

CHAPTER 3

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

Mkhumbane and the Pogrom of January 1949

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

34. MNAD; H2/CM, vol. 1; Manager MNAD - Town Clerk, 30 July 1949.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

City, Countryside and the People of Mkhumbane

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

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

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

43. *Ilanga lase Natal*, 12 October 1946.

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

45. *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

68. *Ibid.*

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

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

71. *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

79. Walker, *Kaffirs*, p 33.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

83. *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

90. Port Natal Development Board slide archive.

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

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

93. *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

107. Ibid.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

119. Ibid, 16 October 1946.

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

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

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

The Municipality and the Making of Mkhumbane

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

131. *Ibid.*

132. Minutes of City Council, 7 January 1944.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

141. Minutes of City Council, 7 January 1944.

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

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

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

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

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

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

144. *Daily News*, 3 May 1944.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Structure of a New Shack Society

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

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

The changing nature of the shantytown's spatial structure throughout the 1940s is clearly evident from surveys carried out by the municipality in 1948. In the Newtown area, situated on land owned by Mr Panjalai,¹⁸⁵ there were approximately 887 African residents, living in 640 rooms in 112 shacks. There was an average of 5.7 rooms per shack and an average 1.3 Africans per room. These rooms were owned by a total of 288 people, both Indian and African. There were 249 Indian owners of shack material, and 39 African owners, only 19 of whom actually lived in the settlement.¹⁸⁶ Likewise in the Haviland Road settlement, there were 490 Africans living in 55 shacks comprising 365 rooms. With a similar shack density to that existing in Newtown, 57

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

195. Durban Housing Survey, p 372.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

203. PNAB slide archive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

231. *Ibid.*

232. *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

234. *Ibid.*

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

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

237. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

238. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 29 November 1986.

239. See Maasdorp and Humphreys, *From Shantytown to Township*, chapter 3.

240. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

Draaihoek area: "There man you could get anything! It was our Chicago. Anything! If you want a back then you must go to Draaihoek."²⁴¹

In the shantytowns the circulation of money, goods and services created a sense of unity and community. The complex shack tenancy and ownership relations were merely aspects of this broader economic system. Like the co-operatives, Mkhumbane's economy was based around the need for money to circulate rapidly within the shacklands. Together with the co-operatives the main venue for the redistribution of money was the stokvel. Within the shantytowns there were few people who lent money: "it all happened at the stokvel."²⁴²

The stokvel host would buy meat and alcohol which could include 'White man's liquor' and often hire musicians. Such musicians could either be a *jasbaadjie* group or a "three man band". Such a band would comprise guitar, drum and either the double bass which was a tea chest, with a string attached at the top and held taut, or a violin. If a drum was not available "musicians could play on the shack walls."²⁴³

Stokvels could be widely advertised in advance or "people would just hear the music and come along." People would move between various stokvels, the only constraint being the need to pay the required entrance fee and willingness to spend money.²⁴⁴ The host would hire a 'master of ceremonies', the "M C", who was usually chosen because the man was literate, had a lively and enthusiastic character and could shout.²⁴⁵ The 'M C' would commence proceedings by announcing the purpose behind the stokvel in ways which stressed the respectability of the host, his loyalty to the community and publicly reveal the hosts' aspirations and ambitions. Thomas Shabalala remembers:

'Now gentlemen, Mr Shabalala is inviting you all to come and enjoy this occasion which Mr Shabalala is having so that he can build his house properly.' Or you want to get money to invest in a bus. Or shackshops. These things. Not stupid things. 'Now as you all know Mr Shabalala has lived here in Mkhumbane for a long time and all think very highly of him. He is a good man for us and he shall always be with us.'²⁴⁶

In such often highly ritualized opening speeches was a social contract between the host and the community, a stressing of the needs of the community and an understanding that limited capital resources needed to be pooled in order for increased material prosperity.

When entering a stokvel people would go directly to the 'M C', pay an entrance fee, have their names written down and receive something to eat and drink. From then on everything else had to be paid for. Joshua Mzimela recalls:

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

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

243. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

244. *Ibid.*

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

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

It you want more then you went to the M C and said 'With this 10d I am taking this piece of chicken.' The M C then gave you a fork to select the piece you wanted. Just as you were choosing your chicken the M C would stop the band. 'With this 10d Mr Mzimela is eating a chicken.' Then the other people would play around. We were just trying to get money - just playing. Other people would do up to the M C and say 'With this 12d I am taking Mr Mzimela's chicken.' It could go on and on. Sometimes you could get 1 for a chicken.²⁴⁷

The general level of hilarity provided considerable amusement. Shouting 'Water! Water!' which was derived from 'order! order!', the M C would announce the guests' every whim.²⁴⁸ Charles Khumalo recalls: 'You could even bid for the band and the M C would stop the band. Or to change the tune or for the band to bugger off! - 'Now with this 15d you are too rubbish, bugger off!'.²⁴⁹

At the end of the stokvel the 'M C' would give the host a list of how much each guest had spent. There was an extremely strong moral compulsion on the host to attend stokvels held by his guests and to spend equal if not larger amount. Thomas Shabalala recalls:

If you spent 2 at someone's stokvel, then he had to spend 2 or more at yours- so that he can also get a lot of money at one time. This was the way we were doing it. To give everyone a chance to do the things that were needed. If that man did not give you that money, then he was looked down upon. By everyone.²⁵⁰

But it was not just money which became redistributed within the shantytown community.

Conscious of the need to sustain a livelihood within the whole community and understanding the problems of obtaining both sufficient wages and even continuous employment within an industry desiring unskilled and casual African labour, residents would often provide the elderly, unemployed or indigent with employment. Shebeen queens would "employ" men as bodyguards and for the various menial tasks so essential to illicit liquor manufacture. Likewise women would be taken on for serving shebeen clientele.²⁵¹ Unemployed men would often be the labourers erecting shacks.²⁵² Children would be "paid" to collect empty bottles for gvine and shimeyane. Various womens' associations would gain the services of unemployed women to assist in making childrens' clothes.²⁵³ Invariably for undertaking such tasks people would receive not money but food and drink.²⁵⁴

247. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 28 April 1985.

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

249. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 8 July 1985.

250. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 29 November 1985.

251. See I Edwards, 'Shebeen Queens, illicit liquor and the social structure of drinking dens in Mkhumbane', *Agenda*, no 3 (1988).

252. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 8 July 1985.

253. Interview with Mr C Matiwane, 23 April 1983.

254. Interview with Mr M Mcanyana, 12 July 1985.

As with the ambiguity central to shantytown residents' attitudes towards the future of their residential life in the area, the very nature of the shacklands' internal economic structure produced both a highly defensive outlook and a very much more belligerent outgoing competitiveness. Shack residents were continually aware of the need to ensure that as much of their own money should circulate within the shantytowns as possible. But this was a very imperfect currency. In the city there were far stronger economic structures that also provided goods never to be either produced or available in Mkhumbane. It was from this conflict between the shantytown economy and the wider spheres of production and consumption that the roots of much of the shantytown residents' militancy lay. The weaknesses of the shantytown economy should be overcome by assuming greater influence over an extending sphere of trading ventures. This was a highly aggressive undercurrent within shack-residents' lives.

During the 1940s there was thus continual conflict over municipal beer-brewing operations and an often violent rejection of municipal and police attempts to curb illicit entrepreneurship in Mkhumbane. Similarly Indian trading and other commercial ventures in the Cato Manor Farm area should be restricted. Africans should not trade with Indians as this diminished the amount of money which could circulate within Mkhumbane. Furthermore, Africans should acquire an exclusivity of trade within the shacklands. Indian trading operations should cease.²⁵⁵ Here lay the material roots of an ethnic conflict so vividly exemplified during the course of the riots of January 1949.

Conclusion

Immediately after these riots African shack-dwellers believed that they had both liberated Mkhumbane and thereby gained control of the land area and acquired a near absolute dominance over material resources and entrepreneurial ventures in the area. The aspirations of the proletarian society of Mkhumbane seemed to many to be much more closer to fulfillment. With the successful outcome of the riots the Mkhumbane residents seemed to be really making their own future.

And yet within a few years the municipality had assumed a ever increasingly influential role in the shantytowns. Furthermore, in those few years, the weaknesses in shantytown society were becoming apparent. The shack-dwellers had always been unable to provide those residential facilities so integral to social stability in the shantytowns. Health and sanitation conditions grew worse and shacks still remained a inadequate as housing structures. Furthermore, despite the attempts at creating a broader proletarian unity during the later 1940s, there were increasing indications of class divisions within shack society. As the nature of capitalist production changed so divisions occurred within the working class; these could threaten proletarian unity. Such a broadly based populist unity was rather more rapidly shattered by the way in which, cast in the forge of 'New Africa' and the structures of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul', arose a new, powerful and prosperous African trading class from

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

amidst the ranks of militant populist shack-leaders.²⁵⁶ During the 1950s both state and capital were to work towards making these very class distinctions that much more delineated. During the 1950s the policies of both state and capital were to both erase many of the apparently victorious struggles waged by the proletariat during the later 1940s and serve to dramatically restructure the basis of African labour employment and residence in the city.

256. Kuper had recognized the growing importance of such traders after the riots of January 1949 but is unable to explain the origins of such trading aspirations. See Kuper, *African Bourgeoisie*, p 301.