in fact it received the greatest attention from the press, both local and abroad. Moreover, quite a number of works have comprehensively traced the events of the strikes.<sup>69</sup> In order for this study to capture the reader's imagination, pictorial examples of the strike are provided in this thesis.

Mostly, when workers began to strike they rejected the idea of electing representatives for fear of

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<sup>69</sup> See for instance, Labour History Group, Durban Strikes (Cape Town, July 1987); IIE, The Durban Strikes; SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1973; and Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today.

victimisation. However, Durban workers enjoyed the support of their traditional leaders, especially King Goodwill Zwelithini. The interventionist role played by King Zwelithini at Coronation raised worker expectations and gave the strikers' cause some legitimacy.

Strike surveys have shown that as one factory returned to work, another came out on strike; the main issue in each of the strikes was the same - the demand for higher wages. (See Appendix.) Several marches of workers in Durban were reported from January to March 1973; the momentum of the strike wave failed to decline, even as thousands of armed police were flown in from Pretoria and other cities of South Africa. Certainly, the heavy police presence did not incite violence and in most cases the police hardly intervened actively in the strikes. The press described the behaviour of the police as one of "maximum restraint" during the whole period of unrest.<sup>70</sup> It is possible that the police adopted such an attitude on the basis of avoiding confrontation with workers such as had occurred in the past. Moreover, there was a possibility of general unrest taking place should the police have used force. Whatever the reason, the police presence failed to deter workers from striking.

From 9 January to 31 March 1973, Durban was rocked by a series of strikes. Most important were the Frame strikes. From 25 January onwards, Frame's textile empire

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<sup>70</sup> See for instance, The Daily News, 9 Jan. 1973 and also The Natal Mercury, 18 Jan. 1973.

was on fire: the strikes spread from mill to mill and the whole empire stretching from Pinetown to the Mobeni area was affected. Within weeks, thousands of workers from various industrial establishments also downed tools. The first three months of 1973 saw, as Minister of Labour Marais Viljoen stated, 61 410 workers on strike.<sup>71</sup> However, the general consensus of opinion was that by the end of the phenomenal year, about 100 000 African and Indian workers were involved.<sup>72</sup>

The outbreak of strikes in Durban took the apartheid state by complete surprise. It was clear that the decade of "law and order" of the 1960s, the widely acclaimed era of industrial peace, was over. The state's immediate response to the strikes was to blame the so-called "agitators" and "intimidators".<sup>73</sup> The state further implicated employers for failing to improve workers' wages and living conditions. In turn, employers of African labour pointed fingers at the state's labour policies and in particular at the Wage Board. The accusations and counter-accusations left historians and other interested scholars puzzled as to what might have precipitated a strike wave of such magnitude in Durban in 1973.

A sizeable number of works have been produced in an

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<sup>71</sup> House of Assembly Debates, 24 Apr. 1973, col 691 -98. See also the figures provided by the SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1973.

<sup>72</sup> SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1973.

<sup>73</sup> See IIE, The Durban Strikes, 1973 -Human Beings With Souls (Durban, IIE in conjunction with Ravan Press, 1974), 91.

attempt to explain the causes of the 1973 Durban strikes. M. Boulanger's work singled out low wages, job colour bar and the total absence of legal machinery for representation on the part of African workers.<sup>74</sup> In its study, the Institute for Industrial Education (IIE) came to the conclusion that:

The strikes were a series of spontaneous actions by workers which spread by imitation, and the spread was 'multiplied' by the fact that three quite independent factors happened to coincide. The second factor was the existence in Durban, strategically placed in each of the major industrial areas, of a number of factories belonging to one organisation characterised by particularly low wages and bad labour relations- the Frame group. The third factor was the rising transport costs and the rumoured train boycott. What precisely sparked off the strike is not clear - however, once the strikes did occur, the sight of large crowds of workers out on strike encouraged workers in neighbouring factories, and the strike spread geographically road by road.<sup>75</sup>

The authors of this pioneering study of the 1973 Durban strikes failed to explain the reasons for their outbreak, that is, why they occurred at Coronation Brick. J. Maree in his review article lambasted the authors of The Durban Strikes on the grounds that they "...display[ed] an annoying ignorance about the causes of the strike at Coronation....We are left with the lamest accounts that have an 'agitator' ring about them."<sup>76</sup> The idea of a "spontaneous strike" embarked upon by workers was clearly a prob-

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<sup>74</sup> M. Boulanger, "Black Workers and Strikes in South Africa", Race, XV, 3 (1974).

<sup>75</sup> IIE, The Durban Strikes, 99-100.

<sup>76</sup> J. Maree, "Seeing Strikes in Perspectives: Review Article of the Durban Strikes, 1973", SALB, Vol. 2, No.9 & 10 (May -June 1976), 97.



lem to the authors. In their attempt to avoid spontaneity, they emphasized three major players during the strike: small groups of agitators, activists and influential persons. The authors went on to assert:

The spread of spontaneous action of this kind will almost certainly depend upon and be influenced by pre-existing informal communication networks such as friendship groups, 'homeboy' groups, groups of people who 'habitually commute together' and so on.<sup>77</sup>

E. Webster criticised the authors for their failure "to explore further these central insights into spontaneous mass action and the reader is left with the actual dynamics of conflict in particular factories unexplained and unexplored."<sup>78</sup> Webster also noted that,

The omission is the result of the authors' political objective in writing the book, i.e., to explore the dominant managerial and state ideology that the strike was the result of 'agitators'. This, of course, the book does very effectively in Chapter Three, albeit in a defensive way.<sup>79</sup>

Apart from Webster's criticisms, the authors of the book were criticised by Maree when he noted:

...While conceding that the Durban Strike was spontaneous, it is quite conceivable that some leadership and organizational patterns amongst the striking workers were emerging. The sad omission of The Durban Strikes is a study of the leadership and organizational patterns that most probably existed during the strikes.<sup>80</sup>

David Hemson is of the opinion that the 1973 strikes were

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<sup>77</sup> IIE, The Durban Strikes, 91-2.

<sup>78</sup> E. Webster, Cast in a Racial Mould (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1985), 132.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Maree, "Seeing Strikes in Perspectives", 99.

guided by underground leadership structure "which exist[ed] as the groupings of workers acting consciously, illegally and secretly to carry forward working class struggles."<sup>81</sup> He further states:

While the mass strikes were undoubtedly spontaneous, in the sense of not being planned from a political centre, they were not unorganised, although this organisation was not merely a series of heightened social interactions nor a result of communication between social groupings in bus queues, but collective action by workers guided by working class leadership.<sup>82</sup>

Justifying his claims, Hemson drew examples from the dockworkers' strike of 1972, in which an anonymous letter expressing the workers' demands was addressed to the Wage Board.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, letters stipulating workers' demands were clipped on the noticeboards, giving ultimatums to managers to respond; "...`round robins' and petitions [were] organised, and secret strike committees [were] set up."<sup>84</sup> Recounting his experiences of the 1973 strike, Hemson believes that people such as Wiseman Mbali and B.B. Cele were underground leaders who played a significant role in igniting the Durban strikes.<sup>85</sup> Such a view has so far been backed up by scattered evidence coming from the Natal Chamber of Industries' report in which Pinetown

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<sup>81</sup> D. Hemson, "Trade Unionism and the Struggle for Liberation in South Africa", Capital and Class, Nos 4-6 (1978), 22.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 22-3.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Discussions with D. Hemson, 24 October 1994.

strike leaders were identified.<sup>86</sup> In a report to the NCI, the names of strike leaders were given as: Philip Masondo, Joseph Mavundla, Paulos Ntwaniza, Enock Sithole, Jewel Cele, M. Mtolo and Gilbert Mtetwa.<sup>87</sup>

Luckhardt and Wall also acknowledge that worker action was spontaneous, but claim that it was organised by underground union leaders.<sup>88</sup> Certainly more research needs to be done on this controversial thesis advanced by Hemson, and Luckhardt and Wall.<sup>89</sup> What is very clear from the 1973 strikes is that workers refused to elect representatives and none of the underground leaders in Natal came out, but rather workers insisted on speaking with one voice.

More recently, R. Toli's work made an invaluable contribution to our understanding of the 1973 strikes.<sup>90</sup> Toli draws attention to long and short-term causes of the strikes, particularly at the Coronation Brick company which ignited the 1973 strike wave. The central thrust of Toli's thesis is poor wages and the management's rejection

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<sup>86</sup> KCAL, PNAAB, KCF 82, Roll 64, Natal Chamber of Industries, Public Relations, File 4, 19 Nov 1973- 14 Oct 1974, File 3/8, 5 Feb. 1973.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., Report by M/O, Pinetown.

<sup>88</sup> Luckhardt and Wall, Organise or Starve, 453.

<sup>89</sup> See forthcoming book on 1973 Durban strikes by Dr David Hemson. It is unfortunate that the Natal Chamber of Industries, when disbanding in 1977, destroyed all their documents. In fact, the NCI officials deliberately destroyed all confidential material contained in their library which could have been of vital importance to this particular study.

<sup>90</sup> R. Toli, "The origins of the Durban Strikes, 1973" (University of Durban-Westville, MA, 1991).

of wage increments, and, secondly the job colour bar which excluded some African workers from skilled jobs and hence from higher wages. Thirdly, Toli identifies certain influences and networks of communication that developed before the general strike, such as the activities of the Black Consciousness Movement, the General Workers' Factory Benefit Fund (GWFBF), the Students' Wages Commission and the dockworkers' strike of 1972. However, as the work of Toli and others has shown, historians have neglected the very fundamental causes which are derived from the residential areas where the general workers lived with their families.

The 1973 conflict did not arise purely from work-oriented problems, market forces and influences, and networks of communication. It was also a conflict that emerged from the discontent created within the African residential areas. This is a neglected aspect, a less well-known long-term cause. The townships, hostels and compounds are not "total institutions where protest is vigorously repressed, but rather act as hothouses of discontent."<sup>91</sup>

In a symposium organised by the South Africa Institute of Personnel Management in March 1973, Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi summarised the causes of the Durban strikes as follows:

...Can anyone tell me that against this background it is all a surprise that Africans in Durban went on strike?...There has been inflation in this country for some time and the cost of living has gone up all the time with high

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<sup>91</sup> Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 174.

fares Africans have to pay to get to their places of employment.[sic] Africans, poor as they are, are always placed in townships as far away from their places of employment as possible ...Black workers need the security that all workers have... Black workers would like to have their children educated on the same basis as White children. In other words they would like their children to have a free and compulsory education... Black workers would like to have social benefits just as is provided as a matter of course for White workers...Black workers would like to enjoy normal family lives and not lead an abnormal loveless life as 'bachelors' in the hostels...South Africa cannot afford to sit down and maintain conditions for workers which border on semi-slavery.<sup>92</sup>

It is certainly clear that the causes of the outbreak of the 1973 strikes cannot be simply attributed to activities of "outside agitators", as government officials claimed; nor can blame be laid on "younger Bantu workers without family responsibility", as the Durban Chamber of Commerce's Non-European Affairs Standing Committee and the Economic Advisory Committee noted.<sup>93</sup> Studies undertaken by the Institute of Social Research (ISR) at the University of Natal,<sup>94</sup> and the SAIRR,<sup>95</sup> failed to find any evidence of the so-called outside agitators or of large-scale intimidation. Even the police found no evidence to

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<sup>92</sup> M. G. Buthelezi, "The Reasons Behind the Durban Strikes and the Aspirations and Needs of the Black Workers", S.A. Institute of Personnel Management, Strikes -The Lessons from Natal (IPM, Symposium held in Johannesburg on the 14th March, on how to avoid and deal with strikes, 1973), 3-5.

<sup>93</sup> KCAL, PNAB, KCF 80, Roll 62, DCC, Minutes of a Special Committee of the Non-European Affairs Standing Committee and the Economic Advisory Committee, 8 Feb. 1973.

<sup>94</sup> University of Natal, Institute of Social Research, "The Durban Strikes" (UND, ISR, 1973).

<sup>95</sup> SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 1973; and SAIRR, Labour Organisation and the Black Worker, 1974.

substantiate the state claims.<sup>96</sup> On the contrary, the Durban strikes were a wave of worker response to widespread and deep-seated grievances.

Professor Schlemmer's remarks on the Durban strike could validate such claims:

The important conclusion to be drawn here, however, is that there was, well before the strikes, a core of people, not outsiders or politically orientated intellectuals, within the industrial employee group, to act as a nucleus around which labour action could grow. Given the extent of the discontent, the outcome was not surprising. Informal patterns of communication in friendship groups, drinking groups, groups sharing transportation facilities, and other social networks would have been sufficient to set in motion a widening process of mutual encouragement and support. Questions of whether or not there were small groups of people who might have encouraged strike action in the initial stages are almost completely irrelevant to an understanding of the process. If one is to be in the least realistic, one must assume that if certain social pre-conditions exist, a mere fortuitous combination of, say, material setbacks, no matter how slight or temporary, perhaps the demonstration effect of a single labour dispute, and perhaps a loose rumour or two of impending strike action, can lead to strikes similar to or more extensive than those of February 1973.<sup>97</sup>

Professor Schlemmer's study suggests the existence of social pre-conditions which are easily traceable. Some of those conditions have already been examined in previous chapters of this thesis. Such issues are important if we are to understand the 1973 strikes. Judith Msomi, recounting her experiences of the early 1970s, stated:

Many of us lived in shacks, we did not have proper accommodation, no water, no electricity and the sanitation was very, very poor. The

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<sup>96</sup> Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today, 50.

<sup>97</sup> SAIRR, Labour Organisation and the Black Worker, 9.

wages in the textile industry were bad. In 1972, I was paid R5 per week and I was expected to survive on that and in addition my two children... When we went on strike in 1973, each and every worker demanded higher wages, but of course there were too many grievances to be addressed. Things such as accommodation, education for our children, transport, racism and so on, were our grievances...<sup>98</sup>

Given the situation which faced African workers of the time, it only required a precipitating factor such as the failure to be awarded an increment or, say, the rumoured 16 percent increase in rail fares, to ignite latent frustrations into a strike. Once the Coronation Brick workers began their strike, the process snowballed as more African workers saw the relevance of strike action to their own particular situations. (See Appendix.)

#### Philip Frame and the Strike Wave in Textiles

In February 1973, newspapers monitoring labour unrest in Durban boldly printed: "Tycoon Frame gets the blame: Amazing career of man who got rich on cheap labour"<sup>99</sup> and "Philip Frame asks: Must I take all the blame?"<sup>100</sup> That was enough to capture people's attention. In an interview with the Rand Daily Mail, Philip Frame admitted underpaying his workers, saying, "I certainly share the

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<sup>98</sup> Interview with Judith Msomi, Bolton Hall, Workers' College, 16 October 1992.

<sup>99</sup> The Sunday Times, 11 Feb. 1973.

<sup>100</sup> The Rand Daily Mail, 13 Feb. 1973.

collective responsibility or guilt."<sup>101</sup> Certainly, when the strike wave began at Frametex in New Germany, the entire textile industry, without exception, became involved.

Labour conditions in the Frame textile mills were extremely exploitative. The targets for exploitation were mobile women mainly from distant reserves. For instance, in 1973 the Frame company employed just over 22 000 workers in factories operating in South Africa (mainly in Durban), Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi, and more than half of these workers were women. Such women were subjected to terrible working conditions. Not surprisingly, women employed in the textile industry have tended to be very militant in their approach to labour struggles. In 1973 they participated fully with men in the strikes.

By 1973, some workers at one of Frame's textile companies had not received an increase in 14 years.<sup>102</sup> Obed Zuma recalls the working conditions at Frame:

The working conditions were terrible in Natal and in South Africa as a whole. But at Frame it was worse because this company had a feeling that it was helping poor people, so there was no need of improving conditions of work...Wages were low, ranging from R5,65 per week, especially because employees were mostly women. The system of employment itself was exploitative ...many promises were never fulfilled, nothing was provided for workers like transport, food, accommodation. Workers had to go to landlords for rented shacks. If they had no money, they would remain stranded, many women being forced

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Labour History Group, Durban Strikes, 15.



to co-habit with men for accommodation...<sup>103</sup>

When the strike broke out at Frame, women took a leading role. Management needed to redress the grievances of the workers, for, as one worker shouted during the strike period: "We are not children,...we are asking for the managers to listen to our problems, then we will go back to work."<sup>104</sup> Jabulani Gwala, recounting his experiences in the textile industry, noted:

It was a sad state of affairs at Frame. Both men and women were exploited like slaves. The wages were so poor and the working conditions were terrible. Frame was not interested in the welfare of his workers. His main concern was to maximise profit through payment of poor wages to the workers.<sup>105</sup>

One could possibly understand why textile women became so militant during the 1970s, as the following report shows:

In the Frame factories, prospective female employees who survive a mandatory pregnancy test are then subjected to the continual watchful eye of factory doctors instructed to watch for signs of impending motherhood. Until early 1980 the Frame factories terminated the services of pregnant women, but since then an altered policy ostensibly provides for reemployment eight weeks after confinement. Women workers allege, however, that supervisors retain the arbitrary power to determine whether a woman will be reinstated. Those allowed to return are required to undergo a 'retraining' period during which time they are excluded from bonuses and overtime work. Instances of coercive intrusion by capital into workers' personal lives appear to be not uncommon in South Africa. In one engineering factory it was discovered in 1970 that African women were being forced to take the pill daily under a

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<sup>103</sup> Interview with Obed Zuma, 18 Aug. 1993: 1973 Research Project.

<sup>104</sup> As cited in Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today, 46.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Jabulani Gwala, Bolton Hall, 27 Sept. 1993.

nurse's supervision.<sup>106</sup>

The working conditions experienced by workers at Frame demanded militant action as a way of achieving a wage increment. Frame, like other employers, initially attempted to implement the advice in the ten-point circular that was distributed by the Durban Chamber of Commerce to its members on how to deal with strikes. The ten points were:

1. Notify the Department of Labour (telephone number 28371).
2. Advise your workers that you will consider their demands on condition that they return to work.
3. Advise the workers that there will be no pay for the time they are on strike.
4. If you consider that your present rates of pay are fully justifiable stand by these and in no circumstances move from that stand.
5. If you feel that an increase in minimum wages is necessary determine this increase and tell them of your decision. Thereafter stand by your decision.
6. Do not attempt to bargain as this will only encourage the Bantu to escalate his demands. Action must be positive, definite and final.
7. Grant increases of a definite amount in preference to percentages on earnings. Percentages are not easily understood by the Bantu and across-the-board increases are of greater benefit to the lowest workers.
8. Do everything possible to avoid violence but if this should arise, call the police immediately.
9. Handle the press carefully - they may not trespass on your premises but it is usually wise to give them reasonable and accurate information.
10. Stoppages to date have been mainly good natured and the tactful police action has contributed greatly to this. Make every effort to keep it this way.<sup>107</sup>

The textile workers held out; Frame failed to withstand pressure and finally awarded increases to the striking

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<sup>106</sup> As cited in Stichter, Migrant Labourers, 177.

<sup>107</sup> KCAL, PNAB, KCF 80, Roll 62, The Durban Chamber of Commerce, 9 Feb. 1973.

workers. The textile workers had made it clear that:

We are not children who make a noise for no reason. We are men and women who want to see if tomorrow can be better than today because today is a struggle which is very heavy and we would like to have hope for the future.<sup>108</sup>

### The Results of the 1973 Strikes

Clear to all employers of African labour was the fact that minimum wages of below R10 per week were a recipe for disaster since, as rightly noted by Prime Minister John Vorster, African workers were "human beings with souls." The 1973 strikes immediately "prompted agonized soul-searching which was to go on for years - until, in fact, the 1976 Soweto unrest switched the focus to agonized soul searching about township unrest."<sup>109</sup> Even the situation of African workers employed by British companies in South Africa came under public scrutiny after the release of a series of reports by the local and international press. Articles by Adam Raphael of The Guardian forced the British government to institute a full-scale enquiry by a Parliamentary Select Committee into wages paid to African workers in South Africa.<sup>110</sup> British companies in South

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<sup>108</sup> D. Horner, "Recent Durban Strikes", Race Relations News, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Mar. 1973), 1.

<sup>109</sup> University of Witwatersrand (hereafter UW), William Cullen Library (hereafter WCL), Historical and Literary Papers (hereafter HLP), FOSATU, AH 1999/C 3.12.3.18: C 3.5.4, Strikes: Political Implications of Industrial Unrest, 5.

<sup>110</sup> See UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, Ah 2196/ H 23.3.1, Profiteering From Cheap Labour: Wages paid by British Companies in South Africa (London, South African Labour Education Project, Aug. 1980).

Africa were found to be among the worst exploiters of African labour. The first "Code of Conduct" was recommended for subsidiary companies in South Africa. However, the "Code of Conduct" was heavily criticised by trade unionists as a

...means by which the capitalist class tries to substitute its own programme of improvements for the programme of social transformation demanded by workers. All the Codes of Conduct that exist have been drawn up by governments or groups of employers... In reality, there is not the slightest guarantee that even the wages proposed by the EEC Code of Conduct will be paid by all British employers in South Africa.<sup>111</sup>

Despite such criticism, the increases which were awarded to workers in 1973 are a pointer to the effectiveness of strike actions or work stoppages.

As a result of the strikes, the government and company managements had to look for ways of dealing with the new situation. The strikes brought about the formation of independent African trade unions. In response to that development, the government, surprisingly, amended the labour laws as a way of facilitating new channels of communication between African workers and their respective employers.

The Bantu Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act of 1953 was amended in 1973 in response to the new climate of militancy from African workers. The Act was renamed the Bantu Labour Relations Regulations Act of 1973. The amended Act gave birth to three kinds of committee for

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8. See also UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, H 23.2, EEC Code of Conduct, 1973.

representing African workers at the company level: works committees, which had existed in a different form under a previous Act but were snubbed as "tea and toilet committees" by African workers<sup>112</sup>; co-ordinating works committees, which were supposed to co-ordinate various activities and represent African workers in industries, or at any work place where there was more than one works committee; and finally, liaison committees. The functions of the works and liaison committees, as gazetted by the government in 1973, were similar.<sup>113</sup>

All the members of works committees were to be elected by the workers themselves; in the case of liaison committees, half of the members and the chairman were to be appointed by the management, while the remainder were selected by the workers. However, the establishment of both types of committee remained open, except that the choice between the two committees was placed at the discretion of management. It followed that once a liaison

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<sup>112</sup> Friedman, Building Tomorrow Today, 54.

<sup>113</sup> According to the Government Gazette, the functions of the liaison committee were:

to consider matters which are of mutual interest to the employer and his employees and to make to the employer such recommendations concerning conditions of employment of such employees or any other matter affecting their interests.

See Government Gazette, No. 3963, Section 3, (4 July 1973).

In the case of works committees, their functions were: to communicate the wishes, aspirations and requirements of the employees in the establishment... to their employer and to represent the said employees in any negotiations with their employer concerning their conditions of employment or any other matter affecting their interests.

See Government Gazette, No. 3963, Section 4, (4 July 1973).

committee was established and registered, no works committee was allowed in that particular establishment.

Of particular significance in the new Act was the right of African workers to strike. That right, although enshrined in the 1973 Act, was very limited. Accordingly, TUCSA commented that: "...the conditions under which African workers legally have the right to strike are severely circumscribed, and... considerable procedures allowing for a 'cooling-off' period have to be followed."<sup>114</sup> Moreover, the legality of strike action failed to protect strikers from being dismissed.

While the intention of the 1973 Act was to prevent the African work force from striking through the establishment of a number of liaison committees, labour unrest continued throughout the second half of 1973 and thereafter. Tables A and B present statistics to substantiate our claims in this regard.

TABLE A: WORKS AND LIAISON COMMITTEES ESTABLISHED,  
1973-1975

At 31 December	Works Comm.	Liaison Comm.	No. of Workers Represented	Co-ordinating Works Comm.
1973	125	773	312 541	3
1974	207	1 482	521 624	4
1975	287	2 042	617 579	5

<sup>114</sup> TUCSA, Trade Union Directory, 1976, 45.

TABLE B: NUMBER OF STRIKES REPORTED IN DURBAN, 1973-1975

	1973	1974	1975
Unlawful strikes	252	194	123
Persons involved	73 399	38 961	12 451
Number of strikes involving African workers	246	189	119
Number of African workers involved	67 338	37 724	11 847

Source: UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, H23.3.2, Rodney Stares, Black Trade Unions in South Africa: The Responsibilities of British Companies (Published by Christian Concern for Southern Africa, 1977), 18. See also SAIRR, Survey of Race Relations, 173, 302.

The entire period from 1975 on was one of decreasing militancy, and an increasing struggle for union organisation. In 1975 the government was again forced to review the Bantu Labour Relations Act. This time the Act was aimed at creating industry committees consisting of individuals chosen from the members of liaison or works committees. One or more members of such industry committees were to be allowed by the Minister of Labour to participate in the negotiation of wages and working conditions that were conducted by the Industrial Council. If there were no Industrial Councils existing in that particular industry, the industry committee was to be

empowered to make agreements with a group or association of employers.

In August 1977, the amended Bantu Labour Relations Regulations Act came into effect. The idea of industry committees was withdrawn from the final Act. The Act recognised liaison committees rather than works committees. The Act also contained provisions which amounted to the exclusion of African trade unions from participation in the process of wage negotiations. While the government made attempts to develop new channels for African representation at the workplace level, it further undermined the position of African trade unions. It is clear that the state's intention in establishing committees was an attempt to extend control through reform. Despite state repression, evident through the 1974 and 1976 bannings of about 30 trade unionists, the attempt at control-through-reform continued, culminating in the release of the Wiehahn Commission Report in 1979. This report recommended the official recognition of African trade unions rather than continuing to "bleed the unions to death" as was done in the past.<sup>115</sup> In rather dramatic fashion, as had happened to the colonial Zimbabwean government in 1959, a Select Committee concluded that unregistered unions tended to be more dangerous than registered ones.<sup>116</sup> As pointed

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<sup>115</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, FOSATU, C 3.15.4, Nicholas Wiehahn and The End of Classical Labour Ideology: The Commission and Its Aftermath, 12.

<sup>116</sup> See for instance, P.R. Warhurst, "African Trade Unions in Southern Rhodesia, 1948-56: Prelude to Mass Nationalism?" (Paper presented at African Research Seminar, St



out in the Wiehahn report, such unregistered trade unions "could well bring extreme stress to bear" on the whole labour system.<sup>117</sup> The government accepted the major recommendations of the Wiehahn Commission, and the Industrial Conciliation Act was amended to extend the definition of "employee" to include African workers. African trade unions were granted legal recognition and that in itself marked the beginning of a new chapter in the labour history of South Africa. It made the struggle worthwhile for the African workers of South Africa, and of Durban in particular.

#### Conclusion

The 1973 strikes were unique in that their outbreak was spontaneous; they were guided by workers themselves, devoid of outside leadership. Workers refused to elect a leadership - one that had to negotiate with employers - thus avoiding state victimisation and employer co-option. Workers broke the "silence", and shook the apartheid state which had enjoyed relative industrial "peace" soon after it banned the ANC and PAC and had assumed greater powers in the 1960s. Further, workers won wage increments without being involved in tedious wage negotiations. In addition, the explosion of industrial unrest beginning in Durban

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Antonys College, Oxford, 30 Apr.1991); and N. T. Sambureni, "African Trade Unionism in Southern Rhodesia, 1939-55" (University of Zimbabwe, History Seminar Paper, 1991).

<sup>117</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, FOSATU, C 3.15.4, Nicholas Wiehahn, 12. See also important comments in SALDRU and SALB (et al), The Wiehahn and Riekert Reports (Workshop Bulletin of the SALDRU, SALB (et al), 1979).

ignited a series of responses which, for almost two decades, the apartheid state failed to control. It also marked the birth of a new brand of independent African trade union movement which forced the state to institute reforms and contributed to the eventual collapse of the apartheid state. It would be misleading, however, to say that the collapse of apartheid was a process of reform forced by the worker resistance movement alone: rather, the end of apartheid was a by-product of its own internal contradictions and conflicts, the widespread popular resistance beginning in Durban in 1973, and of escalating pressure from the international community. Nevertheless, Durban had been at the vortex of this change.



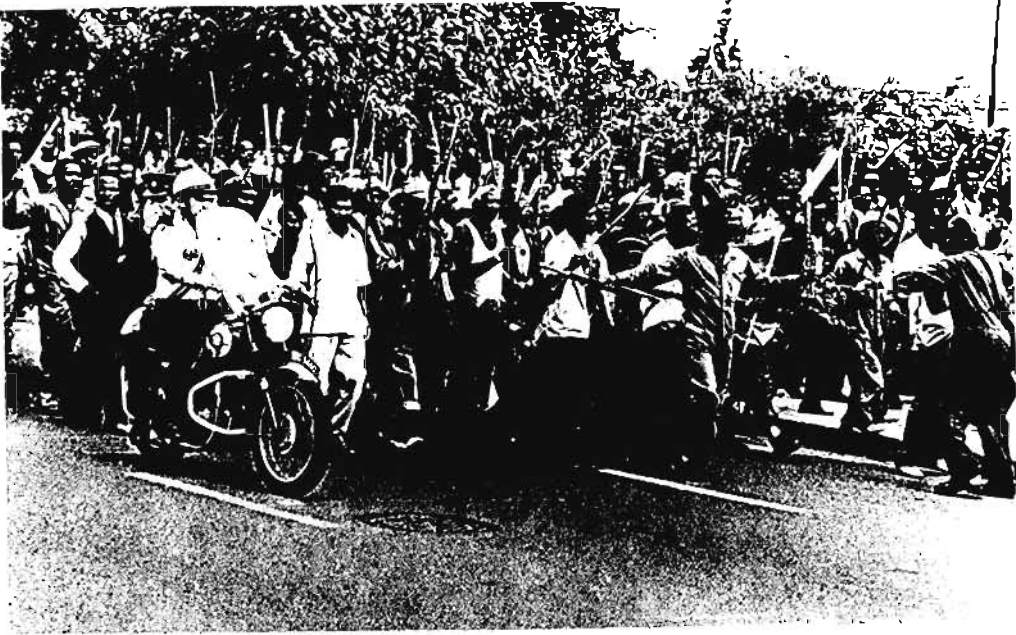
1. Coronation Brick workers parading in the streets.
2. Coronation Brick workers at the Sports Ground.



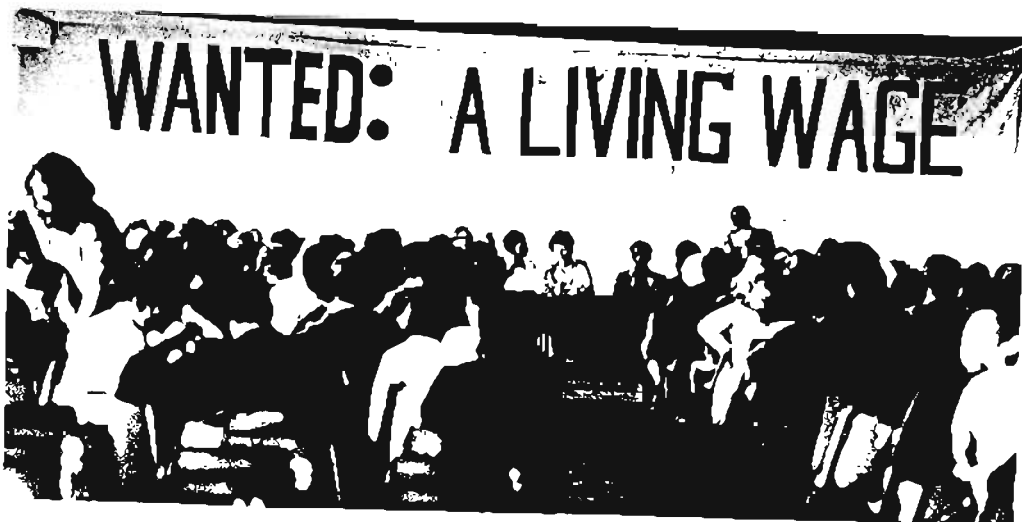


3. Frame Group workers outside the mills.
4. City Engineering workers marching in the streets.





5. City Engineering workers marching and escorted by the Traffic Police.
6. Mass meeting of the Consolidated Textile Mills workers at the Bolton Hall.





7. Whites unloading vegetables at the Market during the 1973 strike.

CHAPTER EIGHT  
AFRICAN TRADE UNIONISM IN DURBAN  
1960-1979

As the African working class became fully integrated into the capitalist economy, its interest in industrial trade unionism increased. Linked to that development was the politicisation of African trade unions. Not surprisingly, the emergence of political unionism in South Africa sparked debate over the role of the political party versus trade union relationship, especially during the late 1950s and early 1960s when SACTU was a fully-fledged member of the Congress Alliance. This chapter's major focus is on the political trade unionism of the early 1960s, and the rise of independent African trade unions soon after the Durban strikes of 1973. As for the 1970s, the formation and organisation of the National Union of Textile Workers (NUTW), which was centred in Natal, is dealt with cursorily in this chapter.<sup>1</sup> Natal, of course, was central to

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<sup>1</sup> There is voluminous literature available, mainly primary documents, on the National Union of Textile Workers of Durban, which are housed in the Historical and Literary Papers, University of Witwatersrand Library. The NUTW's minutes, correspondence, reports, letters, collections, press release statements, cuttings, publications and other miscellaneous papers dated from 1973 to 1989 are found in the SACTWU collection, which comprises 244 boxes. Because of the abundance of primary data on the NUTW, one can possibly write an independent thesis on it and for that reason this chapter will provide an overview. I am

worker struggles during the 1970s, which spilt over to the rest of the country. During that period, Durban was vital, as Kraak contends, in the national economy, "...contain[ing] the largest concentration of manufacturing industry outside the PWV area."<sup>2</sup> It was in Durban that worker struggles became widespread, and the city became a "...stimulus to the re-emergence of independent trade unions with majority African membership, mostly formed in the areas around Durban and Johannesburg."<sup>3</sup>

The first part of this chapter will briefly examine African trade unions in the 1960s.<sup>4</sup> The second part will examine the NUTW as an example of the rise of independent African trade unions in the 1970s. It is important to examine the trade unions of the 1970s since worker struggles of the time marked a turning point in the labour movement at large and in the history of South Africa. In this study, trade unions are treated as separate entities, divorced from strikes, the reason being that in the strikes that took place during the period under investigation, workers were not necessarily called out, or directed by trade union officials: rather, strikes were spontaneous

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grateful to SACTWU officials for allowing me access to their recent documents.

<sup>2</sup> G. Kraak, Breaking the Chains: Labour in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s (London, Pluto Press, 1993), 128.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> See Luckhardt and Wall, Organise or Starve, and Feit, Workers Without Weapons.



outbreaks, initiated by and large by the rank and file of the workers, although some scholars contest this thesis.

### Political Unionism of the Early 1960s

Linked to the strikes of the late 1950s and early 1960s was the political influence of the ANC in Cato Manor shantytown. Eddie Webster's study of the politics of the worker stay-away in the period up to 1976 portrays the stay-away as a symbolic protest, or as he puts it, "... a general withdrawal of labour that does not focus around specific plant-based issues."<sup>5</sup> Webster argues that the "One Pound a Day" campaign waged by the ANC and SACTU during the late 1950s was subsumed by the political demands of the time and the use of anti-apartheid slogans, for instance "The Nats must go." Certainly, in South Africa during the apartheid days the African working class was "exploited both as a class and as a race...."<sup>6</sup> The realisation of that situation by African nationalists led them to emphasise the importance of the working class movement in the struggle for liberation. Trade unionism alone was inadequate, considering the political situation of the time, and hence Nkrumah's doctrine to "seek ye first the political kingdom" became a dominant theme of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Despite SACTU's involvement in politics, Tom Lodge believes that some trade union

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<sup>5</sup> Webster, "Stay-Aways", 11.

<sup>6</sup> Braverman, "The African Working Class", 57.

policies were maintained.<sup>7</sup> In any case, even when SACTU was launched in 1955, the main purpose was "to link economic struggles with political assertions of working class consciousness."<sup>8</sup>

In Durban, before the 1959 riots in Cato Manor, SACTU's drive for union membership was hardly a success:<sup>9</sup> SACTU failed to comprehend fully the reasons why African workers joined the trade union movement. Many African workers joined SACTU affiliated unions on the basis of their experiences in the shantytowns and the household budgetary constraints encountered in their day-to-day life. Yet workers joined SACTU not only for economic reasons, but also because of social concerns, such as housing. However, SACTU had a strong political bent that was distinct from the economic and social aspirations of the workers. Of course, SACTU made attempts to marry the economic drives with their own political aspirations, but without major success, especially in Natal. The situation was different in the Transvaal, where SACTU was dominated by both "populist" and "orthodox" unionism, which failed, at least before 1960, to assume leadership within the Congress Alliance.<sup>10</sup> The first signs of growth in union

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<sup>7</sup> Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945, 191.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>9</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 290, and Feit, Workers Without Weapons, 54.

<sup>10</sup> Lambert as cited in P. Eidelberg, "The Unions and the African National Congress", South African Historical Journal, 28 (1993), 274.

membership began around 1957 during the "One Pound a Day" campaign. In Cato Manor, the campaign raised great expectations among African workers, who were attracted to SACTU affiliated unions; but on the whole very limited success was recorded since such unions were generally small and had not yet made inroads in establishing shop floor structures within their respective industries.<sup>11</sup>

The call for a stay-away by the ANC in 1957 initiated debate among local SACTU committees as to whether it was beneficial or detrimental to the workers.<sup>12</sup> Durban unionists were of the opinion that strong unions should be developed at the workplace: "... getting involved in residential areas was another matter, but we first had to get power in the factories... we were not that strong anyway. The stay-away idea does not further the aims of the working class."<sup>13</sup> Points of difference within the Congress Alliance emerged and it was during the second National Workers' Conference in 1958 that Chief Albert Luthuli stated:

Because of the name of the Conference, some people in our Congress are treating it as though it were a trade union affair primarily concerning the active trade unionists and confined to delegates elected from factories.<sup>14</sup>

For Luthuli the Congress represented a wide spectrum

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<sup>11</sup> R.I.Lambert as cited in Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 292.

<sup>12</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 293.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Lodge, Black Politics, 195.

of interests and it was not possible to give prominence to workers' interests at the production point at the expense of organisation in the townships "where we are strong."<sup>15</sup> Even though the ANC enjoyed support from SACTU union members, Luthuli was mainly concerned with mass nationalism. He also called upon SACTU to build " a...network of factory committees drawn from the most experienced and politically conscious trade unionists."<sup>16</sup> Luthuli acknowledged the significance of African trade unionism yet at the same time did not want trade unions to be highly influential in the Congress Alliance.

The period before the 1959 riots proved to be a failure in terms of building union membership in Durban. On 26 June 1957, a stay-away campaign launched by SACTU centring on wage issues was a dismal failure.<sup>17</sup> In Cato Manor the call was ignored. The same fate struck the 1958 stay-away call by the ANC. It was only during and after the Cato Manor riots of 1959 that SACTU became strong. In the period immediately following the riots, SACTU gained a sizeable number of new members. Lambert claims that this development was more evident in Natal and the Eastern Cape through the presence and efforts of Luthuli and Mbeki respectively.<sup>18</sup> In Natal, Luthuli used his political in-

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>17</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 294.

<sup>18</sup> R. Lambert, "Political Unionism and Working Class Hegemony: Perspectives on the South African Congress of Trade Unions, 1955-1965", Labour, Capital and Society, 18,

fluence to call on all African workers "...who were not members of a trade union to join one, and this led to a great increase in SACTU's membership in Natal".<sup>19</sup> It was during that same period that SACTU also succeeded in negotiating better working conditions, reduced working hours, higher wages and some form of union recognition.<sup>20</sup> SACTU also established factory committees, especially in Natal, a point which is ignored by Feit and Ensor.<sup>21</sup> It was a remarkable period for SACTU: a foundation for strong unionisation was being laid.

In 1961, SACTU conducted a survey of African workers and came to the conclusion,

...that workers who are organised into trade unions are more responsive to a political call than unorganised workers. Their trade union activity has given them heightened political consciousness and they also respond more rapidly when the appeal is made on a factory, as opposed to a residential basis, as they feel that there is a lesser chance of being dismissed if the whole factory is involved.<sup>22</sup>

SACTU's findings clashed with the views of many South African radicals who argued that, whether a trade union is "revolutionary" or "reformist", it remained limited in its control over labour, and that in itself made it a limited

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2 (1985), 270.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Luckhardt and Wall, Organise or Starve, 440.

<sup>21</sup> See Lambert, "Political Unionism and Working Class Hegemony", 270.

<sup>22</sup> As cited in Lambert, "Political Unionism", 104 and Webster, "Stay-aways", 23.

weapon for revolutionary purposes. Anderson argues that a Marxist political party was a "polyvalent potential for revolutionary action, which can be crystallised swiftly and interchangeably in a number of different fields...elections, demonstrations, boycotts, agitation, political education, insurrection, etc."<sup>23</sup> Undoubtedly, in the available literature on the political struggles of the early 1960s there has been considerable debate on the role of the working class and trade unions, the question being, was it possible to separate politics from trade union issues?

From its inception, many of SACTU's leading union organisers were either members of the ANC or the banned South African Communist Party (SACP). In 1956, the Durban local committee responsible for the formation of new unions was led by Billy Nair and Stephen Dhlamini,<sup>24</sup> both textile workers. Among union organisers who were members of the Congress Alliance were people such as Moses Mabhida of the Textile Workers' Union, and Stanford Mtolo and Jacob Nyaoase of the African Bakery and Confection Workers' Union.<sup>25</sup> During the early 1960s, many of these organisers were recruited into Umkhonto we Sizwe, which led Edward Feit to conclude that SACTU ceased to function as a trade

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<sup>23</sup> P. Anderson, "The Limits and Possibilities of Trade Union Action," in R. Blackburn and A. Lockburn (eds), The Incompatibles: Trade Union, Militancy and the Consensus (Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1967), 268.

<sup>24</sup> Lodge, Black Politics, 191.

<sup>25</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 289.

union organisation and became involved in political campaigns of the time, leading to its demise.<sup>26</sup> The decline of SACTU was also caused by state policies, which equated normal trade unionism with the activities of banned ANC, as demonstrated by the 1962 Sabotage Act that defined strike action as an act of sabotage.<sup>27</sup>

Of particular interest to this chapter are Rob Lambert's remarks on SACTU's potential, which was subordinated to politics by the Congress Alliance:

The essence of SACTU's failure was not that the leadership devalued trade unionism or shop-floor organisation, nor did failure lie in their inability to develop a mass base, rather it lay in their subordinate position within the alliance.<sup>28</sup>

It is Lambert's contention that the leadership of the Congress Alliance advocated popular democratic demands that coerced SACTU into a premature confrontation with the apartheid state at a time when it was still building a mass base and an experienced union leadership. Certainly, the relationship between SACTU and the Congress Alliance was never based on equal partnership, and many of its union officials were too involved in Congress politics, which compromised trade union ethics. Lambert's analysis is of significance, especially for the 1960s.

Between 1960 and 1966, many SACTU officials were arrested and jailed for sabotage activities, or for en-

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<sup>26</sup> Feit, Workers Without Weapons, 170 -2.

<sup>27</sup> Lodge, Black Politics, 197.

<sup>28</sup> Lambert, " Political Unionism", 104.

hancing the activities of the banned ANC. About 160 office bearers of SACTU were banned during that period.<sup>29</sup> In Durban, as we have already noted, many union organisers were members of the Congress Alliance. The Hospital Workers' Union was under the chairmanship of S. Mtolo,<sup>30</sup> while Curnick Ndhlovu was the secretary of the Railways Workers' Union.<sup>31</sup> Some other prominent union organisers were Billy Nair of the Textile Workers' Union, Solomon Mbanjwa of the Match Workers' Union, and Eric Mtshali, who was secretary of a SACTU branch in Pinetown.<sup>32</sup> One of the prominent figures of the early 1960s was the SACTU organiser, F.T.R. Dhlamini, who played a significant role in the establishment of the Kwamashu Resident Association.<sup>33</sup> Dhlamini was the chairman of the South African Railways and Harbour Workers' Union.<sup>34</sup> Other important organisers were M. Vakalisa of the African Municipal Workers' Union, who together with Moses Mabhida was detained in the 1960s for

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<sup>29</sup> SACTU, Babebetsi Mekoting: Mine Workers' Conditions in South Africa (London, SACTU, 1976), 21. See also Lodge, Black Politics, 197 and D. Hemson, "Black Trade Unionism, Industrial Strikes, and Mass Struggles in South Africa", 10.

<sup>30</sup> Feit, Urban Revolt, 222.

<sup>31</sup> KCAL, PNAB, KCF 30, Roll 13, E.G. Jakins to Dir., Bantu Admin., 29 Aug. 1962.

<sup>32</sup> Feit, Urban Revolt, 222. Ilanga Lase Natal, 7 Apr. 1962.

<sup>33</sup> KCAL, KCF 30, Roll 13, Jakins to Dir., 29 Aug. 1962.

<sup>34</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 2 Mar. 1962.



five years on Robben Island.<sup>35</sup> Miss A. Zondi of the Domestic Servants Union,<sup>36</sup> together with Mate Mfusi, Queeneth Dladla and Doris Mnyandu, all of the Health Workers' Union, were banned in 1963 for five years.<sup>37</sup>

Some SACTU-affiliated unions were formed in response to a crisis, as in the case of the African Tobacco Workers Union.<sup>38</sup> The Tobacco Union was a by-product of the 1954 dispute between management and workers over wages and working conditions. Workers were dismissed and charged with participating in an illegal strike. In response to that crisis, the Congress organised a consumer boycott of all cigarettes from the United Tobacco Company of Durban, in support of workers' demands.<sup>39</sup> The boycott was a success: the company was forced to re-employ all workers dismissed, and wages and conditions of work were looked into. Consequently, the Tobacco Union was born, with Billy Nair as its secretary. Other unions under Congress officials were the Metal Workers' Union, which was led by Nair as secretary and Bernard Nkosi as an organiser,<sup>40</sup> and the African Chemical Workers' Union also under Nair.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ilanga Lase Natal, 17 Feb. 1962.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 30 June 1962 and Ilanga Lase Natal, 28 Dec. 1963.

<sup>37</sup> Luckhardt and Wall, Organise or Starve, 312.

<sup>38</sup> Lambert, "Political Unionism", 484-5.

<sup>39</sup> Lodge, Black Politics, 198.

<sup>40</sup> Lambert, "Political Unionism", 480.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 488.

It would be wrong to suggest that all African trade unions of the 1960s were affiliates of the Congress Alliance. Political trade unionism was not the only answer to problems of the period: rather a significant proportion of trade unions were mainly interested in day to day issues at the work place. Such unions were accommodated in the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA), which represented the majority of mixed, coloured and Indian trade unions.<sup>42</sup> In 1962 unregistered African trade unions were allowed to acquire membership of TUCSA's liaison committee, which was established for that specific purpose. It was TUCSA's belief that African workers must be incorporated into registered trade unions in order to protect them from political influences. TUCSA established an African Affairs section for research, public relations, and trade union organisation, to cater for African workers. In 1967 TUCSA managed to enlist 13 African trade unions with a total membership of almost 12 000 into its African section.<sup>43</sup>

It was unfortunate that, during the 1960s, TUCSA failed to gain a significant proportion of African workers in its organisation. The failure of TUCSA, especially in African membership, was mainly due to its policies towards African trade unionism. In fact TUCSA preached non-involvement of African trade unions in politics, and took an

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<sup>42</sup> SAIRR, South African Workers: Their Organisation and the Patterns of Employment (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1969), 143.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 31.

anti-communist line. It opposed all forms of boycott of South African goods entering the international market.<sup>44</sup> One of TUCSA's organisational tactics was to establish African trade unions in opposition to existing SACTU unions in various industrial areas. The move did not succeed. TUCSA faced mounting pressure from both the state and predominantly white unions to expel African trade unions within its organisation. By 1969 most African unions which had subordinated themselves to TUCSA were forced to withdraw from the organisation, thereby ending their existence.

The mid-1960s saw the collapse of SACTU, although it was never made illegal by the apartheid state. Various factors account for the striking collapse of SACTU. Feit postulated that SACTU became a recruitment ground for Umkhonto, and that the union movement was driven into political battles, which in turn affected the entire organisation of the African working class at the shop-floor level.<sup>45</sup> When union leaders were arrested and jailed, most of the component unions died out. If Feit's analysis holds water, then SACTU's involvement in politics militated against the development of strong unions, a point of considerable debate.<sup>46</sup> Undoubtedly, a sizeable number of workers interviewed believe that SACTU collapsed

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<sup>44</sup> Hemson, "Black Trade Unions", 11.

<sup>45</sup> Feit, Workers Without Weapons, 170-2.

<sup>46</sup> See Lodge, Black Politics, 197-8.

because of its involvement in politics.<sup>47</sup> Faya noted that:

SACTU collapsed because most of our union leaders were arrested which left workers without leadership. Leaders such as Ndhlovu, Mabhida, Nair and many others were arrested for being members of [the] banned ANC. ...During the 1960s we had not yet developed strong shop floor structures unlike today. In any case nobody wanted to organise after our leaders were imprisoned. We were all afraid...<sup>48</sup>

Similar sentiments were expressed by Mothwa when she commented on the current situation:

Unions must be independent,...united and form a federation to share problems and ideas. But unions do not do that because of politics. Workers must be given freedom of choice and association at [an] individual level. Many people criticize UWUSA because of its involvement in political matters. Look at the ANC, many unions are driven by it. Many do not take any decision without ANC intervention... Why should that be the case?<sup>49</sup>

SACTU failed to establish itself as an independent worker movement, a fact which prompted Lambert to write:

Because of SACTU's subordinate position, decisions to launch national strike campaigns were taken with little reference to the level of preparedness and maturity of working class organisation. It was the dominance of the ANC and SACP in the alliance that finally led to the smashing of SACTU, at the very point that it was developing both a mass base and an experienced

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<sup>47</sup> Interview with P.M. Faya, KwaMashu, 1 Sept. 1992; and Interview with Judith Msomi, Workers' College, 16 Oct. 1992. In my discussions with trade union officials at Workers' College, most of them expressed the view that SACTU's demise was largely because of its involvement in Congress politics.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with P.M. Faya, KwaMashu, 1 Sept. 1992.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Mothwa, 1973 Research Project. UWUSA was an Inkatha-sponsored umbrella union which was launched on 1 May 1986. Chief Buthelezi argued the necessity of a trade union to challenge the hijacking of the trade union movement by the ANC and the United Democratic Front. See Financial Mail, 4 Apr. 1986.

leadership.<sup>50</sup>

Another structural weakness within the union movement during the early 1960s was its failure to build strong shop-floor structures. Certainly the organisation of SACTU-affiliated unions left much to be desired; funds were limited and embezzlement was not uncommon. A case in point is SACTU's two organisers responsible for organising the Dockworkers' Union.<sup>51</sup> Writing about that case, Lambert noted: "Two of the full-time organisers became corrupt, and misused union funds. By 1960 they had misused the funds and the union was in complete disarray."<sup>52</sup>

Significant also to our analysis is the fact that African trade unions remained unregistered, which placed them at a disadvantage, especially after the ANC was banned. The government equated African trade unionism with clandestine activities of the banned ANC. That move resulted in an obvious inhibition on the part of African trade unions.

Whatever reasons historians will advance when explaining the failures of SACTU during the 1960s, it should be noted that insofar as SACTU's main purpose of linking "economic struggles with political assertions of working class consciousness" was concerned, it achieved much in that respect. Perhaps SACTU's weaknesses should not obscure its achievements of the time. SACTU's demise

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<sup>50</sup> R. Lambert, "Political Unionism in South Africa", SALB, 1, 2/3 (1980), 104.

<sup>51</sup> Lambert, "Political Unionism", 482.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

during the 1960s was followed by a spate of strikes beginning in 1971 in Durban, finally leading to the Durban strikes of 1973. The 1973 strikes gave the impetus to a new phase of African trade unionism which still exists in South Africa at the present.

The Emergence and Development of NUTW in Durban, 1973-1979

The NUTW was one of the first independent unions to be formed soon after the Durban strikes of 1973, when it became evident that the textile workers presented the greatest potential for union organisation. On 23 September 1973, the NUTW was born.<sup>53</sup> The origins of this union can be traced before the strike wave of 1973. It was Harriet Bolton who committed herself to organising the unorganised African workers during the early 1970s. During that time, she was the general secretary of the Natal branches of the registered Textile Workers' Industrial Union (TWIU), Garment Workers' Industrial Union (GWIU) and the Furniture and Allied Workers' Union (FAWIU).<sup>54</sup> Bolton

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<sup>53</sup> See UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, The National Union of Textile Workers: A History of NUTW- The First Ten Years, 1. The founding members of the NUTW were: J. Copelyn, H. Cheadle, I. Shongwe, Junerose Nala, H. Khahlede, C. Mbali, T. Khumalo, S. Ngubane, P. Sewnath and the typist/administrator, Jeanette Murphy. See Minutes of Meeting of the NUTW, 30 Sept. 1973 and also The Textile Forum, Mar. 1974.

<sup>54</sup> Natal Room (hereafter NR), David Hemson Collection and Papers (hereafter DHCP), Extract from J. Maree, The National Union of Textile Workers, 1973 -1979. I am very grateful to Dr David Hemson for giving me access to his collection.

began the process of employing young white academics in a bid to revive and organise registered unions in Natal province. In April 1970 Rob Lambert was employed as an assistant secretary of FAWIU and David Hemson became the national organiser of TWIU in June 1972.<sup>55</sup> During that period Hemson, Bolton, Lambert and Cheadle launched a Benefit Fund (BF) which attracted African workers. (See Chapter 7.) On 9 September 1972, when the General Factory Workers' Benefit Fund (GFWBF) was officially launched, it had about 1000 members.<sup>56</sup> Dominant among the new recruits were the textile workers, who later experienced the largest number of, and the lengthiest, strikes during 1973.

Also important for the development of African trade unions was the Central Administration Services Committee (CAS) that was launched in March 1973 in Durban by Harriet Bolton, Archbishop Dennis Hurley, TUSCA trade unionists and Richard Turner.<sup>57</sup> The committee's role was to raise funds and provide an institutional base for the launching of African unions. The CAS's role was thus:

...to draw all the registered unions in Bolton Hall into a concerted drive to form parallel-type unions to the registered ones....The unions involved were ...[the] Garment, Furniture, Textile and Motor Assemblies. BF, Urban Training Project and Wages Commission representatives sat

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<sup>55</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, *The Emergence and Development of FOSATU (Natal), 1972- 1979*, 2.

<sup>56</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, *GFWBF Min.*, 17 June 1972 . See also *GFWBF Report to TUACC* by D. Hemson, June 1974.

<sup>57</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, *The Emergence and Development of FOSATU*, 3.

on CAS also.<sup>58</sup>

The Durban strikes heightened African worker militancy and created some confidence in the ability of the African labour force to organise itself. Soon after the strikes, African workers from various industries joined the Benefit Fund in large numbers. They asked to be organised into trade unions representing their particular fields of work. One of the long-term objects of the General Factory Workers' Benefit Fund was to utilise the BF as a stepping stone to trade unionism proper, organising sections of its members into industrial unions when sufficient membership in any particular industry was achieved. Such a process, according to Bonner, was accelerated by the dock strike of 1972 and the Durban strikes of 1973, "...precipitating the formation of unions much earlier than might otherwise have been the case."<sup>59</sup> Because of large numbers of new members in the Benefit Fund, the first African trade union was launched on 26 April 1973 in Pietermaritzburg by metal workers.<sup>60</sup> Soon after the establishment of the Metal and Allied Workers' Union, other trade unions followed, established by the clothing, textile, chemical, furniture, transport and general workers.

As for the African textile workers, their

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>59</sup> P. Bonner, The History of Labour Organisation in South Africa (Durban, FOSATU, 1980), 22-3.

<sup>60</sup> Webster, Cast in a Racial Mould, 132.



organisation was initiated by the registered TWIU during the strike period. The TWIU negotiated wage increments for both Indian and African workers at Smith and Nephew, and Consolidated Textile Mills.<sup>61</sup> Before the launching of NUTW, TWIU, through David Hemson, managed to organise the unorganised African workers in the textile industry. In August 1973, representations were made to the Industrial Council and the TUCSA Annual Conference by TWIU on behalf of 500 striking African workers at Frame's Wentex Mill in Jacobs. The dispute was over a five percent wage increment. All striking workers were fired and the company re-employed some workers, rejecting others whom they considered as "troublemakers, including nine works committee members."<sup>62</sup> A donation of R3500 was given to dismissed workers by TUCSA.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, TUCSA appealed to the Minister of Labour to have dismissed workers reinstated; the appeal was not successful. Some form of organisation was already provided to African textile workers well before the inauguration of NUTW in September 1973. Even after the formation of NUTW, TWIU under Norman Daniels continued to play a significant role in the organisation of African workers. For some time both NUTW and TWIU worked together and shared the same offices and organisation, but they later developed strong rivalry over

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<sup>61</sup> Natal Room, DHCP, The National Union of Textile Workers, 1.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

policies and philosophies.<sup>64</sup> The conflict between the two unions eventually led to a split and also competition for union members at Smith and Nephew. At the end of May 1977, about 60 Indian members of the TWIU at Smith and Nephew joined the NUTW.<sup>65</sup>

#### Recruitment and Organisation in NUTW

During the first months of its existence, NUTW experienced membership growth. The largest membership was concentrated in the textile border industries, where working conditions and wages were appalling. As already stated, initial recruitment had started with the Benefit Fund, and by the end of October 1973, the Union had a total membership of almost 1500.<sup>66</sup> New members were recruited from Smith and Nephew, S.A. Fabrics, Dano Textiles, Nortex, Seltex, Frametex, Afritex, Pinetex and Ropes and Mattings.<sup>67</sup> It was from those mills that the shop-stewards were elected. By June 1974, the NUTW had

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<sup>64</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, F49.2, Textile Workers' Industrial Union, 1973-1988, Correspondence: Relationship between NUTW and TWIU.

<sup>65</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, NUTW, Minutes of the Ann. General Meeting of the NUTW, 9 Oct. 1977, 2.

<sup>66</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, D 13.2, Natal, 1973 -1987 ; and G 106.5, Membership Figures.

<sup>67</sup> NR, DHCP, The NUTW, 2; and SACTWU, Minutes of Meeting of the NUTW, 30 Sept. 1974.

signed up 5000 members<sup>68</sup> and in 1979 it had a paid-up membership of 5500.<sup>69</sup> Membership increased rapidly, especially soon after the January 1974 strikes in the textile industry, but suddenly dropped in 1975 during the textile recession.

More important to the NUTW in 1974 was the recognition agreement signed on 19 July with the Smith and Nephew company.<sup>70</sup> Smith and Nephew was one of the British companies in South Africa that was under investigation. One of the recommendations formulated by the British government for subsidiary companies in South Africa was that, "...there is nothing to prevent a company from recognizing and negotiating with a trade union representing African workers."<sup>71</sup> The agreement was important in that the NUTW was granted the right to organise its members at the company during non-working hours and at least three hours every Wednesday during lunchtime. Shop-stewards representing the union were elected in all departments of the company. Commenting on the recognition

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<sup>68</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, The Emergence and Development of FOSATU, 7; and NUTW, Report to the 1 st TUACC Council, 16 June 1974.

<sup>69</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, The Emergence and Development of FOSATU, 7; and Profile of the NUTW by Professor Bendix, 1982, 16.

<sup>70</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, Profile of the NUTW by Professor Bendix, 1982; and The NUTW: The First Ten Years, 4.; NR, DHCP, The NUTW, 3. See also the original agreement document between the NUTW and Smith and Nephew in UW, SACTWU, G116.2, Agreements.

<sup>71</sup> See M. Legassick, "The Record of British Firms in South Africa in the Context of the Political Economy", SALB, Vol.II, 1 (May/ June, 1975), 75.

agreement of 1974, John Copelyn stated: "The serious benefits of that Agreement were really substantial organisational gains for workers."<sup>72</sup>

By 1980, the NUTW had signed a number of recognition agreements with various companies such as South African Fabrics, David Whitehead and Sons, Hammarsdale Clothing, and Furpile and Progress Knitting Mills.<sup>73</sup> As part of the NUTW's strategy, it first organised those companies considered as good employers, and especially international subsidiary companies. Recruitment in those companies started outside the factory gates and once the union was assured of 25 percent membership, the management was approached for union access to its members. In some cases where management proved hostile to union access, the recruitment drive was intensified through secret shop stewards within the company.<sup>74</sup> The union also utilised general meetings to recruit new members. During meetings, the union emphasised those issues which appealed to workers and warned workers against capitalist exploitation.<sup>75</sup> Such strategies worked in favour of the

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<sup>72</sup> NR, DHCP, The NUTW, 4.

<sup>73</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, Profile of the NUTW, 19. By 1982 in Natal province, the NUTW had signed no fewer than 19 recognition agreements. Some of the companies beyond the Durban boundaries which signed the recognition agreements with the NUTW were Mooi River Textiles, Herbox Textiles, Gelvinor Textiles and Brailey Linnofra International. See also NR, DHCP, NUTW - History, Growth and Objectives by J. Copelyn, Sept. 1984, 5.

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Jabulani Gwala, Bolton Hall, SACTWU Offices, 27 Sept. 1993.

<sup>75</sup> NR, DHCP, NUTW- History, Growth and Objectives, 2.

union membership drive.

From late 1975 onwards, the NUTW's paid-up membership declined. During that time, the textile industry was hard hit by the economic recession,<sup>76</sup> brought about by the importation of cheap material from the Far East, especially from Japan.<sup>77</sup> During that period almost 10 000 textile workers in the country were retrenched and the textile industry utilised about 60 percent or less of its plant capacity.<sup>78</sup> In response to the economic crisis, the government imposed tough duties on a variety of imported textile products.<sup>79</sup> Various textile industries retrenched their workers during the recession period and some of their targets were workers who were identified as union members or what management termed "troublesome" workers.<sup>80</sup> At Nortex, Ropes and Matting, Wentex, S.A. Fabrics and Dano Textiles, retrenchments were effected.<sup>81</sup> As a result of such problems, the union movement was weakened and a sharp drop in membership was experienced. The greatest

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<sup>76</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, *The Emergence and Development of FOSATU*, 10; and J. Maree, "An Analysis of the Independent Trade Unions in South Africa in the 1970s" (University of Cape Town, Ph.D, 1986).

<sup>77</sup> See Maree, "An Analysis of the Independent Trade Unions"; and NR, DHCP, *The NUTW*, 6.

<sup>78</sup> SAIRR, *Survey of Race Relations*, 1974, 265; and *Survey of Race Relations*, 1975, 177.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Judith Msomi, Bolton Hall, Workers' College, 16 Oct. 1992.

<sup>81</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, NUTW, Report to TUACC Council Meeting, 6 Apr. 1975.

challenge which faced the union, then, was to make substantial economic gains if they were to do more than remain with only a small, committed number of union members.

NUTW membership subscriptions dropped significantly as the number of union members declined. In 1974, the union subscriptions collected averaged R1437 per month especially between July and September.<sup>82</sup> From October 1974 to July 1975, the average dropped to R1108 per month.<sup>83</sup> Because of the economic recession in 1975, union subscriptions further declined heavily particularly from mid-1975. From September to December 1975, subscriptions collected amounted to R501 per month while in 1976 the average was R430 per month.<sup>84</sup> However, such sharp drops cannot be explained solely in terms of the economic recession. There were other important factors which inhibited workers from joining or participating in trade union activities during this period.

As previously stated, one of the reasons why employers of African labour preferred mobile labour from far-away areas was that it was expected to be docile and subservient and would not be influenced by "communistic

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., NUTW, Financial Statements, 31 July 1974 and 14 Sept. 1974.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., NUTW, Financial Statements, 31 July 1975.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., NUTW, Financial Statements, Sept 1975- Feb 1976, Apr. - June 1976, Aug. -Dec 1976. See also NR, DHCP, The NUTW, 6.

trade unions".<sup>85</sup> The idea of such a huge mobile worker component diluting labour was challenged during the 1973 Durban strikes, which showed the unity of the African working class, both mobile and urban workers. In fact, the so-called "migrant" labour system was challenged not only by the mass strikes of 1973 but by the huge entry of mobile workers into trade unions. Ironically, during the 1970s, the system itself created conditions conducive to workers to join the unions. As Ari Sitas argued, "migrants were...combined the moment they entered the hostel [or factory]. People from the same region, or clansmen would immediately organise the new comers' life on group lines."<sup>86</sup> He designated such cultural formations, "defensive combinations", which consequently provided a base for collective mobilisation of mobile workers. A proportion of organisers and shop stewards interviewed by Sitas pointed out that

Migrants are keener union members than permanent people. A couple said that there wasn't any real difference between migrants and permanent people, that migrants responded sooner because of their work conditions but then permanent people followed suit.<sup>87</sup>

In a survey conducted by Eddie Webster and Judson Kuzwayo in 1975, they came to the conclusion that about 58 percent of African workers joined unions in order to

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<sup>85</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>86</sup> A. Sitas, "Moral Formations and Struggles Amongst Migrant Workers on the East Rand", Labour, Capital and Society, 18, 2 (1985), 383.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 391.

defend their rights at the workplace.<sup>88</sup> African workers wanted unions to play a meaningful role in their day-to-day lives, and improve their wages and working conditions. From the survey, three broad answers were given as to why Africans failed to join the unions that were formed in Durban during that time.

Fear of victimisation is another thing. Many people feel there is still a storm to fall on the trade unions - to be safe one has to keep off entirely and if you are found discussing such matters [you] can be called to book by either the management or police. Secondly, respondents mentioned unfavourable experience with the union in the past due to leadership splits, corruption or simply lack of effectiveness due to failure to win recognition. Thirdly, a feeling that the state and employers are too powerful and would not allow unions to become viable, so why bother to join them.<sup>89</sup>

The survey showed that a significant proportion of workers failed to join unions because of fear of being victimised by their employers and the police.<sup>90</sup> African workers were also concerned about the unions' effectiveness in delivering the goods. During the 1970s, some successes were recorded in terms of wage increments but, on the whole, failures outweighed successes. Unions' failures in that respect contributed to the withdrawal of some members and the subsequent decline in membership.

Another contributing factor was the banning of union

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<sup>88</sup> See E. Webster and J. Kuzwayo, "Consciousness and the Problem of Collective Action - A Preliminary Case-Study of a Random Sample of African Workers in Durban" (Paper housed in the NR, DHCP, nd).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 11.



leaders. On 31 January 1974, David Davis of the Benefit Fund and a Metal Union organiser was banned and prohibited from carrying out any duties in any union.<sup>91</sup> Further state bannings followed. In February 1974, a number of textile organisers including Hilton Cheadle, Jeanette Murphy and David Hemson were banned.<sup>92</sup> Another setback was experienced when Chief Buthelezi accused the NUTW of degrading his status within the community.<sup>93</sup> Arising out of that charge was the dismissal of Barney Dladla, the Community Affairs Minister of the KwaZulu government, who had played an important role during the 1973 and January 1974 strikes. During the Frametex strikes in January 1974, Barney Dladla successfully led about 5000 striking workers and intervened on their behalf in their demand that the management of the company negotiate with the NUTW, which represented the majority of workers.<sup>94</sup> Frame offered wage increases and the workers returned to work. It was that incident which led to the dismissal of Dladla by Chief Buthelezi. During and soon after the Durban strikes of 1973, Chief Buthelezi had supported African workers' demands for higher wages and called upon the South African government to recognise African trade unions. In contrast, in 1976, the KwaZulu government emphasised that "...trade

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<sup>91</sup> Webster, Cast in a Racial Mould, 133.

<sup>92</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, The NUTW - The First Ten Years, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> NR, DHCP, The NUTW, 5.

unions are not recognised by the KwaZulu government...and [that] trade unions do not form part of such lines of communication."<sup>95</sup>

In April 1974 the state prosecuted the NUTW organiser, Wiseman Mbali, for inciting workers to strike.<sup>96</sup> State bannings continued in May 1976 with the detention of Junerose Nala and Obed Zuma, both officials of the NUTW.<sup>97</sup> They were detained under Section Six of the Terrorism Act for "furthering the aims of an illegal strike, following a very bitter two weeks strike by workers at Natal Cotton and Woollen Mills."<sup>98</sup> State bannings and detentions deprived the union movement of experienced leadership but that did not lead to the demise of the union since it had a strong shop-floor structure. The NUTW did not depend solely on its top leadership strata, as shop stewards were elected in various factories and were responsible for recruiting new members; they also collected union subscriptions and handled some workers' complaints. In July 1974, the NUTW recognised that: "Factory organisation inside the factory is the only way for

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<sup>95</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, NUTW, Director of Works, KwaZulu, to Trade Unions, Durban, Circular No. 5 of 1976.

<sup>96</sup> The case is well-documented in UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, NUTW, G 45.12.1, State versus C. Mbali ; and see also SALB, 2, 3 (1975).

<sup>97</sup> See "Profiles of J. Nala and O. Zuma" in SALB, Vol. 2, Nos 9 and 10 (May-June 1976), 117-118.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 117. See the details of the strike in SALB, Vol.3, No.7 ( June-July 1977); and also in Maree, "An Analysis of the Independent Trade Unions", 186-190.

us to proceed further than we did."<sup>99</sup> Indeed, that was a powerful strategy which brought the union organisation closer to workers. Some of the tasks undertaken by the shop stewards were:

...to convene meetings, before and after shop-stewards meetings, of the workers in their departments to learn of problems and to report back on shop-stewards' discussions and decisions; to enrol new members; ...to collect the members' subscriptions each week..., to raise complaints of workers with management...<sup>100</sup>

Such organisational methods utilised by the NUTW were later adopted by unions affiliated to the Trade Union Advisory Co-ordinating Council (TUACC) affiliated unions in 1977, which gave primacy to the shop stewards in union growth.

Internal conflicts within the NUTW contributed to the decline in membership but failed to destroy it. In January 1975, three union organisers who believed in Black Consciousness ideology were dismissed from the NUTW over differences in policy.<sup>101</sup> The Black Consciousness organisers wanted the expulsion of White organisers from the union movement and argued that the union's decline was caused by "whites who were dominating" union affairs.<sup>102</sup> Unfortunately for the Black Consciousness organisers, the

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<sup>99</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, NUTW, Minutes of Staff Meeting, 15 July 1974.

<sup>100</sup> NR, DHCP, The NUTW, 9.

<sup>101</sup> See UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, The Emergence and Development of FOSATU, 11 and NR, DHCP, The NUTW, 10.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

White organisers enjoyed the support of the African workers and as a result the Branch Executive Committee decided to dismiss the three organisers.

In any event the NUTW eschewed any form of political involvement with the banned nationalist movements.<sup>103</sup> The trade union movement was to remain independent and workers believed that the unions of the 1970s must address day-to-day issues in the factory rather than concentrate on national political problems.<sup>104</sup> Politics of the factory became dominant during the 1970s although that did not negate the fact that workers were politically conscious. Workers emphasised that the mistakes of SACTU should not be repeated if unions were to survive and, hence, "working class factory consciousness" took precedence.<sup>105</sup> Even during the 1976 Soweto uprisings, the NUTW did not participate directly in the unrest, fearing government repression if they were to be involved in a politically

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<sup>103</sup> E. Webster, "A Profile of Unregistered Union Members in Durban", in J. Maree (ed), The Independent Trade Unions, 1974 -1984 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987), 28.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>105</sup> H. Benyon, Working for Ford as cited in Webster, "A Profile of Unregistered Union Members", 29. Benyon states that: "A factory class consciousness understands class relationships in terms of their direct manifestation in conflict between the bosses and the workers within the factory. It is rooted in the work-place where struggles are fought over the control of the job and the 'right' of managers and workers. Inasmuch as it concerns itself with exploitation and power it contains definite political elements. But it is a politics of the factory.", 98.

inspired strike.<sup>106</sup> As one of the NUTW shop-stewards stated in the 1970s,

A working class movement should not be deeply involved with a political movement. As workers we can participate in issues in the community, but not as a workers' movement. Some issues like rents we cannot avoid, but we must draw some lessons from the past, from the older unions like SACTU. Through deep political involvement, factory issues get left behind and too much time is spent over political issues.<sup>107</sup>

On several occasions, the NUTW made it clear that it had no factional political affiliations but stood for a just society. Because most of its members were African workers, the leaders of the NUTW believed that social justice could be attained through equitable living and working conditions for all workers irrespective of colour, race or gender. It also stood firm on a non-racial union policy and rejected outright the call of the three Black Consciousness organisers to expel all White organisers. Soon after that crisis, Thizi Khumalo, an organiser from the NUTW, also called for the expulsion of White organisers. Khumalo had just lost his post as an organiser at the Jacobs office because of poor organisational skills.<sup>108</sup> He attributed the loss of his job to the

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<sup>106</sup> See Webster, "Stay-Aways and the Black Working Class: Evaluating a Strategy", Labour, Capital and Society, XIV, 1 (Apr. 1981).

<sup>107</sup> Survey conducted by the Natal Project, Working Class History in the Community and Labour Research Unit, UND, Sociology Department, Oct. 1986.

<sup>108</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, The Emergence and Development of FOSATU, 11; and NR, DHCP, The NUTW, 12. Khumalo was unable to write reports for presentation to the BEC. He failed to write even a single report till the time of his forced retirement from the NUTW.

dominance of White intellectuals in the union. In March 1976, Khumalo was transferred from the NUTW to the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU).<sup>109</sup> The conflict was resolved but the NUTW lost a number of factories and members where Khumalo had worked as organiser. On the whole, the union emphasised its stand on non-racialism and the importance of shop stewards, and constituted itself from the bottom up, firm by firm. In that manner their approach was in total contrast to the one adopted by SACTU during the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Central to the survival of the NUTW in the 1970s was their strategy towards management's resistance to unions. Most employers favoured the establishment of liaison committees, over which they had a greater control.<sup>110</sup> Liaison committees were purely advisory. Various attempts were made in Durban to promote the establishment of liaison and, to a lesser extent, works committees as a way of warding off the unions.<sup>111</sup> The NUTW experienced management hostility at different textile factories. By 1974, at Wentex, Frametex, Hammarsdale, Dano and S.A. Fabrics,

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> See Table A in Chapter Seven; and NR, DHCP, "The Problems Facing Open Trade Unions" by Harold Nxasana (nd), 2.

<sup>111</sup> KCAL, PNAB, KCF 80, Roll 62, DCC Minutes, 12 Oct. 1972; Extract of NEA Conference on Industrial Representation of the Bantu, 28 Nov. 1972; DCC, Report and Recommendations of the Labour Relations Sub-Committee on Matters Pertaining to African Trade Unions, 12 Sept. 1974; and DCC Minutes, 14 Nov. 1974.

liaison committees were launched to resist the NUTW as a form of worker representation.<sup>112</sup> Generally, the TUACC-affiliated unions were opposed to liaison committees and occasionally boycotted the elections of such committees. On their part, management resisted unionisation of African workers. Conflicts between management and workers arose over such issues; an example of such a conflict took place at the Natal Cotton and Woollen Mills (NCWM) in Durban in 1975.<sup>113</sup>

The dispute between management and workers at NCWM began on 27 October 1975 and lasted for two weeks. What is significant about this dispute is the management's attitude towards the NUTW. The company employed about 650 workers, of whom half were African members of the NUTW and 150 were Indian members of the TWIU.<sup>114</sup> The personnel manager, C.J. Steenkamp, was not in favour of trade unions; he preferred a liaison committee. He dismissed workers who were members of the NUTW and in just three months, 20 long-serving workers lost their jobs. Workers suspected that Steenkamp dismissed long-serving members in order to hire his own izimpimpi (spies) from his previous company.<sup>115</sup> He was also accused of being a racist and a

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<sup>112</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, NUTW, Staff Meeting Minutes, 11 Mar. 1974.

<sup>113</sup> NUTW, "The Natal Cotton and Woollen Mills Confrontation", SALB, Vol 3, No. 7 (June-July 1977).

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 8. All information in this account is drawn from the NUTW, "The Natal Cotton and Woollen Mills Confrontation".

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 16 -7.

person who took delight in using foul language to African workers. The strike ended on 10 November and a third of the workers on strike were dismissed, marking an end to the longest strike in the history of the textile industry. In early 1976 Steenkamp was dismissed.

The NCWM dispute is significant in that it highlighted to the NUTW that consistently boycotting liaison committees would not bring about the recognition of the union at the company. During early 1975, the NUTW decided not to boycott liaison committees but rather to participate in these structures.<sup>116</sup>

During the early 1970s, a general trend had developed whereby African workers resisted liaison and works committees, favouring trade unions. The Port Natal Administration Board, for instance, complained about the general indifference of African workers towards liaison committees.<sup>117</sup> Up to 1976, the Board continuously reported lack of interest among African workers in participating in liaison committee structures.<sup>118</sup> Several reports of various districts of the Port Natal Administration Board indicated that, "... the response was equally disappointing and the labourers had to be asked to find persons

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<sup>116</sup> Interview with J. Gwala, Bolton Hall, SACTWU Offices, 27 Sept. 1993. Gwala was a prominent member of the Frametex Liaison committee during the 1970s.

<sup>117</sup> NA, PNAAB, 1/2/1/1/2/27, Staff Advisory Boards, Liaison Committees, 7 Apr. 1974 - 30 July 1976.

<sup>118</sup> See for instance, NA, PNAAB, Executive Committee Minutes, 4 May 1976; Dept. of Business Undertakings, May 1976.



sufficiently interested to accept nominations";<sup>119</sup> "the response...to nominations was very poor."<sup>120</sup> But, as mentioned above, with the passage of time, many African workers changed their strategies from confrontation to involvement in those structures.<sup>121</sup>

Faced with the existence of the liaison committees at Frametex, Pinetex and Seltex/Nortex, the NUTW fostered good relations with members of those committees. Union members infiltrated liaison committees, thereby gaining control and facilitating the union's capacity to focus on workers' grievances in those structures.<sup>122</sup> By 1978 the NUTW members at Frametex had completely taken over the liaison committee.<sup>123</sup> A similar situation had occurred at Feltex in 1975, when the NUTW members had managed to win all liaison committee posts.<sup>124</sup>

By 1979 the NUTW tended to concentrate on major textile industries such as Smith and Nephew, Frametex, Con-

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., Dept. of Business Undertakings, May 1976.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Western District Bantu Works Committee, 1976.

<sup>121</sup> See for instance, NA, PNAAB, L.H.S. van Rensburg, Director- Technical and Building Services to Chief Dir., 30 July 1976.

<sup>122</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, NUTW, Report to BEC Meeting, 11 Oct. 1975.

<sup>123</sup> See Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Frametex Committee, 14 Mar. 1978. Some of the members were: Jabulani Gwala, A. Mthembu, D.R. Dhlamini, M.D. Cele, Q. Sikobi, M.B. Mbele, P.Z. Khanyile, M. Radebe, A.S. Bhengu and three women, F.O. Gumede, S.D. Mavimbela and L.L. Gqwani.

<sup>124</sup> UW, WCL, HLP, SACTWU, Minutes of Meeting, June 1975.

solidated Woolwashing and Processing Mills (CWPM) and South Africa Fabrics, where there was effective union organisation. But union organisation was also extended to other smaller factories. At major textile industries, shop stewards were properly constituted and functioned well. Liaison committees in those industrial establishments were dominated by union officials who were highly respected by the rank and file workers. For instance, at Frametex, Jabulani Gwala, the chairperson of the shop stewards committee, and S. Cele commanded respect among African workers.<sup>125</sup> Even during the 1979 Frame strike, about 500 workers refused to be addressed by Mr Frame and, instead, were addressed by Jabulani Gwala.<sup>126</sup> He persuaded workers to return to work and guaranteed that a wage increase that was supposed to be effected within six months was to be effected within two months. Frame also undertook not to dismiss any of the striking workers and the strike came to an end.<sup>127</sup> Clearly, the NUTW had by 1979 successfully managed to place factory issues in the hands of shop stewards.

With the dawn of the Wiehahn Commission's recommendations in 1979, a new beginning was created whereby African trade unions could be registered. Because of the

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with Msomi, 16 Oct.1992; and see also the tribute to S. Cele soon after his assassination in 1980 during the Frame strikes. Textile Forum, June 1980

<sup>126</sup> For the strike details see The Rand Daily Mail, 3 July 1979 and also Gwala's notes on the 1979 strike. Notes are author's personal collection from J. Gwala.

<sup>127</sup> Gwala's notes on the 1979 strike.

changed labour conditions, new strategies had to be formulated. The Wiehahn Report envisaged reforms as the only way of ensuring effective control over the growth of African unions. In fact, according to the Report, African unions were not subjected to any form of "discipline and control" but rather enjoyed more substantial freedom than registered unions.<sup>128</sup> The rapid growth of independent African trade unionism, and the industrial militancy which had rocked Durban since the strike wave of 1973, made the state fear a possible re-unification of banned political organisations and the trade union movement, as had happened during the 1950s and early 1960s. The government saw control through reform as an answer to labour problems of the 1970s. Unregistered African trade unions were granted legal recognition, and accorded the same privileges as their White, Indian and Coloured counterparts. However, Wiehahn recommended a formal ban on any form of political trade unionism or affiliation.<sup>129</sup> Such sophisticated strategies failed to attain the state's desired results of, at the least, dampening down the labour militancy of the 1970s. On the contrary, major conflicts were to break out between workers and employers. The relationship between the ANC and the trade union movement during the late 1950s and early 1960s remains controversial, yet interesting to assess. Lambert's analysis of that relationship is convincing, at least for the period up to 1965, especially

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<sup>128</sup> SALDRU, SALB, "The Wiehahn and Riekert Reports".

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

on Natal. Political unionism was both instrumental in and detrimental to union growth in Natal: an apparent paradox that remains largely unresolved in the rest of the chapter. The relationship facilitated the rapid growth of SACTU, particularly from 1957 onwards. It was certainly so in Durban where SACTU's political campaigns up to 1961, although targeted at the state, "...were at the same time to be the most effective strategy for mobilizing workers at factory level, thereby building, extending and solidifying the trade union base itself."<sup>130</sup> As rightly claimed by Lambert, it was more evident in Natal through the presence and efforts of Chief Albert Luthuli. Luckhardt and Wall comment on the "militancy and vitality" of the Durban branch of SACTU in 1961 which "made Natal an excellent venue for the meetings".<sup>131</sup> Equally important for Natal was the domination of SACTU by Congress officials who joined Umkhonto we Sizwe after 1960, eventually leading to the demise of the trade union movement.

Even in the 1970s, it was hardly possible to divorce politics and purely bread-and-butter matters. The African independent trade unions of the 1970s emphasised establishing an independent worker position, fearing state repression if they became involved in the political struggles. Yet at their union meetings, officials and workers chanted "Amandla Ngawethu". One of the closing salutations

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<sup>130</sup> Lambert, "Political Unionism and Working Class Hegemony", 249.

<sup>131</sup> Luckhardt and Wall, Organise or Starve, 414.

used by the NUTW in the paper, Textile Forum, was "Amandla Ngawethu".<sup>132</sup> Even the least political of unionists spoke against the state and chanted anti-apartheid slogans during union protest meetings during the 1976 state banings of the NUTW officials. Although the form of political unionism which Lambert puts forward for the late 1950s and early 1960s was not applicable to the 1970s, nonetheless, it was hardly possible to keep politics and purely trade union matters completely separate.

### Conclusion

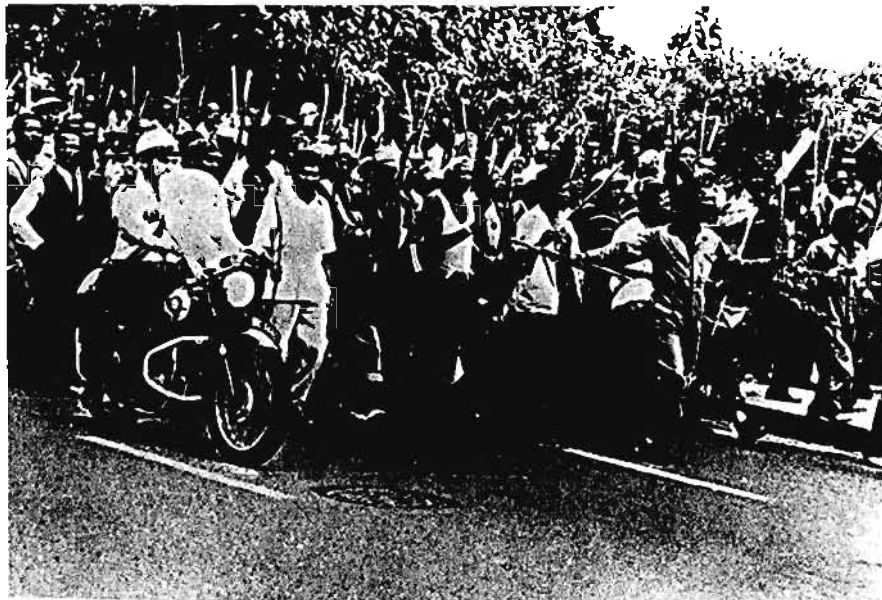
Significant of the new brand of African trade unionism in Durban in the 1970s was that it tried by all possible means to avoid any alignments with the banned political movements. There was a dramatic shift from the broad trade union movement approach adopted by SACTU in the late 1950s when it became a member of the Congress Alliance. During the 1970s, African trade unions organised themselves from the bottom up, industry by industry; in fact, a strong shop-floor structure was put into place. Furthermore, trade unions of the 1970s clamoured for recognition in each particular industry rather than seeking broad agreements. These were some of the aspects which strengthened the independent trade union movement, unlike the broad industrial mass movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

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<sup>132</sup> See for instance, Textile Forum, 14 Dec. 1978.



1. Launching of the National Union of Textile Workers in September 1973.
2. The January 1974 Frame Textile strike led by the KwaZulu Community Affairs Councilor, Barney Dladla.



## CONCLUSION

Events in South Africa from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s have been subjected to a bewildering diversity of historical interpretations: interpretations, moreover, which are often too simplistic. The events that took place were complex, contradictory, and conflictual to the extent that no single historical explanation can adequately unravel such complexities.

The main analytical thrust of this particular study is that the apartheid state, through its often brutal interventions in urban African society and in the economy, or more broadly in workplace routines, increasingly integrated African workers and their families into the apartheid boom. During this period, the apartheid state assumed distinctive powers to control the political, social and economic spheres of urban African community life. Consequently, because of its repressive policies together with the high rate of economic growth during the 1960s, the apartheid state engaged itself in social engineering on an unprecedented scale. Very often the state failed to achieve its goals. However, success often created unmanageable problems. State intervention in all spheres of life created a more complex society: a society that ulti-

mately was structurally far too complex to be effectively managed by the very apartheid state which had played a major role in its creation. The apparent result of the success of the apartheid state's social engineering in the 1960s is that cracks began to develop; the apartheid state showed signs of collapse by the mid-1970s.

On the economic front, one key controversy in the available literature has been the liberal-revisionist debate about whether the apartheid state has been functional or dysfunctional to the economic boom of the 1960s. The liberal modernisation theory stressed the economic dysfunctionality of apartheid while the radicals viewed apartheid and capitalism as mutually dependent. This study challenges such simplistic opposition and counter-opposition of one view to another, arguing for a more complex analysis of both the economic processes and the role of the state, based specifically on local case studies. One major consequence of the debate between various schools of thought has been to generalise the relationships which existed between capitalism and apartheid. The state reacted differently to problems which arose in different regions and in different economic sectors. The relationship that existed, as argued in Chapter Two, has been dominated by the complexities, contradictions, conflicts and complementary aspects of apartheid policies. The state's impact on the economy was characterised by uncertainties, conflicts, failures, deviations and successes in its application and implementation of apartheid policies.

This study reinforces the view that the relationship



was both functional and dysfunctional - "functional for the reproduction of certain relations and class positions and contradictory for others."<sup>1</sup> Some sectors of industrial capital were hostile to state labour policies while others were not antagonistic to such policies - a view held by Posel and Lipton, for instance. Various ways and means of accumulating capital were instituted by different industrialists which by and large were not systematic but chaotic.

Some sections of employers of African labour conflicted with the state's influx control mechanisms and the workings of labour bureaux. Industrialists, for instance Frame Textiles and the Dunlop Rubber Company, were in favour of mobile labour, and they, together with African work-seekers, adopted methods which undermined state labour recruitment policies. Even the Durban local authorities were sometimes reluctant to implement state labour policies. The labour bureau system was viewed by employers as an unnecessary and cumbersome exercise, while employees themselves preferred to be engaged at the gate or off the street rather than to follow the stipulated procedures of the state labour bureau system. The state's efforts to control and regulate the movement of African labourers from the reserves into White apartheid cities were a resounding failure, particularly in Durban. The failure showed the workings of informal resistance to apartheid by both employers and employees. The state did not always

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<sup>1</sup> Wolpe, Race, Class and Apartheid, 8.

succeed in achieving what it desired: a case in point was the failure of influx control measures. From the late 1970s, the state began to acknowledge that influx control measures were not a success.

Undoubtedly, the apartheid state's achievements on the political front, when it suppressed mass mobilisation by African organisations, especially during the early 1960s, co-existed with failures in other areas. During the 1960s, the apartheid state had successfully integrated African workers within the economy but not as mass consumers, and often not as semi-skilled or skilled workers. Essentially, African workers were integrated in ways which prevented the economy from expanding; ultimately, the actual integration path taken undermined the growth of capitalism. Wages remained poor for African workers, thus reducing their potential as consumers. Formal houses for married couples and hostels for men and women were constructed. Under the Bantu Education Act of 1953 schools for African children were provided, although with major problems in the availability of facilities and the quality of education supposedly gained from such schools. A transport network was provided to cater for the movement of African workers between their places of residence and the apartheid city. By and large, the apartheid state provided urban infrastructure for the African community to a degree that cannot be equated to that of any previous government. During the 1960s, large-scale production of houses and urban infrastructure took place in Durban. Generally, the

late 1950s and early 1960s have been described by John Rex as "apartheid gone mad"<sup>2</sup>, while Posel labelled it the "madness of apartheid".<sup>3</sup>

Considering the structural transformation that took place, and the contradictions and complexities of the period, it is hardly surprising that the study of South African history during the 1960s and 1970s is largely problematic to historians. In fact, the events of the 1960s represent the most curious aspects of the apartheid system with which historians have yet contended. Apartheid, contradictory and conflictual as it was, meant not just mass bannings and repression but also mass provision of urban infrastructure for the African community. Apartheid was more complex than a simple success story of the state mowing down all forces that stood in its way. It is an apparent paradox that the failures of apartheid were partially rooted in its successes.

Politically, the apartheid state made great strides when it banned African political organisations in 1960. These organisations sank into dull passivity as the apartheid state assumed even greater powers. Underground sabotage campaigns waged by Umkhonto we Sizwe, beginning in 1961, failed to have an impact on the state or to "bring the government and its supporters to their senses before

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<sup>2</sup> Rex, "The Compound, the Reserve and the Urban Location", 14.

<sup>3</sup> Posel, The Making of Apartheid, 5.

it is too late..."<sup>4</sup> The end result was that by the mid-1960s, African political organisations were completely paralysed inside the country and decided to go into exile. This marked the end of mass mobilisation and a dramatic turn to community politics. The African community no longer challenged the state directly, but indirectly by attacking local government structures established within the townships, such as Advisory Boards, Resident Committees and Urban Bantu Councils. Conflicts arose among a number of parties: township residents, the rising African petty bourgeoisie who dominated local state structures, and various groups dominant in civic politics. This led to the creation of new forms of community politics.

One distinctive characteristic central to the study of African labour history is the level of awareness among African mobile workers and urban resident workers in their response to demands of the new capitalist economy. Throughout this study, emphasis has been placed on workers' everyday experiences not only at the factory level, but also in the townships where they lived and at market places where they were consumers. In other words, African worker struggles were not centred on wages alone but on broad challenges faced in their day-to-day experiences. While employers voiced concern in the 1970s about strikes and resisted African independent trade unionism, African workers responded to new economic challenges in a variety of ways - hidden or disguised, as well as open forms of

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<sup>4</sup> Lodge, Black Politics, 234.

action.

A deeper understanding of worker struggles during the absence of effective trade unionism could be extracted from what is fashionably termed as hidden responses. Such forms of action developed by ordinary workers when conventional forms died out showed at least that workers were not passive entities of the capitalist form of accumulation. Certainly, individualised forms of struggle have always given way to collective consciousness, which is more effective, is in direct conflict with capital, and can gain substantial improvements in terms of wages, conditions of service and other related matters. Nonetheless, hidden forms of struggle are important in that they give rise to collective action and hence are a necessary component in the development of collective consciousness—perhaps best demonstrated by the Durban strikes of 1973 and the rise of independent African trade unions thereafter.

Once the African workers of Durban broke out of their "silence", South African labour history took a dramatic turn, one which affected the entire country for the coming decades. The strikes were significant in that they assumed a new and distinctive character not possessed by any of the previous general strikes, especially those initiated by nationalist leaders of the 1950s. The Durban strikes were worker actions, led and stage-managed by workers themselves. They gave rise to the independent African trade union movement, which forced the apartheid state to

institute legislation that, for the first time, allowed African workers to be legally recognised as employees, and that granted African trade unions legal recognition and also their right to strike. The apartheid state gave in, exposed its weaknesses, and began to institute reforms designed to cool down the rigid Verwoerdian model of apartheid, which eventually led to its demise. Such a process was initiated by the events beginning in Durban in 1973. Clearly, the demise of apartheid was a result of a combination of factors: the apartheid state's internal contradictions, widespread popular resistance and escalating international pressure.

Significant also of the independent African trade unions of the 1970s, particularly the National Union of Textile Workers, was that they eschewed any form of political participation with the banned anti-apartheid movements. They developed strong shop-floor structures and were organised from bottom up, factory by factory - quite a departure from the mistakes of SACTU during the early 1960s.

Trade unionism is treated in this study as one, albeit important, aspect of worker consciousness. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, SACTU had strong links with the ANC, which eventually led to the demise of the former in the mid-1960s. That relationship has occasioned much debate among scholars. Nonetheless, in South Africa politics and trade unionism could not be separated during the apartheid days, although the impact on the development

of trade unionism was negative. In the post-1994 period, the relationship remains controversial and debatable.

African worker struggles in the 1960s and 1970s were not solely about trade unions, strikes, stay-aways, boycotts, riots and revolts, but also about workers' daily struggles in all facets of life, expressed not only through open actions but through hidden actions as well. The totality of such worker actions, open and hidden, when workers chanted "Usuthu" and "Amandla Ngawethu", and when workers stole from their employers or sabotaged industrial machinery or pretended to be ill, all gave meaning to what we termed worker struggles or consciousness among mobile and urban resident workers.

APPENDIX

STRIKES AND WORK STOPPAGES IN 1973

<u>Date</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>No. of Workers Involved</u>	<u>Comments</u>	<u>Reference</u>
9 Jan.	Coronation Brick and Tile Company, Durban	1 500	Those earning R8,97 a week demanded R20 and later R30 a week. An increase of R2,07 raising minimum wages to R11,50 per week was given.	<u>Star</u> , 9/1; <u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 10/1, 11/1, 18/1
10 Jan.	A.J. Keeler, Durban Docks	70	Workers given an extra 50 cents.	<u>Sunday Tribune</u> , 21/1
12 Jan.	T.W. Becket & Co., Durban	100	Ninety workers dismissed but most later re-engaged. R3 increases per week raised minimum wages from R10 to R13.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 13/1, 25/1
15 Jan.	J.H. Akitt, Durban	100	Workers who had earlier been given an extra 50 cents a week, demanded 90 cents a day increase.	<u>Transvaler</u> , 16/1
15 Jan.(?)	James Brown and Hamner, Durban	Not given.		<u>Natal Witness</u> , 17/1



16 Jan.	Dundee Cartage Co., Dundee	30	Brief stoppage for wage claims.	<u>Ibid.</u>
17 Jan.	Mosenthal Marine, Durban	16	Arrested by S.A.R. Police for picketing.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 18/1
17 Jan.	Natal United Transport, Durban	120	Granted 15% wage increases after approach to management.	<u>Ibid.</u>
19 Jan.	Consolidated Fine Spsinners and Weavers, East London	50 rising to 1 000	Wage claims.	<u>Daily Dispatch</u> , 23/1
22 Jan.	Motorvia, Pinetown	250	Lond-distance drivers earning R20-R25 per week demanded increase to R40. Workers lodged complaints with Pinetown Bantu Affairs Department. They were discharged, rehired, and given increases based on a new scale for the distance travelled.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 23/1
25 Jan.	Frametex, New Germany	Not given - mention of hundreds	Wage claims.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 26/1

26 Jan.	Frame Group, Textiles, 4 mills at New Germany	1 000 rising to 2 500 and then to 7 000	Wage claims of R20 for men and R14 for women a week were lodged. Police called in. Strike ended 29 Jan. after increases offered between R1,75 and R3 a week.	<u>Star</u> , 26/1
29 Jan.	Huletts, Mount Edgecombe	200	Workers awarded 20% pay rise - approx. 10 cents a day.	<u>Star</u> , 29/1, <u>31/1</u> ; <u>Cape Times</u> , 30/1
29 Jan.	D. Pegler & Co., New Germanay	20	Immediate increases demanded.	<u>Star</u> , 29/1; <u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 30/1
29 Jan.	Natal Canvas Rubber Manufacturers, Durban	650	Protest against a 4c-a-week deduction for sick benefit fund. Police called, R1 per week offered.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 30/1; <u>Star</u> , 30/1
29 Jan.	Hume Ltd., Pinetown	600	Workers rejected 90c a week raise.	<u>Mercury</u> , 30/1
29 Jan.	Pinetown Engineering Foundry, New Germany	200	Wage claims.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 30/1
30 Jan.	L.G. Green Ltd.	50		<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 31/1
30 Jan.	Consolidated Textile Mills, Jacobs	2 600	Initially workers dismissed.	<u>Star</u> , 31/1; <u>Rand Daily</u>

Mail, 2/2

Star, 31/1

30 Jan. National Chemical Products, 300 Wage claims.  
Durban

31 Jan. to 2 Feb. During this period the industrial action escalated and it was estimated that at least 20 000 workers had been involved in work stoppages by 2 February. Firms involved were:

Dunlop (S.A.) Ltd., Durban	1	300	<u>Rand Daily Mail, 3/2</u>
Ropes and Mattings, Durban	2	800	<u>Ibid.</u>
General Chemical Corporation (Coastal) Ltd., Durban	-	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Crossley Carpets, Durban	-	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Hart Ltd., Durban	7	00	<u>Ibid.</u>
Bakers Ltd., Durban	-	-	<u>Rand Daily Mail, 1/2, 2/2</u>
United Cake Oil Mills, Mobeni	2	00	<u>Ibid.</u>
C.J. Wright & Sons, Jacobs	2	00	<u>Ibid.</u>
Tri-Ang Pedigree, Mobeni	-	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Defy Industries, Pinetown	-	-	<u>Ibid.</u>

Polycrate Ltd., New Germany	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Glen Removal & Storage	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Congella Erection Company, Pinetown	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Supercola Ltd., New Germany	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Afritex, Mobeni	500	<u>Ibid.</u>
Union Flour Mills, Durban	700	<u>Ibid.</u>
Dorman Long, Durban	300	<u>Ibid.</u>
James Brown and Hamer, Durban	400	<u>Ibid.</u>
Softex Mattress Co., Durban	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Natal Underwear Manufacturers, Jacobs	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Pepsi-Cola abotlling Co., Durban	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Universal Mills, Durban	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
L.H. Marhinsen, Durban	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Durban Concrete Fencing	-	<u>Ibid.</u>
Beverley Hills Hotel, Umhlan- ga Rocks	-	<u>Ibid.</u>

Colgate-Palmolive, Boksburg			<u>Ibid.</u>
Consolidated Textile Mills, East London	2 000	Laboratory employees asked for 20 cents an hour increase. All 11 dismissed.	
Blaikie-Johnstone, Durban	600	Unrest which began with 50 workers on 19 Jan. escalated to include 2 000.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 3/2, 6/2
Madadeni Transport Services, Newcastle	-		<u>Star</u> , 2/2 <u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 3/2
Airco Engineering, Wentworth	150		<u>Ibid.</u>
Durban Falkirk Iron Co., Jacobs	-		<u>Ibid.</u>
Ensor Plastics, Durban	-		<u>Ibid.</u>
Hebox, Hammarsdale	-		<u>Ibid.</u>
Amalgamated Packaging Industries, Mobeni	400		<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 6/2
Acme Timber Industries & Timbrik Model Homes, Durban	220		<u>Ibid.</u>
The Metal Box Company of South Africa, Mobeni	1 000		<u>Ibid.</u>
Main Tin Manufacturers,	500		<u>Ibid.</u>

Mobeni

At one stage during this period it appeared that only 4 factories in the Jacobs Industrial Complex, Durban, were operating.

4 and 5 Feb.

Smith &amp; Nephew, Pinetown

600

Rand Daily Mail, 5/2

Federated South African Meat Industries, Durban

-

Ibid.

Rowen (S.A.) Ltd., Mobeni

-

Ibid.

5 Feb.

Johannesburg City Council

145

African bus drivers continued a go-slow which started on 24 January and threatened strike action. Conflict resolved when compromise agreement between workers and municipality was made.

Star, 5/2;  
Rand Daily Mail, 12/2

6 Feb.

Durban Corporation

4 000

rising to

16 000

Black workers in City Engineer's Department stopped work. Movement spread to other divisions to include most black municipal employees. By 9/2 most had

Star, 6/2

			returned to work after 15/5 pay rise.	
6 to 7 Feb.	Hammarsdale Industrial Complex	7 000	7 000 workers stopped work. Police attacked a small group with tear gas.	<u>Rand Daily Mail, 7/2</u>
7 Feb.	South Coast Agency, Port Shepstone	150	Pay rises between 20 and 30% given.	<u>Rand Daily Mail, 8/2, 9/2</u>
	Bonnievale Ltd., Port Shepstone	80	R6 to R10 a week increases demanded.	<u>Ibid.</u>
	South Coast quarries, Port Shepstone	40		<u>Ibid.</u>
	Archibald & Co., Umzinto	70		<u>Ibid.</u>
	LTA Construction Co., Durban	± 134	African workers stopped work on a building site and moved from site to site encouraging other workers to stop. Prosecuted and fined minimal sums.	<u>Rand Daily Mail, 13/3</u>
8 Feb.	Goodhope Pipe Factory, Pietermaritzburg	100		<u>Rand Daily Mail, 9/2</u>
	Ferralloys, Cato Ridge	320		<u>Ibid.</u>
	Plascons Evans, Durban	400	Dismissed.	<u>Ibid.</u>

	National containers, Durban	300	Dismissed.	<u>Ibid.</u>
	Clover Dairies, Durban	5	Prosecuted and fined for threatening to assault workers who did not stop work.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 17/2
	Malibu Hotel, Durban	180		<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 9/2
	Edward Hotel, Durban	-		<u>Ibid.</u>
	Rydal Mount Hotel, Durban	-		<u>Ibid.</u>
9 Feb.	Durban Dockworkers	-	Extra R10 per week demanded.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 13/2
12 Feb.	Fresha Eats, Johannesburg	18	Wage claims.	<u>Ibid.</u>
	Seven-T-construction and Strachan Construction, Durban	± 145	Wage claims.	<u>Star</u> , 12/2
	Alex Carriers, Pietermaritzburg	80	Wage claims. Police called in.	<u>Ibid.</u>
26 Feb.	T. & K. Kerr & Hagerman, Worcester	167 Coloured workers	Struck when a white foreman replaced a Coloured person. 51 workers later resigned.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 28/2
27 Feb.	Rennies Delivery Service, Benrose, Johannesburg	100	1 1/2 hour work stoppage for wage increases. Police evident but no action taken.	<u>Ibid.</u>



23	March	RCR Distributors	28	Workers walk out after 4 col-leagues allegedly discharged for asking for increases.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 24/3
25	March	Alusaf Aluminium Smelter, Richards Bay	± 600	Black workers struck for higher wages - at first rejected a R2 per week paya increase offer. Strikers defied ultimatum to return to work or be fired - strikers fired - troops employed to maintain production. Strikers dispersed by tear smoke. 100 strikers returned to work on 1/4.	<u>Star</u> , 26/3, 27/3, 28/3; <u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 29/3, 31/3; <u>Han-sard</u> 9 cols. 564- 6, 3 April. <u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 2/4, 4/4
25	March	Roberts Construction Co., Richards Bay	300	African workers went on strike in support of Alusaf strikers - fired.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 29/3
25	March	A Klerksdor Miller's Co.	300	Workers sent on strike for two days.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 27/3
26	March	Veika Clothing Factory, Char- lestown	1 000	black workers went on strike for increased wages - returned to work after 5 days without securing anya promise of increases.s	<u>Star</u> , 26/3, 30/3

26 March	Univa Metal Iworkers (Pty) Ltd., Alberton	50	Unskilled labourers went on short strike - returned to work and agreed to form works committee.	<u>Star, 26/3;</u> <u>Rand Daily</u> <u>Mail, 27/3</u>
30 March	Trump Clothing, Charlestown	700	Black workers strike for higher pay in support of strike at Veka - returned to work without having their demands met.	<u>Star, 29/3;</u> <u>Rand Daily</u> <u>Mail, 30/3</u>
1 April	Williston court, Parktown	19	African cleaners went on strike - apparently discharged.	<u>Rand Daily</u> <u>Mail, 4/4</u>
2 April	Richards Bay Six Consortium, Richards Bay	± 300	Black workers strike for more pay ± 500 other employees stop work in sympathy. Strikers dispersed by police with tear smoke.	<u>Star, 2/4;</u> <u>Rand Daily</u> <u>Mail, 3/4</u>
2 April	Acme Timber Industries Saw-mill, Durban	350	Black workers walk out over pay increase demands.	<u>Rand Daily</u> <u>Mail, 3/4</u>
2 April	Ferrovorm, Alberton Limited, Alberton	150 - 250	Black workers strike when pay increase demands not met - about 75 discharged.	<u>Star, 2/4;</u> <u>Rand Daily</u> <u>Mail, 3/4</u>
2 April	H.V. Henochsburg (Pty) Ltd., Johannesburg	1 000	African workers stage 5 hour strike.	<u>Star, 2/4;</u> <u>Rand Daily</u> <u>Mail, 3/4</u>
4 April	Brookfield Knitwear, Johan-	300	African and Coloured workers	<u>Star, 4/4</u>

	nesburg		strike for 2 hours - return to work when management agrees to immediate 5% C.O.L. increase.	
4 April	Jardin Des Modes, Johannesburg	85	African clothing workers stage sit-down strike for C.O.L. increase.	<u>Star</u> , 4/4
4 april	Border Passenger Transport company, East London	?	Bus drivers strike - return to work 5/4 pending negotiations between management and Dept. of Labour.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 5/4
5 april	Italian Knitting Industries, Johannesburg	100	Lightning strike achieves immediate 7 1/2% C.O.L. increase.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 6/4
5 April	Rhine Fashions, Johannesburg	85	Short work stoppage.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 6/4
5 april	Kels Lingerie, Jeppestown	200	Short work stoppage - strikers returned to work after management agreed to negotiations on paya increases.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 6/4
7 april	W.J. Leith & Co., Mtubatuba	200	Workers strike, refusing to accept certain pay increase offers.	<u>Star</u> , 9/4
11 April	Lona construction, East Lon-	800	Black workers strike for wage	<u>Rand Daily</u>

don		increases.
Berkshire International, East London	300	Black workers stage short work stoppage - return to work after negotiations with management.
S.A. Weatherwear Co., Johannesburg	400	African and Coloured garment workers stage sit-in strike.
Tongaat Super Complex	400	Workers strike and pickete gates. Crowd dispersed by police. Returned to work after discussions with management.
Tongaat Town Board	200	Workers strike for two days - return to work when given ultimatum to return to work or be fired.
Regent Neckwear, East London	100	Strike for higher wages
Castellano-aBeltrame, East London	180	
Vecor Vanderbijlpark	300	White workers stage short strike. Return to work after negotiations with management started.
Haggie Rand's Factory,	1 270	African strike for two days

Jupiter, Johannesburg

for higher wages.

15/5; Rand Daily Mail, 15/5, 17/5

14 May International Harvester Plant, Pietermaritzburg

90

African workers walk out - most return when management refuse to negotiate.

Rand Daily Mail, 18/5, 22/5; Financial Mail, 18/5

16 May Windhoek Municipality, African Police Force

50

Policemen strike for higher pay - 38 return and 12 resign.

Rand Daily Mail, 17/5

21 May Pilkington Bros. Glass Factory, Springs

150

Workers stopped work for a few hours after a member of the workers committee sacked. Return to work when colleagues reinstated.

Rand Daily Mail, 22/5

18 June Alloy Diecast Factory, East London

300

Black workers strike in support of pay increase demands.

Rand Daily Mail, 20/6

21 June Stevedoring Companies, East London

?

Stevedores strike for higher pay.

Rand Daily Mail, 23/6

28 June Kaffrarian Steam Mill co., East London

160

Employees strike - fired and replaced by other workers.

Rand Daily Mail, 29/6

4 August Cathkin Park Hotel,

35

African workers resigned over

Rand Daily

	Drakensberg		dispute on overtime rates.	<u>Mail</u> , 6/8
8 August	Frame Group's Wentex Factory, Durban	1 000	African workers strike after services of 600 terminated in wake of wage demands. Five African workers were later charged with inciting and taking part in a strike.	<u>Star</u> , 9/8; <u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 10/8, 14/8, 16/8, 19/10
20 August	Johannesburg Offal Traders	16	Venda labourers prosecuted for allegedly striking on 20 August.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 22/8
3 Sept.	Scaw Metals Ltd., Alberton	700	African steel workers strike for higher pay - returned to work after discussions with consultative committee.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 4/9
4 Sept.	Western Deep Levels Mine	29 - 36	Machine operators strike - returned to homelands.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 5/9, 6/9
8 Sept.	Orange Fish Tunnel Construction Project	1 100	Workers strike for higher pay. 300 resign, the rest return to work after management offer increases.	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 12/9
11 Sept.	Western Deep Levels Mine	70 - 100	Workers refuse to go underground because of wage grievances - disturbances	<u>Rand Daily Mail</u> , 12/9, 13/9

18 Sept.

Rand Col Storage

60

erupt - 12 killed.  
Workers strike in support of sacked colleague.

Rand Daily Mail, 19/9

11 Oct.

Stellenbosch Farmers Winery,  
New Germany

300

African workers struck for 5 days when R5 per week pay increases refused.

Star,  
11/10; Rand Daily Mail,  
12/10,  
13/10,  
16/10

7 Nov.

S.A. Meat Supply, Johannes-  
burg

1 000  
(?)

40 workers dismissed after work stoppage in connection with wage dispute.

Star, 7/11;  
Rand Daily Mail, 9/11

Source: SAIRR, A View of the 1973 Strikes, 20 November 1973

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3. Interviews conducted by N.T. Sambureni. Where necessary, interpretation and translation services were provided by fellow University of Natal students - Mendi, Dumisani Nyawo, Zakithi Mbonane, Ria Dlodlongwana and Peace Cele.

(a) Tapes and transcripts.

Mr P.M, Faya, KwaMashu, 1 September 1992.

Mr Stephen Govender, Durban, 23 October 1992.

Mr Jabulani Gwala, Bolton Hall, SACTWU Offices, 27 September 1993.

Mr J. Mhlangu, Dalton Hostel, 3 October 1992.

Mr E, Mgaga, assisted by D, Nyawo, Kwa-Dabeka, 20 August 1992.

Miss Judith Msomi, Bolton Hall, Workers College, 16 October 1992.

Mr E, Nyawo, Umlazi, 30 July 1992.

(b) Untaped Interviews or Discussions.

S.B. Bourquin, University of Natal, History Department, 6 October 1993.

Jabulani Gwala, Bolton Hall, SACTWU Offices, 1992 and 1993.

David Hemson, 22 June 1994. I had several discussions with Dr David Hemson as a colleague and a trade unionist of the 1970s. He clarified quite a number of issues relating to African trade unionism and the Durban strikes of 1973.

Shop -Stewards and trade unionists at the Workers College, Bolton Hall, who were undertaking a trade union course in 1992. I became involved in the course as a tutor while Professor Jeff Guy provided some lectures. My profound thanks to Professor Guy who introduced those students to me.

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