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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

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Title: Birds in the Cornfield: Squatter Movements in Johannesburg, 1944-1947.

by: A W Stadler

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BIRDS IN THE CORNFIELD: SQUATTER MOVEMENTS IN JOHANNESBURG, 1944-1947.

A.W. STADLER

> The Government is beaten, because even the Government of England could not stop the people from squatting. The Government was like a man who has a cornfield which is invaded by birds. He chases the birds from one part of the field and they alight in another part of the field..... We squatters are the birds. The Government sends its policemen to chase us away and we move off and occupy another spot. We shall see whether it is the farmer or the birds who get tired first.....(1)

Thus spoke Oriel Monongoaha, one of the leaders of the Pimville squatters. The tenor and tone of his words suggests that while the squatter movements were in the first instance a protest by blacks in Johannesburg against the serious shortage of housing which developed during a period of rapid urbanisation, they assumed the proportions of open rebellion, mounted on a scale unprecedented in any urban area in South Africa.

The squatter movements were remarkable, not only for the numbers involved (a), their duration, and their successes, but above all because their structure and organisation flowed out of an instinctual understanding of the contradictions developing in the South African political economy.

The most coherently organised movements established virtually a state within a state into which no whites could go except under a squatter escort; they had their own courts, police and administration; their leaders' political skills easily matched the officials with whom they had dealings. Yet the movements failed to generate a wider political rebellion - it was the birds who tired before the farmer: this paper will try to explain their failure as well as their successes.

In order to come to grips with the nature of the rebellion, it should be noted that while black families had been settling in Johannesburg from the turn of the century onwards, the squatter movements arose out of the massive family migration from the rural areas into the city during and after the war. The appearance of families of migrants on a massive scale suggests that the reserves were failing to provide part of the family's subsistence. The collapse of the reserves coincided with the expansion of jobs in Johannesburg, and indeed with an increase in wages in the urban areas. But the wages of unskilled labourers never reached the cost of family subsistence in Johannesburg, and pockets of unemployment persisted throughout the war: after the war there was widespread unemployment.

(a) At their height, something between 60,000 and 90,000 people were involved. In January, 1947, the City Council estimated the number of squatters at 63,000, including 21,000 resettled in breeze-block rooms in Jabavu. In March, the Council put their numbers at 92,500 including 25,000 resettled squatters.(2)

The black population of Johannesburg nearly doubled between 1936 and 1946, from 229,122 to 384,628[3] and the major increase took place after the war broke out. The Johannesburg Municipality estimated that 57% of the increase was the result of migration from the rural areas.[4]

The evidence that families were migrating is less easy to quantify, but the evidence, though impressionistic, is strong. A municipal official writing in 1947 reported that

> recently there has been apparent a growing practice on the part of rural Natives entering the Urban areas to seek work and immediately to bring their wives and families with them. Formerly the labourer only brought his wife and family after he had been employed in the area for some years. The change in practice is due in some measure to the disparity between wages and living conditions as between the rural and Urban areas. Stories of high wages and more attractive living and social conditions are gaining increasing prevalence in the rural areas.[5]

A police constable who went to Natal on holiday in October, 1946, told of "men, women and children" on the train to Johannesburg, and of people gathered on Volksrust and Standerton stations "with all their household goods."[6] W.J.P. Carr, then assistant manager of the Johannesburg Non-European Affairs Department, recalls that men, women and children arrived in Johannesburg in every conceivable kind of conveyance.[7] Every census taken of the camps shows a reasonable numerical balance between men and women, while children formed a considerable proportion of the squatter populations.[8]

These accounts do not make it clear precisely when families began migrating on a large scale, and it is possible that the scale of family migration increased after the successes of Mpanza's first movement, i.e. from 1944 onwards, lured by the stories that "Natives in Johannesburg are being given by the Municipality places to build their own homes or shacks" which the holidaying constable reports having heard in Natal and on farms in the Memel district of the Free State.[9] The late dates of most of these accounts would suggest that it was later rather than earlier in the war that family migration took place. On the other hand the stimulus to record these observations for posterity did not come till after the Moroka "disturbances" of 1947.

The appearance in Johannesburg of families in very large numbers exaerbated the housing shortage. But the problem to which squatting was a response lay much deeper than a housing problem. As the Bantu World correctly observed, squatting had its origin in the land hunger of the reserves and the conditions of European farms. There were "thousands of landless and homeless people in the Native areas....." and people were being evicted

> by the thousands from European-owned farms because they failed to comply with the intolerable conditions imposed upon them by the farmers. Congestion and abject poverty drive them out of the reserves. How can starving men and women remain where they cannot obtain food?

It concluded that the "problem of 'shanty towns' cannot be solved by the enforcement of rigorous measures but by the revision of the Natives' Land Policy."(10)

The general deterioration of the reserves had of course been evident long before the second world war. During the early war period, several factors operated simultaneously, however, to speed their collapse. One factor, not confined to the rural areas, was the rapid increase in the costs of the most important items of black subsistence. A study conducted in 1940 at the University of the Witwatersrand suggested the cost of necessary items of consumption had increased by between 20 and 50 per cent since before the war: mealie meal by 20%, rice by 50%, candles by 45%, wood by 50%, boermeal by 25%, parafin by 25%, coal by 50%.(11)

To make things worse, a serious shortage of maize developed from about 1941, a crucial problem because maize could serve as a cheap substitute for bread. The shortage was in part the result of an over-optimistic forecast of production for the 1942 season which led to undertakings for export which could only be met (because of drought the following season) by exporting local reserves; the drought also caused a serious drop in maize production in the subsistence sector.(12) A Transkei missionary suggested that yields in 1942 were anything from a quarter to a seventh of the usual crop.(13) In consequence, to quote a contemporary account

> men are travelling long distances in search for some store which can sell them their food. Most of them are far too poor to buy bread instead. Taken all together, they form a large percentage, possibly even half the whole population.(14)

The maize shortage seems to have persisted throughout the war; it reached desparate proportions in 1946. An article in the Primary Producer quotes a statement that the original farm ration of "3 lb. of maize meal per day has been reduced first of all to 2½ lbs. and now stands after further drastic reduction at 1½ lbs. per diem."(15) The next year, it was reported that labourers' rations were less than 3/4 lbs.(16) The Bantu World uncovered a situation in which white farmers were (illegally) selling mealie meal to "starving and desparate Africans at anything from £1.10.0 to £2.10.0 a bag", double the controlled price of maize.(17)

But if conditions in the rural areas were terrible, the much better conditions in Johannesburg were such that it became a matter of survival for thousands of people that they should brave the elements and the authorities by moving into

the open veld.

Hitherto, particularly in the mining industry, wages had been held below subsistence level because part of family subsistence could be produced in the rural areas. The appearance of African families in the city on a large scale has been offered as evidence that the reserves were failing in this respect. The mine-workers' strike of 1946 has been cited as a response to this situation.(18)

Yet, as will be shown presently, wages for unskilled labourers in industry other than mining were also below the level of family subsistence. Squatting was a response to a situation in which the costs of family subsistence had to be met entirely from wages, yet in which wages were below the cost of family subsistence. Squatting may be seen, then, as an attempt to reduce the costs of subsistence in a situation in which, because of the swollen "reserve army" moving into the city relatively unimpeded by influx controls, wages could be held down during a period of rapidly rising living costs.

Before examining wages in detail, it should be noted that while new jobs opened up in Johannesburg and along the Reef as local manufacturers took advantage of the fall of imports from Europe, and as industry geared up to make the materials of war, there was never full employment in Johannesburg. In some sectors at least full employment was only achieved by lowering wages. Thus the Manager of the Non-European Affairs Department reported in 1940 that unemployment had developed, particularly in the building industry, and added that "most of the Natives who became unemployed have been able to find other employment, although not always at the remuneration previously received."(19) The increase in the wages of unskilled workers from mid-1942 in turn probably created some unemployment: according to the Smit Committee

> We are now reaching the stage when minimum wages have been laid down for almost all unskilled labour in the larger industrial areas, and the initial effect of raising the wages of this class has been to bring about the reduction in the numbers employed, through better organisation and the installation of machinery wherever possible.(20)

At the end of the war, there was widespread unemployment in Johannesburg; in 1946, the manager of the NEAD reported that "many hundreds of location tenants are seeking employment" and that it was "fair to assume that some thousands of male Natives are unemployed."(21) Many unemployed people lived in the squatter camps; during a police raid during 1946, 250 of 395 people arrested were workless.(22) The camp known as "Tobruk" was occupied mainly by ex-servicemen, many of whom were jobless. In any case, it is likely that with a very rapid influx of people into the city, many would be temporarily unemployed even in a situation approximating to full employment.

Wages were probably rising overall in industry during the war, and blacks in semi-skilled jobs were "earning in many cases as much as £2.10.0 to £3.10.0. per week" by 1943.(23) But the wages of unskilled workers probably seldom, if ever, equalled the cost of subsistence of a family of five. In 1940, under the existing Wage Board Agreement in force in Johannesburg, the rate for unskilled workers was 5½d. per hour - £4.19.0. per month for a 50-hour week. (Higher rates were paid in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.)(24) The African Commercial and Distributive Workers' Union argued that 30s. a week was necessary for unskilled labourers, and an investigation conducted by Eileen Krige, Mabel Parker and Ellen Hellman, suggests that this was a conservative estimate: "A native family of five cannot subsist on less than £6.10.0. a month."(25) During 1942, a Wage Board investigation into the earnings of 27,994 unskilled labourers in Johannesburg, including Municipal workers, revealed that they received an average wage of £5.2.11. per month, including the Government's cost of living allowance. At this stage it was estimated that the "amount required in Johannesburg to house, feed and clothe a Native family of five in decency" was £7.14.6.(26)

In August, 1942, a new Wage Board recommendation was gazetted which proposed a three-stage wage increase over eighteen months which would result in unskilled labourers' wages reaching £1.7.0. a week (£5.1.0 a month) by February, 1944.(27) Even adding the Government cost of living allowance (8/8d. in 1942) does not bring the income of the fully employed labourer up to the subsistence level of 1942. Despite the fact that the daily rate was slightly higher, the position of daily paid workers was probably worse if the assumption is made that they were intermittently unemployed.

In the £7.14.6. estimate of subsistence, the cost of rent, including water, sanitation, streets and services, was £1.5.0. just under 20% of subsistence.(28) It is possible that many workers living as tenants and sub-tenants in Orlando were paying less, but probably not much less. Even so, it is reasonable to infer that an unskilled labourer earning around £5.10.0. a month in early 1944 might stand a chance of maintaining himself and his family if he could find a way of housing himself for nothing.

Aside from the cost of housing, another "elastic" component of subsistence, transport, should be mentioned. The report which suggested that the cost of subsistence of a family of five was £7.14.6. in Johannesburg in 1942 calculated that transport cost 6/6d. a month - 4.6% of subsistence costs, or 6.3% of the 1942 income of an unskilled labourer.(29) These estimates leave out of account the wide variations in transport costs; transport would be proportionately a smaller cost for people living in areas like Sophiatown, Newclare and Martindale,

or even Eastern and Western Native Townships, than for people in Orlando, Pimville and Alexandra, between 8 and 10 miles from the city. It was in these areas that the main squatting movements originated. Transport costs would have been even higher for people living in one of these areas and working along the Reef. Transport costs may have weighed heavily as an incentive to squat; by saving on rent, the costs of getting to and from work might be absorbed. There had been a bus boycott in Alexandra in 1944; squatting, bus boycotts and rent boycotts may all be seen as different efforts to reduce the cost of those components of subsistence which could be changed by collective action.

It is likely that the most recent arrivals in Johannesburg settled in the areas more distant from the city. It was in these areas too that the main squatting movements originated. Only the small and ill-fated Newclare movement, which lasted barely a week before the police cleared it, originated in an area near to the city centre.

It is true that other factors worked in favour of squatting taking place far from the city. Thus regulations against unauthorised extensions to municipal housing were strictly enforced in Orlando, even at a stage when relaxation might have helped the Council to deal with squatting.(a) On the other hand the normal method of absorbing extra tenants in freehold areas like Sophiatown, was to construct another backyard shack. This meant that housing capacity in the freehold areas, though finite, was less bounded than in the municipal locations. By contrast, the authorities, including the police, were probably able to take immediate and effective action against squatting within the city boundaries during the crucially important early stages, particularly if the squatters chose a highly visible site, as did the Newclare group who tried to settle opposite the railway station.

The gap between wages and subsistence constantly exercised the authorities. Throughout the war, attempts were made to find some way of reducing the cost of housing, i.e. the cost of that part of subsistence represented by housing, as an alternative to increasing wages. Some years before the squatting movements began, the central government instructed an inter-departmental committee to discover ways "other than merely increasing wages of improving the social and economic condition" of blacks in urban areas. (Emphasis added.)(31) A variety of schemes and ideas continued to circulate in official circles during and after the war.(b)

It is this concern with lowering the costs of housing rather than increasing wages (or passing the cost of housing onto the employers of labour) which is interesting, and which suggests the constraints faced by municipal and other authorities. The Johannesburg Municipality fully appreciated the relationship between subsistence costs, wages and the distribution of obligations between public and private powers. During 1946, a meeting of its Finance Committee heard a report entitled "Cost of Housing Schemes and the Question of Industrialists Bearing a Portion of Providing Houses for Industrial Workers" which stated the problem in the following terms:

(a) The Council rejected a proposal by Orlando tenants during February 1946 that tenants be permitted to build lean-to shacks onto their houses for the re-absorption of squatters.(30)

(b) "There have been experiments in the construction of houses from new materials and in the use of Native labour for building, either under the Bloemfontein system (under which materials were loaned to blacks) or in departmental building. Certain private contractors have also experimented with new types of houses requiring only unskilled Native labour. These experiments have as yet only touched the fringe of the housing shortage and the majority of houses within the municipality have been erected at high cost." (32)

> The burden of the cost of providing housing schemes... falls on the ratepayers of the City and the Government. The provision of this accommodation at low rentals has thus enabled the employers of labour to pay minimum wages to their workers, and for this reason they should be called upon to bear a proportion of the cost of any housing schemes erected by the Council for the benefit of the workers. The ideal solution of the problem would be the payment of economic wages to natives..... The alternative is the imposition of tax on employers.....(33)

Although the report erred in stating that the ratepayers and the Government bore the burden of housing costs, it accurately summarised the alternatives available to local authorities. But the Municipality had no power to tax industry; and it was not until the tough-minded Verwoerd (no friend of Johannesburg industry) became Minister of Native Affairs that this solution was imposed by the central government. With a complaisant, though occasionally conscious-stricken government in power in Pretoria, industry was prepared neither to pay higher wages nor subsidise housing:

> Prominent industrialists and financial authorities in Johannesburg are unanimously of the opinion that it is wholly impossible for industry to be saddled with an additional burden of making provision.... for the housing of their Native employees, and yet retain their markets. (34)

This statement was made in 1948 after the war-time boom was over for industry and a hostile government was in power, but it can probably stand as an adequate reflection of opinion of a few years earlier.

Given this situation, the reduction of housing costs was the only alternative which the Council could envisage. After the war, a scheme known as the COTT scheme was introduced whereby black artisans would be trained and put to work on the construction of location housing. The Municipality supported the scheme, but the white building unions opposed it except on the condition that the wages of blacks employed should be the same as those paid to white artisans. The Municipality lost interest in the scheme on those terms - it was only attractive if it promised to reduce costs significantly. (35)

Thus far it has been suggested that the assumption that the squatter movements originated in a housing shortage does not stand up to scrutiny. There was, of course, a critical housing shortage in Johannesburg, and it was exacerbated during the war, and the pressure on housing must probably be counted as a factor contributing towards squatting. But this crisis had endured for as long as blacks had settled in the city. The roots of the housing crisis lay in the same general conditions which gave rise to squatting: the abysmal poverty of blacks in the city, their political disabilities, and the restrictions imposed on their access to accommodation in the city.

Aside from the limitation on the areas in which blacks were permitted to purchase land or to live, an important constraint on municipal housing was that the costs should be paid for out of the "Native Revenue Account", an account into which rents, profits for services and - above all - profits from the municipal monopoly over "Native" beer brewing were paid. Before 1934 no sub-economic housing was built in the urban areas. In effect, the poorest class in society, whose wages barely covered the costs of subsistence, bore the major costs of housing. Although deficits are recorded from time to time, it was a general rule that housing for blacks should not become a cost on general revenue.

In Johannesburg at least, municipal parsimony may be understood in terms of the limited financial base of revenues; in broader terms, it indicates the power of the great interests, particularly mining, over the city. City finances were drawn from two main sources: rates on the capital value of land and profits from services. (36) Except qua property-owners in the city, the great interests

centred in Johannesburg did not contribute to the city's finances. Mining land was not (and is still not) subject to rates. Thus the burden of providing the city's finances fell mainly on the city's petty-bourgeoisie and - as tenants - its working classes.

Moreover, insofar as it bore on housing for blacks, the machinery of municipal government was seriously deficient during the thirties. The Native and Non-European Affairs Department was only formed in 1928; prior to that date housing for blacks had been administered under the Parks and Recreations Department vote, along with the Zoo. While the senior officials appointed in the Department were competent and dedicated in a paternalistic way to the well-being of their subjects, their scope for action was severely hampered by lack of money, limited statutory powers, conflicts with other departments, inertia and sometimes more than a hint of corruption in those departments (37), as well as political interference, usually mounted on the interests of landlords.

Several major scandals resulted from the pressures these interests were able to bring to bear on the NEAD and other municipal departments; the opposition of landlords which retarded the supply of water to Sophiatown(38); the successes of the New Doornfontein Stand Owners Association in persuading the Native Affairs Committee to postpone the removal of blacks living in the backyards of New Doornfontein to Orlando in 1935. (The commission of inquiry which investigated this matter drew the drolly ambiguous conclusion that "not all the members of the Native Affairs Committee had received payment" from the Association.) (39)

Before the war, the major preoccupation of municipal officials concerned with housing was to try and enforce slum clearance and health regulations. But with the slow production of housing for blacks, this effort developed into a somewhat pointless war of attrition against the city's poor. According to the Murray-Thornton Commission, the Public Health Committee's attention had been drawn as far back as 1926 to "the uselessness of demolishing existing slums, without providing pari passu other and proper accommodation for the dispossessed occupants..."(40) and that if "specific rehousing and proper supervision do not accompany clearance, the effect of closing one slum will be .... merely to intensify another slum next door." (41)

Successive commissions had drawn attention to the overcrowded and insanitary conditions in the townships and the freehold areas. The Stallard Commission of 1921 described some of them in the following terms:

> "Brown's yard ... contains about 40 small rooms, all occupied by Native families ... Makapan's yard, 45 small rooms .... White Star Trolley yard .. 40 rooms occupied by natives and Cape families..."(42)

These conditions were duplicated in varying degrees in the freehold areas of Sophiatown, Newclare and Martindale within the municipal boundaries and Alexandra beyond the city borders.

The initiation in 1932 of Orlando, hailed by the Bantu World as the "future great City of Bantudom", destined to be "greater than Zimbabwe" (43) promised some relief, not only in the freehold areas, but also in the older municipal locations of Pimville and Eastern and Western Native Townships. Of course, the benefits of improved housing have to be balanced against the longer distances, the architectural uniformity, the social dislocation and increased regimentation. As the Bantu World was quick to add to its prospectus:

> "what of the pinpricks, of the Police raids and the harsh regulations that obtain in townships built solely for black folks?"(44)

slum after an outbreak of the plague, much of its accommodation had been condemned again and again but left to stand because of the lack of alternative housing. Aside from the shortage of housing, other services were severely inadequate. In Pimville, the worst in this respect, there were 63 watertaps and 63 drains to serve an estimated 15000 people.(51) Eastern Native Township was by comparison positively opulent in this respect: the number of taps was only one fewer than the number of houses. On the other hand, overcrowding in Eastern Native Township was worse than in any other area.

From the beginning of the war, but particularly from about 1943, the housing shortage became much worse. Moreover the construction of new housing declined and then stopped: 750 new houses were built in 1941 and 1942; none were built in 1943 and 1944.(52) Initially the Council was averse to allowing more than one family per house in Orlando, but under pressure of the crisis it issued permits from 1940 which allowed tenants to take in sub-tenants. To judge from the difference in numbers between the "estimated" population (recorded above) and the "official" population, there were about 8,000 unregistered sub-tenants in the locations.

It was from among the sub-tenants that the majority of the first group of squatters were drawn. By 1944, the waiting list for housing had grown to 16,000. The rival claims of squatters and persons on the waiting list for housing later posed a problem of great complexity for the Council, anxious to preserve the rules of bureaucratic justice inherent in queueing rather than to concede to the political pressures of squatters. The division of interest between squatters and persons on the waiting list indicates that squatters were likely not to have been on the waiting list, or at least not high enough on it to have reasonable expectations of a house. In turn this would suggest that the squatters were drawn predominantly from the latest arrivals in the city, though this is not necessarily the case with squatters from Pimville.

Moreover, as the ratio of people to housing units suggests, the situation in 1940 was least pressing in Orlando, yet it was here that over-crowding was sufficiently acute in 1944 for tenants to throw their sub-tenants out. It is reasonable to infer that the people who squatted from Orlando had settled there during the period 1940-1944. As it is reasonable to conclude that new arrivals in town were most likely to get work as unskilled labourers, it is probable that most squatters were unskilled labourers and their families, recently extruded from the countryside, with a fair proportion of their number periodically unemployed.

Finally, before considering the movements, an important political condition for their emergence and their successes must be sketched: the divisions in the state between central and local administrative authorities, and particularly the reluctance on the part of the central government to act decisively, with the degree of force which it was physically capable of bringing to bear against the squatters. Despite continuous appeals from the Johannesburg Municipality, the Union government exhibited a degree of apathy which at times amounted virtually to connivance in squatting. While stronger opposition from the central authorities may not have produced the effect which the Council sometimes naively hoped of eliminating squatting, it certainly would have impelled the movements to take a different direction from the one they took.

Underlying the division between central and local authorities lay an important difference of interests. Secondary industry, intent on taking advantage of a more mobile labour force, exerted a considerable influence on the central government, though it was by no means dominant in the array of interests on which the government depended for its support. The influence of industry on government policy is noticeable in the relatively light enforcement of influx control regula-

tions during the war. Government attitudes toward squatting were strongly influenced by industry's need for labour.

In this regard, it is instructive to consider briefly the fate of the squatters who settled on Alberton commonage during 1946 and were simply removed by the Union Department of Native Affairs to a "released area" at Hammanskraal near Pretoria. The most important reason why this removal was effected so easily was that most were unemployed and "their removal therefore caused no economic dislocation."(53)

The municipality sometimes rather wistfully referred to the Alberton squatters as an instance of how simple the solution to squatting could be if the Union Government took sufficiently energetic steps to prevent it.(54) But in fact the Union Government would act decisively only if it could do so without jeopardising the supply of labour to industry. Its position can be summarised in the statement it made in justifying its rejection of the Council's proposal to remove Pimville squatters at around the same time: "To do so would be to remove the individuals from their livelihood...."(55) These considerations suggest that, notwithstanding the evidence of unemployment during the period when squatting was at its height, an important condition for squatting was industry's increased need for labour. The reinforcement of influx controls, markedly from 1948, may have reflected the increased pressure of agriculture on government, or the declining need of industry for labour. (The Nationalist Party's election to power in May almost certainly influenced this change, but is not a sufficient explanation of it.)

The political constituency of the City Council were the ratepayers of Johannesburg. Given the small scale of financial assistance for black housing from the central government, and the reluctance of industry to share the burden of any deficits arising from the Native Revenue Account which might arise from producing housing for workers in the Reef towns as well as Johannesburg, municipal fear of squatters getting a foothold is understandable enough. For this reason, the Council constantly sought to have squatting treated as a "national" problem.(56)

Furthermore, the mining houses had little interest in a laissez faire labour policy, or of incurring any sort of commitment to increasing, directly or indirectly, its financial obligations to black housing outside of the compounds. Thus there seems to have been at least a tacit alliance between mining and the city, and the mining interest was able to influence Council policy directly and in detail. Sir George Albu was chairman of the Council's Non-European Affairs Committee throughout the period.

II

Squatting began in March, 1944, when James "Sofasonke" (we shall all die together) (a) Mpanza led a group of sub-tenants from Orlando and some families from Newclare and Kliptown onto open ground in Orlando, between the communal hall and the railway line, where they proceeded to set up shelters of hessian. Some 250 shelters were initially erected; by April 4, the numbers had grown to between six and eight thousand; at its height, there were something like 20,000 people in the camp.(58) It may be that Mpanza got the movement going by the

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(a) The name of the Sofasonke party may have originated in the oath which Mpanza got his lieutenants to swear: Mpanza is supposed to have said: "You are now soldiers. You have joined forces with me and you will die where I die." "We then repeated: 'Yes chief, we are your soldiers. We have joined with you - we shall die where you die." (57)

simple experident of urging tenants to throw their sub-tenants out; one witness alleges that during 1946 (i.e. two years after he led the first movement) Mpanza addressed Orlando tenants in the following vein:

> Now you tenants of this township must take out all of your sub-tenants; kick them out; put them in front of your doors in the street..." (59)

It is possible that this witness, a member of the Communist Party, was biased, but the allegation is repeated by another witness. (60) The report of the manager of the NEAD simply states that the leader "secretly organised a number of persons, predominantly women, to take possession of vacant land." (61)

The initial reaction of the City Council was that the squatters should be prosecuted, but the central government took the view that "nothing could be gained by chasing a number of people from a spot where they were settled unless the authorities knew of a place to which they could go."(62) By the end of March the Council began its slow and reluctant retreat before the squatters when it resolved not to prosecute them on condition that there was no more movement of people into Mpanza's camp at Orlando; that the squatters could remain pending the provision by the Council of temporary accommodation in "breeze-block" rooms in a new camp to be established in Jabavu and that free water and sanitary services would be laid on. Mpanza accepted these conditions, but was either unable or unwilling to enforce the condition concerning the influx of people into the camp. By the end of May, 1944, 200 rooms had been built; by October, 1945, 4042 had been built to accommodate 20,000 people, and the last shack in the first shanty-town demolished.

With the resettlement of Mpanza's squatters accomplished, the Council felt strong enough to take action against Mpanza and in January, 1946, tried to get him removed from Johannesburg under Section 5 of the Native Administration Act, a move which the Government supported after some prevarication. Mpanza stalled the proceedings by taking the matter to court. It was at this stage that the second movement began.

The movement was preceded by a request by elected members of the Orlando Advisory Board (of which Mpanza was a powerful member) on behalf of Orlando tenants for the Council to provide tents or land for their sub-tenants, failing which the sub-tenants would be expelled. A series of meetings ensued, culminating in a mass meeting of tenants which apparently agreed not to expel sub-tenants for a month. Mpanza protested against this decision, but the Council's representatives assumed that the chairman's summary expressed the decision of the meeting. However, the following day (January 28) a thousand families arrived at the office of the Orlando Location Superintendent, claiming that they had been ejected by the tenants. There was, of course, no accommodation for them, and they began to occupy 45 partly completed and 15 temporarily vacant houses already allotted to people on the official waiting list.

Realising the pointlessness of trying to eject the squatters, the Council was requested by its officials to set aside land and procure tents from the Government. It was anticipated that the police could be mobilised to remove "trespassers" in Johannesburg (i.e. people not employed or normally resident in the city.) At the same time it was decided to take immediate action against Mpanza and to warn two other Board members, Lukas Kumalo and G.G. Xorile, of the possibility that they might be removed from Johannesburg. (a)

(a) The fate of these two is not known. The "fall guy" was Edward Kumalo, who seems simply to have wanted a house in Orlando. He later emerged as the leader of the Volkshaven squatters.

It was found that the tents available were neither sufficient in number nor suitable (most had no poles), and the Health Department believed that a tent colony would constitute a danger to public health. By now the authorities were beginning to realise the enormity of the problem: compelled to acknowledge the existence of the squatters, every move they undertook to accommodate squatters promised to evoke pressures from other groups and, though they might not have known it at the time, to attract more people to town. The proposed action against Mpanza and other "instigators" was the typical reaction of an authority faced with an insoluble dilemma.

At the end of January, the Council decided to prevent squatters from occupying houses; if this were done "the whole movement would collapse of its own accord."(63) The Council saw the issue as a trial of strength on which the interests of "law and order" as well as the claims of people on the waiting list depended. But the Government insisted that no order for ejectment could be made unless alternative accommodation were provided, even if it were the barest minimum. The opinion of the police weighed heavily on the Government; they considered that while they could enforce an ejectment order, they could not prevent reoccupation, and decided that their role should be confined to quelling any disturbances which might break out.

But at least firm action could be taken against Mpanza, or so it was thought. An order to remove him to the farm Coldplace, District Ixopo, Natal, was issued on February 6, and when he ignored it he was arrested. Despite his argument that he was exempt from "Native Law" he was convicted. He appealed against his conviction and though the Provincial Division upheld the conviction, the Appellate Division upheld his subsequent appeal in September, 1946.

Action against the squatters proved equally difficult. By mid-February, 1946, the Council had succeeded in getting an ejectment order, and this was executed with the support of a force of 750 SAP and municipal police. But something between two and three hundred families simply moved to a piece of land barely fifty yards away from the houses and attempted to erect their hessian shelters. They were prevented from doing this until the afternoon of March 8 when it rained, and some women, anxious for their sick children, put up shelters. Against the advice of the police, the NEAD pulled down the shelters. The squatters, mostly women, resisted. In the resulting fracas, two people were killed, and the municipal workers and police were driven into the communal hall by the squatters. Stories now began circulating that the squatters were making knives and spears and were holding the area in front of the communal hall against all comers.

At this stage the third major movement began, this time in Pimville. The Council had by now accepted responsibility for providing sites in Jabavu for squatters normally resident and employed in Johannesburg (64) and undertook to make services available to them. It would provide sites; the squatters would erect temporary shelters; the Council in pursuit of its commitments to people on the waiting list would provide breezeblock shelters adjacent to Orlando; Jabavu squatters would move into Orlando as sub-tenants while sub-tenants on the waiting list would move into the breeze-block shelters. A census was undertaken under protection of a force of police, who also tried to prevent the further influx of people into the area. Not unexpectedly, the squatters refused to accept an arrangement whereby they were supposed to replace the rehoused Orlando sub-tenants, and the Council retaliated by ceasing the construction of breeze-block rooms.

In its anxiety to maintain its obligations to those first on its gargantuan waiting list, the Council failed to reckon with the claims of people living in areas outside Orlando. The Pimville squatters indirectly expressed the demand for housing of people who had lost their position in the queue because of the

They erected their hessian shelters near to Komo's Tobruk, raising a banner inscribed with the legend "Alexandra Tenants' Association - We Want Land."

Baduza had made an attempt earlier in the month to establish a camp on private land at Alexandra, but the police demolished their shacks and arrested Baduza and his lieutenants. While on bail, Baduza made a second attempt to settle in Alexandra, but under pressure from the Native Commissioner, he moved to Orlando. The City Council, which did not have jurisdiction over Alexandra (the area was precariously administered by the Alexandra Health Committee) secured a removal order against Baduza and his followers, and they were transported back to Alexandra where they settled on two squares in the town. The removal of Baduza's folk back to Alexandra (without consulting the Health Committee) in some degree legitimised their presence there, and the camp waxed strong.

By now the Council was coming to realise that while small movements were vulnerable,(a) any well-organised movement could not be eliminated simply by harassing the leadership or by moving them out of town, particularly as the central government made it clear that the only acceptable immediate solution was the development of "controlled" squatting camps, for which the resettlement of Mpanza's camp in breezeblock rooms had provided a precedent.

By early March, 1947, a scheme had been hammered out whereby land and services (including clinics) would be made available to 10,000 squatting families who would pay a composite fee of 15/- a month for these facilities. The scheme included the removal of squatters in Alexandra, but it was explicitly intended that the scheme would be available only to persons employed in Johannesburg and their families.

It was perhaps an anomaly that the Council should at this stage have been relatively unconcerned about the development of yet another movement, drawn probably from Orlando, which settled on private land at Volkshaven, outside, but close to, the municipal boundaries and moved a few days later to Albertyn, near to what later became the Moroka Emergency Camp. Led by Edward Kumalo, the squatters claimed they had been sold land by one Ephraim Moonshi, who died while a case of fraud was being prepared against him. By August, 1947, the camp contained between 1500 and 2000 families. The camp exhibited the same organisational structure as Mpanza's of

> unlicensed trading, leaders and committees that appoint camp guards and provide crude unsanitary conveniences, and the levying of charges by the leaders on the occupants for the maintenance of these services.(69)

The Council considered this movement with greater sympathy than other squatter camps, perhaps because it lay outside the municipal boundary, and possibly because Kumalo did not seek to challenge its authority. Perhaps the Council saw the movement as a sort of unofficial advance party of settlers in its emergency scheme. At any rate, despite being physically vulnerable, with wide streets between the dwellings, no attempt was made to move it, and indeed the Council laid on water to

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(a) Two such movements may be mentioned in this connection. A small movement tried to settle on the farm Zuurbekom during November, 1946, and again in January, 1947, but was broken on each occasion by the combined action of the SAP and the Municipality. The second was the group of 25 families which occupied land near Newclare station during September, 1947. The adult males were arrested under the pass laws and their shacks demolished.

the camp.

The scheme proposed in March, 1947, was part of an ambitious five-stage plan to eliminate "unauthorised" squatting, and particularly to break the power of the leaders by imposing penalties on people who collected money for purposes connected with squatting and by empowering the authorities to eject "undesirable people."(70) Once this scheme was established, action by the authorities became more decisive and the cooperation of the police more apparent. Thus on April 29, a force of 900 police cordoned off and combed Monongoaha's and Komo's camps, arresting 396 people (including Komo) who were charged with a variety of offences; 108 were found guilty under the pass laws and "dealt with by the Native Commissioner".(71) Another 250 were prosecuted under Section 29 of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act which provided for the "removal of idle, dissolute or disorderly natives" and warned to find work - evidence that there was considerable unemployment in the camps. The leaders were charged with assault, extortion and malicious injury to property - the organisational structure of the the camps was under attack.

The new emergency scheme involved the removal of Orlando and Alexandra squatters to Moroka, with which Jabavu (where Mpanza's squatters were now resettled in breeze-blocks) was consolidated. Orlando squatters were moved during 1947; the Alexandra squatters between the end of June and the middle of July. As the squatters were moved, they were culled of families who could not show that they were employed or domiciled in Johannesburg. By April 1948, most of the hessian shelters had been replaced with shacks of mud brick with iron roofs. This was by no means the end of the story, however.

The rental charged per stand in the emergency camp was 15/- per month, while the breeze-block rooms, constructed of material supplied by the Council, cost only 5/- a month. An even greater anomaly was that a two-roomed municipal house with services cost only 13/4d. The rationale for the high rent (aside from promising to reduce deficits) was that rents had to be

> high enough to deter householders from joining squatting; not so high as to result in boycott of camp and mass squatting on free gound; not so low as to result in occupants refusing to move to temporary housing when ready.(72)

In consequence, a rent boycott began before the removals to the emergency camp got properly under way. Of the 1750 registered occupants of Jabavu, only 43 paid rent for May and only two paid for June. Ntoi was active in the rent boycott - he held a meeting in mid-June on the border between Moroka and Jabavu and at a subsequent meeting on July 22, members of his committee collected money (around 2/6 per person) to brief counsel on the issue. In November, the Council reduced rentals to 10/- a month, which had some effect on the payment of rent in Moroka, but not in Jabavu. By mid-1948, five out of six householders in Jabavu were still refusing to pay rent. They were depositing their rental with a committee which was organising the defence of a test case. The resistance of Jabavu was expressed in the Asinamale (no money) party led by Peter Lengeni. Eventually the boycott was overcome by tough action by the Council. (73)

The rent boycott became connected with a variety of other issues; with the boycott of Advisory Board elections and, claims a Council note, attacks on shops.(74) It was being tied up, argued the Council, with "the general political question of the disabilities of Natives...."; "... the failure of the authorities to immediately provide promised social amenities provided a 'cause'.... These causes are woven into a general attack on the authorities...."(75)

There was, in fact, something in the rent boycott which gave it a potential for broader political action than the squatter movements out of which it grew.

For one thing, the objectives were, potentially at least, far more radical than those the squatters envisaged. Ntoi made this clear when he announced that his intention was not to reduce rent, but to eliminate rent: he is reported as saying that

> the people should not pay any rent at all, because the Council would use this money to build houses for Natives for which they would,in due course, also have to pay rent. (76)

Perhaps more important however, the potential the rent boycott had in generating a wider political movement than squatting lay in the fact that it involved greater individual commitment than did squatting. The squatters generated considerable power, but it was always based in the physical presence of large groups, and it lost its coherency as soon as the authorities could find some way of drawing the squatters away. Squatting was always based on a short-term optimising strategy rather than long-term political calculations; for this reason it generated little commitment to leaders once they were unable to offer a better deal than the Municipality or to match the coercive power of the state.

The squatters were always to some extent inward-looking, and vulnerable as soon as they moved away from the camp. In optimal conditions they might, like the birds in the cornfield, move from one part of the field to another, but eventually they were netted and caged, first in the emergency camp, and eventually absorbed into the housing schemes developed by local and central government.

While measures such as the emergency scheme and the attack on the leadership to some extent explain the decline of the movements, it should also be emphasised that the general economic and political conditions which had made them possible had begun to change by 1947. The evidence of unemployment in the camps suggests that in the post-war recession, the need for labour was less pressing; the upswing in pass law and influc control from 1947 and especially 1948 suggest that white agriculture was regaining the ground it had been losing to industry, even before the 1948 election. After the election, of course, the whole balance of political forces changed in a direction which made squatting increasingly difficult.

III

The physical and organisational structure of Mpanza's movement, adapted with variations by the others, was simple and effective. In order to join Mpanza's squatters, a family had first to join the Sofasonke Party (membership fee 6/-) and pay an entrance fee to the camp (2/6) and a further 2/6 a week towards the administration of the camp. Mpanza was the only leader who had a party, though Ntoi's Pimville Sub-Tenants Association (later renamed the Homeless Ex-Servicemen) had been in existence for some years before squatting began, and Ntoi, Edward Kumalo and Monongoaha all issued squatter permits for a fee. The most successful movements had an organisation comprising a police force which regulated entry to the camp, expelled non-members, enforced discipline, administered facilities, and punished offenders against regulations with both fines and beatings. Even outsiders, for example "European newspaper reporters", were subjected to their discipline.(77)

Aside from matters of internal administration and discipline, Mpanza established shops, charging £25 for trading concessions and sites. He tried to prevent shopkeepers from Orlando from trading in "Shantytown." Bakers' vans were charged £2.10.0. a month for the right to supply the camp.

The powers exercised by the leaders and their police led to numerous accusations of "terrorism" by the municipal authorities. One report refers to

> Acts akin to terrorism, i.e. squatters who have voluntarily left the area ... have been forcibly made to return. Furthermore, in order to enlist public sympathy, native women in the last stage of pregnancy and also those with newly born children have been compelled to take up occupation in the area.(78)

The municipality collected affidavits from people which alleged beatings and brutality. (79)

The remarkable autonomy of the camps must in part at least be attributable to their physical compactness; despite their proximity to large tracts of open land, the camps which endured for any length of time were densely settled, so that it was impossible to drive a vehicle into them. The Council complained of the lack of access to Mpanza's camp.(80) Carr recalls that in order to meet with squatter committees, he would arrange a time and place where he would be met by an escort, who would take him into the camp, and after the meeting, conduct him back to his car. (81)

These densely packed camps gave the leaders considerable power in relation to the authorities - so long as they retained control over the squatters, though, as has been suggested, power which rested on the physical presence of a multitude was a limited one and ineffective by comparison with other kinds of organisation. Nevertheless, the significance of these "liberated zones" (the phrase is used by Legassick) should not be under-estimated in challenging the authority of white-dominated political institutions, and discrediting white officials and politicians who entered them. For instance, Councillors Legum and Green spoke to squatters in Orlando on one occasion. As soon as they had finished speaking, Mpanza and Kumalo went to the microphone and "told the Natives not to listen to what they had been told by the Council's representatives as they were trying to mislead them".(82)

During April, 1947, when the Council was trying to resettle Alexandra squatters, the municipality sent a message to Baduzaasking him to convene a meeting of squatters so that the resettlement scheme could be publicised. Baduza got the message, but recognising the threat which the scheme constituted to him, made to response, nor did he attend the meeting.

> Native interpreter messengers were sent through the camp calling people together, but they had obviously been instructed to boycott the meeting and refused to attend. The Native Commissioner, after waiting an hour, proceeded to address a small group of people... Baduza's armed"police" immediately appeared and with a show of force and the brandishing of sticks and sjambocks, drove away those who had gathered around the officials.(83)

The meeting was reconvened the next day. Baduza attended, launched a verbal attack on the officials present and when he had finished speaking, "the people, at a signal from Baduza, broke into song and dispersed." (84)

No wonder the Municipality was concerned at the "constitutional danger" of squatting; as they correctly perceived, "municipal control over the Orlando Township ... is practically nil"; *Komo, Monongoaha and Baduza had arrogated to themselves* "all state and governmental functions in Tobruk and Alexandra camps."(85)

Mpanza of course overshadowed them all in his arrogation of state and governmental powers. After his successful appeal, "the squatters are now openly hailing Mpanza as King..."(86); and he was claiming that "the Law could not touch him.... the Council had no standing in Orlando and he had described himself as King of Orlando and people were paying admission to see him...."(87) After the incident of March 8, 1947, the Council took seriously the rumour that the squatters were arming.(88)

> They have apparently also publicly stated that they intend to hold onto the area which they are now occupying and do not allow any European to go near it, and state that if any European does so he will be killed, with particular reference to Mr. Venables.. and Lt.-Col. Armitage....(89)

The police did not support this view, but Councillor Legum insisted that the Council was better informed than the police. (90) The Council was in fact assembling some of the components of a myth of a general insurrection, based on a view of squatters as vagrants led by truculent dictators. The Municipal welfare officer, Mrs. Henderson, declared that

> 99% of the squatters are intruders from outside the Johannesburg area... the vast majority of these intruders are adventurers and gamblers, particularly among the women, of a type attracted to Johannesburg by the prospect of making money from organised prostitution and illicit liquor selling.(91)

The Communist Party, it was averred, was "active in supporting the Natives in their present attitude..."(92) The Council's diagnosis of the dangers of squatting was in part a reflection of its feeling that the Government was apathetic; at any interview with the ministers of Native Affairs and of Justice, Councillor Green argued that "conciliatory methods were of no avail in handling the Natives"(93) and Brian Porter, later Town Clerk of Johannesburg said the feeling had "arisen among Natives as the result of certain Press reports that the Government was not supporting the Council".(94)

Actually, aside from the fact that Senator Basner acted as Mpanza's attorney, that the Communist Party issued occasional statements calling for action on the squatting problem, and that some white Communists apparently helped with a soup kitchen, there is little evidence of "agitation" from outside. The report of the police officer who investigated the Moroka disturbances, and who had little reason to suppress evidence of Communist "incitement" explicitly refuted this, though he states that once the movement started it was supported by the Party.(95)

In fact the signal feature of the movements, and the major symptom of their weakness was their failure to link up with political groups. Mpanza may have hired a Communist attorney, but he was strongly antagonistic to the local black Communists, and the antagonism was heartily reciprocated.(96) The Fagan Commission suggests that Mpanza enjoyed sufficient influence to prevent Communists from being elected to the Advisory Board.(97) There seems to have been little contact with the African National Congress either, and reports of the Congress conference of 1946, preoccupied with the miners' strike, did not mention squatting.(98) The only figure of significance in the broader context of African politics who concerned himself to any extent with the squatters was Paul Mosaka, member of the Native Representative Council, who emerged as a negotiator, though he seems to have acted primarily on behalf of Orlando tenants.

A major impediment to the creation of a broader political organisation was the leadership structure, a form of bossism, and it is difficult to imagine any other sort of leadership emerging. Mpanza and Ntoi, and perhaps some of the others as well, made a great deal of money. Ntoi is thought to have bought property at Evaton, and Mpanza acquired a string of valuable race-horses. But most of the others seem to have faded into penurious anonymity.

Despite the allegations of violence and corruption levelled at the main leaders, they were not simply gangster chiefs exploiting the plight of the homeless. Mpanza at least enjoyed great popularity, and 30 years later his name (alone of the leaders) is instantly recalled with pride and pleasure by the people of Soweto.

(There is a "Sofasonke" party in Soweto to this day, though its links with Mpanza are probably tenuous.)

What is known of Mpanza reveals a figure of great originality, resourcefulness, toughness and political skill. Born in Natal, he was sentenced to death during the twenties for the murder of an Indian trader. Reprieved, he was released on parole to a minister of religion. Converted to Christianity while in prison, his public utterances were dense with biblical allusions, including comparisons between himself and Jesus Christ. For instance, after his release from prison in 1944, he exhorted his followers not to be afraid:

> The position of the chieftainship is given to me like Jesus. Many people thought I was arrested, and yet I was not. The same as with Jesus. Many thought he was dead, and yet he was not.(99)

Something of his flair and originality, and also something of the form of leadership he was developing may be guessed at from an account of the party he held to celebrate the success of his appeal in 1946: A crowd gathered at his house; an ox was slaughtered and the meat distributed ceremonially to various groups in the location; a song "We have won the case at Bloemfontein" was sung; women ullulated; a praiser lauded him in Sesotho. He was hailed as "Maghebule" ("peeler" or "slicer", the one who sliced land from the Municipality.) "After the feasting, more people came from the location dressed in African fashion of the old days."(100)

The account suggests that Mpanza was trying to establish wider political linkages beyond the squatter camps, but if so he never succeeded; the emergency camp put paid to his power, and, unlike Ntoi, he does not seem to have adapted to the new politics of the rent boycott.

The leaders may have made money out of squatting, but the costs to the squatters were lower than rent in (non-existent) housing or in the emergency camps. The leaders pressured, bullied and manipulated people, but this was nothing new in the experience of South African blacks. But above all, they challenged the political authorities, not as a political party, but directly as a pressure group mounted on the basis of popular action.

The municipality for this reason constantly sought to undermine the position of the leaders, both, as has been shown, by drawing their support away into municipal schemes (which were in many respects simply expensive bureaucratic imitations of the squatter camps) and by efforts to get them removed from the area. They also sought to denigrate the leaders, seeking thereby to legitimise the Council's own institutions of political representation. Thus Mpanza was "dictatorial and truculent"(101); Ntoi a man with "a difficult temperament. He is unable to cooperate with any other organisation. He is essentially a dictator."(102) The Council

> considered all the so-called leaders of the squatter camps at Tobruk and Alexandra to be self-appointed, to have no democratic mandate on behalf of the squatters and to be actuated solely by personal motives and refused to discuss with them a scheme (the emergency scheme) the first effect of which would be to deprive them of power, prestige and a source of income and to substitute for personal despotism a democratically elected Advisory Board.(103)

In fact the machinery of democracy which the Council instituted in opposition to the "personal despotism" of the squatter chiefs left much to be desired; even Fagan, hardly a fervent democrat, had clearly been appalled by the way in which the Council put its yes-men onto the Advisory Boards.(104)

One of the measures which the Council initiated to legitimate its institutions was to hold elections to the Advisory Board in the emergency camp. The

result was the election, on the basis of a "mandate" from 13 unopposed candidates "representing" 6500 voters, (with 10 other wards vacant) of a Board presided over by the widow of the Professor of Philosophy at the University, Mrs. Winifred Hoernle. Admittedly the Council was not solely responsible for this curious outcome of the democratic process; her name was chosen from a panel of "fourteen European and Native names approved by the Minister of Native Affairs".(105)

IV.

The"disturbances at Moroka" of September, 1947, in which three policemen were killed when they tried to prevent the destruction of trading stores in Moroka do not form part of this account. But the specific nature of the disturbances alert one to the immensely important developments which were taking place in black Johannesburg as a result of the massive increase in the number of families, and the fact that these families were located far from the freehold areas or the city centre.

The squatter movements bear on these developments insofar as they had successfully exploited the precarious opportunities presented during the war to establish a viable community on Johannesburg's southern boundaries. The consolidation of families made possible through squatting meant the huge extension of an urban community, requiring educational, health and other services if they were to fulfil the function of providing labour to the new engines of commerce and industry. The rapid growth of the community contributed towards profound changes in the structure of city government and national politics - a story which cannot be taken up here. Of the services needed by this great community, Africans were barred from independently providing all but one: trading.

In the areas to the south-west, unlike most other areas (even Alexandra - from personal recollections from the mid-fifties, trading there seems to have been dominated by Indians and Chinese) black entrepreneurs dominated small trading. The history of trading in the new community is closely interwomen with the history of squatting; as Mpanza encamped with his ragged armies in their hessian shelters, he sold licences to traders. This was one of the instances of "lawlessness" which incensed the authorities, and after trying to break his power by resettling his followers, the Municipality sought to break his control over trading by issuing municipal licences in Moroka. The Council did not overtly intend to vindictively pursue individual "illicit" traders; on the contrary, it decided that other things being equal, it would give preference to "illegal traders who have business contacts with wholesalers."(106) However other things proved to be anything but equal in view of the criteria established by the Council to decide between applicants, and all but three licences went to people from outside Moroka. It is likely that the crowd of 200 or so which destroyed the licensed traders' stalls and killed the policemen were acting on behalf of the deposed illegal traders. (This is the only instance of a mob emerging in the whole history of squatting.)

Beneath the struggles between legal and illegal traders, it is possible to see, in shadowy outline, the development of an incipient class formation in which the authorities intervened to play a crucial role in determining the life chances of particular individuals. The decision to give preference to "illegal" traders with business contacts with wholesalers, while it did not in any event benefit squatter traders, was a clear indication that municipal strategy was aimed not at reinforcing an independent trading class, capable of drawing on supplies from the informal sector, subsistence producers, or criminal sources, but was aimed at linking African traders as a subordinate element in Johannesburg commerce.

Few of the applicants for licences, even the poorest, seem to have been squatters; possibly as the Joint Council of Europeans and Africans suggested, the belief was current that "traders were discriminated against because they were squatters or because they took part in the rent boycott..." (107) The intervention

of the authorities on behalf of traders from outside struck at the remnants of squatter power, and in effect threw the state's resources on the side of the traders who had arrived in Johannesburg before the movements emerged. Eighty-five per cent of the applicants and seventy-six per cent of successful applicants had been in Johannesburg for ten years or longer. The struggle over licences (not reflected in the choices made between applicants, but in the whole process of licensing) in effect precipitated a struggle between late and early arrivals in town, and specifically between the squatters and those who came to Orlando via the freehold areas and older locations.

Trading offered an opportunity for individuals to escape the fate of the common labourer, if not from a life of poverty. The establishment of its control over trading placed the state in a strategic position to manipulate the African trading class, and hence to reassert the control over Johannesburg's blacks which it had nearly lost.

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1. This speech was cited in a memorandum submitted by Advocate Rosenberg to the Minister of Native Affairs around the end of September, 1946. Annexure A p. 50.

2. The estimate of 63,000 is recorded in Annexure A, p. 53; that of 92,500 in Annexure A1, p. 1.

3. Moroka Disturbances, p. 11.

4. Memorandum by City Council to Commission of Inquiry, p. 3.

5. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 49.

6. ibid, p. 80 (annexure K)

7. Interview with W.J.P. Carr, August, 1977.

8. A census of the breezeblock rooms in Orlando, taken between April and August 1946, revealed that there were 5398 men, 5332 women and 9607 children living in 4026 rooms. The number of families was estimated at 4658, and the number of children at two per family. (Supplementary Memorandum, p. 15.) Another estimate suggested just under five persons per family. (Memorandum, p. 70)

9. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 80 (Annexure K)

10. Bantu World, 29 September, 1946, p. 4.

11. The study, undertaken by P.H. Guenault of the University's Economics Department, was reported in South African Outlook, July, 1941, p. 139.

12. op. cit. March, 1942, pp. 47-8.

13. op. cit. September, 1943, pp. 128-9.

14. op. cit. March, 1942, pp. 47-8.

15. Primary Producer, 22 August, 1945.

16. Farmer, 18 January, 1946.

17. Bantu World, 13 April, 1946.

18. Dan O'Meara, 'The 1946 African Mineworkers' Strike in the Political Economy of South Africa', University of Sussex seminar paper (n.d.)

19. Annual Report of the Manager of the Non-European Affairs Department, Mayor's Minute, 1939-40, p. 194.

20. Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on the Social, Health and Economic Condition of Urban Natives, 1942-3, p. 3 (hereafter Smit Committee.)

21. Supplementary Memorandum, pp. 13-14.

22. Moroka Disturbances, p. 75.

23. Smit Committee, p. 3.

24. South African Outlook, April, 1940, p. 63.

25. ibid.

26. Smit Committee, p. 2.

27. Government Gazette, Vol. CVXIX, No. 3084, Proclamation No. 1579.

28. Social and Economic Planning Council Report No. 13: Economic and Social Conditions of the Racial Groups in South Africa, U.G. 53-1948, p. 82.

29. ibid.

30. Paul Mosaka to Non-European Affairs Department, 11 February, 1946, Annexure A, pp. 16-17.

31. Smit Committee, p. 1.

32. U.G. 53-1948, p. 10.

33. Supplementary Memorandum, pp. 37-8.

34. "Industry Cannot Bear the Cost of Native Housing", South African Industry and Trade, December, 1948, p. 65

35. Cf. for example, "Construction of Native Housing by Native Labour", South African Builder, February, 1946, pp. 21-3 and "Housing: Natives at last to be trained to build for themselves," ibid. October, 1946, pp. 11-13.

36. J. Maud, City Government: The Johannesburg Experiment, Oxford, 1938, Chapter X.

37. Report of the Commission of Inquiry: Johannesburg Public Health and Native Affairs Departments, 1935 (hereafter Murray-Thornton Commission) passim.

38. ibid. p. 18.

39. ibid. p. 32.

40. ibid. p. 16.

41. idem.

42. Report of the Local Government Commission, 1921 T P 1-1922, p. 46.

43. Bantu World, 16 September, 1933.

44. idem.

45. Moroka Disturbances, p. 20.

46. Cf. Trevor Huddleston, Naught for your comfort, Johannesburg, 1956, especially chapter 7, for a moving but unsentimental appreciation of Sophiatown. Huddleston asserted that "the word 'slum' to describe Sophiatown is grossly misleading...." because of its beauty. (Op.cit. p. 121.)

47. Murray-Thornton Commission, p. 24.

48. ibid. p. 16.

49. Mayor's Minute, 1939-1940, p. 193.

50. Sources: Mayor's Minute, 1939-1940, pp. 199-200; City of Johannesburg Non-European and Native Affairs Department, Survey of Reef Locations and those of Evaton, Meyerton, Nigel, Pretoria, Vereeniging, May, 1939, pp. 14-16.

51. Mayor's Minute, 1939-1940, p. 199.

52. Memorandum, p. 3.

53. Moroka Disturbances, p. 49.

54. Annexure A, p. 48.

55. ibid, p. 38.

56. ibid, p. 49.

57. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 90 (Annexure T)

58. Moroka Disturbances p. 24. The account given in this Commission has been followed for the most part.

59. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 90 (Annexure P)

60. Op. cit. P. 89 (Annexure S)

61. Mayor's Minute, 1948, p. 6.

62. Moroka Disturbances, p. 25.

63. ibid. p. 40.

64. ibid, p. 54.

65. Annexure A1, p. 6.

66. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 24.

67. Annexure A, p. 52.

68. Moroka Disturbances, p. 69.

69. ibid, pp. 62-63.

70. Annexure A1, Schedule 2, p. 5.

71. Moroka Disturbances, p. 75.

72. Annexure A1, Schedule 2, p. 6.

73. Carr interview.

74. Annexure A, p. 70.

75. ibid, p. 69.

76. idem.

77. Mayor's Minute, 1944-1948, p. 6.

78. Annexure A, p. 21.

79. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 94, (Annexure X.)

80. Annexure A, p. 52.

81. Carr interview.

82. Annexure A, p. 31.

83. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 23.

84. idem.

85. Annexure A, pp. 2 and 21; Memorandum p. 7.

86. Annexure A, p. 22.

87. op. cit. p. 28.

88. op. cit. p. 21.

89. idem.

90. op. cit. p. 24.

91. Memorandum on Moroka Riot 30/8/1947 by the District Commandant, S.A.P. No. 39 (Johannesburg District) Annexure E, p. 1.

92. Annexure A, p. 18.

93. op. cit. p. 31.

94. idem.

95. Memorandum on Moroka Riot ... op. cit. p. 10.

96. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 84, (Annexure P.)

97. Moroka Disturbances, p. 23.

98. Bantu World, 12 October, 1946.

99. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 82, (Annexure N.)

100. Bantu World 29 June 1946.

101. Annexure A, p. 2.

102. Supplementary Memorandum, p. 27.

103. Annexure A, p. 67.

104. Moroka Disturbances, pp. 28-29 and 87-88.

105. Annexure A, p. 68.

106. Annexure A, p. 63.

107. Evidence by the Joint Council of Europeans and Africans to the Fagan Commission of Enquiry into the Moroka Riot, J.C. 24/47, 15 September, 1947. p.5.