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STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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There has evolved over the years in South Africa a phenomenon that can loosely be called 'urban apartheid'. The essential objectives of urban apartheid have been to regulate the number of Africans living in urban areas, and to exercise tight control over the daily lives of urban Africans. Underlying these essential objectives have been further fundamental concerns: to maintain the supply of labour at sufficient levels to meet the needs of capital; to ensure that the demand for different types of labour is met, whether it be migrant, unskilled or skilled; to allay the paranoia and fears of an urban middle class who felt their health and safety threatened by the large numerical presence of the black underclasses.

The history of urban apartheid in twentieth century South Africa has been marked by the efforts of the state, central and local, to achieve these often contradictory objectives, and by the struggles of the black underclasses to resist the imposition of controls. Over the years two mechanisms have been devised by the state as the chief components of the urban apartheid system: influx control and segregation. Much has been written about both of these instruments of control. For instance, work has been done on the evolving legislative framework of urban apartheid.[1] Hindson has produced an important analysis of the influx control system, showing how its major functions changed over time.[2] In recent years studies in local urban history have proliferated, and some of these have been concerned with the issues of influx control and segregation.[3] There has, though, been virtually no attempt to trace and analyse the development of influx control and segregation over time in any specific local urban context. Part of the purpose of this essay is to attempt such an examination, looking at how these mechanisms evolved in Durban through the twentieth century up until the beginnings of the 'group areas era' in the early 1950s.

It will clearly be insufficient to provide a mere catalogue of control measures. The local, regional and national context in which influx control and segregation were implemented will have to be examined. Influx control and segregation measures in Durban can only be understood in terms of demographic trends and the changing political economy of the city. Attention must be paid to the many forces that shaped local state policy: the demands of capital; the dictates of the central government; pressure exerted by local ratepayers; the perceptions and policies of key local administrators; the struggles of Durban's black underclasses.

At various times segregation measures in Durban have affected Africans, Indians and 'Coloureds'. The main focus of this essay is the way in which certain forms of urban apartheid operated against Africans in Durban. The time-span covered can be broken down into three main phases: the first runs to about 1920; the second from 1920 until 1936-37; and the third from 1936-37 until the early 1950s.

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Before the early 1920s influx control and segregation were imposed only to a very limited extent in Durban. This was because the economic, social and demographic make-up of the town did not seem to demand such controls at the time. The town's economy still rested very largely on commerce and shipping. Its industrial base was minuscule, in spite of some expansion during the South African War and World War One. Moreover, Durban was still in an early stage of urban growth at the beginning of the century. In 1900 its total population amounted to about 55,700, and by 1921 it was still only 90,500. Africans made up less than one-third of the total population; in 1921 there were an estimated 28,400 Africans living in Durban.[4]

The vast majority of this African population was male. In 1921 the African male/female ratio was 6,6:1.[5] Many of these males were migrant workers living in so-called "barracks" (single-quarter hostels) or in private commercial compounds. This preponderance of male migrants reflected the central position of the docks in the local economy. The docks required a flexible labour supply to cope with fluctuations in shipping and the seasonal demand for labour. Thus the docks came to rely on casual, 'togt' labour, supplied largely by unskilled African migrants.

In 1911 a member of the Natal Manufacturers Association stated, quite bluntly, his vision of an ideal labour supply: "...the essential requirements are: - 1. That the labour should be cheap. 2. That it should be constant. 3. That it should be controllable."[6] Casual, 'togt' labour did not really satisfy these requirements. As Hemson has shown, 'togt' workers at the Durban docks enjoyed a certain degree of independence and could command relatively high wages. The point was not lost on either local employers or the police. Durban's Superintendent of Police, R.C. Alexander, proposed his solution in giving evidence to the South African Native Affairs Commission in 1904: "I would put my Natives in barracks and let them march into the town as they do with soldiers. That has been my ambition for 25 years, and I have not altered it."[7]

Alexander's lament about the lack of regimentation and segregation arose out of what he saw as the laxity of the corporation in failing to provide controlled accommodation for casual workers. Since 1878, when the first "barracks" had been built, he had pestered the corporation to build more: "Then it took me from 1878 to 1894 worrying the Corporation every year to build some barracks. Then they built the old barracks down at the Point....Then it took me from 1894 to 1904 to get them to put up these other barracks. At the same rate of progress, the next barracks will not be put up during my life."[8]

A Native Locations Act, passed by the Natal legislature in 1904, opened up the possibility of urban segregation. The Act enabled Durban and Pietermaritzburg to establish segregated urban locations for Africans. But it was no more than enabling legislation, and the Durban municipality did not act on it. The

town council was neither willing to provide the necessary finance, nor able to agree on a site for such a location.[10] In the early 1900s there continued to be much debate and discussion among local capitalists and officials about the pros and cons of herding Africans into a segregated location.[11] But the municipality stuck with the practice of providing limited "barrack" accommodation for single workers. In 1911 about 5,850 Africans, including 1,000 women, were housed in municipal "barracks" or hostels.[12] The first municipal housing for African families did not become available till 1916 when Baumannville was opened; and this comprised a mere 120 so-called "cottages".

Just as the imperative to establish segregated locations in Durban was not all that strong before the 1920s, so was the machinery available to limit African mobility and urban migration not all that awesome. The political economy of both Durban itself and the rural hinterland simply did not demand rigid controls. The rural economy was still sufficiently resilient that urban migration had not yet become the vital necessity that it was to become for millions of Africans in later generations. However, controls restricting the physical and occupational mobility of Africans in Durban existed from the nineteenth century. In 1869 a 9 p.m. - 4 a.m. curfew was introduced.[13] A law passed by the Natal legislature in 1888 provided for the registration of all African workers. From 1891 it was enforced in Durban, not all that effectively, with a view to excluding from the town "native deserters, idlers and vagabonds."[14] This represented an early attempt on the part of the local state to limit the African presence in Durban to labour needs. This was to be the essence of the future influx control system.

A further step towards such a system was taken with the enactment of another Natal measure in 1901. This required all African workers in the colony to obtain an identification pass, which had to be carried at all times and produced on demand.[15] By 1904 Police Superintendent Alexander was making full use of this control mechanism: "...I have a Pass Book with a counterfoil, and every Native who comes into the town to transact business, such as purchasing goods, visiting friends, or looking for work, goes straight to the Police Station. He cannot go an inch without that pass." What is more, Alexander saw the identification pass, not as a restrictive control, but as a ticket to liberty: "I think the identification pass one of the grandest things they could have. They can show their pass, and say: 'I am so and so; there is my pass, I am a free man'."[16] Curious notions of freedom reigned among officialdom in early twentieth century Durban.

The system of registration and identification passes was consolidated and tightened in by-laws passed by the Durban town council in 1916. J.S. Marwick, the manager of Durban's newly established municipal Native Affairs Department (later changed to Native Administration Department), was soon expressing his delight at the immediate impact of the by-laws. Desertion and

crime were being curbed. The by-laws, together with the new local state apparatus for "native administration", offered the prospect of much tighter control being exercised over Durban's African population.[17] This was the foundation of the "Durban system". Largely on the basis of profits derived from the municipal beer monopoly, the Durban corporation was creating administrative machinery that would serve as a model when national policy-makers and legislators embarked in the early 1920s on formulating urban areas legislation for the country as a whole.

Thus towards the end of the first phase, the period up to about 1920, the Durban local state was developing apparatus for controlling the black underclasses. But the degree of control being exercised at this stage was only very limited. Durban was still in an early phase of industrialisation. It did not contain a vast black proletariat. Indeed, early control measures were rather directed at semi-proletarianised migrants. Moreover, these measures were adopted largely at the Durban corporation's own volition, with no prompting or pressure from the central state.

During our second phase, from about 1920 to the mid-1930s, there was both an intensification of pre-1920 trends and some new developments. Durban's vast rural hinterland, where a fairly buoyant farming economy had been sustaining African reserve-dwellers as well as tenants on white-owned land, gradually became more impoverished during the 1920s. The reserves came to wilt under the pressures of overpopulation, overstocking and drought, giving rise to outmigration. And African tenants came to be squeezed off their plots as white farmers, keen to put more of their land to direct productive use, terminated quasi-feudal or leasing arrangements with their tenants. The natural drift of impoverished reserve-dwellers or evicted tenants was towards the urban areas. And an emerging city like Durban was an obvious destination. In the 1920s Durban was still a place where there were open spaces to be occupied and opportunities to be exploited. Africans could rent backyard rooms or outhouses in central areas, or they could occupy the vacant sites of land not far from the city centre. There they could participate in the lucrative "illicit" liquor traffic or some other informal sector activity. Or they could find work in the growing formal sector. During this second phase Durban enjoyed sporadic industrial growth. After a recession in the early 1920s, Durban's industry recovered in the mid-1920s. And following on the great depression of the early 1930s, industry in the city was entering a major period of growth by the mid-1930s.

In these circumstances it was not surprising that the African population of Durban should have been growing in numbers. In 1921 about 46,000 Africans lived in Durban; by 1936 the figure had risen to about 71,000.[18] The question at once arises, how did the central state and the Durban local state respond to this growing African urban presence? The form that this response should take was, in fact, a matter of debate. One side in the

debate favoured official recognition of the growing stabilisation and permanence of the African labour-force in urban areas. This position was expressed in the 1932 report of the Native Economic Commission, and in the 1935 report of a Department of Native Affairs sub-committee (the Young-Barrett Committee). The latter argued that the issue of African urbanisation could not be resolved "...by expelling them [Africans from urban areas] as soon as they have served the white man's purpose; ...there is a duty on Enlightened Authority...to concern itself with the betterment of Native social conditions."[19] The Young-Barrett committee was responding specifically to the earlier report of the Transvaal Local Government Commission (the Stallard Commission). The Stallard Report, issued in 1922, reflected the other side of the debate in its oft-quoted conclusion that Africans should only enter urban areas to minister to the white man's needs.[20]

Which side prevailed in this debate? There is no clear-cut answer to this question. It is probably true to say that official thinking at the central state level was veering more towards the Young-Barrett view in the 1930s. However, this point needs to be qualified in two ways. First, it would be wrong to suggest that the stabilisation of African workers and the Stallardist view, preferring the continuation of migrant labour, were stark alternatives. As Hindson has shown, state policy increasingly became geared towards sustaining a system of differentiated labour-power, balancing the requirements of different capitalist sectors for either stabilised or migrant labour.[21]

The second qualification is that the debate might have a different outcome in different urban centres. This was possible because in the 1920s and early 1930s the local state still enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy from the central state. It is true that the central state was beginning to intervene more in the sphere of urban African management from the 1920s. This intervention was embodied most apparently in the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act. However this measure had a very limited impact on Durban. Some of the provisions of the 1923 Act, such as the introduction of the municipal beer monopoly and the native revenue account, had already long since been in operation in Durban. At the same time the Act was largely enabling legislation, which imposed few obligations on municipalities. Some of these non-obligatory clauses the Durban municipality chose to ignore, at least until the late 1920s. For instance, the Act provided for the possible establishment of 'native advisory boards'. Durban did not create one of these until 1929. The Act also provided for the construction of segregated African townships. It was only eleven years after the passing of the Act that Lamont township, to the south of the city, was opened for occupation.

In Durban local state policy in the 1920s tended towards the Stallardist position. This was partly made possible by the

city's geographical location. Durban's proximity to the reserves facilitated labour migrancy, which was the basis of Stallardism. Moreover the limited development of Durban's manufacturing sector meant that the demand for semi-skilled stabilised labour was not all that great. So structural factors made Stallardism possible. But it was also very much encouraged and sustained by a key figure in the local administrative apparatus. C.F. Layman was the manager of Durban's Native Administration Department from 1921 until 1936. During his time at the helm he developed a reputation for being authoritarian and unapproachable. In 1931 Durban's Native Advisory Board, a body that was not usually accustomed to expressing forceful opposition, passed a vote of no confidence in Layman.[22] More significant was Layman's persistent support for the Stallardist line. In 1923 he expressed his views to the parliamentary select committee examining the Natives (Urban Areas) Bill. Layman was critical of some aspects of the original bill. For instance, he expressed his strong disapproval of the bill's provision for African freehold tenure in urban areas: "The natives will cease to recognise that they are in the urban area primarily for employment, and once they become owners in freehold the stimulus to good behaviour which is maintained by the possibility of their leasehold tenure being forfeited will cease to operate." Layman's voice may have carried some weight, as the provision for freehold was taken out of the final bill. Layman also fiercely objected to the growing tendency of African families to settle in urban areas like Durban: if "encouraged" this tendency "will lead to a state of affairs in which the control at present exercised over the native population in the town will disappear."[23] Far better, he contended, that "those natives who wish to maintain touch with their homes in the country should receive every possible facility and encouragement to do so."[24]

The Stallardist line was consistently expostulated by the likes of Layman. But a rigid Stallardist policy was never practicable. It could not be fully enforced, as Africans ignored or evaded the controls restricting their movement. By the mid-1930s a "differentiated" labour-force was becoming more and more of a reality in Durban. A rapidly declining male : female ratio was clear evidence of family settlement and the growing permanence of a large section of Durban's African population. However, this did not prevent the Durban corporation from using controls to contain the process of stabilisation.

The consistent, fundamental objective of these controls was to restrict the African presence in Durban according to labour needs. As we have seen, such controls had been in operation in Durban since the nineteenth century. In the 1920s there were efforts to systematise the controls even further. One of the concerns of the 1923 Urban Areas Act was to consolidate regulations restricting African movement into urban areas. But these consolidated regulations would only come into force in particular urban areas after such areas had been proclaimed by

the Governor-General. Durban became a proclaimed area in 1928, thereby bringing into operation the controls laid down in the 1923 Act. As a result of the proclamation African work-seekers and other visitors coming to Durban had to report to a registering officer within twenty-four hours of arrival. Work-seekers could remain in a proclaimed area for a maximum of six days. All those who did find work had to be registered; and they were bound by service contracts which gave employers considerable control over their workers. The service contract was, in effect, a form of pass that had to be carried at all times and be produced on demand.[25] It obviously suited Layman. In 1930 he was calling for "a systematic inspection of all Native Registration passes" in Durban. He gained the backing of the city council. And his hand was further strengthened by a 1930 amendment to the Urban Areas Act, providing for the deportation from towns of Africans considered to be "idle, dissolute or disorderly". Armed with these weapons, Layman's department was able to organise the expulsion from Durban of over 1,000 Africans in 1930 alone.[26]

The tightening of influx control measures in Durban was a response to the growing African influx into the city, brought on by a deterioration in the material position of rural Africans and by the expansion of Durban's industrial sector. The essential objective of influx control was to limit the size of the African influx without endangering the labour supply. It was thus geared to meet capital's need for labour, and to satisfy police and ratepayers' demands for social control by keeping out of Durban those Africans who were surplus to labour requirements.

Social control, however, could not be achieved just by limiting urban immigration. Control still had to be exercised over those Africans whose labour was required in the city. One of the key mechanisms developed to achieve such control was racial residential segregation. In the early 1930s the Durban corporation came under considerable local pressure to implement segregation. The pressure did not come from capital. Indeed, strict residential segregation was often not in the best interests of employers who liked to have their workers living close to the work-place. Rather did the pressure emanate from the local police and middle-class ratepayers. In the forefront of the demands for segregation was Chief Constable Whitsitt. He complained that Africans of the "won't work, illicit liquor selling class" were being "harboured" all over the borough.[27] Whitsitt was supported by strong representations from various ratepayers' associations. In 1933 and 1934 the Bluff, Mayville and Umbilo associations, among others, demanded that their areas be segregated, complaining particularly about the presence of African liquor-dealers in their areas.[28]

The upshot was a series of segregation proclamations, applied successively to specific areas of the city, culminating in the proclamation of the whole borough in 1937. The intent of the measures was to prohibit any householders in the proclaimed

areas from accommodating on their premises any Africans except domestic workers or those exempted under the 1923 Act. As Whitsitt put it, "The whole idea of having an area proclaimed is to get rid of the Native inhabitants with the exception of domestic servants." The effect of the proclamations was to force many Africans out of the central residential areas of Durban to the emerging shack settlements in Cato Manor and the southern periphery of the city.[29]

This was perhaps the first official manifestation of the group areas approach, for which the Durban local state was to be such an enthusiastic proponent in the following decades. This early segregation drive did not, though, develop into a concerted programme of segregation. It was essentially a foretaste of what was to follow in the 1950s. In the 1930s wholesale segregation was prevented by a legal loophole. The 1923 Act laid down that in order to evict an urban resident, a municipality must first be able to provide alternative accommodation for the evicted person. This condition placed the onus on the Durban corporation to provide more housing for Africans. It was in this context that Lamont township was constructed, to the south of Durban, and opened for occupation in 1934. But the building of Lamont was a mere drop in the ocean. The corporation was unwilling to provide the finance to embark on a substantial programme of African housing. Moreover it was not yet entirely committed to the principle of constructing African townships, which in themselves amounted to an implicit recognition of labour stabilisation. Rather was Durban's housing policy coming to be based on a dual system: township accommodation for "stabilised" families, and single quarters for migrant workers. This was a housing policy that reflected the growing shift towards a system of "differentiated labour-power" in Durban.

During this phase from about 1920 until the mid-1930s the issues of influx control and segregation came more and more on to the agendas of both the central government and the Durban corporation. And measures were adopted that were to form the basis of urban apartheid. In our third phase, from the mid-1930s until the early 1950s, the political economy of Durban and its hinterland changed significantly. This change was to lead ultimately to a more intensive implementation of influx control and segregation. The end of this phase was also to see a change of government in South Africa. Many have ascribed the intensification of urban apartheid in the 1950s to the newly elected Nationalist government. This assumption needs to be seriously questioned. As we shall see, the Durban corporation, which was not controlled by a Nationalist city council, was to show itself to be an enthusiastic proponent of urban apartheid.

From the mid-1930s those trends that had begun to change the face of Durban during the previous twenty years or so gathered momentum. The city's manufacturing sector, which had enjoyed occasional phases of growth before the mid-1930s, now began to develop significantly. World War Two provided a major

stimulus. The metal and engineering industries assumed special importance during wartime. And demand for locally produced clothing rose as the war drastically curtailed imports. While the manufacturing sector was growing, Durban's rural hinterland was, for various reasons, providing a less and less stable material existence for African communities. The reserve economies continued to deteriorate under the worsening burdens of overpopulation, overstocking and soil exhaustion. The 1936 Land Act rendered ever more precarious the position of labour tenants on white farms.

Rural immiseration had the effect of driving more and more Africans away from the countryside. Industrial expansion, and the accompanying growth in labour demand, made Durban a natural destination for rural emigrants. The estimated size of Durban's African population rose from 63,457 in 1936 to about 150,000 in 1949.[30] Moreover, the composition of this population increase gave an irreversible demographic impetus to stabilisation in the form of a changing male/female ratio. Between 1936 and 1946 Durban's African female population doubled from about 14,200 to about 28,500. Over the same period the ratio of African males to African females declined from 3,46:1 to 2,65:1.[31]

These are clear indicators of a trend towards stabilisation. But the proportion of African migrants to permanent city-dwellers still remained very high in Durban in the mid-1940s. According to an official government estimate for the year 1946, about 74% of Durban's African population were migrants. However, an unofficial estimate for 1953 reckoned that about 50% were migrants.[32] It is unlikely that such a significant shift in the balance had occurred over a mere seven years. Rather is the disparity between the figures a reflection of the difficulties involved in achieving accurate estimates and in making a rigid distinction between migrants and non-migrants. Many Africans seem to have been weekly commuters between Durban and the reserves; to classify them would have been problematic.

Whatever the exact proportion of migrants to non-migrants, the "differentiation of labour-power" was becoming a demographic reality in Durban in the 1940s. And it was a reality that neither the central state nor the Durban local state could try to wish away. Central state thinking was reflected in the reports of the Smit Committee and the Fagan Commission in the 1940s, both of which acknowledged the inevitability of African urbanisation and the irreversibility of labour stabilisation. The Minister of Native Affairs, van der Byl, stated the position clearly in a meeting with the Durban city council in November 1945:

> The influx of families is the result of industrial development. It is a penalty of all-round prosperity. Industry requires a permanent labour force - stabilised labour - which gives greater

> efficiency. It will pay higher wages for a man who will stay on the job all the year round with an annual two or three week holiday. Therefore the Native no longer goes home every six or nine months. But he is not prepared to sacrifice his family life so he brings his family to town and houses them where he can.[33]

This also seems to have been the dominant line of thinking in the Durban corporation in the 1940s. It was partly a case of coming to terms with realities. But Durban's departure from the older approach may have been made easier by the retirement of the ardent Stallardist, Layman, in 1936 and his replacement by T.J. Chester as Manager of the municipal Native Administration Department. Chester seems to have been more of a benevolent paternalist. Even Champion had some good words to say about him: "The Administration of the present Manager's predecessor [Layman] was just the opposite of what we gladly enjoy today [under Chester]."[34] No doubt Chester's rejection of a rigid Stallardist line partly explains his relative popularity.

It would, however, be wrong to assume that the Durban corporation's abandonment of Stallardism implied also a relaxation of the controls exercised over the city's African population. Both the central state and the Durban corporation retained a fundamental concern to limit the African urban influx to labour needs. Towards this end the influx control system was tightened, intermittently rather than progressively, from the late 1930s. A key measure was the 1937 Native Laws Amendment Act. This legislation strengthened the influx control and expulsion powers of local authorities. No African could enter an urban area without the necessary permission. Illegal entrants could be removed. Local authorities could refuse entry to any African if there was a surplus of labour in the urban area concerned. And in order to determine whether such a surplus existed or not, each local authority would be required to conduct a biennial census, supplying details of African population and employment levels.[35]

The central government in the late 1930s was alarmed at the growing African urban influx and was determined to curb it.[36] Thus the 1937 Act was followed by an intensified implementation of pass controls and a rapid increase in prosecutions for pass offences. Influx control was tightened even further by a proclamation issued in 1940. This restricted the right of Africans to enter urban areas under the control of certain local authorities only to those seeking or taking up employment or on a bona fide temporary visit.[37]

By 1940 it appeared as though a trend was developing towards a more rigorous and repressive influx control system, prefiguring the pattern of the 1950s and 1960s. However, during the 1940s the pattern was interrupted, particularly in Durban. There were two main, interconnected reasons for this. First, an

ever more stringent implementation of influx control was not always in the interests of a city like Durban. The Durban economy tended to be subject to fluctuations in labour demand. These could be short-term and seasonal, depending on shipping levels and the holiday trade, or of a longer-term nature, depending on wider business conditions. Such fluctuations required a more flexible implementation of influx control. This can be illustrated for the late 1930s. As we have just seen, the central government was tightening influx control at this time. But in 1938 Durban was enjoying a low unemployment level. Its 1938 census revealed that only 2% of African males in the city were unemployed. Chester was concerned that influx control might endanger the city's labour supply: "The present labour requirements of the City indicate that the present influx of Natives to take the place of those returning to their homes should not be restricted, as the percentage of unemployed is infinitesimal."[38] The following year Chester was urging that native commissioners throughout Natal be asked not to discourage Africans from coming to Durban to obtain work.[39]

The second factor inhibiting the implementation of influx control was the outbreak of World War Two. Durban was a key contributor to the country's war effort. During the war the city's economy boomed. At the same time, the drain of personnel to the war front placed a severe strain on the state apparatus. It was largely in order to relieve pressure on the police that the government decided in 1942 to relax the pass laws in the major urban areas. Passes could now only be demanded from an African suspected of criminal activity.

The combined effect of Durban's war-time boom and the relaxation of the pass laws was to bring Africans flocking into the city. In time the influx began to exceed the demand for labour. And from 1944 key figures and bodies in the local state began to call for the full reimplementation of the pass laws. Early in 1944 a conference was held on the 'Alleged Increase of Native Crime in Durban'. The participants at the conference -- the chief magistrate, district commandant, the local native commissioner, the town clerk, and city council representatives -- called for the reimposition of the pass laws to check crime.[40] Chester complained that since the relaxation of pass controls "Durban had become the refuge for a considerable number of workshy and dissolute natives and under the existing conditions it was not possible to deal expeditiously with these undesirables."[41]

The Durban corporation was caught in a contradiction. It needed the labour to service the city's growing economy. But local officials were unhappy with the urban influx, which seemed in their view to exacerbate the social problems that they associated with the African presence. As Chester put it, "We wanted their labour, and either we had to sabotage our war effort by turning them out of town, or tolerate them where they were at Cato Manor. We took the lesser of the two evils."[42] In order to

manage the contradiction as best as possible the local state continued to direct its efforts towards regulating urban migration in accordance with labour demand. But this exercise remained problematic as labour demand continued to fluctuate and the calculation of demand tended to be uncertain and inexact. These variables militated against a consistent implementation of influx control and made for the kind of vacillation and hesitancy that characterised the Durban corporation's policy in the 1940s. The municipal records reveal the corporation's concern that the administration of influx control be as flexible as possible and allow for fluctuations over time and changing local needs.

Such flexibility may have been possible for most of the 1940s because the central state had not yet firmly imposed its stamp on urban policy. This, though, began to change after the accession to power of the National Party in 1948. The Nationalist government showed itself to be less prepared to make concessions to meet particular local needs, and more concerned to achieve a greater centralisation and uniformity in urban policy. One of the new government's immediate concerns was to remove "surplus" labour from urban areas. Thus the Durban corporation received a telegram from the Department of Native Affairs in May 1949 stating that the Minister was "perturbed at high percentage of unemployed [Africans in Durban]. Steps should be taken to remove unemployed from urban area."[43] The government also applied itself eagerly to the task of standardising and tightening the mechanisms that controlled and restricted the movement of Africans. Amended registration regulations, aimed at African work-seekers or temporary visitors to urban areas, were promulgated in 1949.[44] The Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act was passed in 1952, consolidating existing pass laws and introducing a standard pass book for Africans. In the same year a new Native Laws Amendment Act further strengthened the influx control apparatus. The aim and effect of this measure was to reinforce the growing differentiation between the stabilised African proletariat and temporary migrants. The right to permanent urban residence depended on strict qualifications being met. The access of temporary migrants to urban areas was to be restricted according to labour requirements.[45]

It is beyond the scope of this essay to probe in any detail the growing centralisation of state urban policy under the Nationalists in the 1950s and the impact of this process on Durban. It can be said that this growing centralisation may have introduced a new uniformity and rigidity into influx control; and it would have limited the possibilities for the flexible implementation that the Durban corporation had desired in previous years. However, the approach of the Nationalist government did not represent any radical new departures from earlier urban policies. The underlying features of state policy continued to rest on the basic objectives of the pre-1948 era: to limit the African urban presence according to labour

requirements, by excluding or removing people surplus to those requirements; and to secure a differentiation in status among those whose labour was required - a differentiation between 'stabilised' proletarians and temporary migrants. Moreover, this basic approach of the Nationalist government was not out of line with the Durban corporation's thinking on influx control. Although there had, over the years, been some shifts in this thinking, it had consistently been rooted in those same basic concerns which shaped government policy in the 1930s and beyond.

A similar picture of compatibility and congruity between the policies of the Durban corporation and the central government becomes apparent when we examine our second main theme, urban segregation, for this period from the mid-1930s to the early 1950s. We have already seen how a segregationist drive against Africans was launched in Durban in the early 1930s. In the 1940s a similar drive was directed against Indians. Many whites had been agitating against the growing "penetration" of Indians into predominantly white-owned residential and trading areas. In 1943, under pressure from the Durban city council, the government appointed Justice Broome as a one-man commission to investigate the extent of Indian "penetration" in Durban. His report, which indicated that "penetration" was on the increase, was followed by restrictive legislation. The Trading and Occupation of Land (Transvaal and Natal) Restriction Act, commonly known as the "Pegging Act", was passed in 1943. It was a temporary measure designed to restrict property transfers between whites and Indians in Durban for three years. This was followed in 1946 by the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act, or "Ghetto Act", a wider, more permanent measure that applied to the whole of Natal. Among its provisions was one creating controlled and uncontrolled areas. In the uncontrolled areas there were to be no racial restrictions on property transfers; but in the controlled areas inter-racial property transfers would be prohibited, except by ministerial permit.[46]

This assault on Indian property-owners was part of a larger segregationist blueprint that was being formulated in Durban in the 1940s. In 1943 the city council's Post-War Development Committee, believing that it was in the interests of each racial group to be housed in separate areas, recommended that a system of racial zoning be introduced in Durban. The city's Valuator and Estates Manager had submitted a broad plan, according to which certain areas of Durban would be set aside for particular race groups. This formed the basis of the committee's recommendation. The segregationist map of Durban envisaged by the Valuator and Estates Manager was based on the projected growth of the city's industrial areas to the west and south of the harbour. Segregated residential zones would therefore have to be established "for the four races to serve the Old Borough Area and also, for the four races to serve the industrial area". A remarkable feature of this plan was the extent to which it prefigured the pattern of segregation that came to be formally

implemented under the Group Areas Act from the 1950s.[47]

While key figures in the Durban local state were thinking more and more along these segregationist lines in the 1940s, the corporation was not carrying the blueprint through. Implementation of the blueprint would have involved a considerable financial commitment from Durban, particularly for the provision of African township housing. The corporation was not prepared to make this commitment. It is true that there was some expansion in the provision of formal accommodation for Africans from the late 1930s, best illustrated by the opening of Chesterville in the mid-1940s. But this limited expansion was never sufficient to keep pace with the rapid growth of the city's African population. Thus by the late 1940s vast shack settlements had grown in and around Durban - a trend hardly in keeping with the segregationist blueprint which could not permit such uncontrolled residential expansion.

Moreover, in the 1940s the Durban corporation was under no pressure from the central government to implement wholesale segregation. Indeed, the Durban corporation seems to have been ahead of the central government in its thinking on this issue in the 1940s. Rather was the Department of Native Affairs in Pretoria at this time preoccupied in trying to devise ways of reducing the cost of African housing. Department officials were stressing the need for mass housing for Africans to meet the backlog; this would inevitably involve the construction of individual housing units of poorer quality. Cut out the 'frills', use cheaper building materials, and employ African labour on construction schemes - these were some of the cost-saving proposals. The idea of Africans building their own homes in controlled village settlement schemes was also given favourable consideration.[48]

The accession to power of the Nationalist government in 1948 was followed by a more vigorous and forceful pursuit of an urban segregation policy, as embodied in the 1950 Group Areas Act. It has sometimes been suggested that the group areas policy was inflexibly imposed by a monolithic central government on some non-Nationalist municipal authorities (such as Durban) that did not accept the group areas principle. This was certainly not the case with Durban. It is true that the Durban corporation might not have implemented a wholesale segregation scheme without the push from the Nationalist government and the element of compulsion inherent in the Group Areas Act. Nevertheless it remains equally true that the Durban corporation was an enthusiastic supporter of the group areas principle, from the inception of the legislation. The Group Areas Act was passed in 1950. Its immediate effect was to restrict transfers of property between members of different racial groups. Much more significant was its longer-term objective. The act created the machinery, in the form of the Group Areas Board, for the demarcating of group areas. The Board would advise the government as to which areas should be demarcated for the

exclusive ownership or occupation, or both, of a particular racial group. Such demarcation could then be enforced by proclamation."[49]

The Durban corporation's enthusiasm for the group areas model is borne out by the report of the City Council's technical sub-committee, appointed in November 1950 to consider the racial zoning of Durban. The report came out firmly in support of the principle of racial residential segregation, the necessity for this arising "primarily from the desire of persons of the same group to live in the same neighbourhood".[50] But it was not just a case of keeping people of different races apart. In some draft notes produced by the technical sub-committee a bizarre justification was presented for separating white properties and Indian smallholdings. The argument went like this: both whites and Indians kept dogs and chickens, but while whites confined their chickens to coops and let their dogs roam free, Indians chained their dogs and let the chickens free. The result was that white dogs attacked Indian chickens, and relations between the two communities deteriorated.[51]

The sub-committee's support for segregation did not, of course, arise out of a concern to protect Indian-owned chickens. The sub-committee had a clear idea of how the demarcation of group areas could facilitate the social and political control of the black underclasses in Durban, without endangering the labour supply. It realised, for instance, that it would be simpler for the police and military apparatus to deal with large, racially homogeneous areas than with a racial patchwork. It urged that segregation be as complete and effective as possible. Zones should be so demarcated that members of one racial group should not have to travel through the zone of another group. And racial zones should be separated by effective boundaries. Natural features, such as rivers, valleys or hills, formed ideal barriers, in the sub-committee's view, while belts of industrial or commercial development served as the most effective artificial barriers. Such belts also formed another important thread in the segregation pattern. Group areas planners deemed it essential that residents in segregated areas should have easy access to their place of work. Thus the demarcation of racial zones in Durban would take into account the main centres of employment for each racial group."[52]

It is beyond the scope of this essay to examine the details of the eventual group areas demarcation in Durban. The technical sub-committee first drew up a set of particular proposals. In their basic outline these followed the segregation plan put forward by the 1943 sub-committee. But in some respects the proposals of the 1951 sub-committee were too far-reaching even for the Durban city council. The sub-committee recommended, for instance, that the main residential area between the Umbilo and Umgeni Rivers be reserved for whites. This would have involved the large-scale displacement of thousands of Indians from Sydenham and Springfield. When the city council eventually

considered the sub-committee's proposals it was not prepared to endorse such a massive displacement. It accordingly suggested that those areas of Sydenham and Springfield occupied by Indians should remain an Indian zone. But the city council largely accepted the sub-committee's basic proposal for the demarcation of African zones. These would fall in two main areas, to the south and north of Durban.[53] It seems that the Durban corporation had particularly strong feelings about the belt of land owned or occupied by Africans and Indians to the west, namely Cato Manor and Chesterville. The objection was that this belt "cut off" the inland white residential areas like Westville. In May 1951 a deputation from Durban, including the mayor and city officials, voiced this objection to the Minister of Native Affairs. The minister was not as sympathetic as the deputation would have liked, and perhaps expected. He could not permit immediate wholesale removals from the area; and in the short term living conditions in Cato Manor would have to be improved.[54]

This last exchange between the central government and the Durban corporation further illustrates one of the central themes of this essay, namely the nature of the relationship and interaction between the central state and the Durban local state. Some theorists have contended that the local state is essentially the arm or extension of the central state. Such a contention is not borne out by this case-study. For the first three decades or so of the twentieth century the Durban local state enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy in the way it approached the management of its black underclasses. From the late 1930s in particular the central state increasingly began to invade that autonomous sphere; and the accession to power of the Nationalists in 1948 was to be followed over the next decades by a gradual centralisation of power and a corresponding diminution of local autonomy in the management of the black underclasses. However, even as local state power was being gradually weakened, the Durban corporation continued to assert its own interests. This study of influx control administration has shown that the Durban corporation and the central state were often out of tune with each other. In the late 1930s, when the central state was trying to tighten influx control, the Durban corporation was calling for it to be relaxed. In the early 1940s, after the government had suspended the pass laws, Durban officials demanded tighter controls to restrict the African influx into the city.

The passing of the Group Areas Act might also be seen as a symptom of the growing centralisation of state power at the expense of municipal autonomy. In some respects this was so, and in the case of Cape Town very much so. But in the case of Durban it would be entirely wrong to conclude that the group areas model was imposed upon an unwilling and uncooperative local authority. Officialdom in Durban had shown its enthusiasm for urban racial segregation long before the Group Areas Act. In the early 1930s a local segregationist drive gained some momentum. And in the 1940s segregation was still very much on the agenda of municipal

policy-makers. So for Durban, the Group Areas Act did not represent any major new departures at the policy level. Its main impact was to spur the corporation into devising and implementing a thorough system of residential segregation. It was the kind of system that Durban officials had been favouring over the years but had lacked the will or the resources to implement.

Influx control and segregation represent two key components in the system of urban management and reproduction developed in South African cities during the course of the twentieth century. This essay has tried to illuminate the particular local dynamic that lay behind the evolution of this system in the city of Durban. The Durban case-study serves to warn against any simplified view of the central state/local state relation. It also tries to warn against any reductionist analysis of urban apartheid. Certainly economic imperatives weighed heavily in the Durban corporation's implementation of influx control and segregation. As we have seen, as the influx control system became more refined so was it supposed to be more closely geared to the labour needs of Durban. And the evolving pattern of segregation tried to ensure a suitable allocation of residential space in relation to centres of employment. However, neither influx control and segregation can be explained in terms of economic imperatives alone. Both need to be examined in relation to the collective mentality of Durban's predominantly white middle class. In the eyes of the majority of Durban's white residents the African presence in the city has for decades been (and continues to be) closely associated with problems of crime, disease and disorder. Thus a major aim of influx control has been to limit the intrusion of these problems into the city by excluding those Africans who were surplus to labour requirements. Similarly, a significant purpose of urban segregation has been to insulate and immunise middle-class residential areas against these perceived dangers. Ultimately it has been a matter of ensuring the exploitability of labour-power, while maximising the invisibility of the labourers.

FOOTNOTES

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1. See T.R.H. Davenport, "African Townsmen? South African Natives (Urban Areas) Legislation through the Years", *African Affairs*, 68, 1969; T.R.H. Davenport, "The Triumph of Colonel Stallard: The Transformation of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act between 1923 and 1937", *South African Historical Journal*, 2, 1970; T.R.H. Davenport, "The Beginnings of Urban Segregation in South Africa: The Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 and its Background" (ISER Occasional Paper, no.15, Rhodes University, 1973).
2. Doug Hindson, *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat* (Johannesburg, 1987).
3. See, for instance, M.W. Swanson, "The 'Durban System': Roots of urban apartheid in colonial Natal", *African Studies*, 1976; C.C. Saunders, "The creation of Ndabeni: urban segregation and African resistance in Cape Town", *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, 1, 1979; E. Koch, "The destruction of Marabi culture: urban segregation in Johannesburg, 1923-1938" (unpublished paper, History Workshop, Johannesburg, 1984).
4. Swanson, "Durban System", p.161.
5. Gavin Maasdorp and A.S.B. Humphreys, *From Shantytown to Township*, (Cape Town, 1975), p.10.
6. Department of Native Affairs (DNA) files, vol.2067, 138/280, Natal: Native Labour Supply 1911-39. Memorandum by J. Reynolds Tait, 1911.
7. D. Hemson, "Class Consciousness and Migrant Workers: Dock Workers of Durban" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Warwick, 1979), pp.83-90.
8. South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903-1905, Minutes of Evidence, Volume III, Q.28,351.
9. *Ibid*., Q.28,193.
10. *Ibid*., Q.28,351; Swanson, "Durban System", p.172.
11. See Hemson, "Class Consciousness", pp.100-109.
12. Paul la Hausse, "The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902-1936" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1984), p.76.
13. Durban Town Clerk's Files (DTCF), 4/1/2/1173, Native Pass System. Extract from the *Natal Advertiser*, February 1916.
14. DTCF, 4/1/2/1174, Native Registration Bye-laws. Mayor of Durban to Prime Minister, 12 January 1917.
15. *Ibid*., 4/1/2/1176. Memorandum by Acting Town Clerk, 17 June 1930.
16. South African Native Affairs Commission, 1903-1905, Minutes of Evidence, Volume III, Qs.28,257 and 28,265.

17. DTCF, 4/1/2/1174, Native Registration Bye-laws. Marwick to Town Clerk (TC), 7 February 1917.
18. Maasdorp and Humphreys, Shantytown, p.9.
19. Quoted in Davenport, "Colonel Stallard", pp.86-87; see also Report of the Native Economic Commission, 1930-32, U.G.22, 1932, Part III, pp.72, 77.
20. Davenport, "Colonel Stallard", p.77.
21. Hindson, Pass Controls, pp.10-11.
22. Durban Native Administration Committee (DNAC) Agenda Book, 27 July 1931.
23. S.C. 3-23, Select Committee on Native Affairs, 1923.
24. DTCF, 4/1/2/75, Natives (Urban Areas) Bill. Statement by Layman, 3 March 1923.
25. DTCF, 4/1/3/1624, Registration of Natives. Proclamation of Urban Area of Durban under Section Twelve of Act No. 21 of 1923; D.C. Hindson, "The Pass System and the Formation of an Urban African Proletariat in South Africa: A Critique of the Cheap Labour-Power Thesis" (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Sussex, 1983), pp.86-90.
26. DTCF, 4/1/2/1177, Registration of Natives. Acting TC to Chief Constable, 17 June 1930; Hemson, "Class Consciousness", p.267.
27. DNAC Agenda Book, 25 August 1931. Whitsitt to TC, 19 August 1931.
28. See DNAC Agenda Books, 19 September and 17 November 1933, 16 July and 14 December 1934.
29. Ibid., 6 February 1936. Layman to TC, 24 January 1936; ibid., 28 February 1936. Whitsitt to TC; ibid., 15 March 1937. Cllr. Kemp to TC, 1 March 1937.
30. DTCF, subject no. 290 P, Judicial Commission on Native Affairs in Durban. Durban City Council's memorandum, ch.II, p.1; DNA, vol.5389, 29/313 G, Durban Municipality: Kaffir Beer. Memorandum by P. Gray, 27 June 1950. Note that the 1936 and 1946 figures are derived from the official government census of those years; the other figures are municipal estimates.
31. DTCF, Subject no. 290 P, Judicial Commission on Native Affairs in Durban. Durban City Council's memorandum, ch.II, p.1.
32. Ibid. Report of the Judicial Commission on Native Affairs in Durban, 31 January 1948, p.18; Iain Edwards, "Nurturing the soil to protect you from politics: the African proletariat in Durban in the early 1950s" (unpublished conference paper, Oxford University, September 1987), pp.12-13.
33. DTCF, 4/1/3/1622, Registration of Natives. Minutes of Council-in-Committee, 14 November 1945.
34. DTCF, Native Locations, file 10. Champion to TC, 21 April 1947.
35. Hindson, "Pass System", pp.97-101. As it turned out, only one such municipal census was undertaken, in 1938.

36. DTCF, 4/1/3/1618, Registration of Natives. Chester to TC, 8 September 1938.
37. Ibid., 4/1/3/1619. Proclamation no.39, 1 March 1940.
38. Ibid., 4/1/3/1618. Chester to TC, 8 September 1938.
39. Ibid., 4/1/3/1619. Chester to TC, 8 November 1939.
40. Ibid., 4/1/3/1621. Memorandum by TC, 7 December 1944.
41. Ibid., 4/1/3/1622. Minutes of DNAC, 13 September 1945.
42. Quoted in Paul Maylam, "The 'Black Belt': African Squatters in Durban 1935-1950", Canadian Journal of African Studies, 17, 1983, p.419.
43. DNA, vol. 5389, 29/313 G. Memorandum by P. Gray, 27 June 1950.
44. U.G. Extraordinary, 30 May 1949. Government Notice 1032, 1 May 1949.
45. Hindson, Pass Controls, pp.61-64.
46. The Durban Housing Survey, by the Department of Economics, University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg, 1952), pp.403-409; Uma Mesthrie, "From Sastri to Deshmukh: A Study of the Role of the Government of India's Representatives in South Africa, 1927 to 1946" (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Natal, 1988), pp.241-46.
47. Jeff McCarthy, "Changing the Definition of Natal's Metropolitan Areas: The Case of Durban 1930-1987" (unpublished paper, Workshop on Regionalism and Restructuring in Natal, University of Natal, January 1988), pp.8-13; Durban Housing Survey, pp.405-408.
48. Examples of such thinking can be found in DNA, vol.4270, 120/313, vol.2. DNA memorandum, "Housing in Urban Native Areas", June 1940; "Notes on the question of cheaper urban native housing", 20 January 1944; "Extension of National Housing Scheme with special reference to native housing needs", January 1948.
49. Durban Housing Survey, pp.409-16.
50. DNA, vol.5304, 29/313(E), Durban - Segregation. First Report of the Technical Sub-Committee on Race Zoning, Part I, June 1951.
51. Ibid. Draft Notes on Some Aspects of the Group Areas Act in Relation to Durban, by the Technical Sub-Committee.
52. Durban Housing Survey, pp.418-21.
53. Ibid., pp.431-45.
54. DNA, vol.5304, 29/313(E), Durban - Segregation. Secretary for Native Affairs to Provincial Secretary, 15 May 1951.