

https://dspace.org/

The background to apartheid in Cape Town: the growth of racism and segregation from the mineral revolution to the 1930's.

Bickford-Smith, V.

1990-02-06T09:36:24Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/7695

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

BICKFORD-SMITH



UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG
HISTORY WORKSHOP

STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

6 - 10 February 1990

AUTHOR: V. Bickford - Smith

TITLE: The Background to Apartheid in Cape Town : The Growth of Racism and Segregation from the Mineral Revolution to the 1930's.

AFRICANA LIBRARY

HWS 20

THE BACKGROUND TO APARTHEID IN CAPE TOWN: THE GROWTH OF RACISM AND SEGREGATION FROM THE MINERAL REVOLUTION TO THE 1930's.

When embarking on my recently completed Phd thesis entitled "Commerce, Class and Ethnicity in Cape Town, 1875-1902", I had obviously hoped to contribute to the historiographical debate about the relative primacy of "class" or "race" as units of collective social action in the past (1) . Somewhat to my disappointment, this debate , of course, de-escalated in the 1980's. The student of South African history is no longer confronted with a stark choice between opposing idealist and materialist explanations of this country's past. Instead something of a synthesis is emerging as Giliomee, reviewing Fredrickson's interactionist position in White Supremacy, hoped that it would (2) .

This synthesis acknowledges the existence of White racism before the Mineral Revolution, although the emphasis here has moved away from seeing the frontier as the incubator of this racism towards stressing the significance of racial slavery in the South Western Cape (3) . In addition Shula Marks, amongst others, has argued that many features of South African segregation, as they developed into twentieth

1 JV Bickford-Smith, "Commerce, Class and Ethnicity in Cape Town, 1875 to 1902", Phd thesis, Cambridge University, 1988.

2 H Giliomee, "White Supremacy: a comparative perspective", Standpunt,36,1983.

3 R Elphick and H Giliomee (eds) The Shaping of South African Society,1652-1840,(Cape Town,Maskew Miller Longman,1989),ch.11.

century Apartheid, were a result of the nature of the resistance of African societies to their incorporation in settler states. These features included the reserves/homelands and the use of chiefs as agents of the colonial state (4) . The synthesis also argues that the demands of mining capital at Kimberley and on the Rand led to the establishment of central features of urban segregation such as the mining compound, migrant labour, the labour registration office and, more controversially I would think, the urban location and pass system (5) .

But despite our much better understanding of the history of the growth of segregation in South Africa, significant gaps remain . I believe that this is largely due to the fact that the synthesis is the result of scholarly focus on specific fields of pre-twentieth century South African history: slavery, African societies and the mining industry. As it is, a number of questions still suggest themselves, and it is worth mentioning just three as they are either tangential or central to the rest of this paper.

---

4 S Marks, " 'White Supremacy': a review article", Comparative Studies in Society and History,29,2,(1987),385-397.

5 JW Cell, The Highest Stage of White Supremacy,(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,1982), especially ch 3; WH Worger, South Africa's City of Diamonds: Mine Workers and Monopoly Capitalism in Kimberley, 1867-1895,(Craighall, AD Donker, 1987). RV Turrell, Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields,1871-1890,(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987). There had, of course, been de facto locations for Africans and coloureds in the Cape before the discovery of diamonds.

Firstly, what has been the changing nature of racist discourse in South Africa and how can one account for changes and continuities in this discourse? In other words, as Saul Dubow has complained, there has been relatively little examination of the content of South African racism (6) . Secondly, and obviously closely connected, what has been the relationship between different racist discourses- how have they informed one another? In this respect what was the relationship between British and Afrikaners/Dutch at the Cape, or between merchants and farmers? Thirdly, what difference has the dominance of merchant rather than mining capital made to the history of racism and segregation?

So to racism and segregation in Cape Town-or should it be the relative lack of racism and segregation in Cape Town? Certainly George Fredrickson has argued, following David Welsh in the Oxford History, that Cape Town in the early twentieth century, Cape Town before 1948 perhaps, was an exceptional place in its relative lack of segregation compared to elsewhere in South Africa (7) . This argument accords well with a belief popularly held by particularly older Capetonians that segregation in the form of Apartheid

---

6 S Dubow, "The idea of race in early 20th Century South Africa:some preliminary thoughts",unpublished paper presented to the Africa Seminar,UCT,1989.

7 GM Fredrickson, White Supremacy,(New York, Oxford University Press,1981), p 267; D Welsh, "The growth of towns", in M Wilson and L Thompson (eds), The Oxford History of South Africa,vol 2, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971),p 174.

was imposed on the city by a Nationalist Government after 1948. Fredrickson has argued that Cape Town's alleged uniqueness in the early decades of the century was due to a combination of the "notorious permeability of the color line" with a "certain tolerance of miscegenation", that made segregated accomodation in Cape Town "not only contrary to local traditions but impracticable" (8) . Unfortunately Fredrickson has explained very little. The existence of the "notorious permeability of the color line" was certainly used on occasion to explain why segregation in Cape Town was, or could be, difficult to attain. It probably does help to explain why de jure segregation was delayed in education and some Government institutions in the city in the late nineteenth century. But this permeability ultimately did not prevent the introduction of pretty comprehensive segregation in Cape Town before 1948, let alone thereafter. "Contrary to local traditions" explains everything and nothing. It begs the question of why those local traditions existed in the first place, as well as why at least residential segregation in Cape Town lagged behind the rest of South Africa. Answers to both these questions can only be found in an examination of Cape Town's social formation. How the latter differed from that of a mining centre like Kimberley or Johannesburg goes a long way in explaining the relative extent and nature of segregation in these cities.

---

8 Fredrickson, p 267.

At the advent of the Mineral Revolution Cape Town, like Stedman Jones' London, and unlike Kimberley with its mine-owners, was a place of "small masters". Indeed similarities in the functions of London and Cape Town produced many similarities in their social formations. In both cities economic power lay with those whose income derived from "rent, banking and commerce" (9) . Seasonality of production, types of casual occupation and a strong artisanal sector characterised both labour markets. What is more, almost half of Cape Town's artisans were black, a legacy of skills acquired in the era of slavery. The nature of Cape Town's social formation helps to explain the nature, and limitations, of segregation and an ethnic division of labour in the city. The latter, in part due to the imprecise nature of the division of labour itself (within many occupational categories) remained far from rigid.

Cape Town's elite consisted of merchants, professionals, members of Government and the Civil Service. Few of this elite employed black labour, or any labour, in large quantities. Indeed, for many, experience of black labour was confined to their positions as employers of domestic servants. Not surprisingly then, there were few signs in Cape Town of a powerful capitalist class pushing for state intervention to bring about the equivalent of the segregated institutions of Kimberley.Nevertheless, Cape Town's elite

---

9 G Stedman Jones Outcast London,(Harmonsworth,Penguin,1976) p 239

identified whiteness with priveleged social position and, as their predecessors would appear to have required from at least the late eighteenth century, whiteness was a necessary qualification for social success. Thus social position and ethnic consciousness interacted to unite a dominant class in Cape Town which at this stage displayed little evidence of a racist discourse that argued for, or rationalised, the separation of white and black amongst Cape Town's lower classes.

Consequently, in the 1870's, segregation between white and black in Cape Town was limited to what amounted to the informal segregation of those deemed insufficiently white from the institutions and facilities frequented by Cape Town's dominant class. This kind of segregation I would dub exclusion. Thus, in 1875, blacks were informally excluded from the better schools, and were confined to either the back pews of churches in the case of the Anglican cathedral, or separate churches if they were DRC, Wesleyan or Methodist. Dominant class Capetonians could also buy residential exclusivity, given the absence of significant numbers of sufficiently wealthy blacks. However, black and white mixed in the poorer residential areas, in the Mission schools and in working class Anglican congregations. Juries were mixed, and those they sentenced were not segregated if they ended up at the Breakwater gaol. Hospitals were not segregated. There were both mixed marriages and cohabitations amongst lower class Capetonians.

Cape Town's dominant class were mainly concerned with exclusion because throughout the nineteenth century, and to the advent of Apartheid, social mobility of "other than whites" threatened the dominant class belief that social order should coincide with racial order, if not be actually achieved via the latter. Any social recognition of "other than whites" as equals would destroy the assumption of racial superiority on which the rationalisation of dominant class position was legitimised and based (10) . Such a belief may seem to have been at variance with the non-racial political-legal tradition associated with Cape liberalism. However, as Trapido has written, "political democracy did not create social democracy". While making this point Trapido quotes JW Sauer, "one of the best known liberals" amongst Cape Politicians:

> In England the workmen and the governing classes both have votes, but there is very little general equality between them-in fact, none at all; I suppose they are just as far apart in some respects as the white man and the native in this country. Political equality is by no means social equality (11) .

---

10 Bickford-Smith,"Commerce",ch 2, and JV Bickford-Smith, "Cape Town at the Advent of the Mineral Revolution (c.1875):Economic Activity and Social",Studies in the History of Cape Town, hereafter Studies,6,1988,61-82.

11 S Trapido, "The Friends of the Natives: Merchants, Peasants and the Political and Ideological Structure of Liberalism in the Cape,1845-1910", in S Marks and A Atmore (eds), Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, (London,Longman,1980),p 258.

The English language newspapers, which defended the "grand tradition" of Cape liberalism when it came to the question of defending the non-racial franchise, and the protection of the property and persons of "other than whites", saw no contradiction between this tradition and segregation: "social separation does not mean the political extinction of the weaker race" (12) .

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the early decades of the twentieth, the extent of segregation in Cape Town increased considerably. One way of explaining much of this segregation would be to argue that it was merely an extension of exclusion at a time of greater opportunity for black social mobility and, as Fredrickson has suggested, when the number of "facilities" in Cape Town where exclusion was deemed necessary also increased (13) . This argument could explain why the town's roller skating rink was made for whites only in 1879. After all there would have been practical difficulties in distingiushing between whites of different classes in a period of rapid commercial expansion and white immigration. Exclusion extended would also seem to explain why "wealthy Malays" were not allowed into the town's agricultural show until after 12pm when "European loafers" and "town girls" were admitted; why even "well-dressed coloureds" were forced to drink at the "tap" at the

---

12 Cape Times 7-12-1889,leader.

13 Fredrickson, p 260.

back of good hotels, according to a ruling in a case heard before the Resident Magistrate in 1887; why blacks were apparently excluded from first class railway carriages and bathing machines by 1889, from the YMCA in 1895, the Circus in 1899, the Town Guard established in the war years from 1899 to 1902, the Tivoli Theatre in 1903 and from all the superior hotels in the Peninsula by 1904. It could also explain why some cricket teams or cricket competitions excluded blacks in the course of the 1890's, as did some residential suburbs and beaches. When cinemas came to Cape Town in the 1900's, several of them were for whites only. Equally it would explain why "facilities" such as trams or third class railway carriages, some cinemas, cricket teams or bars in working class areas, or, residentially, those areas themselves, saw mixing of lower-class whites and blacks right into the era of grand Apartheid.

But this argument does not easily explain the segregation of hospitals in the early 1880's; the segregation of prisons by the early 1890's; why only whites were, by this decade, summoned to serve on juries; why locations were established for African Capetonians in 1901, or why all schools were segregated by the School Boards' Act of 1905. Clearly what was new about segregation in Cape Town from the era of the Mineral Revolution onwards was not just that it was increasing to prevent the upward mobility of blacks, but that segregation was now reaching down into the hitherto undifferentiated lower classes to distinguish white from

black. This kind of segregation, which I have dubbed separation, was accompanied by the growth of a seemingly new racist discourse that argued both for the existence of permanent difference between black and white and for the need for all members of the two "races" to be socially separate (14) .

Crucial to this development was the need of the dominant classes in town and countryside to maintain political power, and thus social position, after the granting of Responsible Government to the Cape in 1872. The latter required them to be responsive to an electorate the majority of whom were white. Significantly, electoral arithmetic ensured that the predominantly Afrikaans or Dutch-speaking commercial farmers could dominate the parliamentary institution if they could persuade lower class rural whites to vote for them-a strong incentive for Afrikaner political and ethnic mobilisation, which emphasised white solidarity that cut across class lines and would enable commercial farmers, as Stanley Greenberg has suggested, to use state power to elaborate "the labour-repressive and racial framework" of the countryside (15) . Such mobilisation was

---

14 JV Bickford-Smith, "A 'special tradition of multi-racialism'? Segregation in Cape Town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries", in WG James and M Simons (eds), The Angry Divide,(Cape Town,David Philip,1989).

15 S Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist Development,(Johannesburg,Ravan,1980), p 26. See also H Giliomee, "Aspects of the rise of Afrikaner capital and Afrikaner nationalism in the Western Cape,1870-1915", in James and Simons, pp 47-62.

presumably facilitated by the fact that although some farmers had at times experimented with white unskilled labour, the majority wished to maintain a rigid ethnic division of labour, given the reality of cheap and controllable black labour and expensive and difficult white (16) . Thus rural relations of production from the late eighteenth century onwards had whites as landowners or supervisors, blacks as the unskilled workforce. Although there is, as yet, little research on the content of late nineteenth century Afrikaner racial thought, it is clear that a discourse existed that argued the need for separation of white and black and that coincided sufficiently closely with material realities in the countryside to be a practical component of Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation, the quid pro quo of lower class Afrikaner support for the elite (17) . Equally it was undoubtedly this dynamic that led to the discovery of "poor whiteism" as an Afrikaner problem in the 1890's, and which led the DRC and Afrikaner Bond to throw their weight behind the need for superior and separate schooling for whites (18) .

An ethnic division of labour was not nearly so clear cut in Cape Town as in its rural hinterland. As late as 1893,

---

16 Bickford-Smith, "A'special tradition", p 52.

18 C Bundy, " 'Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen": White Poverty in the Cape before Poor Whiteism", in W Beinart, P Delius and S Trapido (eds), Putting a Plough to the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South Africa 1850-1930, (JOhannesburg,Ravan,1986), pp 101-128.

evidence to a labour commission showed that at the docks, on building sites and in the homes of the white bourgeoisie, white and black worked in similar categories of labour (19) . Nevertheless, Cape Town's dominant class, and specifically her mercantile and business elite, had its own political agenda after 1872, an agenda concerned with tariffs, railway building and, in general, the need for an improved infrastructure for commercial expansion. In pursuing this agenda, and going hand-in-hand with economic growth and immigration from Britain in the late 1870's and 1880's, Cape Town's dominant class promoted an assertively English ethnic identity at both the local and central political levels.

Adapting an argument used by Crolls and Dodd for the mother country, Englishness in the colonial, Cape Town context necessitated the ability to speak English and the possession of a white skin. Identifying black Capetonians as belonging to the "other" was part of the process of establishing English ethnicity (20) . Moreover as a serious economic depression hit Cape Town in the mid-1880's, the ideology of Englishness helped to ensure that Cape Town's dominant class viewed poverty and social problems in general in ethnic terms. Thus, parallelimg the attitudes of Stedman Jones'

---

19 Cape Parliamentary Papers (CPP), G39-1893, "Labour Commission".

20 Bickford-Smith, "Commerce", chs 3-4; P Dodd, "Englishness and the National Culture", in R Colls and P Dodd (eds), Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920, (Beckenham,Croom Helm,1986), pp 1-28.

middle-class Londoners, some of Cape Town's dominant class, particularly clergymen, journalists and doctors, came to see the neeed for at least limited social intervention, to save the deserving poor from the residuum. This perception was furthered in both cities by demonstrations of the unemployed as well as by riots. The difference was that in Cape Town the respectable working-class, the deserving poor, were deemed to be white, the residuum black (21) .

This conclusion was aided by the fact that despite the lack of a rigid division of labour, the process of urbanisation in Cape Town had produced an approximate division of labour between lightness of pigmentation and status within and between occupational categories, a tendency increased by changes in the technology and techniques of production in the late nineteenth century and, arguably, by the prejudice or self-interest, of employers (22) . In Cape Town the British theory of urban degeneracy was thus ethnicised, so that journalists, doctors and English-speaking civil servants propounded the "sanitation syndrome" (23) . In other words they argued that whites needed to be protected

---

21 JV Bickford-Smith, "Dangerous Cape Town: Middle-Class Attitudes to Poverty in Cape Town in the late Nineteenth Century",Studies,4,(1981),29-65.

22 Bickford-Smith, "Commerce", ch 2 and pp 411-435; P Van Duin, "Artisans and trade unions in the Cape Town Building Industry,1900-1924" in James and Simons (eds), pp 95-110.

23 M Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909", Journal of African History,xviii,3,(1977),387-410.

from contaminating blacks, an argument given both urgency and pseudo-logic in the 1890's when laced with the rhetoric of social Darwinism. Action on behalf of Cape Town's newly discovered "poor whites" first took the rather meagre form in the 1880's of temporary relief work for unemployed artisans and clerks (24) . But by the 1890's, "poor whiteism" was part of the rhetoric and concern of members of the dominant class not only in Cape Town but also in the countryside, and both could agree on the need for compulsory, separate and superior education for whites as the remedy (25) .

Thus the pursuit of separation and the seductive slogan of "white supremacy" were common to both Afrikaner and English ethnic mobilisation. However, the fact of the matter was that in the first decade of the twentieth century the nature of economic activity in Cape Town, and the continuing lack of a rigid division of labour, ensured that few of Cape Town's economically active elite, her businessmen and merchants, had any direct stake in extending separation at their own expense. They may have believed in the theory of total separation, and applauded the segregation of Government institutions, but most of Cape Town's employers of labour, unlike Kimberley mineowners or randlords, had little immediate material interest or incentive in bringing

---

24 Bickford-Smith, "Dangerous Cape Town", pp 45-50.

25 Bickford-Smith, "A'special tradition", pp 47-52.

about a far more comprehensive separation of black and white workers that could only be achieved by residential segregation. Indeed, when pressure built up in the 1890's, particularly from local and central government medical officials, journalists and petty-bourgeois whites, for the need to residentially segregate a highly visible and vulnerable part of the residuum, Transkeian Africans, Cape Town merchants and builders expressed concern that their labour needs, such as they were, would be endangered. Only employers of dock labour came close to requiring, and consequently demanding, the system of labour control that the Kimberley magnates enjoyed by the late 1880's. The fact that most Africans in Cape Town were forced into two locations in 1901 had much to do with the combination of bubonic plague, the fact that by far the largest number of them were unskilled dockworkers, and that by that date their employer was the Cape Government which took on the economic burden of establishing the locations (26) .

By the early twentieth century Fredrickson's "special tradition of multi-racialism" continued to survive, if in truncated form, as a lower-class phenomenon. It existed only in some facilities, social activities and residential areas such as District Six. That it did so at all, when members of

---

26 Bickford-Smith, "A'special tradition", pp 57-61; E Van Heyningen, "Cape Town and the Plague of 1901",Studies,4,(1981), 66-107; C Saunders, "The Creation of Ndabeni: Urban Segregation and African Resistance in Cape Town",Studies,1,(1979), 165-193.

Cape Town's dominant class could agree on the need for exclusion-could even agree in theory on the need for social separation-would seem to be because the vast majority of those actively involved in employing labour, accumulating capital, generating wealth and with possession of political power in Cape Town, perceived some danger, little material gain, and perhaps most importantly, considerable potential expense in over-active social engineering.

Although the history of racism and segregation in Cape Town, for the rest of the period considered in this paper, remains little researched, it is possible from the available evidence to assert that trends begun in the pre-Union period continued up to 1948, and were in fact quickened after 1910. The Union constitution, with its whites only parliament, entrenched white political, and thereby economic and social, supremacy. The black vote, which had anyway been of only marginal significance in the pre-Union Cape, was further watered down after 1910 by the absence of such voters in the other three provinces.

The politics of grain and gold, concerns of, and for, Greenberg's "bounded" white workers, insisted that separation would extend in the decades after 1910 (27) . State intervention on behalf of poor or poorer whites increased in the 1920's, even before the Pact government of 1924, and even when the consequent legislation made no

---

27 Greenberg, pp 273-327.

mention of colour. Thus the Juveniles Act of 1921 assisted youths "subject to compulsory education"; the Apprentices Act of 1922 made apprenticeship only available to those with a minimum of a standard 6 education. Given the nature of extant education legislation, both acts were effectively helping whites only. The "Civilised Labour Policy" of 1924 may, under the Nationalist's "New Deal" have theoretically included coloureds as civilised, but in practice it almost exclusively benefitted whites. In the same year, the Industrial Conciliation Act excluded Africans, as well as domestic workers, the vast majority of whom were black. The Wages Act of 1925 helped to undermine the bargaining position of coloured artisans, because, according to Gavin Lewis, it set wage levels so high that it removed the incentive of white employers to choose coloured rather than white labour (28) . In 1928 the Pensions Act gave coloureds lower pensions than whites, while in 1930 a separate section of the Department of Education was established to supervise coloured education, which, throughout the twentieth century, consistently received less per capita than white (29) . Much of the above legislation combined with deskilling and depression in the 1920's and 1930's to ensure that black Capetonians, be they coloured or African, were unable to

---

28 G Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall: a history of South African 'Coloured" politics,(Cape Town,David Philip,1987), pp 88,119-120,132-133; I Goldin Making Race: the Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South Africa, pp 42,45.

29 Lewis, pp 134-5.

mount any sustained economic challenge to white supremacy. The group that had arguably been in the best position to do so, coloured artisans, had been "shaken out of virtually all the traditional crafts and prevented by apprenticeship barriers and prejudice from entering the new electrical, machine and metallurgical crafts" (30) .

The "great tradition" of Cape Liberalism, which had helped to restrain the widespread de jure imposition of segregation in the Cape before Union, under attack before 1910 and provincialised thereafter, was further eroded by the well known legislation of the 1930's. Only white women were given the vote in 1930, which reduced the coloured vote in that year from twenty to ten per cent of the total in the Cape. African men were put on a separate voters roll in 1936 (31).

At least at a local government level the presence of a sizeable minority of black (overwhelmingly coloured) voters, and the election of a number of articulate coloured town councillors, such as Abdurahman and Cissie Gool, had some effect on decolouring the rhetoric and legislation of the city council in the 1920's and 1930's. It certainly helped to keep a number of municipal facilities, such as the City Hall concerts, open to all. Equally, Abdurahman had managed to insist that municipal grants to the University of Cape Town were conditional on that institution remaining an open

---

31 Goldin, p 39; Lewis, pp 145-147.

one (32) . As the Council embarked, in this period and for the first time, on major housing schemes, including the establishment of whole new suburbs, conciliar reports, minutes and regulations initially made no mention of colour. But in practice, as Naomi Barnett has shown, such schemes continued the pre-Union trend of social intervention-in other words the separation of white and black. Thus Maitland Garden Village in 1921; Athlone in 1925; Sunnyside in 1929 and Bokmakirie in 1930 were for coloureds only, as were council tenements in District Six. A major housing scheme in the mid-1930's in Schotsche's Kloof was for "Cape Malays", while schemes in Roeland Street in 1921 and Devil's Peak in 1927 were for whites only (33) .

If whites were increasingly being separated from coloured Capetonians by extended exclusion,(and Pinelands was a whites only "Garden village" established in 1919), separation, or by the far-from-free operation of the labour market, the local and central states were intervening in an attempt to maintain the separation of Africans from both of these "groups" (34) . Thus the story of "legal" African residence in Cape Town became, in general, one of increasing insecurity and distance from the city. Ndabeni was overcrowded by 1919, and consequently a court case in that

---

32 Lewis, pp 27,74,187,199.

33 N Barnett, "The Racial Factor in the City Council's Housing Policy 1918-1939",unpublished paper presented to the Cape Town History Workshop,1989.

year determined that Africans could not be prosecuted for living outsied the location. However, this situation was altered when the Cape Town city council took over control of locations in the city, asked the Government to allow it to apply the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, and began establishing a new location, Langa (further from the city centre) in the following years. Ndabeni was allowed to fall into disrepair and, by 1936, was no longer operating as a location. The position of Africans in Cape Town, as in other South African cities, was made even more precarious after 1937 by the Native Laws Amenedment Act, which gave them only fourteen days in which to find work. Thereafter, if unsuccessful, they had to return back to the so-called "native territories". With the City Council reluctant, as ever, to spend money on African accomodation, and with an increasing number of Africans staying "illegally" in the city, it is hardly surprising that of the 65 000 in greater Cape Town by 1955, four-fifths were in squatter camps (35).

The growth of segregation in the Cape Town of our period took place despite frequent attempts to prevent it, and even some victories, by black Capetonians. These attempts involved the parallel ethnic/political mobilisation of coloured and African elites initiated before 1910 in response to white supremacy, and their intermittent collaboration with predominantly black labour organisations

---

35 C Saunders, "From Ndabeni to Langa", Studies, 1, (1979), 194-230.

from the 1920's onwards against white political, social and economic exclusion and separation. They also included the testing of segregatory practices in the law courts, demonstrations and communal rent boycotts (36) . Another tactic was the changing of identity: "passing" from coloured to white, or from African to coloured (37) . But perhaps the most successful and enduring resistance, at least to residential segregation, was that offered by African squatters to enforced residence in locations (38) .

This paper has not argued that rigid segregation was entirely in place before 1948 . It has argued that one must investigate closely, and strictly qualify, Fredrickson's statement that Cape Town had a "special tradition of multi-racialism" before Apartheid. What was left of that tradition was undoubtedly all but destroyed by the legislation of the 1950's and its subsequent enforcement.

---

36 Apart from Goldin and Lewis, see Bickford-Smith, "Commerce", pp 346-393 and 435-440; A Odendaal, Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912, (Totowa,Barnes and Noble,1984); Saunders "Ndabeni"; Saunders "Langa".

37 G Watson, Passing for White,(London,Tavistock,1970).

38 B Kinkead-Weekes, "Africans in Cape Town: the Origins and Development of State Policy and Poular Resistance to 1936", unpublished MSocSci thesis,UCT,1985; J Cole, Crossroads: The Politics of Reform and Repression 1976-1986,(Johannesburg,Ravan,1987).