

CHAPTER 5: REINSTATING CONTROL TO MANAGE REFORM;

JUNE 1986 - DECEMBER 1987

Township ungovernability represented the most public rejection of Riekert's reform principles which had shaped the 1980 Alexandra Masterplan. With the resurgence of the recession in mid-1982, the structural contradictions underlying territorial apartheid had re-emerged forcefully. Thus the state still faced an urban crisis, only now it was of greater magnitude than in 1976.

Black local government had collapsed in political and fiscal terms. Councillors had resigned in droves and rent boycotts had emptied council coffers.

The housing crisis was everpresent. The 99-year leasehold and homeownership schemes had been singularly unsuccessful. Despite attempts to shift the responsibility of housing from the state to employers and individuals, the accommodation backlog had barely been touched. Squatter settlements mushroomed within established townships and ringed metropolitan areas too. The shack settlements housed people who had fled drought-stricken bantustans in search of work or who had been thrown off recently-mechanised white farms. They were also home to those who had employment but could not find accommodation in the overcrowded townships (1).

The Department of Co-operation and Development estimated that nationally one million to 1,5 million people were squatters, but acknowledged no reliable figures existed (2). In the Transvaal it estimated there were 850 000 squatters (3). Black Sash figures were far higher: 10 000 to 15 000 shack dwellers in the PWV area alone and nationally, one in six was homeless - about five million people in all (4).

The black middle-class which Riekert had hoped to foster as a politically stabilising mechanism, remained too small to be effective, or had discredited itself through participation in local government. And the policy of delineating 'insiders' and 'outsiders' had also been unsuccessful: recession and its consequent retrenchments and structural unemployment had affected the privileged insiders as severely as it had outsiders.

The Riekert strategy, argues Hindson, was based on a dualistic conception of the South African economy derived from an historical division of the economy between capitalist and pre-capitalist sectors. Riekert assumed the bantustans could be turned into independent, viable economic entities and labour markets sealed off from white urban areas (5). But from the late 1960s, the bantustans were increasingly integrated into the national economy.

'Reproduction of settled urban and temporary migrant labour was giving way to new forms of reproduction hierarchically structured within regional economies centred on the metropolises' (6).

Cross-border commuting and the expansion of squatter settlements in and around metropolitan areas signified the breakdown in labour controls and the emergence of urban and regional markets. The Riekert Commission failed to acknowledge that this had undermined the precepts of territorial and political segregation. Hence its recommendations never went beyond the crisis which had induced the appointment of the commission in the first place.

However, even before the state president declared the state of emergency in 1986, a new reformist overture was on the cards: the President Council's report, An Urbanisation Strategy for the Republic of South Africa was published in 1985 and presented as a White Paper the following year. It dispensed with Riekert's dualist philosophy. The new urbanisation strategy envisaged technocratic re-ordering of society according to interdependent, functional, regional units that overlooked South Africa-bantustan 'borders'. It re-examined the premises of influx control, housing, employment and black local government, retaining some elements of the Riekert Commission, and dispensing with others.

Hindson contends that the new urbanisation policy signified a new system of control over movement and settlement.

'The policy aims to exclude low-paid, unskilled workers from metropolitan centres by making it impossible for them to afford housing and services. It differs from traditional influx control policy in that fiscal controls rather than pass controls are used. Those excluded from metropolitan centres are to be redirected to deconcentrated residential areas on peripheries which may or may not lie within bantustans' (7).

By 1986 when the state began to implement this new strategy it faced an administrative and political vacuum left by the collapse of black local authorities and dismantling of development boards. In their footsteps followed Joint Management Centres (JMCs) and Regional Services Councils (RSCs). JMCs were the grassroots level of the National Security Management System (NSMS). RSCs were the new metropolitan, multi-racial administration. Each contributed in their own way to restoring stability and managing reform.

5.1 A New Urbanisation Strategy

5.1.1 Influx control

Apartheid principles of political and territorial segregation were replaced by a regional planning framework for urbanisation and local government. Regional planning was incorporated first into the 1982 Croeser Report on financing local authorities, the 1983 Kleu Report investigating industrial decentralisation strategy, and finally the President's Council (PC) Report on urbanisation in 1985.

South Africa was divided into eight development regions: one each in Natal and the Orange Free State, two in the Cape Province and four in the Transvaal (8). Development regions encircled or cut across bantustan borders to form integrated planning and administrative units. Riekert had remained caught in viewing the commuter population as a proletarianised, but temporary migrant labour force. The President's Council Report recognised that urbanisation within bantustans was focused on areas adjacent to metropolitan centres and bantustan populations were dependent on employment in metropolitan areas. Bantustans and white South Africa were intricately and functionally interconnected.

The Urbanisation Report accepted the inevitability and economic desirability of african urbanisation. It argued that the regional development and regulation of africans' movement and settlement should be 'dictated by economic rather than political criteria' (9) with due regard for fostering 'civilised norms and standards' and 'combatting anti-social conduct that endangers community and individual security and safety' (10).

State intervention had to ensure urbanisation occurred in an orderly fashion:

'It is necessary for influx control to be replaced by a positive urbanisation strategy that, by making use of market forces, subsidies and development, among other things, will encourage people to settle in certain suitable areas rather than forbidding them to move to certain urban areas' (11).

Workseekers and industry would be channelled into particular geographical areas through positive incentives: fiscal controls, provision of serviced land, and implementation of racially non-discriminatory laws.

The report envisaged expanding established metropolitan townships to accommodate their natural population increase and establishing new residential, rather than dormitory, townships termed 'catchment areas' on the periphery of metropolitan centres. The latter would absorb the population overspill from metropolitan

areas as well as urban newcomers. Catchment areas would be situated close to deconcentrated industrial and commercial areas and have a well-developed transport infrastructure (12).

A relatively high level of infrastructure and services in existing townships would be paid for by africans earning higher wages in metropolitan areas. Catchment areas would be characterised by lower standards of accommodation, infrastructure and services, which eventually would be upgraded by residents.

The report recommended abolishing influx control and pass laws which were racially discriminatory and a source of political discontent (13). The abolition duly occurred in July 1986. However, the President's Council was still concerned about squatter areas, such as Crossroads, which it said were impossible to police properly and became breeding grounds for unrest and crime (14).

Riekert's recommendation for using housing and employment as influx control mechanisms was deemed unrealistic: the PC report now found informal employment and orderly squatting permissible (15). Instead the report suggested using 'neutral' and already-existing squatter, slum and health legislation to remove surplus population from metropolitan areas. The Illegal Squatting Act, for example, provides for summary eviction of persons unlawfully

occupying land, demolition of unlawful structures and high penalties for offenders. Transgressing the Trespass Act carries a maximum fine of R2 000 and two years' imprisonment (16).

To this end, the report differentiated between squatting and informal settlement. Squatting is defined as illegal occupation of land and failure to satisfy health and building standards. Informal settlement referred to legal land occupation with approved health and housing standards. Migrants should be redirected to informal settlements where the state would provide serviced sites and migrants could erect their own homes under supervision, as had happened in Botshabelo in the Orange Free State.

The urbanisation strategy differed from Riekert in its approach to permanent urban workers. Both recognised that influx control had raised urban wages relative to rural wages and so encouraged urban migration. Riekert proposed fostering the development of a privileged and occupationally-mobile, urban, african working-class by protecting it from competition with rural workers. The PC report, however, suggested opening labour markets and abolishing section 10 rights. This would make urban africans vulnerable to losing employment, unable to afford housing and services they would be forced to move to informal settlements (17).

The report maintained that one way of solving part of the urban crisis was by generating employment. Informal sector activity could be legalised and small business development promoted by adjusting 'artificially and unrealistically high standards' of health and safety. Union gains at industrial council minimum wage determinations could be restricted to organised industry rather than automatically extended across entire sectors as happens currently (18).

5.1.2 Housing: shifting state responsibility

Housing, and homeownership, in particular, stated the PC report, was 'a cornerstone of stable communities' (19). Like Riekert, it recognised housing could be an 'instrument for, and yard-stick of, self-realisation for individuals and communities' (20) - a tool promoting visible class differentiation within urban communities. It was also a means to channel urbanisation in certain areas through control over land usage and infrastructure provision (21).

The report took to heart many recommendations arising from the 1982 Viljoen Commission's investigation into private sector involvement in housing, discussed in chapter two (22). The commission suggested shifting the responsibility for providing housing from the state to the private sector, employers and individuals. The PC Report accepted this (23). Like Viljoen, it

proposed lowering costs and standards of officially approved housing, reducing state provision of subsidised housing and encouraging private sector financing and construction.

Recognising that the national housing shortage had reached crisis proportions (24), the report indicated that the 'state cannot stay the pace as a provider of housing' (25). It proposed that the state should accept responsibility only for providing land and infrastructure, essential community facilities, old age homes and, for 'welfare cases', simple shell or core houses (26). If the state relaxed standards by allowing self-help schemes and non-standardised building materials, it could bring housing within reach of the poor (27) - it had to recognise that 'first world standards' were unrealistically high for 'third world conditions' (28). Low income groups could contribute their own capital and 'sweat equity' and build their own homes (29). The housing market would also create formal and informal employment opportunities (30).

Differentiated housing and municipal standards within and between urban communities were enthusiastically advocated as pillars of new urbanisation strategy. Standards of provision would be determined by residents 'ability to pay'. Those who could not afford higher tariffs for better standards of service in the metropolitan areas, would be channelled into catchment areas.

These would cater for migrants and lowest income groups. Here, the state would provide site and service schemes, core and shell houses and allow the owner to enlarge and upgrade according to his/her means (31). To avoid resettling communities, the report suggested legalising existing squatter settlements and converting them into controlled settlements through upgrading (32).

The report followed Riekert's desire to privatise housing, but it went further: Riekert's proposals for homeownership were aimed at a select portion of the african population; the PC Report argued for extending homeownership to the poorest of residents, giving a wider sector of the population a stake in the system. Homeownership by leasehold, sectional title and most significantly, freehold, would open the housing market wider than before. Freehold at market prices with market-related service charges could cater for the middle and upper classes and strengthen black local authorities, by ensuring a sounder tax base (33).

5.1.3 Black local government and regional service councils

The report suggested that to implement the new urbanisation strategy, local authorities should be given a role in selecting and allocating land for urban development, though this should be co-ordinated at local, regional and national levels (34). They

could also ensure building, health and safety standards be complied with (35) and ensure the provision of basic services on an economic basis at residents' expense (36).

But there were pressing problems facing local government which had to be dealt with first. The PC report recognised that black local authorities had experienced a 'crisis of credibility from outset' (37). It attributed this to their inability to resolve overcrowding and improve infrastructure and services. Inadequate financial resources, insufficient land, limited decision making powers and inadequate training had all combined to undermine the legitimacy of councils (38). Local authorities were resented as impeding national political participation (39). Development boards were popularly perceived as the administration board paternalistic autocracy in a different guise since the officials and bureaucracy were unchanged (40).

Local authority participation in Regional Service Councils (RSCs), the report hoped, would resolve financial, infrastructural and political problems (41).

The Croeser Working Group report tabled in 1983 accepted white local government's argument that it needed new sources of municipal revenue. Service and municipal rates did not respond to the economy or inflation. It recognised that all groups should have their own fully-fledged forms of local government with adequate sources of finance.

Croeser suggested finances for metropolitan government be drawn from taxes on businesses' turnover and wage and salary bills. This implied relaxation of Riekert's principle of self-sufficiency: townships and white metropolitan areas were now assessed as functionally-integrated regional units; regional taxes levied on white business would pay for installing, improving and maintaining infrastructure 'in areas where the greatest needs therefor exist' (42), namely, black townships (43).

When originally tabled, the RSC Bill excluded blacks from metropolitan government. The revised draft, passed in 1985, reversed this. White, coloured, indian, urban black and even neighbouring bantustan local authorities would have

representation and voting rights on a RSC. An RSC area of jurisdiction was a functionally-integrated area of employment and residence. Inclusion of blacks in third tier government signalled an attempt to resolve the legitimacy crisis facing national and local government in the eyes of the black community (44).

A RSC would consist of a chairman appointed by the provincial administrator, and one municipal representative for every 10% of regional services purchased by the local authority. If a local body's quota of services exceeded 50% of the total, it had to

shed its excess voting rights. This ostensibly neutral and technical determination of voting powers still favours white local authorities which buy a greater percentage of services.

RSCs are intended to decentralise authority. However, they are conducive to greater centralisation of power. Appointed provincial administrators have wider powers to control and delegate functions to the third tier. Minister Heunis warned that the government would not allow local bodies to sabotage government policy (45). Fearing either a liberal/black alliance or rightwing sabotage in RSCs, the government passed the RSC Amendment Bill on 25 June 1987. This empowers the administrator to overrule a local body which refuses to comply with a RSC directive. In such a case, the task will be delegated to a designated body with costs recoverable from the recalcitrant local authority.

The fiscal basis of RSCs was also related to orderly urbanisation and its strategy of offering incentives and disincentives to encourage a more even distribution of population and economic activity. RSC taxes would drive industry out of metropolitan centres. Taxes on turnover and wage and salary bills would raise costs and reduce incentive to employ unskilled and unproductive labour in metropolitan areas. Labour intensive enterprise and businesses with a low profit-turnover ratio would be forced to move outside metropolitan areas (46).

Similarly, labour would be discouraged from entering metropolitan areas by linking the provision of municipal services to ability to pay local taxes. The standard of services provided would be linked to the financial contribution of the local authority. The RSC Act also allowed for privatisation of municipal services. Local authorities could tender out to private companies to supply services. Consumers would meet service costs individually. This would promote residential differentiation (47).

5.2 Implementing Urbanisation Strategy

By 1987 the new urbanisation strategy was well underway: emergency 'catchment' camps were established for squatters; private developers began new housing schemes for sale to high income individuals; housing prices were reduced to make homeownership available to a broader section of township dwellers; and RSCs were established and began infrastructural upgrading programmes.

Newspapers frequently reported on resettlement of squatter communities at site-and-service emergency camps. About 400 squatters at Chicken Farm near Kliptown were rezoned for emergency camps near Dlamini, Roodepoort and Krugersdorp (48). The Soweto council intended to move 4 500 squatters from Mshenguville in Mofolo to an emergency camp in Dlamini on the

grounds that the shack settlement was a health hazard (49). The Tokoza council demolished 50 shacks which did not comply with health regulations and obstructed township development. It moved people to a serviced area, called Khalanyomi, intended for 3 000 people (50). Squatters at the Fred Clark Camp in Soweto were persuaded to break the rent boycott by the Soweto council, in exchange for a promise of housing. However, the houses they were promised were allocated to other people. The council told the squatters to buy a house in Naledi costing R16 000, or put down a deposit of R2 000 for a site in the Phiri or Dlamini emergency camps (51). The press reported similar incidents in Protea, Tembisa, Siyathemba, Wheelers Farm, Dobsonville, Varkfontein, Grasmere, and Big Farm near Roodepoort.

The private sector invested millions in residential schemes for upper-income groups. Newspapers reported elite housing developments in Katlehong with houses valued at R70 000 (52), in Carltonville's Khutsong (53), and in Dobsonville 2 000 houses were built with selling prices of R40 000 and upwards (54).

The state renewed its Great Sale drive. By October 1986 only 44 000 houses had been sold nationally. The deadline was extended to June 1988 (55). Price reductions were announced by the Bureau for Information in mid-1987 to entice buyers.

The new concessions offered buyers discounts of up to 65% on the purchase price of any house with structural defects (previously the maximum discount had been limited to 20%), and the income aid ceiling was lifted from R800 to R1 000. The state invited a 25% cash discount, and a further 5% discount if they bought before 30 June 1988. Tenants who had paid rent regularly over the last three years could buy a house without paying a deposit. Rent arrears, however, would be included in the purchase price (56).

The effects of the new reductions were considerable. In Lekoa, for example, houses were put on sale for between R390 and R712 compared to a previous price of R4 275 (57). People who owed rent but wanted to buy a house were given up to five years to repay their arrears. The deposit on the house equalled only 10% of its value and the remainder could be paid off over ten years (58).

Regional Service Councils were established in July 1987 and rapidly began the task of installing and improving infrastructure in black areas. The Central Witwatersrand RSC consists of Johannesburg, Roodepoort and Randburg whose combined vote represents 69,8% of the total, and Soweto, Diepmeadow, Dobsonville and Alexandra which together have 19,84% of the vote. As service upgrading and consumption increases in black areas, explained the chairman, Gerrit Bornman, voting powers will

increase. Twenty years hence Soweto should be on a par with Johannesburg in terms of services utilised and thus percentage of votes (59).

The Central Witwatersrand RSC sees itself as regional co-ordinator of bulk services, directing and planning rather than providing services. It has selected certain basic services which, it believes, no local body can do without: water to each property; waterborne sewerage; basic roads, not necessarily tarred but with storm water drainage, and roadworthy in all weather for the purpose for which they were designed; refuse removal; and electricity installations which can be extended to each house (initially only street and high mast lighting are to be installed). The RSC plans to concentrate on providing minimum standards of service in line with the 'needs' of the community, rather than services of standards 'too high' or financially unrealistic. It intends to introduce common tariffs for bulk services.

Satisfying the backlog in its region, estimated the Central Witwatersrand RSC, will cost R364 million over the next four or five years. Already R58 million has been requested by Alexandra, R98 million by Diepmeadow, nearly R18 million by Dobsonville, and R189,6 million by Soweto (60).

The RSC expected R70 million from business levies during the first financial year. It decided to set aside R66,1 million for improvements to township infrastructures. Projects included:

- R15,2 million for constructing water, roads and electrical projects in Soweto
- R9,5 million for building roads, water reticulation, and fencing in Diepmeadow
- R3,2 million for roads, purchasing refuse removal vehicles and installing electricity in Dobsonville (61).

Privatisation of municipal functions is also under consideration. Dr Mortimer, acting chief executive officer, spoke in glowing terms about privatisation of rubbish removal in Botshabelo. There, the municipality awarded contracts to small companies for cleaning the township in sections. He explained:

'This is a third world solution and provides work and encourages small business' (62).

Many township councils have enormous debts. Soweto, for example, has a loan debt of R441 million. In his budget address, Bornmann said the RSC would consider assisting with repayment. Mortimer suggested that the RSC might help with 'own affairs' functions through monetary 'gifts'.

One twentieth of one percent of levy income is assigned to a training fund. Informal training includes skills such as learning meeting procedure and how to present a budget. Formal

training will include council artisans being trained by contractors on site, educating black engineers and administrative programmes for councillors and officials possibly through technikons (63).

Thus the RSC will not only assume the burden of infrastructure provision, but also try to set local government back on a sound financial and administrative footing.

5.3 Orderly Urbanisation in Alexandra

By mid-1985 it was clear that the precondition for any future reform was restoring law and order. The first state of emergency was lifted in early 1986 and replaced a few months later by one more harsh. Its renewal in July 1987 passed by quietly - emergency regulations had been absorbed into daily life.

The South African Defence Force (SADF) has begun to play an ever more significant role in restoring 'the peace'. But it has a long-term perception of its role too. Jannie Geldenhuys, chief of SADF explained:

'The trick, in a conflict situation, is to manage change. ... [The SADF] is ... there to ensure evolutionary, constitutional, legal and lawful change ... It is a basic truth that the Defence Force should play a role in

protecting this lawful development so decisions are not forced upon the country by some form of armed aggression from beyond or within our borders' (64).

5.3.1 Restoring Law and Order

The SADF's first move, in March 1986, was to occupy the stadium which had hosted all mass meetings in the months before. But the creation of street committees was largely able to circumvent the loss of a central meeting place.

When the 1986 emergency was declared, the SADF cordoned off Alexandra. Roads were barricaded with barbed wire, empty diesel drums, boulders and big concrete slabs. All entrances had 24-hour roadblocks and every vehicle was searched as it entered the township (65). High mast street lights were installed and World War Two search lights lit up the township from nearby high ground (66). Security forces swept through the township, house by house, seeking leadership cadres, grassroots comrades and weapons. The entire Alexandra Action Committee leadership was detained. Regular patrols kept an eye and ear to residents' movements and mood. By March 1987, all exits were still monitored but only random cars were being searched (67).

The SADF and SAP were slow to restore law and order despite their heavy presence. One indication of their failure to assert control was continued hijacking of trucks and cars. Between March and August 1986, 447 trucks and cars, worth R10 million, had been hijacked near Alexandra. In September, another 30 cases were reported, which police now ascribed to a 'criminal element' rather than related to unrest. The military cordon showed results however: 195 vehicles were recovered and 95 people arrested and charged. Those convicted recieved sentences of two to five years (68).

Resistance also faded slowly. Three schools organised a five-day class boycott in August 1986 demanding the release of pupils detained during the state of emergency, and protesting against the presence of security forces at schools and new scholar identity cards introduced by the Department of Education and Training (69). In November, youths tried to petrolbomb a principal and attacked another teacher (70). By the new year, student protest seemed to turn on itself and in February and March 1987 several youths and students died in alleged feuding between the Alexandra Students' Congress and the black consciousness-inclined Azanian Students' Movement (71).

Other incidents filtered through police reports. A policeman was injured when unknown persons fired on a patrol in December 1986 (72). Two months later, Putco decided to withdraw services to

the outskirts of the township following attacks on buses and drivers by 'criminal elements' (73). In February, a security force vehicle was stoned (74).

Arrests were followed by a series of criminal and treason trials which aimed to undermine popular credibility of township leaders and their ideas. Public violence, sedition, treason, subversion, arson and murder charges sought to recast people's power and restore law and order. Reinstating control over the township thus had two dimensions: repression of resistance through the state of emergency, detentions and police and army presence in the township; and an ideological counter-offensive which criminalised radical ideas and actors in courts of law. (Treason and criminal trials are listed in footnote (75)).

5.3.2 JMCs: a new administrative order

An administrator was appointed to take over running Alexandra council activities in June 1986. Steve Burger was appointed administrator and head of the Alexandra mini-Joint Management Centre. He had a long history in black local government administration. Previous to his current appointment, he had served as Director of Community Services for the West Rand Administration Board (76). Nominally, the Alexandra council

structure continues to exist, but its activities are now managed and planned by the mini-JMC. JMCs are the lowest level of the National Security Management System.

The militarisation of local government was a long-term consequence of state restructuring begun when PW Botha assumed presidency. As Minister of Defence, PW Botha had overseen the birth of the State Security Council (SSC) in 1972 (see below). Following the Info Scandal and his election to presidency, Botha set about reorganising the cabinet. The slovenly administrative and decisional style, departmental autonomy and debilitating interdepartmental political competition that had characterised Vorster's reign was replaced by a closely-interlocking, centralised and rationalised cabinet, and an enlarged role for the prime minister. Experts, many of them SADF personnel, and increasingly the SSC, were drawn into policy planning and its execution (77).

The National Security Management System (NSMS) was inaugurated officially on 6 August 1979 (78). It does not have a formal budget because it is not an executive organisation. Its projects are funded and carried out through executive departments.

The Cabinet formally controls the NSMS and lays down its broad policy parameters. However, Cabinet and SSC memberships often overlap. The SSC is one of four permanent cabinet committees established by Botha to replace over 20 committees which existed

under Vorster. It is the only committee whose composition and functions are prescribed by statute, the Security Intelligence and State Security Council Act of 1972. The state president is SSC chairman and other members are drawn from the ministers and director-generals or heads of the departments of foreign affairs, defence, law and order, and justice. The Act also allows for permanent or ad hoc inclusion of other ministers or officials. In 1984, Ministers Chris Heunis, Barend du Plessis and Gerrit Viljoen were permanently co-opted to the SSC (79). The Working Committee of the SSC acts as its management caucus.

The Secretariat consists of permanent professional staff who give effect to SSC decisions: it consists of 100 officials of which 56% are drawn from the National Intelligence Service (NIS), 16% from the SADF, 16% from the SAP, and 11% from the Department of Foreign Affairs. The Secretariat is divided into four branches: administration, national intelligence interpretation, strategic communication (which deals with dissemination of public information), and the strategy branch which formulates and systematises 'total strategies' to counteract the 'total onslaught'. The strategy branch is assisted by thirteen interdepartmental committees selected for their specific expertise. The Secretariat's budget for administration, logistics, and salaries is funded by NIS on a 'no strings attached' basis (80).

Joint Management Centres (JMCs) have an insignificant policy making role, but as NSMS incarnate at ground level, are the most visible manifestation of the structure.

Nationally, eleven JMCs have been set up corresponding to SADF commands. Beneath them, lie 60 sub-JMCs at the regional level and 354 mini-JMCs at the local level (81). The Witwatersrand JMC is chaired by SADF Brigadier GHP Murphy and its area of jurisdiction corresponds with that of the Witwatersrand Command of the SADF. Sub-JMCs and mini-JMCs may be headed by SADF, SAP, or other civic dignatories (82). Four sub-JMCs report to the Witwatersrand JMC: West Rand, Soweto, Johannesburg, and East Rand. Mini-JMCs exist in every township. They meet together in sub-JMC meetings to compare progress and convey reports and requests upwards (83).

It is intended eventually to shape JMC areas of jurisdiction to coincide with state administrative structures. So JMCs' jurisdiction will correspond to the eight regional planning areas and to executive committees (previously provincial administrations). Sub-JMCs will link into regional service councils and mini-JMCs into local authorities (84).

Since September 1986, Alexandra has been administered through a mini-JMC. Like other JMCs, it consists of four sections known by their Afrikaans acronyms (85):

- Veikom (Veiligheidskomitee): the joint intelligence committee, includes police, army, and municipal police representatives, and is led by the security police. It is responsible for collating local intelligence for transmission to the National Intelligence Interpretation Branch. It meets every 24 hours to analyse incidents of the day and to plan and assign tasks for the next.
- Semkom (Staatskundige, Ekonomiese en Maatskaplike Komitee): the constitutional, economic and social committee headed by administrator Steve Burger, which implements upgrading and welfare programmes;
- Komkom (Kommunikasie Komitee): the communications committee controlled by the Bureau for Information and the Strategic Communications Branch responsible for reporting the activities of the JMC 'correctly';
- GOS (Gestamentlike Operasie Sentrum): a body of officials which give practical effect to JMC decisions.

JMCs do not have their own budget. Departments which implement their recommendations provide necessary funding (86).

Membership of sub-JMCs and mini-JMCs is flexible and interested parties may be invited to attend committee meetings. Committees may meet twice a week and the level of security force participation is determined by the unrest situation. The mini-JMC consists of about 20 people drawn from local offices of departments of post and telecommunications, health and welfare, manpower, home affairs, education, SADF and SAP. Usually five

representatives are drawn from the city council, including the town clerk, administrator or mayor and representative of engineering, technical, financial and law enforcement branches, or ambulance services (87). Private sector and local community representatives may be drawn in through liason forums or steering committees (88).

The function of JMCs explained the Minister of Defence is

'to co-ordinate joint government action at regional level.

These centres do not have any executive power. Execution of government action still occurs at the level of the responsible government institution' (89).

JMC officials seem to see themselves as apolitical officials resuscitating black local government. They are functionaries

'who are answerable to the politicians or the elected cabinet ministers. If this system is undemocratic, then the whole civil service is undemocratic. They are working on behalf of the elected people' (90).

This unassuming civil servant ethic belies the intensely political role they do perform.

5.3.3 Total strategy and JMC ideology

'Total strategy' has encapsulated security establishment ideology since the late 1970s. The 'onslaught' is believed to be inspired from abroad and co-ordinated through communist powers, the South African Communist Party and its 'lackey', the African National Congress. According to the government's White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply, 1982

'the ultimate aim of the Soviet Union and its allies is to overthrow the present body politic in the RSA and to replace it with a Marxist-orientated form of government to further the objectives of the USSR, therefore all possible methods and means are used to attain this objective. This includes instigating social and labour unrest, civilian resistance, terrorist attacks against the infrastructure of the RSA and the intimidation of Black leaders and members of the Security Forces' (91).

The 'total onslaught' assumes manichean dimensions. Explained, PW Botha

'It is a struggle between the powers of chaos, Marxism and destruction on the one hand and the powers of order, Christian civilization and the upliftment of people on the other' (92).

Since the eruption of urban unrest, the language of total strategy has been transformed. Though the president may still characterise the UDF as embodying 'the forces of hatred' and its end goal 'the destruction of our system of government and of civilized values' (93), the government has frequently and publically affirmed that real grievances underlie civil unrest. These, the state believes, have been manipulated by insurgents, agitators, the ANC and its 'internal wing', the UDF. Minister of Law and Order, Adrian Vlok maintained that the UDF and its affiliates had

'allowed no opportunity to pass to seize on grievances and bottlenecks such as the weak economy, the increase in GST, general price increases and increases in rentals, service charges and busfares for making political capital' (94).

'Total strategy' to counter the 'total onslaught' has always been characterised as pervading every realm of society. It embraces psychological, social, political, ideological and economic factors. JMC strategy and practice has accepted this more pragmatic framework. The SSC secretary describes JMC philosophy:

'It is the conviction of the government that this threat [unrest in 1986] can only be met and turned back by application of strategies using in the same way as the enemy, the four main elements: constitutional, economic, social and security' (95).

The essence of the government's sweeping counter-revolutionary strategy is hijacking the revolution for itself. Major General AJ Wandrag of the SAP explains:

'The only way in which to render the enemy powerless is to nip revolution in the bud by ensuring that there is no fertile soil in which the seeds of the revolution can be germinated' (96).

JMCs aim to co-ordinate government activity to 'lower the revolutionary climate' by improving the quality of life of township inhabitants and thereby winning their hearts and minds. Socio-economic programmes focus on providing new schools and upgrading existing ones, health promotion programmes, installing electricity and water-borne sewerage, tarring roads, building play parks, promoting sport, installing telephones and training programmes for the unemployed. In the words of another JMC official, JMCs deal with rent, services, provision of facilities, 'things that if they are not handled properly can be a cause of crisis' (97).

Security philosophy and strategy, said an intelligence official 'is all about welfare and security - and the masses in the middle. ... You look at the things making people unhappy and you exercise good government by redressing those things which are exploited by the revolutionaries. You protect the major target, that is the system of government from the bottom up, you protect the masses from intimidation, and you

operate against the revolutionary organisation to demonstrate to the masses that you are in charge and that you have the power to protect them and the government system. The main thing is to sort out the objective conditions and give the people a vision of a new South Africa that's worth working for, so that you can attract even the revolutionaries' (98).

The aim of such JMC activity is not a return to the status quo - its agenda is clearly reformist. General Jannie Geldenhuys, explains the military's role in terms of managing change:

'In the management sciences they say the key to this is you must scientifically manage change and keep it as stable as possible. You can't go too fast because then you will reach the limits of stability. You can't go too slow because at the other end of the spectrum things will get out of hand again. ...[The state of emergency is] a mechanism to create that measure of stability which is required to carry on with the process' (99).

The White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply (1986)

puts it even more succinctly. The SADF's role is

'essential to create and maintain peaceful conditions in which the government's constitutional initiatives may develop fully' (100).

In summary, JMC's are the lowest level of a streamlined state security bureaucracy which integrates its activities with those of other government departments. They accept 'total strategy' as their ideological framework, but without its manichean dimensions. By resolving township socio-economic grievances they hope to win the support of residents and thus pre-empt political organisation.

5.3.4 Alexandra's Urban Renewal Plan

The Alexandra Urban Renewal Proposal was presented in 1986. It is characterised by the security establishment as an 'oil spot' programme in which residents will be 'pulled back to our side': its success will permeate other Reef townships and gradually spread over the whole country (101).

The upgrading scheme also quite clearly follows the President's Council's Report on Urbanisation Strategy. It seems to envisage Alexandra as a metropolitan township catering for a class-differentiated population which nevertheless is relatively well-paid. Population estimates were upped to 100 000, after a census was conducted in late 1986. The renewal plan suggested that the town should be allowed to expand to 120 000 inhabitants (102) through natural increase rather than overspill from other

areas (103). It estimated that a further 242 hectares was necessary to satisfy land use needs. The land would have to be claimed from surrounding areas (104).

The plan limits state involvement to service and infrastructure provision and defines upgrading housing as the property owner's responsibility. It also sees the housing market as a new source of employment. The 1980 Masterplan, in contrast, placed the entire responsibility for upgrading in the lap of the town council, which was expected to be self-financing.

The 1986 plan is extremely critical of the 1980 plan which had 'yielded limited success and ...failed to improve the standard of living of some 90% of the residents of Alexandra' (105).

Only 257 state-funded houses had been completed and 86 were still under construction. Finished flats totalled 444, 20 were still incomplete and building had just begun on another 286. The private sector had built 137 houses for leasehold sale and begun construction of 100 townhouses. With the exception of 176 houses, the new areas were provided with waterborne sewerage, water reticulation, electricity and tar roads. Storm water control was almost complete. The council had erected prefabricated houses to accommodate 140 families, of which 40 had

been donated by business concerns (106). The redevelopment programme had cost R25 million which had been provided by the National Housing Commission (107).

The 1980 upgrading scheme had planned to retain only 5% of existing units and to demolish over 2 500 original houses, but no suitable land existed for temporary accommodation. Consequently, the community saw redevelopment in terms of 'resettlement' which was 'socially and politically unacceptable' (108). People were bitter about the loss of freehold, which the 1986 plan termed their 'heritage and birthright'. The cost of the earlier programme was also impractical given the present state of the economy (109). Residents' insecurity, the slow implementation of the plan and lack of upgrading of services in 'old' Alexandra had 'contributed towards the worrying security situation and the resignation of the former councillors' (110).

The new urban renewal proposal recognises and seeks to address these failings. It adopts many of the first plan's suggestions about expanding school and recreation facilities, installing municipal services, higher density and differentiated housing patterns and creating a small business district. Security strategy demands that work begin immediately and demonstrate tangible results.

The first prong of the strategy is service provision. By March 1987, a post office and clinic had been built and public phones installed in the township (111). High mast lights had been erected, the main thoroughfare tarred and an outfall sewer (a necessary prerequisite for the sewer system) had been completed. ESCOM drew up a plan for electrification of the area according to 'Third World' standards. This meant rejecting conventional underground cables for cheaper overhead lines. But electrification would still cost R120 million (112). The urban renewal proposal suggested individual stand metering for individual dwellings by means of prepaid tokens (113) - a nifty strategy to avoid possible future service boycotts.

The DET set aside R10,5 million for six new schools to be completed before the end of the year, and two more were planned for 1988 (114).

By the end of the year, ablution facilities - toilet, shower, wash trough - had been provided for every township dwelling. Some units were temporary and removable, others were permanent structures built alongside houses. Each unit cost R1 200. Alexandra was divided into 102 blocks (115), each of which contained about 20 units (116).

The second prong of the plan is to make homeownership more easily and rapidly available. All stands were surveyed and every structurally sound dwelling given a value during 1987 (117).

Residents can buy houses on freehold tenure, 99-year leasehold, or, where a property is occupied by more than one tenant, sectional title (118). Present occupants are given first option to purchase their dwellings at 'affordable prices'. The responsibility for upgrading housing now lies with the individual owner. Provision has been made for soft loans to upgrade property and technical advice and skills training is available (119). The privatisation programme, assisted by employers, building societies and financial institutions, argued the planners,

'would avoid continuous subsidisation by the State and would give the community a stake in the land' (120).

Housing standards have been differentiated according to income. Land on the east bank of the Jukskei was allocated to a private company for elite residential development (121). One set of houses for the middle income bracket, will sell for R18 000 to R25 000; another set of houses, aimed at high salary earners, will cost R40 000 (122). In old Alexandra, the plan proposes maintaining, if not increasing, population density by retaining the current spatial pattern of several dwellings in a yard, and developing dual function dwellings (residential-cum-business) (123). This will minimise removals and reconstruction.

The proposal considers the council responsible for the poor. The council built 600 shell houses by July 1987 (124). But it had already begun to sift out 'acceptable' residents. In October, a

number of shack dwellers received warning notices that their presence was illegal because their shacks did not comply with legal and health requirements. They ignored the notices and were evicted. Their shelters were demolished and their building materials confiscated (125). The council also maintained that the shacks stood in the way of the urban renewal scheme. It did, however, promise that those squatters who had lived in Alexandra before July 1986 would be permitted to put up shacks on serviced land set aside for a temporary transit camp (126).

The emphasis on homeownership has three aims: firstly, it is hoped to recoup infrastructure costs from house sales (127). Secondly, the motivation is political:

'owners can assist local authorities in creating order, promoting cleanliness, limiting crime and preventing squatting' (128).

Thirdly, the renewal programme is seen as part of a strategy to combat unemployment and foster small business development. Owner upgrading will maximise labour intensive reconstruction (129) and can use local contractors and unemployed people (130). Local business expansion will not only create work opportunities but

'form a sound tax base which will make the town administratively and economically more viable' (131).

5.3.5 Financing the redevelopment programme

Even with lower infrastructure standards and shifting responsibility for housing to the individual, the cost of urban renewal programme is prohibitive. Planners estimate that initial road tarring, provision of electricity, water supply, water borne sewerage, and street lighting will cost R4 566 per household (132). By the time the project is complete in May 1990 it will have cost R65 650 000 in total (133).

Financing this scale of development is beyond a local authority lacking a tax base. The state granted R75 million for 1987 from the National Housing Commission and has promised a further R92 million over the next three years (134). The council also has applied to the Central Witwatersrand RSC for R10,6 million for the second phase of upgrading - a request the RSC is still considering (135).

JMC strategy, RSC rationale and the Urbanisation Strategy all revolve around similar objectives: upgrading metropolitan areas for a relatively privileged and consequently politically stable population, and shifting migrants and the very poor to periphery catchment areas with lower standard of services and housing. They also shift the responsibility for implementing the policy through infrastructure upgrading and housing provision from the

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