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HISTORY WORKSHOP

APARTHEID SUBJECTS AND POST-COLONIALISM:
NATIVE ADMINISTRATORS IN PORT ELIZABETH, 1945-1970

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1. Introduction

During the course of the Twentieth Century, Native Administrators have played a significant part in both implementing and shaping state policies with respect to African people in urban areas. Responsible for the day to day administration of formal African townships, they were the "face" of government in many localities. Their influence spread beyond the routine tasks of administration, though. As I have discussed elsewhere, through various meetings, institutes and communications, native administrators around the country developed some common strategies and practices and contributed to the formulation of policy at both a local and a national level (Robinson, 1991). Their interventions in specific African communities were also frequently beyond the routine, and administrators played an important role in containing African political resistance (see for example, Sapire, 1993). Seldom, however, have our historical accounts focused upon these administrators themselves. Usually they appear in narratives more concerned with local political struggles, or tales of segregationist initiatives (Atkinson, 1991). In this paper, I wish to present some more detailed evidence concerning the native administrators in Port Elizabeth, who were responsible for the government of New Brighton township. The backgrounds and work experiences of these men, together with their administrative practices and their relationships with those they were governing will form the focus of attention here.

My interest in these administrators grew out of a concern for explaining state interests in urban segregation. Why, I asked, did the state (rather than racist whites, or exploitative capitalists) wish to re-shape urban areas along racial lines? I explored the role of various

disciplines, or rationalities within the state, as well as the place of imperatives to govern in this ordering of urban space (Robinson, 1990a, 1994a), and identified the "profession" of native administration (amongst others such as planning, health and policing) as crucial to the articulation of this relationship between state capacity and spatial form (Robinson, 1992). While the territorial nature of the Port Elizabeth native administration department (PENAD) does not emerge very strongly in this paper, it is my general argument that the coincidence of race and space was crucial to the ability of the Apartheid state to control the growing urban African population. More important for the present discussion, however, is the particular interpretation we offer in writing about these historical subjects, native administrators, and it is to this question that I wish to turn before proceeding to examine the strategies and tactics of the employees of the PENAD in the post-World-War II period.

2. Creating Apartheid subjects in history

In contrast with many South African historians' concerns to explore the economic processes which have been structuring of society (and space - although this latter has been curiously neglected given the severe spatiality of Apartheid South Africa), my work, and that of some others, has been concerned to set out some of the dynamics of state power and state interests, as well as the way in which some important networks of knowledge/power have shaped South African society. The metaphors underpinning this work, while suitably attuned to historical specificity and changes in space and time, have, in the most part, been associated with the attainment or loss of control of power. Almost a zero-sum phenomenon, local and central state apparatuses have built up their capacities for surveillance, successfully contained political, collective and individual protests or else they have failed and "the community" has seized a measure of power for itself, challenging the effectiveness of state control, leading to yet another round of state-building and efforts to implement more effectively the techniques and strategies of power upon which the success of the system of domination depended[1].

[1] Some evidence in relation to this is presented in Greenberg, 1987 and Posel, 1990.

An important critique of this view of the apparatuses of racial domination has been offered by Doreen Atkinson (1991) who suggests that the relations of power in urban areas were much more negotiated. Indeed, she demonstrates that "moral communities" were forged in which administrators, the local state and urban communities together negotiated their understandings of the basis of governance, and of the nature and meaning of urban African citizenship. No zero-sum game, then, but a complex negotiation of the moral and substantive bases for the exercise of political power. The interface between the dominator and the dominated, she argues, is a far more complicated phenomenon than a focus simply upon the exercise of power, even in its capillary and fragmented forms, suggests.

That the relationship between "coloniser" and "colonised" is more complex than this is, of course, reinforced by the growing body of literature concerned to explore and specify the nature of "post-colonial" societies. Here we receive support for Atkinson's (1991) description of the ongoing mediation and negotiation of meaning between subjects embroiled in the colonisation process. No longer inhabiting the rigidly separate domains of coloniser/dominator and colonial subject/dominated, the very constitution of these contesting subjects is seen to be intertwined. It would therefore seem to be important that we take a more critical look at the kinds of subjects which our historical and geographical imaginations are conjuring up from the historical record.

South Africa's history is firmly tied to the global trajectories of colonialism and imperialism. Ideas, techniques and practices of racial domination in South Africa have drawn upon and refined those which emerged from colonial experiences and racist practices elsewhere. The writing of South African history and geography has also been shaped by the intellectual histories which have been linked to colonialism and post-colonialism: from those defensive stories of colonial "civilizing" interventions, to the nationalist liberation tales of the anti-Apartheid struggle. However, South African historians and geographers have yet to explore in much detail the implications of recent post-colonial writings and theorising for the ways in which we have constructed our accounts of the past and our interventions in the present. The laborious and frequently nerve-wracking efforts to create a post-Apartheid order have revealed the veracity of those whose ideas we label "post-colonial": for in this world-historic effort to shake-off the "last word" in racism (Derrida, 1985), Apartheid, we have become

increasingly aware of the persistence of elements of the old order, as well as of the mutual transformations involved in negotiating the demise of old identities and powers. Political positions are contested and fluid; political identities often surprising to interpretations of society which built upon a (dualistic) radical history.

There are many important themes to draw upon in this convergence between colonialism, post-colonialism, their theoretical dimensions, and the rise and recent demise of Apartheid. In this paper, I want to explore these very wide concerns in the following more limited sense: I would like to address the implications of post-colonial interpretations of colonial and post-colonial history for the ways in which we write about subjects in South African history.

The emblematic "post-colonial" position is that of the hybrid, or syncretic subject (Ashcroft et al, 1989). The closed positions of "the same" and "the other" are not easily available in a world "after" colonialism, except insofar as they may be retained by mechanisms and strategies of social closure. Apartheid, for example, serves as a constant signifier of the binary dualisms which support/ed all sorts of opposing dichotomous subject positions (Minh-ha, 1989). To defend unmediated subject positions in a world after colonialism, then, we would have to deny our global and national pasts and erect complex barriers around our subjectivities in order to defend our endocentricity. Post-colonial theorists would argue that colonised and ex-colonised people have been inextricably entwined in the subjectivities of the colonizers (and vice versa), have inhabited the "in-between spaces" which cross-cultural contact - even of the most violent and segregating kind, such as Apartheid - creates. This does not imply a de-politicised and quiescent approach to history. Rather, as Homi Bhabha argues, in taking account of these processes of the mutual constitution of the subjects of the colonial process

> "it is possible ... to redeem the pathos of cultural confusion into a strategy of political subversion....In occupying two places at once...the depersonalised, dislocated colonial subject can become an incalculable object, quite literally, difficult to place. The demand of authority cannot unify its message nor simply identify its subjects. For the strategy of colonial desire is to stage the drama of identity at the point at which the black mask slips to reveal the white skin. At that edge, in between the black body and the white body, there is a tension of meaning and being, or some would say demand and desire...It is from that tension - both psychic and political - that a strategy of subversion

> emerges. It is a mode of negation that seeks not to unveil the fullness of Man but to manipulate his representation. It is a form of power that is manipulated at the very limits of identity and authority, in the mocking spirit of mask and image" (Bhabha, 1986: xxii).

In the colonial encounter, then, we observe not only an engagement between two symbolic orders, but also the impossibility of asserting an original subjectivity, or of finding in history coherent, non-contradictory subjects. Indeed, it becomes important to challenge the places prescibed for subjects, "others" from the perspective of Western discourse (Young, 1990). Such places need to be different from those set out by Western discourse, generallyappearing in the form of an "other-of-the-same", and both a racialised as well as gendered other. And it is important to bear in mind the extent to which these two hierarchies - race and gender - have been mutually supportive: as historians have suggested, the West's encounter with the Orient was fundamentally sexualised (Said, 1978; Nandy, 1983; Mitchell, 1988), with the Orient being represented as "woman" to be dominated and controlled, and images of conquest were intrinsically sexualised (Spivak, 1986). This is an important aspect of political power in South Africa which we have not considered enough in general, and which still needs to be explored in the case of urban politics, and more specifically, native administrators (for an exception see Mager and Minkley, 1993).

To engage with these efforts to re-read our colonial past and to examine our own complicity in colonial and imperialist narratives is to enter a terrain concerned with the positionality of authors and the complicity of the texts we produce. It is also to require of us at least some preliminary conceptualisations of alternative ways of writing our histories. While there is not the opportunity for me to explore these questions in any detail here (they have been discussed at length in South African feminist circles - see Hassim and Walker, 1993; Lewis, 1993; Robinson, 1994) - in the course of my argument, I will try to point out some of the ways in which the subject positions of myself and others writing South African history has at least partly shaped our scripting of this world-historic acting out of the colonial encounter (see also Robinson, 1994b).

Although there have been some important revisions of our understanding of Apartheid in the last five or so years, I would suggest that the nature of subjects we write into History still

remains to be addressed. A focus upon the state has caused some leading historians to question earlier assessments of Apartheid as a grand shema, implemented with ruthless efficiency by a large and impersonal state machinery. That Apartheid was rather more cobbled together, frequently ineffective and contradictory, and also more closely linked to the kinds of modernising projects which states everywhere have undertaken has emerged as a consensus of a new generation of historians (Posel, 1987; Dubow, 1989; Bonner et al, 1993). However, it seems that these analyses still rely upon conceptions of the subjects of Apartheid which reproduce the colonial/Apartheid dualisms, with dominating state actors and resisting, oppressed individuals and groups.

Indeed, the exploration of subjectivity and positionality amongst historians has been limited to trying to understand the processes which produce effective political identities: identities which are frequently pre-given by the narrative structures with which we operate, either consciously or unconsciously (on this see Robinson, 1994b). Excesses to these assumed identities are frequently explained as exceptions, leaving the primary historical agents intact, and the rational foundations of the writer's explanation preserved. A partial exception to this is found in La Hausse's (1993) study of what he terms the 'picaresque' in African political identity. A notion with close similarities to the more indigenous "trickster" of folk tales, La Hausse mobilises this metaphor in an attempt to explain the strangely ambiguous character of some African petty bourgeois politicians/businessmen/swindlers in early twentieth century Natal. La Hausse offers this as a metaphor for a particular grouping of African politicians and petty bourgeoisie, attempting to survive in the interstices of a world which is presenting decreasing opportunities for themselves, caught always between collaboration with the state and their ability to live off of their own communities. The grounded theorising which LaHausse embarks upon here is most interesting and arguably contributes to the generation of an indigenous, theorised account of our history. However, as with many other cases of social history, perhaps the wider implications of this specific historical account could most profitably be spelt out more fully in conjuction with the writings of post-colonial theorists, drawing inspiration from other places. Indeed, what La Hausse is presenting to us, in rich and grounded historical detail, is the outline of a post-colonial subject: hybrid, stitching together complex fragments of identities, slipping between dominant and indigenous cultures, arguably duplicitous in relation to both.

For clearly it is not only the unfortunate and opportunistic petty-bourgeois politicians of La Hausse's period whose subjectivities were so complex as to be labelled devious[2]. If, however, instead of relegating to the "outside", or seeking to ground in a particular historical-material reality, those aspects of our "characters" which undermine the structure of our historical tales, we accept the profound ambivalence and duplicity of most/all historical subjects; if we abandon the entire, well-constructed (sutured) subjects which usually people our stories, and allow the inexplicable to become a part of the explanation....then indeed, the trickster, in a whole variety of guises, becomes a useful metaphor way beyond mid-twentieth century Natal. For even as he suggests that the picaresque may have been characteristic of many "legitimate" and popular African leaders, La Hausse limits the applicability of this notion to a particular historical period, associated with specific material/economic pressures for this group of the African elite.

Can we, then, abandon our search for coherent subjects of history, unambiguously bearing the flag of liberation or resistance or clearly asserting the unflinchingly cruel violence of domination, except where this is practically impossible? If we re-examine our subjects, allowing those pieces of their characters which puzzle us to centrally contest the representations which we create, how could this change our interpretation of Apartheid power relations; could it help us to understand the transformations we are experiencing today: a period where, arguably, the "outsides"/excesses of subjects constituted through our historical narratives are coming back to haunt us? In the case study which follows I will suggest that this often fearful and always disruptive outside to traditional anti-Apartheid historical narratives should be confronted, and written into our histories and our geographies.

In terms of the present case study, interpreting spaces of exclusion such as African townships as landscapes of control relies upon an account of subjects locked in dualistic conflict. These are captured through images of opposition: the moments of public conflict, when the oppositions are clearest - exactly those moments which are easiest to locate in the historical records associated with particular localities. But if we too easily read resistance into historical

[2] And, indeed, La Hausse draws his interpretive framework from European fiction and African folklore, where similar shifting and trickster characters have, at times, attracted attention.

encounters we may miss the silent moments of co-operation, the daily negotiations of meaning which display the more complex identities which the post-colonialists have drawn our attention to. In my own research concerned with "urban native administrators", and despite my theoretical concern with and consequent narrative imperative to documenting the exercise of power in the organisation of urban space and the importance of this in effecting control and domination over African people, the ambiguities of the position and identity of the Native Administrators did emerge. Mostly, I suspect this was possible because I was concerned with the routine exercise of power, and not with the more spectacular moments of political conflict. In addition, I was theoretically unconcerned with resistance (although I did write it into the text - from habit? or perhaps from my own subject-ive concerns to wrestle with the dark drama of Apartheid - see Peckham, 1992). This meant that my main focus was upon the strategies and self-interpretations of the administrators and state officials themselves. My interpretive framework, though, led me to resolve the ambiguities and contradictions which I found in their accounts within the formal domination-resistance model. Here I suggest that this model needs to be opened up and the dissonances of the various subject-positions explored more openly.

Our interpretations of both the processes and the spaces of control must, then, be re-examined. And there is an emerging body of evidence to suggest that this is appropriate. Various types of state intervention under Apartheid have, until recently, been seen as simply the products of a malevolent and dominative state. That the form in which these interventions came closely resembled both earlier segregationist policies and welfare state initiatives elsewhere has often been obscured - especially the latter relationship. But as Hyslop (1993: 401) argues in relation to Apartheid (Bantu) Education, "The grossly racist and inegalitarian character of the new system should not obscure the fact that it introduced into South Africa a mass education system which effectively included the black working class. Important parallels can be drawn between the imposition of Bantu Education and the establishment of mass schooling in industrialising societies elsewhere."

I would suggest that a similar argument could be made with respect to the provision of housing and urban planning. While its particular segregated form, and the associated separate administrative structures associated with African areas should not be divorced from the

Apartheid project of domination, houses were built, people were housed (and the decade of the 1960s was arguably the closest South Africa ever came to solving a century-long African urban housing crisis) and state apparatuses were constructed which administered the intervention of the state in the everyday lives of ordinary people. As my own research has shown, these were quite unique structures: both in terms of housing and administration. But that we need to take seriously the element of "normality" (in a neatly Foucauldian sense) embodied in these developments means that reductionist interpretations of the Apartheid landscape must be abandoned along with our tendency to seek out caricatures of historical subjects.

My case study, based in Port Elizabeth, traces the history of the African township (New Brighton) from its origins at the turn of the century until 1971, when the administration of African urban areas was transferred from local councils to the central state. What I wish to present here are some aspects of an account of those men who administered these segregated areas as employees of the local state. Their backgrounds are interesting, and I outline these in the first part of the following section: their actions and self-interpretations more rewarding for our purposes, and I also discuss some of the evidence in regard to this. In exploring their relationship with those they governed, I hope that the ambiguities of their position emerges: despite some of my own efforts (which I will point out) to order the narrative around themes of control and domination.

3. Between control and sympathy: Native administrators in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth.

Between 1923 and 1960 the population living in the area of New Brighton and its various extensions increased from several thousand to almost one hundred thousand people. The staff whose task it was to control this population increased from a total of 45 people in 1927 - some administrative, some labourers and others medical personnel - until by 1948 the total number in the department was 66. An administrative expansion at the end of the 1950s resulted in a staff complement of 307 people. This five-fold growth reflected not only population growth and the extension of the township, but also an increase in the tasks and

scope of the administration. This is signified, for example, by the 46 staff members employed in 1959 to implement labour registration which had only been introduced in Port Elizabeth in 1953[3]. The expansion of the staff was also accompanied by a change in the ethos and style of administration, a shift which placed a strain on those administrators who had become accustomed to a particular mode of operation, and a shift which also bred a new type of administrator who was more likely to have an academic qualification, less likely to speak an African language and more inclined to pursue bureaucratic efficiency than to forge strong personal relationships with those living in the township. This period of transformation in the administration of New Brighton exposes some of the ambivalences and contradictions in the experiences and actions of the administrators themselves: ambivalences around which it is difficult to draw a clear narrative boundary.

When the Native Administrator of New Brighton since 1925, Mr. McNamee, retired in 1945, pleased to avoid the stigma of the incipient rent protests of the time (he had repeatedly urged the council not to implement rent increases since, in his opinion, people could not afford to pay any more), Mr. Charles Travis Boast was appointed as his successor. Previously a magistrate and public prosecutor in Natal, by the accounts of his staff he brought a unique style to the administration. He prided himself on always being available to any member of the township, and he apparently would spend much of his time during the day in consultation with residents who came to him with various problems. His second in command, Mr. Ivan Peter commented,

> "At that time Mr C.T.Boast's policy was that we didn't turn anyone away if they came to us at head office to complain about something that was going on in the townships, we didn't say voetsak (get lost) go and see your Superintendent, we dealt with it and you helped them as far as you thought that some injustice had been done...we helped a lot of people who had difficulties"[4]

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[3] PE Mayors Minutes (MM) 1927, Report of the Superintendent of Natives; PE MM 1948, 1959, Report of the Manager of Native Affairs (MNA).

[4] Interview with Mr Ivan Peter, 14 April 1988

Another employee, though, noted that this "probably got in the way of him managing the place"[5] Boast himself wrote that it was a time-consuming process interviewing (in 1962) some 2463 members of the "Bantu public" on matters such as eviction, domestic quarrels, rent payments, endorsements out of the area, dwelling defects or improper conduct by officials[6]

> This approach of spending many hours listening to the grievances of the population proved most useful to an administration faced with a highly organised and politicised community. It served partially to hide the political face of the administration for a time, and probably helped to defuse many a tense situation in the township. But the records again suggest that even if the administration did manage to "help" some individuals (although always within the bounds of laws and administrative directives), it was in the end still the vehicle for implementing state policy. The administrators often point out that they tried to deal with the people "as human beings, regardless of their being black or white", but their sympathy for the residents stopped at the slightest suggestion of political activity and was clearly conditional upon their "good behaviour". Moreover, the accounts of residents certainly do not support this self-image of kindness and concern.

The above paragraph (from Robinson, 1990b) is a good example of writing this history into a pre-formed narrative; a narrative informed by anti-Apartheid opposition, a narrative which fed into my own committed political and oppositional interpretation of urban history. How does one reshape this story, without becoming indecently apologetic on behalf of the administrators? Given their personal histories (see below), and their own position in white society - made inferior by their association with the "natives" - they were in a profoundly ambivalent relation to the people whose daily lives they set out to order and govern. They seem to disrupt Apartheid conventions - seeing people as human beings too, not natives or bantu only; feeling and at times expressing sympathies with the plight of their subjects. And this doubly closing appeal to the resident's perception? Who did I ask? A few activists from the time - with a strong orientation to representing the state structures as seamlessly inclined to oppress, and who indeed experienced the least ambivalence in their relations with the administration as a result of their political involvement (see below).

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[5] Interview with Mr John Poppleton, 23 May 1988.

[6] MM, 1962, Report of the MNA, p.198.

The white employees who worked for Mr. Boast were primarily men who had had some encounters with black people during their youth: Mr. Peter for example, had grown up on a farm; Mr. Reynolds' father had been the Labour Registering Officer in East London's townships; Mr. Mundell grew up in the Transkei "amongst black people" and Mr. Boast himself was the son of a Magistrate in a rural area. These experiences, while allowing the administrators the space to claim a more intimate knowledge of the "black man", were all situations of domination, places in which these men would have learnt not only the language of the indigenous people, but also the ways of the coloniser, their strategies of domination and their visions of the "other" which enabled these strategic interventions. The administrators generally spoke Xhosa or Zulu fluently, and this language requirement was the basic qualification for the job along with "knowledge of the black man". The men were not specially trained for the job, although it was expected that the manager would have some expertise in the fields of law or public administration. As a magistrate, then, Mr. Boast was well qualifed to interpret and to apply the numerous and changing laws applicable to the black population of Port Elizabeth. One of the employees, Mr. Poppleton, was something of an exception in this department. He studied at the University of Natal, Durban, taking Native Administration as a major subject (I discuss aspects of the development of the discourse and practices of the field of knowledge of Native Administration in Robinson, 1991) and then working in the Durban Native Affairs Department before moving to Port Elizabeth. Other senior members of the staff (apart from Mr. Boast with his legal qualifications) were not so highly educated, and even matriculation was not considered essential for appointment to the post of Superintendent[7].

But the crucial factor was experience, and here the department was strong. Mr. Peter, for example, had worked for many years with the central government's Native Affairs Department and then as a labour controller on the mine compounds. After this he had moved to East London as a Superintendent in the Municipal Native Affairs Department, from where he took up the position in Port Elizabeth in 1961. Mr. Reynolds was employed as the Registering Officer in Port Elizabeth soon after the Labour Bureau was established. He had

[7] Interviews with Mr L.C. Reynolds, 26 June 1988; Mr Ivan Peter, 14 April 1988; Mr Poppleton, 23 May 1988; Mr Mundell, 6 May 1988.

worked from about the age of fourteen in the East London Native Affairs Department after his father had "pulled him in to help during the strikes of 1929/30" (the ICU strikes[8]. And Mr. D.B. Naude claimed 35 years in Urban Native Administration by 1955, 17 of which had been in Port Elizabeth[9], while Mr. A.P. McNamee (appointed in 1955) was the son of J.P. McNamee, the previous Superintendent in the township, and had actually grown up in Red Location. Once again this litany of experience reveals the ambivalences of the administrators. For Mr Peters' experiences of some of the severest aspects of racially based labour controls in the mines contrast strongly with the romanticised memories which McNamee Jnr had of his time growing up in Red Location. He recalls in his detailed memoirs, for example, playing cricket with young New Brighton boys, forming firm friendships and clearly being strongly morally influenced by the many different people he encountered in the township[10].

With the shift in the political and administrative situation, however, the profile of Superintendents also changed. These employees recall that they became "a rare breed": men who had specific knowledge and experience of dealing with black people or who were prepared to work in the townships[11]. As the staff grew, so more technical and administrative employees were engaged, and these new officials did not need to have the personal interaction with the people in the township which had been so crucial to the Superintendent's job. And as the numbers in the townships grew, even the superintendents found it ever more difficult to maintain this sort of relationship with the population. In addition, the rules and regulations of the township were substantially reinforced by national pass legislation which enlarged the means available for policing the population. Many tensions were encountered within the administration as it sought to implement new laws to achieve old ends, and to cope with a significant alteration in the political circumstances in which they operated.

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[8] Interview with Mr L. C. Reynolds, 26 June 1988; Port Elizabeth Intermediate Archives (PEIA) A31 Vol 4, 1 February 1961 - 2 December 1963, 20 March 1962 Town Clerk to Chief Bantu Affairs Commissioner.

[9] PEIA 25/100NB No 10, D.B. Naude to Town Clerk, 27 May 1955.

[10] Unpublished manuscript, A.P. McNamee, c. 1988.

[11] Interview with Mr Ivan Peter, 14 April 1988.

Popular resistance to the administration became more focused, and the administrative staff were often instrumental in using Location regulations and administrative decisions to restrict and punish those residents of New Brighton who played an active role in anti-Apartheid politics. In some ways, written through the available records of political and administrative archives, the recollections of activists and administrators, and a historiographic interest in the growing opposition to the Apartheid social order, the claims of the administration to a sympathetic interest in the concerns of the residents seem to be exposed as fraudulent. Indeed, I used this as a reason to undermine these claims and to represent them as, at best, a functional paternalistic interest in the well-being of the inhabitants of New Brighton. I wrote, for example, that as political conflict in the town escalated, "the staff could no longer hide behind a pretence of political neutrality". But as the discussion below indicates, a tension between concern and control persisted into the 1960s and 1970s, when administrators took up the cause of residents against the city council's frugality in relation to Native Administration. This co-existed alongside their increasing involvement in the implementation of degrading and harmful legislation. But our interpretation of these processes, I will suggest, does not necessarily need to reconcile these positions, or reduce one set of dynamics to the other.

4. Popular resistance; administrative ambivalence

Ordinary African people in Port Elizabeth were involved in both individual and collective resistance to the application of Apartheid legislation, especially the introduction of pass laws, from which Africans in Port Elizabeth were exempted until 1953, for a variety of locally specific reasons (see Robinson, 1990b). At every opportunity African people had objected to the suggestion that the City Council enforce laws regarding influx control, and when passes were finally issued they were greeted by numerous demonstrations and protest meetings. But the process of re-housing African people from slum areas in town (primarily from Korsten) to KwaZakele, an extension of New Brighton, seems to have ensured that the requirements of the legislation were met by many people who would otherwise have been refused accommodation in the town. This enabled some people - especially women who were

at the time administratively exempt from the legislation - to acquire housing and, for a time at least, to remain in the town[12]. But the tightening up of influx control legislation in the early 1960s (Posel, 1987) made it increasingly difficult for African people to escape the regulations[13].

The focus of opposition to the implementation of this legislation took the form of anti-pass campaigns. Locally, protests had been registered by Unions and popular organisations whenever it was made known that the Council was considering implementing "pass laws"[14], and there was also strong support for the various national campaigns launched to oppose passes for Africans (Lodge, 1983). The strongest organised opposition to passes came from the women, who - having first been granted exemptions from these provisions - were required to carry passes from 1 February 1963. Women throughout the country had always protested vigorously against the application of pass laws on the grounds that the arbitrary arrest of mothers and wives would endanger their children and undermine home life (Walker, 1983). In Port Elizabeth women staged a number of protests against the legislation[15].

But the state, including the New Brighton Native Administration Department, embarked upon a careful campaign to ensure that passes were issued, encouraging employers to make arrangements for their employees to acquire the relevant documents. Despite intense state

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[12] The manager reported on 21 June 1957 that he was clearing areas in Korsten "regardless of their qualification to be in the area". PEIA BS1(v) MNA to District Commandant Korsten Police.

[13] New Age reports this from the point of view of the African population who experienced increased harrassment during pass raids (5 July 1962) and women who were deported to rural areas (11 October 1962).

[14] For example, after the council's decision in January 1953 to implement influx control, a meeting of some 20000 African people in Port Elizabeth expressed their opposition and suggested that the City Council had "shed the last vestige of its once boasted liberalism". Advance 22 January 1953.

[15] New Age 20 August 1959; 13 October 1960; 11 October 1962.

repression of activists in the area[16], people continued to object to the unjust and harsh application of the laws[17]. And when the political opposition turned to violent methods of resistance, the Labour Bureau (part of the efforts linked to influx control to channel labour in a "rational" way to employers) was a key target for attacks[18], as were the administration offices and headmen's homes[19]. However, political organisation in the area was severely undermined by the extensive bannings and imprisonments of leaders during the course of 1962 and 1963. At at the end of 1963 the Manager of Native Affairs could report a "significant decline in political activity[20]. Individual evasions of the law persisted, but the pass laws were imposed and continued to serve as weapons for routine, political and population control until their abolition in 1986.

By the 1960s, then, the influx control and labour registration bureaucracy had come to represent the public face of the administration far more than the superintendents, and this face was no longer paternalistic or humanitarian even though the superintendents continued to insist that "they tried to help as many people as possible[21]. Clearly they were constrained by the legislation (although they were not hesitant to use it to dispense with, amongst others, political activists[22]), but - and aside from the rare individuals who may

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[16] Many people were banned, arrested and tried on various charges including treason. New Age 19 April 1962; 23 August 1962; 11 October 1962; 8 November 1962.

[17] New Age 1 October 1959; 5 July 1962.

[18] PEIA AB F1(ii) 19 December 1961, Boast to Town Clerk, reporting a bomb attack on the bureau on 16 December 1961.

[19] PEIA AB F1(ii) 11 October 1962, Boast to Town Clerk 2 March 1959 reporting an effort to burn down the Superintendents' offices and the homes of headmen.

[20] MM 1963 MNA Report.

[21] MM, 1960, MNA Report, and Labour Bureau Annual Report for 1959: "the attitude of officials in this particular section is interpreted by the Native population attending as the attitude of the Department as a whole and that the Influx section is considered one of the most important focal points in the whole Department".

[22] By the end of the 1960s the administration used any available reason to refuse permission for people to remain in the town: convicts, political activists, and even an 80 year old woman (who was accused of coming to town to work, rather than to be with her family) were all refused permission to live in New Brighton. PEIA C69: Influx Control and FOreign

have persuaded them of the value of their case - the NAD officials generally supported the application of the law. There is some evidence that the Registering Officer was unwilling to make exceptions, although by virtue of their more "personal" contacts with local people the Superintendents and the Manager occasionally argued for the application of "discretion" in certain cases[23]. On the whole, though, the administration's powers over the daily lives of African people in the town were multiplied several-fold by these legislative measures, notwithstanding the fact that their application was not always as straightforward as the government may have wished (see Robinson, 1990b for further detail).

The formal political role of the administration was now apparent to all, and while individual administrators generally resisted the notion that their work carried any "political" significance, this function had fallen within the ambit of "native administration" in the town from its very beginnings (see Baines, 1988). The rest of this section reflects upon some of the political interventions of the New Brighton administration ending with a discussion of aspects of the incorporation of this administrative structure into the central state apparatus in 1972. In contrast to the protestations of Superintendents, and especially in this later period, the history of "native administration" in Port Elizabeth seems to indicate that the growth and changing strategies of the PENAD were always unambiguously related to the broader South African political context. This was because the intrinsic task of this state apparatus, irrespective of the particular mechanisms that it utilised, was always understood to be to ensure the domination of African people. At times it also enhanced the capacity of capital to exploit black labourers in the work place and served to uphold white privilege in urban areas. All of these facets were vigorously contested by African political organisations, and it is in the administration's dealings with these organisations that their broader political role seems to be revealed. And yet, as I will point out, elements of the historical record return us to the problem of a more ambivalent relationship between the adminsitration and the residents of New Brighton than this narrative account would seem to suggest.

Natives, 9 March 1971 to 30 August 1972.

[23] Ibid Superintendent McNamee's suggestions concerning some returning political prisoners, for example, were directly contrary to those of the registering officer. Interview, Mr Ivan Peter, 14 April 1988.

The relationship which emerged between the administration and African political organisation was curiously at odds with the professed concern of administrators for the needs of those whom they governed. Indeed, it is in the expressly politicised and conflictual moments of administration that the functionality of the paternalism of the administrators seems to be revealed. In the late 1920s the personal intervention of Paddy McNamee (Snr) in a dispute over the use of the male hostel defused a potentially explosive situation. Similarly, resistance to a later removal of people from Red Location kitchens in the 1960s was dealt with by the area Superintendent (McNamee Jnr), who at first postponed and then slowly effected the evictions in a more considered fashion. On a much larger scale, though, during the 1950s while the city council was generally refusing to interview the ANC on the grounds that all representation was to occur through the Advisory Board, the Manager was receiving regular and vociferous deputations from the local ANC Women's League. These deputations were also "handled" with a brand of paternalism. The women made strong demands of the administration and of the Council which were entertained with patience by the administrators, but which received very short shrift from the City Council.

A particularly striking example occured in July 1956 when some 200 women met with various administration officials for some 90 minutes. Many detailed grievances were discussed and a clear, strongly worded memorandum was submitted by the women to the Manager for transmission to the Council. The women concluded their memorandum with the statement that

> "We are not prepared to be sent from pillar to post by the powers that be. We therefore call upon you to convey our grievances to the City Council ...you will not doubt our state of frustration and despondency"[24].

This suggests that the administration's tactic of patient and attentive listening, with no attendant action, was being firmly rejected, exposed as fraudulent. But it also implies that the Superintendents did know and did understand at least some of the difficulties of township life. The incident in question led to a public denunciation of the Council's neglect of the

[24] PEIA AB A1(i) Memorandum for Submission to the Manager of Native Administration, New Brighton Administration, 16 July 1956.

Location by a number of Superintendents[25]. Nevertheless, the Council refused to take serious measures to remedy these complaints, hampered as ever by its demand that the Location be self-financing[26].

In this case the administrators played a contradictory role, aware as they were of many of the legitimate grievances of individuals. Their sympathies did not extend to grievances concerning denial of basic political rights, however, and political activists were subjected to careful administrative surveillance as well as to police harrassment. Previous political involvement was sufficient reason for complete administrative inflexibility in a variety of areas, including housing, employment and pass law regulations. The Council was also concerned to oversee activists in this way and supported administrative efforts to encourage or to force such people to leave the town. Increases in administrative efficiency enhanced political surveillance, as the Manager noted in 1968:

> "the effectiveness in establishing a special Section 29 Unit ... has had a very important result. It has enabled this Department to co-operate with the Security Police concerning internal security measures"[27].

As the administration moved into the 1970s and became incorporated into the Central Government apparatus, its governing ideology and organisation conformed more easily both to prevailing government policies - now directed through a standard, efficient bureaucracy - but also to state strategies for political incorporation. Previous parochial administrative strategies, which had involved paternalistic concern and tactical conciliatory maneouvres combined with a more or less effective application of the law, were steadily replaced by a

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[25] Evening Post 6 August 1956.

[26] PEIA AB A1(i) NAC Minutes 6 August 1956. On his retirement, Mr Boast commented that "his only frustration during 26 years in the municipal service had been lack of finance for projects under his control. He expressed the hope that more benevolence would be shown by the Council in the future in providing more finance for municipal projects. However, he paid tribute to the Council for the work it had done in t he past of promoting industry in PE and avoiding friction between the races" Eastern Province Herald 1 May 1969.

[27] PEIA AB A31 Vol 7 Manager of Bantu Affairs to Chief Bantu Affairs Commisioner 24 January 1968.

large and increasingly distant bureaucratic administration whose emphasis was on a more corporatist effort to secure support within the township (an extension of the Superintendent's "loyals") and an impartial application of the legislation. Port Elizabeth was brought more into line with other black townships around the country, particularly as the next Manager - Louis Koch - moulded the administration into this new form.

He introduced a council monopoly of beer brewing in 1968 - long delayed because of opposition from the township residents - in an effort to redress the growing deficit on the Native Revenue Account, reformed the now key and yet inefficient Registering Office, and embarked upon a detailed investigation and re-organisation of the administration. He discontinued the tradition of always being available for township residents to discuss their problems and to plead special cases, although colleagues suggest that he attempted to preserve an image of such paternal concern and accessibility (and he himself presents his administration in this light). But in an ever-growing community, personal relations were replaced with an attempt to foster influence with particular (non-political) groups in the township - sporting, religious or charity groups. The administration claims some success in this regard[28] but the extent of support for radical community organisations throughout the 1970s and 1980s suggests that they failed to win popular endorsement (Cooper and Ensor, 1981; Labour Monitoring Group, 1986).

There is, however, some evidence that the ambivalence of administration lived on in at least some circles. One of the native adminstrators, Barry Mundell, who worked in New Brighton from 1958 until the present continues to embody some of these contradictory notions of sympathy and control. During the 1980s States of emergency he, unlike most state officials, refused to carry a gun: despite the fact that due to his position he was easily identifiable as an "enemy of the people" by local political organisations. He remains concerned about the poor conditions in the township and ascribes most political agitation to dissatisfaction with basic facilities and extreme housing shortages in the city (a familiar state interpretation during this period). His role, he suggests is to "try and make people happy and content, and that is

[28] As Koch commented "There was great co-operation between the administration and the elected councillors and a previously political community turned into a very positive one". Interview, 30 August 1989.

impossible when there are no houses and services are not what they should be". From his perspective the key constraints on the part of the local authorities are not intended, but are the result of a shortage of funds. Indeed, older members of the community mobilised Mundell's paternalistic reputation in their opposition to proposed removals of people from one part of the township in the mid-1980s. Mundell failed to attend a meeting to discuss the residents' grievances, and one resident commented: "I am sorry because I wanted to talk directly to Mr Mundell because I have known him from childhood. What we know from Mr Mundell from time back - he would call our parents if he wanted to do something. He would speak cordially with our parents. I am so disappointed that today he did not come to us who are now parents"[29]. Local activists considered that this attack on Mundell's paternalistic reputation had been an important strategy in staying the proposed removal, again from Red Location, the oldest section of the township.

5. Ambivalent Conclusions

Rather than closing off the subjects and landscapes of Apartheid history, then, it seems that our excavations of the past can show only a series of less certain conclusions. And it is not only in aid of a better scripting of our pasts that this should be the case, but becasue those past scripts also have present implications. How, for example, do we think of existing townships, as a legacy of control only? Or do we consider new initiatives to create places of urban order and administration with suspicion because it sounds too much like the past? And how do we begin to make sense of the extremely fluid identity politics which is passing through media images and political calculations at the moment, not to mention peoples' experiences. Taking account of the complexity of post-Apartheid will certainly require us to embrace the post-colonial critique. For just as it has been the excesses to traditional subject positions which have begun to arrest our attention historically, so we will need an account of post-Apartheid (and Apartheid) subjects which acknowledges the problem of complicity while avoiding closure around a premature dismissal of co-opted leadership. And which does not fixe in our political and spatial imagination divisions which are rather more fluid than our

[29] Notes of meeting taken by Port Elizabeth Anti-Removals Committee, 19 November 1986.

dualistic accounts allow for. Just as the lanscapes of control of Apartheid were subverted by African political organisation and by people's creation of less regulated spaces, as well as by the ambivalences of administration, so post-Apartheid landscapes will also no doubt confound our attempts to fix subjects and spaces. For the hybrid and trickster subjects of both Apartheid and post-Apartheid will surely surprise us if we attempt to think too simply of them.

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