

# **The Making of Apartheid in Springs: Group Areas and Forced Removals**

**By**

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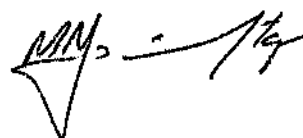
**September 1995**

**Supervisor: Professor P. Bonner**

## **DECLARATION**

**I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.**

**Mohamed Noor Nieftagodien**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M.N. Nieftagodien', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**University of the Witwatersrand**

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## INTRODUCTION

The election victory of the ANC in April 1994 marked the decisive end of the National Party's apartheid rule. The institution of a democratic constitution and the ANC's formal commitment to the Reconstruction and Development Programme have raised the hopes of the majority of South Africans that the devastation inflicted on their lives by the National Party regime would be eliminated. Yet the legacies of apartheid remain as stark today as at the time of Nelson Mandela's release in 1990. Millions of black people continue to suffer the socio-economic consequences of apartheid: mass poverty, homelessness and racial segregation remain all pervasive. Undoubtedly, reversing the massive racial social engineering imposed on South Africans over more than four decades will not occur overnight. Even the National Party's participation in the Government of National Unity will not rid it of its responsibility for the atrocities of the darkest period in the country's history.

The National Party's accession to power in 1948 represented an important turning point in the development of capitalism in South Africa. For the next thirty years, until the commencement of the so-called reform era in the late 1970s, successive Nationalist governments rigorously pursued apartheid policies to enforce white political and economic supremacy and racial separation. These ideas were by no means new, but the rule of the National Party, unlike that of its predecessors, was characterised by a singular determination to implement segregationist policies. The National Party's pursuance of its racial policies occurred not only with greater co-ordination and planning but as its hold over the state became more secure, also with increasing coercion, especially in the 1960s. Once in power the National Party began promulgating a litany of laws designed to fulfil its broad aims. The Group Areas Act,

Population Registration Act, Suppression of Communism Act, among others, indicated the determination of the National Party to impose complete racial segregation and simultaneously strike a blow against the radical opposition movement.

The Group Areas Act (GAA) which was passed in 1950 became one of the cornerstones and arguably the flagship of the government's segregationist policies. The implementation of the GAA resulted in the forcible removal of hundreds of thousands of blacks from their homes and their relocation into racially exclusive areas so that by the mid-1970s the government had largely achieved its aim of effecting complete racial residential segregation. The devastation inflicted on communities all over the country by these policies are well recorded. The voluminous Surplus People's Project, published in 1983, estimated that no less than three and a half million black people were subjected to forced removals.<sup>1</sup> The experiences of integrated communities in urban and peri-urban areas such as the Western Areas in Johannesburg, District Six in Cape Town and Cato Manor in Durban have long captured the imagination of scholars and the general public. The removal of Sophiatown in particular has been the subject of numerous scholarly works, autobiographies and fictional works.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, until recently only scant attention has been paid to the genesis and implementation of the GAA. Few studies have focused on the integral part played by this Act in the dynamic and contradictory process of the making of apartheid and particularly the racial restructuring of the urban areas in the fifties and sixties. Furthermore, the implementation of the GAA in less well known localities than the abovementioned has also been neglected. Consequently, our understanding of the dynamics involved in the actual application of the law remains limited. There is little clarity on why, for example, it often took up to twenty five years for the GAA

finally to be implemented in numerous areas. This is significant considering that at the time of its promulgation, the average urban area was already up to 90 percent segregated.<sup>3</sup> If the creation of 'group areas' was so crucial for the Nationalists, why did it take so long to be implemented? Posing this question raises various other issues: What were the obstacles, if any, to the immediate implementation of the GAA? The 1950s were characterised by numerous local and national struggles, but with a few notable exceptions little has been written on the struggles against the infamous GAA. Indeed, it is necessary to ask why the main political movements did not specifically mobilise a national campaign against the GAA, as they did against the pass laws. How was the implementation of the GAA affected by the changing political situation in the 1950s and 1960s? To what extent did the conflict over policy in the government and the Afrikaner alliance influence the implementation of the Act?

Since the early seventies historians, especially in the radical tradition, have shed light on some of these issues and have enhanced our understanding of the making of apartheid in general. The writings of Legassick, Wolpe and O'Meara, among others, successfully challenged the views espoused by liberal writers which emphasised that apartheid was dysfunctional to capitalism. These early radical historians, writing primarily from a marxist perspective, argued instead that apartheid was an attempt by the white state to address the contradictions and crises faced by a rapidly industrialising society after the Second World War.<sup>4</sup> Coercion and racial segregation were not anomalous features in countries experiencing a late development of capitalism. They emphasised the role played by cheap labour and coercion to maximise capital accumulation. These writers generally focused on the broad socio-economic and political processes in the post World War Two period. Consequently their writings tended to be very general in character. Although limited these contributions have had a significant

influence on subsequent writers.

Since the 1980s social historians have pointed to the shortcomings of the early revisionist literature on apartheid. These writers, they argue, did not sufficiently take into account the myriad of forces which impacted on the evolution of apartheid. In particular, they have challenged the notion of apartheid as a preconceived *master plan* (emanating from the Sauer report) simply imposed on blacks when the National Party came to power. The *master plan* approach does not fully appreciate the role of real living forces in the shaping of apartheid policies. Social historians stress the important influence of local popular struggles, which were not necessarily organised under the auspices of the main national political movements, on the making of apartheid. Bonner, *et al*, argue that these struggles "both shaped the terrain traversed by political movements and played a decisive role in the rise and fall of apartheid."<sup>5</sup> These historians also challenged the idea that the state was merely the instrument of a particular section or fraction of capital (particularly Afrikaner capital). In their literature the state is described as a contested terrain in which different class interests struggle for hegemony. The primary characteristic of social historians' approach is their attempt to write a "history from below", focusing on the role played by ordinary individuals in the making of history. Over the last few years an increasing number of publications have highlighted the role of apartheid bureaucrats and township dwellers in the making of apartheid and the struggles against it. This challenge to "great man history" has had a profound influence on our view of the making of apartheid, revealing a complex matrix of processes, shaped as much by the individual as by broad socio-economic and political forces.

Deborah Posel's work, in particular, focuses attention on how contending forces within the

state (based essentially on different class interests) contributed to the changes in apartheid policies.<sup>6</sup> Her explanation of the changing views of the Native Affairs Department (later Bantu Affairs Department) in the 1950s and 1960s rejects the notion that apartheid can be "seen as having been fundamentally pre-planned, continuous and cumulative."<sup>7</sup> Her analysis of the struggles within the Native Affairs Department highlights the roles of key individuals such as Verwoerd and Eiselen in the formulation of apartheid policies. Much of Posel's argument centres on the changing attitudes in the state to the key issue of black integration into the mainstream or "white" economy. However, her work and that of others, does not explain how the changes in national policy affected the actual implementation of *specific* laws such as the GAA. Thus her recognition of "two distinct phases in the development of Apartheid", remains confined to an explanation of national policy and its validity is not tested at the level of practical application, namely at regional and municipal levels.

Alan Mabin has recently made an important contribution in exploring the "roots of the Group Areas Act and the processes by which its provisions were (incompletely) applied to the urban landscape", revealing that the GAA had a "complex genesis".<sup>8</sup> His insightful work however concentrates primarily on the period before and immediately after the National Party came to power. Therefore, it does not deal with the different forces which impacted on the implementation of the GAA in the 1950s and 1960s. Importantly, Mabin attempts to locate the GAA within the context of regional and urban planning showing that "procedures developed under the Act both derived from established planning practices, and enticed town planners into the implementation of comprehensive racial segregation",<sup>9</sup> showing again that there were important continuities with the pre-1948 era. Mabin also analyses the origins of regional planning, especially of African townships, on the Witwatersrand.<sup>10</sup> The ideas of

regional planning preceded the Nationalist government, but during its rule this concept became central in the racial restructuring of the urban areas. Mabin suggests that urban planners were "seduced" by the government's commitment to greater planning in the early fifties. However, the support for regional planning did not necessarily translate into easy implementation. For example, what problems did regional and local authorities confront when implementing the regional schemes of the government? What was the attitude of black people to these plans? Regional planning was not confined to creation of African townships but also included plans for coloureds and Indians. The Witwatersrand region was particularly the subject in the early 1950s of numerous attempts to co-ordinate the planning of population distribution. The impact of these plans on the different localities of the Witwatersrand remains unexplored.

Geographers and town planners have contributed significantly to our understanding of the making of the apartheid city. In his analysis of the implementation of the apartheid in Port Elizabeth, A.J. Christopher argues that the National Party had a two-pronged programme: first to effect the complete segregation of Africans, and then to segregate the rest of the population. The removal of Africans received top priority.<sup>11</sup> An important component in the making of the apartheid city was that the Central Business District and inner city areas were zoned for whites, whereas blacks were relegated to the peripheries of the cities. Christopher and Robinson<sup>12</sup> trace the development of the segregated city back to colonial times. They suggest that many of the ideas used by twentieth century urban planner had their origins in the colonial period. Interestingly, it is argued that the 'twin process' of removals and resettlement took 35 years to implement in Port Elizabeth.<sup>13</sup> However, Christopher does not analyse the underlying reasons for this long delay.

Van Tonder's analysis of the removal of the Western Areas attempts to relate the roles played by central government and municipalities in the implementation of the GAA.<sup>14</sup> His dissertation focuses largely on the role played by the Johannesburg City Council in the Western Areas Removal Scheme from the mid 1940s. Importantly, Van Tonder effectively dispels the liberal view that forced removals were invented by the National Party. He highlights the role played by leading United Party members in initiating the Western Areas Removal Scheme. In particular, UP member, Sarel Tighy, was pivotal in formulating these plans before the National Party's electoral victory in 1948.<sup>15</sup> Another important theme developed by Van Tonder is the role played by other racial groups in lobbying for the removal of Africans from the Western Areas. Working class whites particularly pressurised their local authorities to implement the WARS. They were profoundly influenced by the rapid increase of the urban African population and their involvement in numerous struggles against the state. For these whites the danger of the "swart gevaar" was a reality too close to home. Equally significant were the representations made by coloured residents, at least those organised by the Newclare Ratepayers' Association, urging the Council to remove Africans from the Western Areas. However, insufficient attention is given in Van Tonder's work to the relationship between the different racial groups within mixed localities and their responses to the GAA and removals. Were all coloureds in favour of the removal of Africans? Did coloureds and Africans unite against the removals? Pirie asserts that Indians and coloureds were the most affected by the GAA and Africans only indirectly.<sup>16</sup> While this view will be challenged it nevertheless indicates the necessity to understand how the GAA affected the different racial groups and how they responded to it. Cachalia, in her dissertation on the removal in Pageview, shows that the state deliberately followed a policy of dividing people along racial lines by first removing Africans and then proceeding to remove coloureds and Indians.<sup>17</sup>

Van Tonder also discusses the weaknesses in the campaigns of the ANC and the Ratepayers' Association against the Western Areas Removal Scheme. He concludes that "Their indecision and division undermined their strategies, limited their unity and ironically strengthened the resolve of the Verwoerd government to pursue its resettlement designs."<sup>18</sup> The inability of the resistance movement to prevent the removal of the Western Areas at a time when defiance against the apartheid state reached unprecedented heights is significant. Van Tonder does not question whether the weaknesses he identifies were replicated in other localities. Lodge suggests that the ANC's late response to the removal of Sophiatown was because of its concentration on the Defiance Campaign. But removals occurred throughout the fifties, and there is no indication that the ANC organised a specific struggle against them. Lodge acknowledges that there were numerous shortcomings in the ANC's campaign against removals but argues that the state's determination to remove the Western Areas, made it very difficult to mount a successful resistance campaign.<sup>19</sup> The question this raises is whether the black urban working class was sufficiently united or strong enough to mount a successful struggle against any racial law or apartheid as a whole. The existing literature on the GAA and forced removals does not reveal the extent to which other integrated localities were faced with similar circumstances. How did ordinary residents of these localities respond to forced removals? What were the main forms of opposition to the GAA? Were there united struggles by African, coloured and Indian people against the imposition of racial segregation? These issues remain largely untouched because of the lack of studies focusing on the specific experiences of people in different localities.

Glen Adler's<sup>20</sup> study of the implementation of the GAA in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage raises an important factor which impacted on the consciousness of black people. The mixed location

in Port Elizabeth, Korsten, was very similar to those on the Witwatersrand, and also had a long tradition of struggle. In fact Port Elizabeth was one of the national strongholds of the ANC in the fifties and played a prominent role in the Defiance Campaign. Yet, the removal of Africans from Korsten occurred very rapidly and almost without opposition. Adler suggests that many people were attracted by the idea of moving out of the overcrowded and unhealthy conditions in the old location to the new townships where their living standards would be improved, albeit only marginally. It will be argued here that the establishment of townships from the 1950s was viewed by many blacks, especially Africans, as a *reform* - an improvement on the squalor of the mixed locations - which in turn impacted on their responsiveness to struggles against the GAA.

Opposition to the GAA did not only emanate from the liberation movement and its allies but also from some municipalities. In his analysis of the GAA in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, Glen Adler highlights the resistance by the Uitenhage municipality to its implementation.<sup>21</sup> He shows the differences in approach by the respective Town Councils, with the former complying and the latter resisting the central government's policies. His study of Uitenhage reveals conflict between the Council and the government. The Council was sympathetic to the interests of Indian and coloured traders, and responded favourably to their requests not to be removed. Its reluctance to move these people retarded the central government's plans to effect complete racial segregation in that town.

The works of Van Tonder and Adler show the necessity for research on local areas. In this way it is possible to discuss in detail the way in which specific apartheid laws were implemented and the responses of local people to their implementation. The abovementioned

studies show that one cannot talk of a uniform implementation of the GAA, even though the final outcome of complete residential segregation was always the same. The processes leading to this conclusion were influenced by numerous factors: the vicissitudes in national policy, the attitude of regional and local government structures, the interests of capital and the struggles of local people.

A major gap in the literature of the post-1948 period is the absence of proper and detailed analyses of the 1960s. Most studies focus on the genesis of apartheid policies and their implementation in the 1950s. Even Lodge's work which covers the period from 1945 to the late 1970s only deals with the mass struggles of the early 1960s; the rest of the decade is dealt with as part of chapters on guerilla struggle and exile politics. The general assumption is that the 1960s represented a period of unbridled success for the apartheid regime and defeat for the mass movement. Our understanding of the fifties has been enhanced by numerous insightful studies, but little research has been conducted on the sixties. This is only partly due to the problems of gaining access to primary material on this period. Detailed studies of the experience of ordinary people in the "golden era" of apartheid must still be undertaken. This paper hopes to make some contribution to this effort.

This brief study will attempt further to shed some light on the issues raised above. This will be done by analysing the implementation of the GAA and forced removals in one municipality, namely, Springs, and in particular the mixed location, Payneville. It will be argued that the GAA and forced removals formed essential components of the government's social engineering schemes, especially in relation to its reshaping of the urban areas. Thus an appreciation of the making of apartheid in the fifties and sixties is crucial. An important

theme which is developed here is the centrality of regional urban planning for the Witwatersrand. The impact of regional schemes on the development of the East Rand in particular is explored. The interaction between the different levels of government is discussed and it is suggested that the relationship between the central government and local authorities was characterised primarily by co-operation. The differences which occurred between the different tiers of government was mainly over practical details rather than the political essence of apartheid policies, although there were of course exceptions.. This was at least partly due to the fact that the government expended considerable energy to ensure that its policies succeeded in the Witwatersrand. Failure in the economic hub of the country would have been disastrous for the regime. Thus the early 1950s witnessed near frenetic activity by different government departments to ensure proper planning and co-ordination. The plethora of commissions, conferences and establishment of committees in this period was indicative of the seriousness with which the government tackled this issue. This study also analyses the struggles (especially the lack thereof) against the GAA and forced removals. It will be argued that the struggles in Cato Manor and the Western Areas were exceptional and that absence of such struggles in Payneville reflected more accurately the situation in other localities.

This is essentially a study in local history. Its main aim is give an account of the experiences of ordinary black people in Payneville in the fifties and sixties. This allows one to reflect not only on the making of apartheid policies but also on the responses of ordinary people to the profound changes foisted on their lives by these policies. Here the focus will be on the experiences of Payneville's residents to the GAA and forced removals. It will be shown how this community was torn asunder by the removals. At the same time the Payneville community will be desegregated to show how different groups - coloureds and Africans,

lodgers and standholders, young and old - reacted differently to the disestablishment of their locality.

The main archival source of this research was the Municipality of Springs files. These records form the core of much of this study. During the course of research numerous records pertaining to the implementation of the GAA and the establishment of KwaThema were located among the East Rand Administration Board records which are to be found a warehouse in Germiston. These records filled an important gap in the research, especially from the mid sixties. However, on their own these archival records only show one side of the story and do not reflect the experiences of ordinary people. The interviews conducted with previous residents of Payneville and Bakerton were an important source of information about the life of the old location. They provide invaluable insights about the relationships between people and their responses to the policies of the government. I was fortunate enough to meet and discuss with people from different social and political backgrounds which allowed for the development of a more balanced view of the old location. This study of Payneville is to a large extent their story and it is hoped that their varied experiences are accurately reflected here.

### **Chapter outline**

Chapter one provides a general overview of the first twenty five years of apartheid. It discusses the genesis and evolution of apartheid and within in this context the development and implementation of the GAA. The continuities and discontinuities between the 1950s and the 1960s will be analysed. It will be argued that by the early 1960s the plans to establish group areas, especially black townships, were so advanced that the changes which occurred

in central government policy did not fundamentally affect the implementation of the GAA. There will also be a general discussion about the lack of struggle in the 1960s.

Chapter two traces the genesis and development of the Group Areas Act. It specifically focuses on the obstacles faced by the Land Tenure Advisory Board in its implementation of the Act. The lack of mass opposition to the Act and forced removals is analysed and it is shown that the main problems faced by the Board were administrative. The roles of the South African Indian Congress and the Councils of Durban and Uitenhage are highlighted as examples of opposition to the GAA. It is argued that the objections raised by these bodies mainly retarded the progress of the Board. Their exposure of loopholes in the Act were counteracted by amendments to eliminate the shortcomings in the Act.

Chapter three discusses the role of regional and local governments in the implementation of the GAA. It traces the attempts to co-ordinate government policy in the Witwatersrand from the late 1940s as a response to the problems of rapid African urbanisation. In particular, the chapter analyses the reasons behind the establishment of the Mentz Commission in 1952 and the effects of its recommendations on the removal of people from the so-called "black-spots" such as Payneville and the establishment of new townships such as Kwa-Thema. Specific reference will be made to the recommendations by the Mentz Commission for the East Rand. The establishment of the Subsidiary Planning Committee to co-ordinate regional planning for the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area will also be discussed. Finally this chapter will discuss the attempts to plan residential accommodation for coloureds on the East Rand.

Chapters four, five and six form the core of this study. They trace the actual implementation

of the GAA and forced removals in Springs from the mid-1940s to the mid-1970s. Chapter four outlines the history of Payneville, looking at the development of industry, population growth and struggles of blacks in the location. It discusses the rapid urbanisation experienced by Springs from the mid thirties and the social and political problems arising from it. By the late forties Payneville was terribly overcrowded and became the centre of political agitation.

The period 1952 to 1958 was characterised by the rapid growth of the new African township, KwaThema and the voluntary move to it by thousands of Payneville's residents. Chapter five discusses this process and analyses the lack of struggle against the GAA and forced removal in this location. The changes to the Council's policies, which were strongly influenced by the regional schemes of the government, are an important part of the background to this chapter. The relationship between the different groups and their response to the GAA are highlighted. So too are the contradictory responses to the removals from different sectors of the community.

The final chapter focuses on the implementation of the GAA in the 1960s. Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s the future of Payneville remained uncertain with various representation made to have it declared a coloured, Indian and white group area. The chapter also discusses the growing conflict between standholders and the Council over the removal. This was exacerbated by the growing awareness that living conditions in the new township, Kwa-Thema, was not as good as it was initially thought to be. In spite of these there was no open challenge to the removals in the 1960s and the reasons for this are explored. The changing role of the Advisory boards is also traced. It is argued that the Payneville Board cannot simply be categorised as "sell-outs". However, the post-Sharpeville period was also

characterised by the growing prominence of black middle class collaborators.

A study of the removals from Payneville is especially pertinent at this juncture because of the campaign by previous location residents to reclaim their land. Since the April 1994 election and the promise by the government that dispossessed people could reclaim their land, hundreds of former Payneville residents have demanded that houses should be built for them in the old location. Interestingly, the campaign has the support of Africans and coloureds, but is viewed with suspicion by the Indian residents from Bakerton. Whether they succeed in their campaign or not remains uncertain. However, the campaign has highlighted the anger of people who were forcibly removed from their homes. Many of these people believe, naively perhaps, that the wrongs of the past will only be eradicated when they can escape the enforced racial segregation of the National Party and return to their old location where Africans, coloureds, Indians lived together.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### The making of apartheid in the fifties and sixties

From the vantage point of the new democratic South Africa, the years of National Party rule appear like the dark ages. The first twenty five years of apartheid are often remembered for the apparent unbridled success of racism and oppression. From the time of the National Party's victory in 1948 numerous unjust and coercive laws were directed against the black people. The white minority regime seems to have become stronger with every new racist law passed. The 1960s especially are viewed as the golden era of apartheid: not only did the economy experience unprecedented growth but the state dealt a crushing blow to the liberation movements. These factors in turn strengthened the hand of the government, allowing it further to entrench segregationist and separate development policies. By the early 1970s the state had largely succeeded in implementing the main aims of the GAA, the bantustan system was taking shape, hundreds of thousands of African people were convicted under the pass laws and numerous draconian laws were passed which effectively paralysed the black opposition movement whilst giving the security apparatus increasing powers. Not surprisingly the South African state of the time has often been compared to the Third Reich. From the perspective of ordinary black people the apartheid state must have appeared insuperable.

Yet, as will be shown here, the National Party's success in implementing its racial social engineering was not a foregone conclusion at the time of its election victory in 1948. In fact, it was not until the 1960s that the National Party was in a position fully to dictate the pace of events, and even then it did not escape internal rivalry and complications. From 1948 and throughout the 1950s the government faced various obstacles to the implementation of

apartheid. The dilemmas faced by it resulted mainly from its inability to resolve the problem faced by the ruling class, namely, effective control over the black urban population. This it was only able to achieve after dealing a crushing blow to the liberation movements in the early 1960s. The evolution of apartheid therefore cannot be viewed as a linear process, with the National Party building on one success after the other. The process was far more dynamic and was influenced by various forces within the Afrikaner alliance and by the opposition of tens of thousands of black people. It took nearly seven years after the promulgation of the GAA in 1950 for the government to be in a position to start using it effectively. This delay in the implementation of a cornerstone of apartheid policy is particularly pertinent and can only be understood within the context of the dynamic process of the making of apartheid as a whole.

#### **Post-war industrialisation and urbanisation**

Apartheid was not simply the product of racist Afrikaner ideology bent on realising white supremacy at all costs. These ideas were in circulation for decades, and previous governments also followed policies designed to achieve white supremacy and racial segregation. The ideology of apartheid emerged out of the post World War Two situation when the country experienced a dramatic industrial transformation. It represented the specific response of a section of the white population, the Afrikaners (and in particular Afrikaner capital) to the crisis brought about by the rapid industrialisation of the forties and the concomitant surge in black urbanisation. These interest groups wanted a government which would act decisively to defend white interest and the interest of capital in particular. At the end of the 1940s the National Party appeared to be the one party with the commitment and plan to implement such policies.

At the end of the 1930s the South African economy was still dominated by mining and agriculture. The African population was also predominantly rural: two million stayed in the Reserves, 2,2 million on white-owned farms and just under one and half million in urban areas.<sup>1</sup> However, by 1952 the industrial and urban landscapes of the country had undergone fundamental changes. The urban African population trebled between 1936 and 1960 and the expansion in manufacture during the Second World War resulted in that sector overtaking mining as the biggest contributor to the gross national product (in 1943).<sup>2</sup> Between 1936/7 and 1946/7 manufacturing output grew at an average of 5,1% per annum.<sup>3</sup> Economic growth in the early forties received an impetus from the wartime conditions. The disruption of the world economy and the increased demand for goods by the embattled western countries forced South Africa to adopt a more rigorous policy of import substitution.<sup>4</sup> This period proved to be the kickstart to the rapid industrialisation of the economy over the next two decades. Manufacturing expanded the fastest from the 1940s. In the early 1950s this sector recorded significant growth, eg. 7,2% in 1954, but declined from then to only 1,7% and experienced a negative growth rate of 1,4% in 1959.<sup>5</sup> This situation was, however, reversed in the 1960s with output growing by 8,4% per annum from 1963 to 1968.<sup>6</sup> In spite of a decline in growth in the late 1940s and more seriously in the early 1960s the economy continued to grow at a relatively fast rate. Although estimates vary, it is generally agreed that in the post-war period up to the mid 1970s the economy grew at an average annual rate of between 5-7%.<sup>7</sup> Until recently, many writers accepted that the South African economy experienced the second highest growth rate in the world during the 1960s, eclipsed only by the phenomenal growth of the Japanese economy.<sup>8</sup> Notwithstanding recent critiques of the accuracy of economic growth figures, it remains undisputed that the post-war period witnessed the best economic performance in the country's history.<sup>9</sup> To a large extent the country's economic growth in this

period was part of the post-war economic boom.

The expansion of industry increased the demand for labour, especially because the growth in manufacturing was primarily labour intensive, at least up to the 1960s.<sup>10</sup> The economic expansion during the war proved particularly favourable for African workers. A large number of white workers (about 186 000) were mobilised for the army and had to be replaced.<sup>11</sup> The number of Africans in industry virtually trebled between 1934 and 1946, from about 85000 to over 250 000.<sup>12</sup> Between 1940 and 1946 alone, approximately 134 000 Africans entered industrial employment.<sup>13</sup> The proportion of Africans to whites in industry increased from 41 percent in 1935 to 52 percent in 1945<sup>14</sup>, marking an important shift in the position of Africans in the economy. The expansion of industry also opened the doors for Africans to occupy more semi-skilled jobs. At the end of the 1930s up to 80% of African workers were employed in unskilled jobs but by the end of the 1940s between 30-40% were employed in semi-skilled jobs.<sup>15</sup> Even though this was not a dramatic increase, and was partly undermined by the return of whites from the war, it was nevertheless indicative of the increasing dependence of industry on African labour. The demand for labour in manufacturing rose consistently in the post-war period. Between 1951 and 1976 employment in manufacturing increased from 855 000 to 1,6 million.<sup>16</sup> Out of a total of 750 000 workers in the manufacturing industry in 1959, nearly 400 000 were African and only 200 000 were white.<sup>17</sup>

An important consequence of this industrialisation was the rapid increase in African urbanisation. In the decade from 1936 to 1946 the number of urban blacks increased from about 1 141 642 to 1 794 212. Probably more significantly the number of urban black women almost doubled from 350 000 to 650 000<sup>18</sup>, indicating a greater tendency to more permanent

settlement in the urban areas. Despite the National Party's attempts to curtail African migration to the towns, the African urban population virtually doubled between 1946 and 1960, totalling nearly 3,5 million.<sup>19</sup> Although the majority of Africans remained rural-based, the mass migration of Africans to the towns fundamentally affected the social and political landscapes of the country. As a result of the improved situation of blacks in industry, demands for higher wages and better working conditions increased in the early 1940s. This was shown by the increase in strikes during the war: in 1940 only 24 strikes were recorded but by 1942 this figure more than doubled to 58, involving nearly 13000 black workers.<sup>20</sup> The strike wave of this period marked the end of the quiescence and confusion experienced by the black opposition movement in the 1930s and gave impetus for the formation in 1941 of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU). In 1940 black workers were organised in about 20 unions with an estimated membership of 23 000, but by 1945 this had grown to 50 unions with about 80 000 members.<sup>21</sup> The latter figure has been disputed and almost certainly exaggerates the actual strength of the union movement at the time. Many unions belonging to CNETU were small and not very well organised. Nevertheless, the growth in union membership during this period reflected the growing strength and confidence of black workers. The most important struggle of this period was undoubtedly the miners' strike of 1946. The African Mine Workers' Union, under the leadership of the communist J.B. Marks, organised a strike of 70 000 workers to demand a wage increase of 10s. Although the strike was bloodily repressed by the state without any concessions being made to the workers, it nevertheless represented the climax of the black workers' struggles during the war and left an indelible imprint on the consciousness of white South Africa. The growing power and militancy of the urban working class brought home the realisation among whites that black demands for equality would not easily be pushed aside.

The struggles by black workers was paralleled by the struggles of communities to improve their daily lives. The rapid increase in the black urban population was not matched by a programme of housing provision by the state. In 1947 the Department of Native Affairs estimated that there was a national housing shortage of 154 000 family units and 106 900 single units (mainly for migrants).<sup>22</sup> This dire lack of housing resulted in massive overcrowding in existing locations and the mushrooming of squatter settlements on the peripheries of urban areas. On the outskirts of Johannesburg alone the number of squatters swelled to about 90 000.<sup>23</sup> Land invasions became commonplace from the mid-1940s as the demand for accommodation reached new heights. James Mpanza, leader of the Sefasonke Party, led thousands of tenants in 1944 to occupy municipal owned land in Orlando<sup>24</sup>. Similar movements occurred in Pimville, Dube and East Rand areas. The mid 1940s also witnessed other struggles by urban Africans against high rents and bus fares.<sup>25</sup>

The Smuts government's response to these developments alternated between reformist rhetoric and outright suppression. In the early 1940s, when the war effort was at its peak and an Allied victory appeared uncertain, the United Party showed a willingness to compromise with blacks. However, the repressive face of the government was never hidden for too long. In 1942 and 1945 the government passed War Measures 145 and 1425 respectively, aimed at curbing black union activity. In 1943 the police were ordered to conduct mass pass raids on the Witwatersrand, resulting in the arrest of 13 000 people in ten days.<sup>26</sup> In spite of these harsh actions the United Party could not stem the tide of black urbanisation or the increasing propensity to struggle among the urban black masses. It was the Smuts government's failure to deal with the "swart gevaar" that cost it the election. On the other hand, the National Party

promised the electorate that it would rigorously pursue policies to defend the interest of whites and deal ruthlessly with the "swart gevaar". On this basis it won a narrow victory in the 1948 election. Malan and his party argued that its apartheid policies, as set out in the Sauer report, would be the salvation of the Afrikaner *volk*. However, they soon discovered that their plan was riddled with shortcomings and could not simply be imposed on the country.

### **The making of apartheid**

The fundamental issue facing the state and capital in the late 1940s, therefore, was how to deal effectively with the massive growth in the black urban population and its tendencies towards militant action. The ambivalence of the United Party was deemed unsatisfactory and there was a desire among whites for a clear and decisive plan of action. The essential dilemma faced by the ruling class was how to maintain segregation and at the same time secure an adequate supply of cheap black labour for industry. The views within the state, and in particular within Afrikanerdom on this crucial issue were often divergent. Some supported the need for a stabilised black urban workforce:

Can we develop our industries when we have the position that the native only works for a few months and then returns to the reserves for a couple of years? No, the native must be trained for his work in industry, and to become an efficient industrial worker he must be a permanent industrial worker. On that account he must live near his place of employment.<sup>27</sup>

On the other hand there were those who regarded this view as a danger to white hegemony:

Racial and class differences will make a homogeneous Native proletariat which will eventually lose all contact with its former communal rural relations which has previously given their lives a content and meaning. The detribalization of large numbers of native congregated in amorphous masses in large industrial centres is a matter which no government can view with equanimity. Unless handled with a great foresight and skill these masses of detribalized natives can very easily develop into a menace rather than a constructive factor in industry ... the whole problem calls for vision and statesmanlike guidance.<sup>28</sup>

According to Posel the question of the economic integration of Africans in the so-called "white economy" remained at the centre of conflict within the Afrikaner alliance, the state in general and between the state and capital from the late 1940s.<sup>29</sup> Before the 1948 election the United Party and National Party formulated their respective plans to deal with this issue in the form of the Fagan and Sauer reports, respectively. The Fagan Commission, although adamant in its belief that the "races differ[ed] so radically from each other that there can be no question of assimilation"<sup>30</sup>, nevertheless supported the idea of controlled urbanisation of blacks. The defeat of the United Party in the elections relegated the Fagan report and its recommendations on African urbanisation to the dustbin of history. It was the National Party's Sauer Report that became the guide to future government policy. Its commitment to white supremacy formed the basis of the support it won from various Afrikaner nationalist forces. It successfully united different Afrikaner class forces - financiers, industrialists, agriculturalists and workers - behind the common ideological discourse encapsulated in the notion of apartheid. Effective racial segregation, firm control over the African population, and white hegemony were the common beliefs which galvanised these disparate class forces behind the National Party in the 1948 election. Once in power the National Party proceeded with

unprecedented fervour and meticulousness to implement its apartheid policies. But what exactly were these apartheid policies to be? Posel has presented an effective critique of the argument that the Sauer Report represented a coherent blueprint for apartheid policies.<sup>31</sup> She has revealed contradictory aims in this report on the crucial issue of the "economic integration" of Africans. On the one hand the report advocated total segregation, arguing for

the ultimate removal of urbanised African communities from 'white' areas, on the grounds that 'the urbanisation of Natives conflicts with the policy of apartheid'.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, the report also reflected the practical dilemma faced by white society over the role played by Africans in the economy and thus stated more cautiously that

as far as it was practically possible [the implementation of apartheid would] be pursued gradually, always taking into account the national needs and interests and with the necessary care to avoid the disruption of the country's agriculture, industries and general interests.<sup>33</sup>

These contradictory statements reflected the division between the "purist" and "practical" tendencies, which were based on class differences within the Afrikaner alliance. The former position was most effectively articulated by the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) which believed that apartheid meant total racial segregation. It did not advocate the immediate extrication of Africans from the urban areas but for the "purists" this was the ultimate aim of apartheid policies. For SABRA economic integration meant accepting Africans as a permanent feature in "white South Africa", which would in turn lead to

demands from them for trade union and political rights.<sup>34</sup> The Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut (AHI) and the South African Agricultural Union, representing the interests of Afrikaner capital, advocated a "practical" policy which viewed apartheid "as a means of *expediting* whites' access to African labour in the urban and rural areas alike."<sup>35</sup> They advocated strong state intervention to control the influx of African to the urban areas and simultaneously to ensure that industrialists and farmers would be guaranteed of a constant supply of cheap African labour.

It would, therefore, be incorrect to assert that the National Party's apartheid policy, as emanating from the Sauer Report, constituted a blue print of homogeneous ideas. In fact there was a continual contest between the "purist" and "practical" factions over the policies pursued by the government. Posel's various articles on the process of policy making within the Native Affairs Department (later the Bantu Affairs Department) reveals intense rivalry between the different factions.<sup>36</sup> This department was integral to the formulation of government policy in regard to Africans and its leaders, men such as H.F. Verwoerd and W.M. Eiselen, were prominent members of the government. The contest over "bantu policy" in this department reflected the general struggle in the National Party and government, albeit in a sharper form.

The key question is which of these factions dominated state policy. From 1948 and throughout the 1950s the "practical" faction in the Afrikaner alliance predominated. The alliance of urban and rural Afrikaner capital ensured that their immediate interests - the supply of cheap African labour - would receive priority interest in the policy of the government. During this period the government implemented policies designed to 'stabilise' the urban black labour force and limit further influx to the needs of industry. The dominance

of the "practical" faction did not go unchallenged as the "purist" faction was well represented in the government, as well as at regional and local state structures.

### **Apartheid in the 1950s**

Throughout the 1950s the government's policies were premised on the recognition of the permanence of African labour in the urban areas. It therefore aimed to maximise control over the black urban population through various measures of influx control, residential segregation and political repression. This is reflected in the legislation passed in the immediate post-1948 period, eg. The Group Areas Act(1950), The Suppression of Communism Act (1950), The Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act (1951) and The Native Resettlement Act (1953). The two key aims of these policies were the extension and entrenchment of racial segregation and the stabilisation of the urban black population. One of the most important pieces of legislation of the time was the Native Laws Amendment Bill, Section 10(1) of which allowed Africans who worked continuously in an urban area for ten years for a single employers or for fifteen for several employers to be granted permanent residential status, irrespective of subsequent unemployment. Furthermore, wives and dependents of men who had residential rights were also recognised as permanent urban residents.<sup>37</sup> At this stage the government distinguished between urbanised (detrilledised) and rural (tribal)Africans. Permanent urban residential rights only applied to the former. This concession of residential rights for "urban" Africans was accompanied by numerous restrictions and influx control to keep unwanted blacks out of the towns.

Thus, it simultaneously attempted to fulfil its ideological aims of racial separation and to meet the specific class interests of capital. The frenetic activity around urban planning in the early

1950s, especially in the Witwatersrand, was indicative of the National Party's desire speedily to set in place its apartheid urban policies. It is important, therefore, to view the various laws pertaining to urban planning (influx control, residential segregation) as component parts in the broader plan to effect urban apartheid and labour controls. The implementation of these laws constituted the most significant attempt in racial social engineering to date. The attack on integrated location, especially the removal of the Western Areas, showed the government's determination to enforce complete residential segregation. The introduction of labour preferences, eg. the establishment of the Western Cape as a coloured labour preference zone showed that the National Party was determined not to leave any part of society untouched by its racial policies. The plan to assert greater control over the movement of African labour was enhanced by the extension of pass controls to African women. However, in spite of the plethora of racial legislation passed in the 1950s, this decade cannot be described as an unqualified success for the National Party and apartheid.

By the time of the election in 1958, a decade after it came to power, it was clear that the National Party had not succeeded in achieving its main aims. Its influx control policies had not stopped the mass migration of Africans to the urban areas. Between 1946 and 1960 the black urban population nearly doubled to almost 3,5 million. The percentage of Africans in urban areas increased from 24% to 32% and they outnumbered whites in almost every major urban centre.<sup>39</sup> Twelve years of Apartheid rule failed to turn the tide of African urbanisation, and whites effectively became a minority in their "own" areas. There were still numerous integrated locations in the main urban areas and probably most importantly, black political opposition begun to reassert itself. This situation was brought about by a combination of inter-related factors. As indicated above the National Party succeeded in passing numerous

apartheid laws but their passage did not lead to immediate or successful implementation. There were various problems, ranging from administrative weaknesses to political opposition, which hampered the successful functioning of apartheid in the 1950s.

The National Party's first problem was that it did not have a clear majority in parliament, having won less than 50% of the votes in the 1948 election. Even though the party strengthened its electoral position throughout the 1950s, it was not until the 1958 election that it won an absolute majority of white votes. Furthermore, in a number of important municipalities such as Johannesburg and Cape Town, the opposition United Party still had a strong political presence. In the 1950s the National Party was unable to ride roughshod over its opposition in parliament and regional authorities as it was able to do from the 1960s. It was often forced to negotiate and even compromise with opposition parties. However, the official white opposition proved to be fairly timid and in many cases acquiesced with the National Party policies.<sup>39</sup> By the time of the 1958 election two splinter parties had split off from the United Party, and its more radical supporters linked up with the Congress of Democrats, a member of the Congress Alliance. This effectively paralysed the white liberal opposition and gave the National Party almost complete hegemony over white politics.

There were also loopholes in many of the laws passed which were effectively used by opposition parties to retard their implementation (see chapter two for a more detailed discussion of this aspect in relation to the GAA). The South African Indian Congress in particular used legal recourse to great effect, often succeeding in causing long delays in the final implementation of racial laws. But the success of these measures were ephemeral as the National Party soon closed the loopholes exposed by opposition lawyers. Mass opposition also

played an important role in hampering government plans. This was especially the case with influx control. The government's attempts to extend passes to African women was opposed through non-compliance and mass mobilisation. Thousands of women were involved in local anti-pass protests, culminating in the march by 20 000 women to the Union Building in Pretoria in 1956.<sup>40</sup> The Defiance Campaign of 1952 and the anti-pass campaigns of the early 1960s further undermined the effectiveness of the pass system. These struggles made it virtually impossible for the government immediately to enforce passes on women, and it was only after the Sharpeville massacre that it was in a position effectively to use passes as a control mechanism.

The picture that emerges of apartheid in the 1950s is therefore a contradictory one. In spite of its fervent pursuance of apartheid ideals, the National Party was unable in the first decade of its rule to achieve all of its aims. But the National Party also used its increasing power in the state to strike blows against the black political opposition, while at the same time fine-tuning its apartheid policies. Segregation and repressive laws were amended throughout the 1950s to eliminate loopholes and make them more effective. Another feature of this period was the operation of numerous commissions to investigate how best to implement National Party policy. By the end of the 1950s therefore the National Party succeeded in putting into place the essence of its apartheid legislation and bureaucracy. Yet, even as it was strengthening its hold on white politics and the state, the National Party was acutely aware of growing resistance from black people. This was reflected in what was probably its most hysterical "swart gevaar" election campaign in 1958. The next few years proved to be an important test of the balance of power between the racist National Party government and the black opposition movement led by the ANC.

### **The 1960s: apartheid's second phase**

The period from 1958 to 1962 was critical in the development of apartheid. The National Party's electoral victory in 1958, which gave it a clear parliamentary majority, marked a decisive point in white politics. The weakness of the liberal opposition meant rendered it incapable of challenging the growing power of the National Party. However, this success came at a time when black resistance, led by the Congress movement, was rejuvenated and entered one of its most militant periods. Underpinned by the struggles of black workers in the factories in the late 1950s, the urban black working class engaged in numerous struggles against apartheid laws. Unionised workers organised in the South African Congress of Trade Unions embarked on the "£1 a day" campaign, to demand a minimum wage. In the townships people were mobilised against the pass laws and struggles for improvements in their living conditions. The late fifties were a watershed in the struggle against apartheid: the bus boycotts, general strikes, wage struggles, and the anti-pass law movement were important signs of the growing strength and confidence of the black working class.

It may be argued that the state and capital faced a serious crisis at the beginning of the 1960s. The state's response was to go onto the offensive. The Sharpeville massacre and the subsequent banning of the ANC and PAC were major blows struck against the opposition movement. The ANC and its allies reacted by organising general strikes, indicating some recognition by it of the importance of the organised workers. But the sabotage campaigns by Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo, the ANC and PAC military wings respectively, as well as by the African Resistance Movement (ARM), were the main response from the liberation movements. This was in turn followed by greater repression from the state. In the wake of these events, there was a capital outflow of R180 million in 1960.<sup>41</sup> This blow to the economy

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followed a decline in economic growth in the late 1950s. At the beginning of the sixties South African society faced an unprecedented political and economic crisis. Once again the struggles of the black urban and rural population threw white politics into turmoil. As at the end of the 1940s there were again serious reviews by the strategists of the state and capital to find the best response to the new situation. Under these circumstances the divisions between the "practical"/*verligtes* and "purist"/*verkramptes* factions were once again thrown to sharp relief.

In her discussion on state policy towards Africans in the 1960s, Posei shows that the Afrikaner alliance and especially the Bantu Administration Department were racked by controversy.<sup>42</sup> Within the cabinet, senior ministers (Dörnges, Sauer, and Schoeman) asked prime minister Verwoerd to eliminate pass books.<sup>43</sup> Their sentiments were supported by Afrikaner and English capital which called for more reforms. They were especially concerned about entrenching the separation between urbanised and "tribalised" Africans. By making more concessions to the urbanised Africans they believed the government would be able to create a compliant and "loyal middle-class type bantu".<sup>44</sup> These ideas even found resonance within SABRA, albeit from a minority faction, and from a "dissident faction" in the Dutch Reformed Church. The latter criticised the migrant labour system as anathema to family life and called for improvements in the lives of Africans.<sup>45</sup>

However, this reformist faction encountered strong opposition within the National Party and the state. Given ideological coherence by the increasingly influential Broederbond, the *verkramptes* insisted that the policies pursued by the National Party in the 1950s were a failure and called for more radical measures to secure white supremacy. The *verkramptes*

consisted mainly of the "purist" faction in the Afrikaner alliance, but now also included the SAAU. Importantly, this alliance was given greater ideological and political cohesion by the increasingly influential Broederbond. The *verkramptes* were extremely critical of the growing dependence by whites on African labour, which they felt seriously undermined the essence of apartheid. These ideas penetrated virtually every part of the Afrikaner alliance, including the previously "practical" SAAU. The spreading of these ideas was to a large extent a consequence of the Broederbond's success in infiltrating various Afrikaner organisations and state departments.<sup>46</sup> The *verkrampte* faction was very influential within the BAD, and it is within this department that the struggle between the different factions was most fiercely contested throughout the 1960s. In the early 1960s the Broederbond and its allies in the BAD set about reversing the National Party's policies in regard to Africans in urban areas. In 1960 they drafted the Bantu in European Areas Bill which called for the fixing of labour quotas. They denounced section 10 'rights' "as an indefensible deviation from the principles of separate development".<sup>47</sup> This idea was integrally linked to another reversal in BAD policy, namely, the distinction between "urbanised" and "tribalised" Africans. According to BAD all Africans had to be regarded as the same and derided the notion of "detrivalised" Africans. Consequently they advocated "ethnic self-determination", which became the ideological justification for the development of the "homelands" policies. MC Botha, Minister of Bantu Affairs, succinctly articulated the position of the "purist":

The Bantu in the white urban areas cannot be dissected from their national relatives in the homelands, not even if they were born here in the white areas. The Bantu in the white area and those in the Bantu homelands are linked into one nation... The national consciousness of the Bantu is more deeply rooted than many people realise and are

prepared to accept.<sup>48</sup>

The opposition from business and many local authorities forced the BAD to withdraw its 1960 Bill<sup>49</sup>, but throughout the decade it attempted to undermine the "rights" of Africans in the urban areas. In 1967 the government introduced the Physical Planning and Utilisation of Resources Bill which intended to "peg or reduce (the number) of Bantu workers employed in industry outside the Bantu areas." and in 1970 the government enforced a labour quota on industry.<sup>50</sup> The BAD was less successful in getting the government to eliminate section 10 "rights", largely because of opposition from business. The resistance from urban business was successful in the 1960s partly because of the economic boom which increased the need for labour. However, their opposition was only against those aspects of apartheid policy which business felt would adversely affect their particular interest. For the rest, the 1960s represented the highpoint of social engineering by the National Party, the political basis for which was created by the smashing of the liberation movements. The security clampdown of the early 1960s included the detention of approximately 20 000 activists, charges of sabotage against hundreds and the promulgation of numerous security laws: the Defence Amendment Act (1961); General Laws Amendment Act, which included the 12 day detention clause; the Sabotage Act (1962); the 90-day detention law of 1963 and the general proliferation of the security apparatus.<sup>51</sup> The Rivonia trial of Mandela and other ANC leaders in 1964 represented the final nail in the coffin for the liberation movements in the 1960s. By that time the ANC and PAC had established themselves in exile and the internal movement was smashed into acquiescence.

The defeat of the black opposition, the disintegration of the liberal parties and the economic

boom of the 1960s tended to ease the tension between the *verkrampes* and *verligtes* as they all basked in the glory of their success. This was also the time when the National Party was able to implement much of its racist agenda. Residential segregation and urban removals were implemented with impunity. Tighter influx controls and more pass raids kept the African urban population in a constant state of uncertainty. Separate development and border industries gained momentum in this period, so that by the early 1970s the bantustan policy was reaching its apogee with the prospect of "independence" being granted. In contrast to the 1950s, the National Party was able to implement virtually any policy it wished in the 1960s without too much parliamentary or extra-parliamentary opposition.

There has been considerable debate over the continuities and discontinuities in the making of apartheid during the 1950s and 1960s. Posel has criticised O'Meara and others for presenting a "grand plan" view of apartheid. Her contention that the "construction of Apartheid has not been a wholly linear, systematic or monolithic project"<sup>52</sup> seems to be supported by the available evidence. Yet, a primary characteristic of the post-1948 period was precisely the emergence of greater planning and co-ordination. The racial restructuring of the urban areas begun in the fifties and the "homelands" system epitomised the Nationalist's social engineering. But the eventual success of these plans should not blind us to the fact that their implementation was not guaranteed. Moreover, these policies were contested within the government and by outside opposition forces, which affected the way they were implemented. Maylam has argued that the primary contradiction in segregation and urban control policies arose out of the state's plans to secure an adequate supply of cheap African labour while simultaneously minimising their presence in the cities.<sup>53</sup> He suggests that in the 1960s the state was most successful in *managing* these contradictions.<sup>54</sup> The basis for the state's success

in the 1960s was created by the defeat of the liberation movements and the economic boom. The continued conflict between the *verligtes* and *verkramptes* in the 1960s did not have a debilitating effect on the state, mainly because of the weakness of the black opposition. The favourable conditions of the 1960s created greater scope for the state simultaneously to pursue policies which benefitted both capital and the rabid racists. Capital accepted most of the apartheid laws passed in the 1960s as long as these laws did not interfere with their access to cheap labour. In fact, the quiescence of English and Afrikaner business is indicative of their general satisfaction with the policies followed by the government. *Verkramptes*, on the other hand, continued campaigning for tighter controls over the African urban population but did not insist on the complete removal of Africans from the urban areas. The one thing on which there was unanimity in the Afrikaner alliance was that the urban black population had to be controlled. This meant curtailing and repressing any possible black opposition. The state and capital understood the significant role played by the black opposition in challenging apartheid.

#### **Popular resistance against apartheid**

An important question which this dissertation explores is the extent to which there were struggles against the implementation of the GAA in the 1950s and 1960s. Pirie has argued that civil unrest or mass struggles were not the most prominent response to the GAA. Rather opposition took the form mainly of media protests, representations and public meetings.<sup>55</sup> If this assertion is true then the question it raises is why the struggle against one of the most important apartheid laws was so muted. One may add a more general question: why did the struggles in this period not prevent or defeat the implementation of apartheid? In order to address these questions it is necessary briefly to assess the struggles of the 1950 and 1960s.

Here it is only possible to do this in a very schematic fashion and highlight some of the main features of the period. Other writers have dealt in considerably more detail with this issue<sup>36</sup> although as Bonner, *et al*, have noted the extant literature focuses mainly on leading personalities and national campaigns.<sup>37</sup>

The 1950s are generally viewed as a watershed in the struggle of blacks against racism and oppression. This is easily understandable because the 1950s witnessed the transformation of the ANC into a popular movement, creating the basis for its mass appeal from the early 1980s. Moreover, the leaders of the struggle in the 1950s - Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, Mhlaba, Tambo - also became the popular icons of the struggling masses in the 1980s. These leaders played an important role in the transformation of the ANC from being an elitist movement engaging primarily in the struggle of petitions and deputation, to a more radical movement prepared to lead mass struggles. As leading figures in the Youth League, Mandela and his comrades, took control of the ANC in the late 1940s, marking a decisive turning point in the history of the ANC, which then went on to adopt the radical Programme of Action in 1949. At the beginning of the 1950s the new look and radicalised ANC prepared itself to battle the National Party and its apartheid policies. The struggles waged by the Congress Alliance, factory workers and the communities all over the country profoundly influenced the development of apartheid. The struggles of the 1940s, impacted seriously on the consciousness of capital, the state and the white population as a whole. Bringing the black urban population under control thus became a key aim for these forces. It was precisely against these measures of control that most of the struggles of the 1950s were waged.

The first indication of a shift in the character of protest politics was the stayaways on May

Day and June 26 to oppose the proscription of the Communist Party of South Africa. According to Lodge these actions did not yet signify the transformation of the ANC from an elitist to popular organisation,<sup>58</sup> but they were an early sign of what lay ahead in the 1950s. The Defiance Campaign of 1932 was the first real attempt by the ANC to lead the masses against the government. In January of that year the ANC sent an ultimatum to the government demanding the repeal of six 'unjust laws': the GAA, the Suppression of Communism Act, the Bantu Authorities Act, Stock Limitation Act, the Voters' Representation Act and the pass laws.<sup>59</sup> Thousands were in active defiance of apartheid laws throughout the country, with over 8000 volunteers arrested for their involvement.<sup>60</sup> Although none of the above laws were repealed, the campaign was nevertheless significant for the ANC. At the end of 1952 it could claim a membership of nearly 100 000,<sup>61</sup> which even if exaggerated represented a phenomenal increase in support for the movement. The increase in membership was also a reflection of the widespread support which then existed for the ANC all over the country. The campaign also injected a new enthusiasm of defiance among ordinary people. Even though the activities of ANC did not remain at the same pitch as during the Defiance Campaign, resistance by ordinary people continued. Some of the most notable struggles in the 1950s were the school boycotts in 1955, the bus boycott in Evaton and Alexandra in 1955-57, the £-A-Day campaign of Sactu and the general struggle against the pass laws. Equally important was the resistance against government laws by ordinary people in locations and squatter camps. As recent writers<sup>62</sup> have indicated, women and youth were especially recalcitrant in the face of the state's attempts to impose tight controls over them. The difficulty the government had in extending pass laws to women, was indicative of the ability of ordinary people, with and without the assistance of national organisations, to defy the laws of apartheid.

In spite of the numerous shining examples of struggles waged against the apartheid government, the reality remains that by the early 1960s apartheid laws not only remained intact but were more or less successfully imposed on the black population. There is little dispute that the use of force by the state in the post-Sharpeville period was crucial in subduing the movement. Yet, this is an inadequate explanation for the quiescence of the 1960s. A critical analysis of the liberation movements in 1950s is required to understand why black resistance failed to defeat the government's apartheid policies. Few writers have given critical assessments of the struggles of this period.<sup>63</sup> Much more detailed analyses are required and here it will only be possible to pose more questions, some of which will be explored in the further chapters.

In their recent work on the struggles of the working class in the 1950s Fine and Davis suggest that there should be greater sensitivity to the inherent weakness of the black working class in the 1950s.<sup>64</sup> They argue that the "roots of working class vulnerability lay in the economy, deriving from the structural position of workers in production. In particular, the black industrial labour force, as the most advanced sector of the working class as a whole, was still relatively small, dispersed and de-skilled. ...the bargaining power of black workers was no stronger [in the 1950s] than it had been in the 1940s."<sup>65</sup> Notwithstanding the important inroads made by blacks into industry since the early 1940s, the formation of a strong working class was still in its infancy. A further hindrance to the development of a collective class consciousness was the dispersal of the workforce in small plants. In 1953/4, 65 per cent of factories employed less than 9 workers and in 1959 the average of number of workers per factory was approximately 43.<sup>66</sup> The majority of black workers also remained employed in unskilled positions, further weakening their bargaining position. An additional impediment

was the occurrence of a high labour turn over among African workers,<sup>67</sup> which would have made it very difficult to effect strong workplace organisations. Fine and Davis also warn against exaggerating the strength of the industrial workforce in comparison with that in the rest of the economy. The majority of African people were overwhelmingly rural and in 1960 only 400 000 Africans out of 11 million were employed in industry.<sup>68</sup> Also many Africans who left the rural areas went to work on the mines, which after the defeat of the 1946 strike remained quiescent throughout this period.

A factor which has only recently begun to receive proper attention is the differentiation within the urban masses. Concepts such as 'nation' and 'masses' are convenient descriptions but give a false impression of homogeneity among black people during this period. One aspect that is often glossed over is the fact that the majority of black urban dwellers in the 1950s were recent immigrants from the rural areas. Bonner, relying partly on the earlier work by Philip Mayer<sup>69</sup>, has questioned certain assumptions about the urbanisation of migrants. Describing the urbanisation of Africans as a "complex and ambiguous process",<sup>70</sup> he suggests that urban life for many first generation immigrants remained *conditional*, with many of them consciously and deliberately maintaining ties with their rural homes. The impact of this on the struggles in the 1950s still needs to be explored but it clearly raises questions about the development of an urban or even working class consciousness among these immigrants. Consequently, their involvement in struggles to improve living conditions in the urban areas was not necessarily automatic.

One other factor influencing the character of the struggles in the 1950s, which has received very little attention, is the impact of the state's 'reforms' on the consciousness of wide layers

of the urban population. It may be strange to describe the racist policies of the National Party in the fifties as 'reform's but the reality is that there were social improvements in the lives of many people. What has made it difficult for these improvements to be accepted as reforms is that they occurred in the guise of racial social engineering, and were thus scorned, even by those who benefitted from the improvements. Nonetheless, the state's massive housing programme of the 1950s, designed to assert greater control over the urban black population, resulted in many people who lived in squatter camps or in overcrowded conditions in locations acquiring houses for the first time in their lives. These houses were more than often of a poor quality but represented an improvements on the squalid conditions experienced especially by lodgers and illegal squatters in locations such Sophiatown, Payneville, etc. Many of these people would have found it difficult to struggle against their removal from the old locations to the new townships built in the 1950s. It is thus important to recognise that the leadership of the liberation movement did not have access to a homogeneous urban mass prepared to struggle for its class interests.

By the late 1950s and early 1960s the situation described above begun to change. The creation of massive townships and the implementation of 'bantu education' tended to homogenise the black urban population. This tended to undermine the division within the African population and started developing a greater sense of unity. As in the eighties the existence of massive townships gave its occupants a better appreciation of their collective power. Influx control and section 10 'rights' militated against high labour turnovers, resulting in the development of a more stable workforce, which in turn made it easier to organise workers into unions. As more workers became dependent on wage labour, demands for better remuneration begun to emerge. These changes created the basis for the renewed upsurge in

struggle in the late 1950s. The severe repression unleashed by the state after Sharpeville struck a serious blow to the black opposition. But the defeat of the movement which ensued cannot adequately be explained by the state's repression. At least some of the reasons for this must be accounted for by weaknesses of the leadership.

Here it is only possible to cite one or two salient examples of how the political approach of the leadership adversely affected the struggle against apartheid. In 1957 the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) launched its campaign for a national minimum wage or the £1 a day campaign. In the same year Sactu organised a successful stayaway in support of their demand with impressive support in Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg. According to Lodge the successful mobilisation of organised workers "generated a revived faith among political leaders in the potency of working-class forms of struggle".<sup>71</sup> Yet, in the next period the ANC leadership tended to undermine the potential power of the organised working class. Its decision to make the 1958 white elections the focus of the General Strike that year undermined Sactu's intention to step up the campaign for a national minimum wage. Unlike with the 1957 strike Sactu was not centrally involved in the 1958 strike and consequently it was less successful. Trade union leader, Dan Tloome, criticised the basis on which the ANC leadership attempted to mobilise the people,<sup>72</sup> although he also believed that Africans were not yet class conscious.<sup>73</sup> The official position of the South African Communist Party, based on its analysis of *Internal Colonialism*, was that the class struggle had to be subordinated to the national democratic struggle.<sup>74</sup> The centrality of working class control of the liberation movement was contested in the liberation movements throughout the fifties. The post-Sharpeville crisis, however, forced the leadership of the movement to act decisively. The course of action which they embarked on in response to the state violence had a profound

impact on the struggle of the working class.

After the banning of the ANC and PAC, Sactu was the largest national organisation in the country allowed to operate legally. With the support it gained from the late 1950's the trade union movement was in a good position to become the main vehicle for protest against the apartheid regime. The strengthening of the position of black workers in industry in the 1960s could have placed Sactu in a much better bargaining position than in the 1950s. However, the turn to sabotage and guerilla struggles by the ANC and PAC denuded the trade union movement of some of their most capable activists. For many activists there appeared to be no alternative to the proposed turn to guerilla warfare. The successful insurgency wars fought by Chè Guevara and Castro appeared to be the ideal examples of what should be done against the warfare by the white regime against blacks in South Africa. The shift to recognising that a violent struggle would be necessary to topple the apartheid government was in itself profoundly important and inspired many to join the leadership of the liberation movement in their quest to inflict a military defeat on the white regime. Yet, as Baruch Hirson (an activist in the sabotage campaign of ARM) recently admitted,

We were not blindly following the Cuban/Vietnamese/Algerian experience. There was no obvious alternative strategy in sight. If, however, we had probed deeper, we might have seen that there was a basic rupture between what we were saying and the class analysis upon which we had always prided ourselves...The new course we were adopting would take us away from the workers who were essential for the building of a socialist society.<sup>75</sup>

This is not the place for a lengthy discussion on the turn to armed struggle. Suffice it to say the argument that there was no alternative to this course of action is flawed. Fine and Davis argue that from the late 1950s the ANC leadership was "out of step with the tempo of the class struggle"<sup>76</sup> and arguably abandoned the class struggle at a time when the working class was showing a willingness to act as a *class* in the struggle against the state. The denudation of activists did not only adversely affect the trade union movement. Communities were also deprived of many of their most capable leaders who went into exile. However, in matters like this it is necessary to have a sense of balance. Under the severely repressive conditions of the sixties there could be no guarantee that a mass struggle against the government would succeed or even be sustained. Thousands were arrested and some were brutally murdered by security forces. The impact of these measures on the popular consciousness cannot be underestimated and took many years before ordinary people overcame their fears. It is ironic therefore that at the time the black working class was gaining in strength, the movement was smashed by the government and was unable effectively to mobilise that power against the state. However, in less than ten years the urban working class began to reverse the setbacks of the 1960s with the docks strikes in Durban in 1969 and again in 1973. The late 1960s also witnessed the early stirring of discontent among black students with the emergence of the black consciousness movement.

This chapter has attempted to outline some of the most important features of the dynamic and complex processes in the making of apartheid from 1948 to the end of the 1960s. It is clear that numerous forces impacted on this process and contributed to the specific routes followed by policy makers. This study hopes to make a useful contribution in shedding more light on the GAA and forced removals. In so doing it is intended to test some of the general

arguments raised about the genesis and evolution of apartheid.

## NOTES

1. Hirson, B: Yours for the Union, Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1989, p.2
2. Lodge, T: Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1983, p.11
3. Nattrass, N: "Economic Aspects of the Construction of Apartheid", in Bonner, P, *et al* (eds): Apartheid's Genesis, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1993, p.43
4. *ibid*
5. Innes, D: Anglo, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1984, p.173
6. *ibid*, p.188
7. Beinart, W: Twentieth Century South Africa, Oxford University Press, London, 1994, p.165.
8. Since the late 1960s various writers, marxist and liberal, have repeated this point. See for example, Legassick, M: "Legislation, Ideology and Economy"; O'Meara, D, Volkskapitalisme; Nattrass, J, The South African Economy. Recently, however, Terence Moll has questioned this assumption, arguing that in fact the growth was not only less spectacular but was also less than countries at a similar economic development. See Moll, T: "Did the South African Economy Fail?", Journal of Southern African Studies, vol.17, 2, 1991
9. Moll does not dispute this. His main criticism is about the precise rate of growth and particularly questions the idea that the South African economy was the second fastest growing in the 1960s.
10. Innes, D: Anglo, pp.169-170
11. Beinart, W: Twentieth Century, p.125
12. Fine, R and Davis, D: Beyond Apartheid, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1991, p.13
13. Innes, D: Anglo, p. 227
14. Fine, R and Davis, D: Beyond Apartheid, p.14
15. Bonner, P: "African Urbanisation on the Rand between the 1930s and 1960s", Inaugural lecture, University of the Witwatersrand, 1993, pp. 7-8
16. Beinart, W: Twentieth Century, p.165

17. Fine, R and Davis, D: Beyond Apartheid, p.155
18. *ibid*, p.14
19. *ibid*, p.136
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24. Morris, P: Black Housing, pp. 36-37
25. Hirson, B: Yours for the Union, Chapters 11 and 12
26. Morris, P: Black Housing, p.36
27. House of Assembly Debates, 1947. Quote taken from Legassick, M: "Legislation, ideology, and Economy in Post-1948 South Africa", Journal of Southern Africa Studies, vol.1, 1, 1974, p.13.
28. *ibid*, from the Board of Trade Industry, *Report No. 282*
29. See for example Posel, D: "The Meaning of Apartheid before 1948", Journal of Southern African Studies, vol 14, no.1, 1987
30. *ibid*,
31. *ibid*
32. *ibid*, p.136
33. *ibid*
34. *ibid*, p.127
35. *ibid*, p.130
36. See for example Posel, D: "The Construction of Apartheid, 1948 -1961"; "The State and Policy-Making in Apartheid's Second Phase", paper presented to the African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, 1990
37. Posel, D: "The Construction of Apartheid", p.11
38. Fine and Davis, Beyond Apartheid, p.156

39. See for example D. van Tonder's explanation of the role of United Party councillors in Western Areas Removal Scheme.
40. Lodge, T: Black Politics, p.144
41. Innes, D: Anglo, p.173
42. Posel, D: "The Construction of Apartheid"
43. *ibid*, p.4
44. *ibid*, pp. 4-5
45. *ibid*
46. *ibid*, pp. 9-10
47. *ibid*
48. *ibid*, p.10
49. *ibid*, p.11
50. *ibid*, pp.15-16
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54. *ibid*, p.57
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57. Bonner, P, *et al*, Apartheid's Genesis, pp. 16 -20
58. Lodge, T: Black Politics, pp. 34 - 35
59. *ibid*, p.42
60. *ibid*, p.46
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62. For example Glaser, C: "When are they going to fight? Tsotsis, Youth Politics and the PAC" in Bonner, P, *et al*: Apartheid's Genesis

63. The works of Lodge and Fine and Davis are some of the notable exceptions

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65. *ibid*, pp. 153 - 154

66. *ibid*, p.154

67. Bonner, P: "African Urbanisation", p.8

68. Fine and Davis, Beyond Apartheid, p.155

69. Philip Mayer's Tribesmen and Townsmen is a fascinating study of the process of urbanisation in the East London.

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71. Lodge, T: Black Politics, p.194

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73. Lambert, R: "Trade Unionism, Race, Class and Nationalism in the 1950s Resistance Movement", in Bonner, P, *et al* (eds): Apartheid's Genesis, p. 282

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## CHAPTER TWO

### The Group Areas Act in the fifties: from inertia to consolidation

The previous chapter argued that the National Party came to power without a clearly worked out plan about precisely how it was going to implement its apartheid policies. The main aim of this chapter is to show how this affected the implementation of the Group Areas Act. From the time of the Act's promulgation nearly seven years elapsed before it started functioning effectively. However, as Posel acknowledges, the lack of a blueprint did not mean that the government operated on an *ad hoc* basis.<sup>1</sup> This applied to apartheid in general and the GAA specifically. Two of the key aims of apartheid policy were to impose stricter control over the urban-based black population and to enforce complete and compulsory racial separation all over the country. The GAA, which according to prime minister Malan "was apartheid"<sup>2</sup>, must be viewed as integral to these aims. The Act was not merely the fulfilment of the racial ideology of the Afrikaner alliance. The National Party's fervent commitment to racial segregation and white supremacy is unquestioned, but it was particularly determined to preserve the hegemony of (white)capital over the mass of black labourers. Historically, a critical aspect of racial balkanisation in South Africa was to effect maximum possible control by the ruling group over the oppressed people. The establishment of reserves and segregated locations were designed to achieve this aim. The GAA represented a continuation of these policies, but with more far-reaching consequences.

The creation of 'group areas' and the removal schemes were integral to the dramatic reshaping of the country's cities in the 1950s. The rapid industrialisation of the economy necessitated changes to the organisation and structure of urban areas. However, the National

Party was determined to infuse this reorganisation with racial segregation. It not only aimed to set racial segregation on a new footing but also to reverse existing practices of residential racial integration. The forcible removal of people from integrated locations became an important corollary of the GAA. Therefore legislation which was directed specifically at urban Africans should be viewed in conjunction with the GAA. The disestablishment of integrated locations became a crucial target for the National Party. Not only were they contradictions to the essence of racial separation, but were invariably the centres of black opposition. However, the removal of "black spots", as these integrated location became known, did not resolve the problems for the government. Removals was one thing, but deciding where to move people of different 'races' was more complicated. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed the establishment of numerous segregated townships all over the country, as tens of thousands of people were moved from old locations and squatter camps, and herded into these new racially exclusive townships. The siting of these townships was in itself problematical as the interests of various groups had to be accommodated. For example, industrialists wanted townships situated in close proximity to industrial areas and whites generally wanted them as far away from their residential areas as possible.

The implementation of the GAA depended crucially on the involvement and co-operation of regional and local government structures. Most local authorities complied with the government's plans. However, even the limited opposition from some Councils caused considerable delays in the implementation of 'group areas'. One area of tension between the central government and municipalities was over who should bear the cost of the racial zoning of the towns. Opposition from other groups, such as the South African Indian Congress, used the legal loopholes in the legislation to hinder the government's work. The main effect

of this type of opposition was to cause delays in the final implementation of the GAA. The primary shortcoming of the opposition was that there was not a nationally co-ordinated mass campaign directed specifically against the GAA.

Support for racial segregation was a central unifying force for the Afrikaner alliance. Working class and middle class whites wanted blacks tucked away in locations far from their own areas. Capital on the other hand wanted the state to 'stabilise' and control the black workforce. But these were not the only interested parties in favour of 'group areas'. UP members in various municipalities often actively participated in the creation of 'group areas'. Probably more significant, however, was the support the government gained from some coloureds and Indians in certain localities, especially for the removal of Africans. Although this kind of support did not come from mass based organisation, it nevertheless strengthened the hand of the government while weakening the ability of blacks to unite against the GAA.

The GAA did not apply to Africans and other legislation such as the Native (Urban Areas) Act catered for their settlement into separate location. However, as mentioned above it would be a mistake to view these Acts in isolation from one another. They were crucial components of the government's social engineering and in particular of the racial re-zoning of the cities. Africans were of course affected by the GAA as thousands were forcibly removed from integrated locations which were declared 'group areas' for whites, coloureds or Indians.

#### **The Genesis of the Group Areas Act**

The promulgation of the GAA in 1950 indicated the government's determination to fulfil its promise to the white electorate that it would enforce compulsory racial separation. However,

the ideas of 'group areas' and racial segregation were by no means novel. For centuries already white rulers attempted to enforce some form of racial segregation on the majority black population. After their military subjugation in the nineteenth century African people were placed in reserves considerably smaller than the territories they had previously occupied. The formation of Union in 1910 opened a new chapter in the relationship between white rulers and the subjugated black population. The 1913 Land Act took segregation a step further by making it illegal for Africans to acquire land outside the reserves. This division of the whole country into white (over 90% of the territory) and black owned land, was replicated at a local level. The 1920 Housing Act, for example, established a Central Housing Board of the Department of Health, which could only approve housing for specific 'groups'.<sup>3</sup>

More significant for the urban areas was the passage by the Smuts government of the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, which empowered local authorities to set aside land for black occupation. It was based on the main tenets of the Stallard Commission of 1922 which regarded Africans as "temporary sojourners" in towns arguing that "the native should only be allowed into the urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and minister to the needs of the white man, and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister."<sup>4</sup> This Act attempted to establish better control over the African population, especially in the aftermath of the post-World War One strike wave in urban areas. It was a crucial piece of legislation because it set the framework for future legislation on residential segregation. However, the application of the Act by municipalities was not obligatory and some towns only adopted it later, eg. Port Elizabeth in 1935.<sup>5</sup> This was indicative of the tardiness with which many local authorities pursued these policies. As a result black residents generally ignored the law and lived in integrated locations.

Racial segregation was not strictly enforced by governments before the apartheid era. The urban black population was not very big and their struggle for political rights was muted during the 1930s. The government's policy towards urban planning was characterised by neglect of the needs of black people, which was reflected in the virtual absence of housing provision for blacks. In 1939 the official housing backlog estimate in Johannesburg alone was 9000 units.<sup>6</sup> Following the rapid urbanisation of blacks in the succeeding decade the number of black families needing housing in Johannesburg alone rocketed to 50 000,<sup>7</sup> making the existing 7000 housing units built a year nationally utterly inadequate. Although the situation in Johannesburg was probably the worse, it reflected a crisis faced by most urban centres in the 1940s.

From the early forties the United Party tentatively moved towards a resolution of the crisis, which revealed its explosive potential in the squatters movement and struggles in locations. The United Party's approach to the urban crisis in the late 1940s laid the groundwork for the National Party's 'group areas' schemes.<sup>8</sup> In the late 1930s the Smuts government had already raised its concerns over the 'irregular' urbanisation, especially of Indians and coloureds. The Thornton report of 1940 expressed shock at the "occupation of land and buildings irrespective of race with the result that Europeans were found to be occupying premises and living cheek by jowl with non-Europeans".<sup>9</sup> The implication of the report was clearly that blacks should be segregated from whites. In the early 1940s the UP did not give much attention to urban planning matters, partly because of its pre-occupation with the war effort. Its policy towards black urban dwellers was ambiguous and consequently was characterised by inaction. By the end of the war, however, the government became more concerned about its lack of control over black urbanisation. It not only acted decisively against black opposition (the crushing of

the miners' strike) but also moved to deal more deliberately with the urban crisis.

The first step taken by the United Party was the introduction of appropriate government bodies to deal with urban planning and housing provision in particular. An important consequence of this was the shift to greater centralised planning of the urban areas.<sup>10</sup> In 1944 the Housing Act was amended to allow for the establishment of the National Housing and Planning Commission in place of the Central Housing Board. In addition a National Housing Council, consisting of Provincial executives and municipal associations, was set up to advise the Minister.<sup>11</sup> The Social and Economic Planning Council established by Smuts emphasised the need for greater co-ordination and planning.<sup>12</sup> These measures did not immediately lead to the formulation of a coherent national plan for urban racial zoning but they were the first tentative steps towards addressing the crisis faced in urban areas. The most striking example of United Party policy to urban racial planning was its role in the Western Areas Removal Scheme.

Van Tonder has brilliantly outlined the pivotal role of the United Party in initiating the Western Areas Removal Scheme.<sup>13</sup> The latter was a key component in the Johannesburg City Council's (JCC) post-war plans to deal with the 'urban crisis'. The western areas of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare were particularly problematical for the JCC not only because of their racial integration but because they were generally beyond the control of the authorities and were in many respects the centre of black opposition in Johannesburg. From the point of view of the JCC it was crucial that these 'black spots' be removed. Instrumental in the removal plans of the western areas was prominent United Party member, Sarel Tighy, who according to Van Tonder wanted to deal with 'problem' of Sophiatown as far back as

1939.<sup>14</sup> Tighy's constituency consisted largely of white working class and lower middle class residents. The proximity of the black western areas was a constant source of concern to these whites who continuously pressured the JCC and government to remove these areas. In 1944 the JCC presented a ten year programme for the removal of the western areas but its implementation was delayed because of a severe shortage of funds.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, in spite of subsequent protestations by the United Party against the National Party's Western Areas Removal Scheme, the plan originated with them. Thus Van Tonder concludes that there was "a large measure of continuity" between the policies of the two parties and there were some elements in the United Party who were "as dedicated to the ideals of urban and spatial (racial) segregation as were the Nationalists".<sup>16</sup>

From the early 1940s Indian people became a prime target of the United Party's urban racial zoning. For a long time whites, especially small businessmen, voiced their concern about the competition from Indian traders. In 1940 Smuts appointed the first 'Penetration' Commission to investigate the 'penetration' of Indian traders in predominantly white areas since 1927.<sup>17</sup> A second commission was appointed in 1943 to investigate the acquisition by Indians of land in Durban. As a consequence of these commissions the government passed the Trading and Occupation Land (Transvaal and Natal) Restriction Act of 1943 which forbade changes in ownership between Indians and whites without ministerial permission.<sup>18</sup> The passage of the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act in 1946 was a watershed in the development of residential segregation.<sup>19</sup> It allowed for the identification of land for Indian occupation outside which they could not acquire or occupy property. These provisions were important precursors to the GAA. In a profoundly significant move the government also established the Land Tenure Advisory Board (LTAB), with an inspectorate, to oversee the

segregation of Indians.<sup>20</sup> For Mabin these moves by the United Party indicated a shift from "ad hoc racial planning" to greater co-ordination and planning, which was also reflected in its establishment of the Natural Resources Development Council in 1947, without whose permission no development of townships could occur in 'controlled areas'.<sup>21</sup> In spite of these shifts in the United Party's policy its attitude to urban planning and control over the urban black population was generally characterised by indecision. It was left to the National Party not only to continue where the United Party had left off but to pursue the racial zoning of urban areas with much greater determination and commitment.

The election platform of the Nationalists emphasised that on its assumption of power, it would immediately proceed to enforce compulsory segregation. However, other than its ideological commitment, the party did not have a clearly defined proposal about how precisely it would implement its aims. The Sauer report, Mabin notes, did not even have a plan for compulsory segregation.<sup>22</sup> Yet it was crucial for the National Party to show that, unlike its predecessor, it would rapidly bring the urban black population under control. Malan thus established two committees under the chairmanship of D.S. van der Merwe, chairman of the Land Tenure Advisory Board, to investigate the future of 'Asiatic land laws'. These committees, and Van der Merwe in particular, played a crucial role in the drafting of the Group Areas Bill.<sup>23</sup> In a number of important respects, therefore, the National Party based itself on the steps taken by the United Party in the last years of its rule: the principles of the Asiatic Land Act strongly informed the GAA and the National Party used the Land Tenure Advisory Board to oversee the implementation of 'group areas'. However, the haste with which the government promulgated the GAA proved costly in the next period when it was confronted with numerous shortcomings in the Act.

### The first seven years of the GAA

In March 1950 the minister of the interior, T.E Dönges, presented the Group Areas Bill to the House of Assembly and by September of that year the GAA became operative. Its primary aim, as the name suggests, was to establish 'group areas' for the different 'races'. Unlike the Asiatic Land Acts of the 1940s, the GAA was to apply to all people classified as white, coloured and Indian, throughout the country - segregation would be compulsory and comprehensive. Importantly, also, the Act allowed for the reversal of existing integration to ensure that all residential areas would become 'racially-exclusive'. As a first step, the Act provided for the "preservation of any particular area from further penetration by one group or the other" and "for the control of the acquisition of immovable property and the occupation of land and premises".<sup>24</sup> These provisions were clearly designed to freeze existing residential patterns pending proclamation of a 'group area'.

The GAA instituted procedures to be followed before the proclamation of 'group areas'. The first was the establishment of *controlled areas*. Within such an area property could not be exchanged between different 'groups' without ministerial permission. In such an area it was compulsory that the occupant of any property had to be of the same 'racial group' as the owner.<sup>25</sup> The declaration of a *controlled area* was the main precursor to the proclamation of a 'group area'. However, the state recognised that initially it would be impossible to impose the strict specifications of *controlled area* because of all the anomalies that would exist. It therefore allowed for exceptions to this rule. *Specified areas* could be declared, the main aim of which was to freeze the *status quo* regarding ownership and occupation. This basically permitted the continuation of integrated areas until such time that complete segregation could be enforced. It also meant that there could be no exchange of properties between different

'racial groups', but allowed exemption from the harsher provisions applicable in *controlled areas*. The Act also established *defined areas* which could apply to parts of a property. For example, if a house was declared a *defined area* any extension to it could only be occupied by the 'group' for which it was declared. Occupation by anyone else required ministerial permission.

The Act also stipulated that there would be three types of 'group areas': for occupation only, for ownership only and for occupation and ownership.<sup>26</sup> In practice this meant that blacks could be placed in a group area with only occupation rights. But it also meant that whites could own properties in areas not for their occupation. In general white 'group areas' were always declared for ownership and occupation to avoid the possibility of blacks owning properties in such areas. Once an area was proclaimed for a certain 'group' all those from other 'groups' became 'disqualified persons' and normally had to vacate the place within a year.<sup>27</sup> The LTAB which was created by the United Party now became the main body overseeing the implementation of the Act. Finally the GAA established an inspectorate whose responsibility it was to ensure that the provisions of the Act were not violated. The GAA thus seemed to be all encompassing and well thought out. But it was quite weak on ideas for practical application and in the first few years of its existence there was very little progress in the proclamations of 'group areas'.

In 1956, Muriel Horrell, a key figure in the South African Institute of Race Relations, commented in her book on the GAA that,

The Group Areas Act has probably caused more uncertainty, anxiety, hardship and

resentment than any other recent measures. Its effects have been particularly pernicious because so few Actual decisions have been promulgated, and the Sword of Damocles has been left in uneasy suspension for some six years, now, over the heads of many thousands of Non-White people, and in some cases, of Whites too.<sup>28</sup>

By 1970 over 111 580 families had been 'disqualified' in term of the GAA<sup>29</sup> and by 1987 over 1300 group areas had been proclaimed.<sup>30</sup> The implementation of this Act had dire consequences for tens of thousands, many of whom were forcibly removed from their homes and herded into segregated areas. Yet, six years after the promulgation of the Act only five 'group areas' had been proclaimed.<sup>31</sup> Why did it take so long for the government to get this crucial piece of legislation functioning effectively? Meshtrie argues that the government "never intended proclamations to be made at a rapid pace - the Act ensured that a course of time would lapse before a group area could be declared as the lengthy preliminary procedures were followed."<sup>32</sup> However, it is unlikely that the government would have planned or anticipated the kinds of delays with which the Act was confronted in the first few years after its promulgation. Certainly, the ideologues of apartheid and their supporters would not have planned for the creation of 'group areas' to take over two decades. The opposition encountered by the LTAB came from various quarters, some of them unexpected.

Meshtrie has recently outlined some of the key *administrative* difficulties confronted by the Act.<sup>33</sup> One of the first problems faced by the LTAB was the initial uncertainty which existed over the number of 'racial groups' to be identified. Without clarity on this issue, the LTAB could not proceed with the creation of 'group areas'. The Population Registration Act of 1950 which identified three main groups, namely, white, coloured and 'native' proved inadequate

and provision was made for further racial subdivisions. Coloureds, for example were subdivided into Indians, Chinese, coloured and 'malay'.<sup>34</sup> Subsequently, Africans were divided into numerous groups. The identification and proclamation of various 'groups' was both tragic and farcical. In 1951 Indians and Chinese were recognised as separate groups in all provinces except the Orange Free State. 'Malays' were also declared a separate group in a number of Cape Town municipalities only. Such persons would, however, become coloured when entering a municipality which did not have any 'Malays'.<sup>35</sup>

A further problem which occupied the time of the LTAB was the issuing of permits. For example, once defined and specified areas were declared permission had to be obtained from the LTAB if coloureds wanted to live in an Indian 'group area' and *vice versa*. Initially there was uncertainty about precisely what length of time 'occupancy' referred to. As a result owners (mainly Indian and Chinese) of public entertainment venues often allowed other 'groups' onto their premises. To prevent this the government amended the GAA so that permission had to be obtained even when people wanted to go to cinemas. As a result the LTAB had to deal with a new range of permits. In 1951-52 it processed 581 permits but this escalated to 1875 the following year and in 1953-59 no less than 3395 permits were processed.<sup>36</sup> The issuing of trading licences and determination certificates also took up a considerable amount of the LTAB's time. As the main implementing arm of the GAA, the LTAB was therefore often busy with matters other than investigating the establishment of 'group areas'. The government attempted to lighten the burden of the board by increasing its bureaucracy in the late 1950s.<sup>37</sup>

Other than these administrative problems inherent to the functioning of the GAA there were

also numerous other obstacles encountered by the LTAB, some of which arose out of opposition to the GAA. One organisation which had some measure of success in delaying the implementation of the Act was the South African Indian Congress and its provincial arms in Natal and the Transvaal. For example, lawyers of the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC), intervened in the LTAB's enquiry meeting in Lydenburg in 1953 to great effect. They insisted that members of the board, whom they claimed were not impartial, should recuse themselves from the hearings. Although the board refused to accede to this, it was forced to test the matter in court, causing a delay of nearly nine months. This action was repeated in other Transvaal towns.<sup>38</sup> When the LTAB refused the SAIC the right to make representations at its hearings it was taken to court where a ruling was made in favour of the SAIC. This forced the government to amend the GAA in 1955 giving the LTAB powers to decide who could appear at its hearings. The essence of this amendment was that only state structures and persons who proposed 'group areas' could appear before the board, thereby preventing opponents of the Act from making representations. The intervention of the SAIC on this matter eventually strengthened the hand of the government because it exposed a number of loopholes in the original Act which the government then proceeded to change. Nevertheless, the SAIC succeeded in its narrow aim of causing considerable hindrance to the government.

Opposition to the GAA also came from some municipalities, such as Cape Town, Durban and Uitenhage. The latter municipality was controlled by United Party members who were sympathetic to coloureds and Indians businessmen and property owners. When lobbied by the Uitenhage Indian Congress in 1953 the Council reversed its decision to co-operate with the LTAB in identifying cases of 'possible penetration' in *specified areas*.<sup>39</sup> The Council basically decided that it would not take the initiative in implementing the GAA because it was likely

to cause economic hardships for Indian, coloured and Chinese businessmen. One Councillor "objected to the very principle of the Act and..did not think the Council should take the lead.. [a]s responsibility for the Act and its administration rested solely with the Government and it should be left to them to apply it."<sup>40</sup> The Council's position of non-compliance, and of leaving the matter in the hands of the LTAB, resulted in a six year delay in the implementation of the GAA.

In Durban the opposition from the City Council surfaced only in 1957. Prior to this the Council was strongly in favour of the implementation of the GAA. In fact it was known to be one of the most fervent supporters of the Act and put forward a strong pro-white plan for the re-organisation of the city. In the 1950s Durban's population consisted of an almost equal number of Africans, Indians and whites. The Council and white residents clearly wanted to make Durban as white as possible and initially proposed to remove half of the city's black population amending this in 1956 to three quarters.<sup>41</sup> However, their attitude to some of the implications of the Act changed after the passage of the GADA in 1957, in which the government indicated that the city and ratepayers would have to bear the cost of implementing the GAA. The Council strongly objected to this.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, they realised that the proclamation of 'group areas' would result in a decline of property values which would lead to the city's physical deterioration and impede development.<sup>43</sup> The removal of Indian businessmen would also reduce revenue income, thereby adding to the economic decline of the city. Consequently, in 1958 the Council requested a delay in the proclamation of 'group areas' in Durban.<sup>44</sup> The government refused and instituted the plans previously agreed with the Council. The immediate implication of this was the 'disqualification' of 81 000 Africans, 75 000 Indians, 8 500 coloureds and 1 000 whites, all of whom would have to be removed

from their existing residential areas.<sup>45</sup> But the Council's opposition prevented the immediate implementation of this plan. The government eventually got its way, but only after a four year delay and only after it applied considerable pressure on the Council.

The primary consequence of opposition from local authorities was to cause delays in the final implementation of the GAA in those localities. However, most municipalities co-operated with the central government and the LTAB. When there was any resistance from authorities the board used its powers to withhold funds for housing, which in the 1950s caused municipalities much concern considering the dire shortage of housing. When town planners for example refused to co-operate with the board or delayed presenting plans for 'group areas', they more often than not found it difficult to raise fund from the National Housing Office.<sup>46</sup> The LTAB eventually succeeded in 'seducing' most town planners, either through coercion or other means, making them active participants in the formulation of racial zoning plans for their respective towns. For many town planners interested in slum clearance and squatter removals the GAA seemed to present a much clearer plan of action than the policies of any previous government.<sup>47</sup>

The government therefore gradually overcame the various obstacles placed in its path. The GAA was probably one of the most amended pieces of legislations in the early 1950s as the government sought to close the numerous loopholes exposed by opposition groupings. In 1957 the government was compelled to pass the Group Areas Amendment Act which incorporated all the amendments made to the original Act. In addition in 1955 the Group Areas Development Act (GADA) was promulgated.<sup>48</sup> The latter Act, which was partly a response to the complaints from the Durban City Council over the effects of the GAA on property

values, established the Group Areas Development Board (GAB), which replaced the LTAB. According to Meshtrie the passage of the GADA accelerated the proclamation of 'group areas', albeit not with immediate effect.<sup>49</sup> The Acts of 1955 and 1957 were crucial in overcoming the legal and administrative problems faced by the central government. The effective functioning of the GAB was further enhanced by an expansion in its bureaucracy. From the late 1950s therefore the proclamation of 'group areas' increased rapidly: in the first six years only five areas had been proclaimed, in the next year this increased to 32 and by 1959 the figure jumped to 170.<sup>50</sup> All that remained to prevent the implementation and proper functioning of the GAA was mass resistance by the black population.

#### **The failure of popular resistance**

Pirie has argued that civil unrest or mass struggles were not the most prominent response to the GAA. Rather, he asserts, opposition took the form mainly of media protests, representations and public meetings.<sup>51</sup> It appears that even though the 1950s were characterised by the emergence of a mass popular movement, there were no spectacular struggle against the GAA or forced removals, in spite of the widespread hatred of them. Some of the reasons for the lack of effective mass resistance against 'group areas' may be found in the attempts to oppose the GAA and forced removals in Durban and Johannesburg. Undoubtedly, the most important struggle between the state and the mass movement over forced removal occurred in the western areas of Johannesburg. The removal of these 'black spots' and the creation of 'group areas' were crucial components of the government's re-organisation of the cities. Its determination to use all means necessary to get rid of Sophiatown and its adjacent location was a key factor in the removal schemes. On the day before the removal of Sophiatown was to commence the police banned all meetings. In

Johannesburg. At least two thousand armed police were used to ensure that any resistance was quashed.<sup>52</sup> This show of force proved the National Party's determination to succeed with its plans. However, the opposition to the removal also faced many problems, making it difficult to mount an effective fight against the government's schemes. Various groups were involved in the opposition to the Western Areas Removal Scheme, eg Trevor Huddleston's Western Areas Protest Committee, the South African Institute of Race Relations, Xuma's Ratepayer's Association and the Congress Movement. The inability of these organisations successfully to organise a united fight against the Western Areas Removal Scheme not only undermined the opposition but strengthened the hand of the government.<sup>53</sup>

The ANC only began giving attention to the Western Areas Removal Scheme after the Defiance Campaign<sup>54</sup> and even then found it difficult to focus on a single campaign. In 1954 the ANC decided rather than focus on the Western Areas Removal Scheme alone it should simultaneously tackle the main apartheid laws such as the GAA, Native Resettlement Act and Bantu Education.<sup>55</sup> This lack of a clear focus was one of the key shortcomings of the ANC's struggles in the 1950s. Therefore no specific struggle was organised against the GAA and forced removals. Opposition to the GAA was more often than not left to organisations such as the SAIC, which only had a limited effect. What emerges from the struggle against the Western Areas Removal Scheme is that the ANC did not have a clearly worked out strategy to counter the plans of the government. This was in part due to the enormity of the task facing the ANC on a national basis. The National Party had gone onto the offensive from 1948 with a barrage of legislation, which the ANC was organisationally and politically ill-prepared to tackle. Its major intervention at the time, the Defiance Campaign, only had a limited effect. In fact the movement experienced a decline after this campaign partly because

the ANC did not have a prepared plan about how to capitalise on this and how effectively to mobilise against the apartheid state.

However, as a broad popular movement the ANC was confronted by numerous problems arising from the heterogeneous constituency it tried to serve. One problem faced by the movement was the division which existed between homeowners and tenants. The latter often accused homeowners of exploiting them, which in many cases was undoubtedly true. Dr Xuma's Ratepayers Association contributed to this problem by specifically organising the property owners and thereby exacerbating the tension between the different groups. However, some ANC leaders were also accused of being partial to the property owners. Another division which strengthened the hand of the government was the support the removal gained from a section of the coloured community, in particular those represented by the Newclare Ratepayers' Association, which called on the government to remove Africans from the western areas. This problem of racial division also reared its head in Durban. There the Natal Indian Congress successfully mobilised thousands of Indians against the GAA. Although the ANC and NIC were political allies they could not overcome the deep-seated divisions which existed between Durban's African and Indian population. These divisions clearly weakened the opposition and strengthened the hand of the government.

The 1950s were also characterised by the most concerted effort by the state to provide housing for Africans. This was partly a response to the massive shortages in housing and the resultant emergence of squatter camps on the periphery of urban areas. However, the government was also committed to 'stabilising' the African workforce to cater for the needs of industry. Up to 1952 the central government and local authorities paid scant attention to

the provision of housing for blacks. In 1948 only 3821 sub-economic houses were built nationally for Africans by municipalities.<sup>56</sup> However, between 1952 and 1960 housing provision for blacks escalated. For example, in the financial year 1955/56 an unprecedented number of 19 000 houses were built in the PWV area.<sup>57</sup> At the height of the housing construction in 1957/58 over 11 000 were built in Johannesburg alone.<sup>58</sup> Most urban areas experienced similar developments, which laid the basis for African townships of today. For the tens of thousands of squatters and lodgers, the idea of having a house, however rudimentary that house might be, was a step forward. Lodgers in the overcrowded inner city locations were more than often the victims of unscrupulous landlords, for whom rent was an important source of income. It was not surprising therefore that these people were not enthusiastic opponents of their removal to racially segregated townships.

The struggle against the GAA and forced removals were therefore muted and generally unsuccessful. The government was determined to ensure that this important aspect of its apartheid policy succeed and that the black opposition movement would be unable successfully to mobilise a campaign to counter its plans. However, the first few years of the GAA were not easy for the government. It faced numerous obstacles but overcame these through coercion and legislative changes. By 1957 the National Party consolidated all the changes to the GAA into a single Act, signalling the strengthening of its legal position. From that point the proclamation of 'group areas' and force removals entered their most important phase. Even though more amendments were made to the GAA in the 1960s, these were generally only fine-tuning by the government. The basis for this development had been laid in the 1950s. The silencing of the black opposition in the 1960s allowed the government to proceed with a key component of its social engineering with virtual impunity.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### Regional planning - the new panacea

This chapter discusses the implementation of the GAA, forced removals and resettlement at a regional level. It is contended here that these policies are best understood within the context of the dramatic re-organisation of the cities which was initiated in the 1950s and carried on through the 1960s and 1970s. Regional planning became an important component of the state's attempts to achieve greater co-ordination and control over urban planning. Changes to urban areas in the post-war period were necessitated by the rapid industrialisation and urbanisation occurring at the time. People from across the political spectrum invariably described the urban situation as 'chaotic', 'explosive' and 'intolerable'. From the perspective of urban blacks the dire lack of housing was a constant source of resentment and anger, which were difficult to contain and underpinned the squatter invasions in the mid to late forties. For capital, urban disorganisation and black militancy were not conducive to industrial growth and capital accumulation. Significant sections of the white population feared that the rapid influx of Africans into the urban areas would jeopardise their privileged position. The message to the state was clear: it was urgent that the urban areas be brought under control, not least because failure to do so raised the danger of more struggles by the black population.

As explained in the previous chapter, the United Party government prevaricated in tackling the urban crisis and it was left to the National Party to restructure the cities. The various efforts by the government to reshape, plan and co-ordinate the development of the urban areas in the 1950s represented one of the most significant attempts at social engineering by the apartheid regime. In fact the early 1950s was characterised by near frenetic attempts by the

central government to formulate a clear urban policy. It was out of these attempts that the basic premises of the 'apartheid city' were derived. A key dynamic in these processes was the increasing concentration of power in the hands of the central government. The formulation of plans was taken away from urban planners and left to government officials who operated within clearly set out objectives and frameworks. Nevertheless, many urban planners supported the government's urban policies because they appeared to be serious attempts to deal with the urban crisis. Thus the National Party did not encounter serious opposition from provincial and local authorities.

The 1950s witnessed the beginning of the demise of integrated urban locations and the emergence of the modern African township, which both in its structure and siting epitomised the apartheid notions of social engineering and 'grand planning'. The human tragedies resulting from forced removals and resettlements were also integral to this process. But the racial reshaping of urban areas was not merely a product of apartheid ideology. It was also intended to meet the needs of capital. Manufacturing capital, especially, required a stable labour force. The creation of new townships and the unprecedented provision of housing to Africans were the main means by which this aim was achieved. Having African families settle in urban areas was crucial to ensure permanent urbanisation. It is for this reason that the government insisted that only married people could occupy these new houses, which often forced men and women into marriages of convenience.

The post-war urban crisis was most acute in the Witwatersrand region. It was here, therefore, that the government concentrated its efforts to resolve the urban crisis. The Witwatersrand became the focal point of the government's regional plans because according to them this

region urgently required planning and restructuring. Success in the economic centre of the country was crucial and the National Party was determined to ensure that the siting and development of new African townships, industry and white residential areas would occur with maximum efficiency and control.

An important feature of the government's *modus operandi* at the time was its greater reliance on internal and closed committees to formulate plans for the development of the regions. These committees often did not have statutory powers and were accountable only to important departments and influential ministers. Central in these schemes was the Native Affairs Department and especially its minister, H.F. Verwoerd, who preferred dealing with matters outside the public eye. Thus the nexus of power in matters dealing with national urban planning appears to have shifted to a smaller group of politicians centred around the likes of Verwoerd, W.M. Eiselen and T. Dönges at national level. Key members from their departments such as Mentz, Moolman, Barker and Nel became the influential figures in the regional planning schemes of the Witwatersrand. Between them they had a hand in most of the committees set up to develop policy on urban restructuring, and more often than not controlled those committees. These individuals shared a common political vision for South Africa's urban areas which they were keen to impose on local authorities.

The GAA and Native Urban Acts were principal components of the foundation on which urban areas were to be reshaped. But they did not provide solutions to the important question of where townships for blacks should be sited. Thus the principles of racial segregation had to be combined with other aspects of urban planning such as the location of industrial areas and transport networks.

This chapter will concentrate on efforts at regional planning in the 1950s. The essential plans for the restructuring of the urban areas, primarily the Witwatersrand, were completed in the 1950s. In the main developments in the 1960s and 1970s built on those foundations. Regional planning reached its apogee in the 1950s but had its origins in the 1940s. Mabin has recently dealt fairly extensively with the origins of regional planning. A summary of some of the important issues raised by him will be presented here in so far they impact on the discussion pertaining to planning on the Witwatersrand and the East Rand.

### **The early days of regional planning**

The previous chapter argued that from the mid-1940s the United Party made tentative attempts to address the urban crisis. In the process it set in place important mechanisms for the racial rezoning of the urban areas and initiated the process of 'slum-clearance', a euphemism for removing integrated locations such as the Western Areas. Towards the end of its term of office the United Party also shifted towards a policy of greater centralisation and planning. But the party lacked vision and unity, and the plans which emerged from its ranks were either not implemented or pursued without any really vigour. This was especially the case in the way it dealt with the housing crisis and the lack of land for the development of African townships. In the mid 1940s the United Party government managed to build no more than 7000 houses per year for urban Africans.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the resolution of the housing crisis was central to tackling the urban crisis. According to W.M. Eiselen, Secretary for Native Affairs, "Only by the provision of adequate shelter in properly planned townships can full control over urban natives be regained."<sup>2</sup>

As industrial development proceeded apace in the forties manufacturing capital required a

more skilled and stable workforce. A serious problem facing capital in the 1930s and 1940s was the high labour turnover among Africans. In the period 1936 to 1944 no less than 50% of jobs for African workers lasted less than a year and only 10% for more than two years. This high labour turnover resulted in the entire African workforce of Johannesburg replacing itself every 20 months.<sup>3</sup> Also, the government was keen to bring the numerous locations and informal settlements that existed under control. They represented a major political problem for the government. The termination of the war also signalled the end of the United Party's excuses for inaction. White voters and capital insisted the government act to bring the urban areas under control. In this situation elements within the government pushed for regional schemes as the basis for tackling the urban crisis. From the mid forties important steps were taken to set in place various mechanisms designed to facilitate co-ordination and planning for urban areas. However, the United Party appears neither to have had the capacity nor the political will to use these mechanisms to effect urban transformation.

Attempts at regional planning were not new. In 1932 a conference of Witwatersrand municipalities agreed that regional planning would be advantageous and in 1934 the province even appointed a 'regional planner'.<sup>4</sup> But not much was done in practice and only towards the end of the war did the regional planning concept once again gain currency. The Housing Act of 1944 allowed for the formation of a regional planning commission, but this idea was not pursued by the NHPC. However, the Social and Economic Planning Council (SEPC) which was constituted at the end of the war recommended the establishment of a national ministry to oversee and implement urban and regional planning.<sup>5</sup> At this stage, therefore, there were elements within the United Party government who considered regional planning of African townships and industry as crucial. Unfortunately for the proponents of

regional planning, these ideas did not receive unanimous support and little was done to carry forward the SEPC's proposals. Nevertheless, the government remained under persistent pressure to deal with urban problems. In 1947 the National Resources Development Council was established to co-ordinate the regional planning of townships in the OFS goldfields. However, similar planning by the Council was not undertaken anywhere else in the country. In Natal and the Cape, Councils independently moved towards more regional planning.<sup>6</sup> Although regional planning was gaining acceptance among more urban planners and local authorities, there was very little co-ordination of efforts to implement such plans on a national basis.

By the end of the war the housing crisis among Africans had reached an extreme crisis and was coupled with outbursts of militant action in numerous locations. From the point of view of the state and capital this the Witwatersrand could least afford to have a large and uncontrollable African population with a propensity for mass struggles. Consequently, the need for African housing presented a much greater challenge to the municipalities in this region. Individual municipalities, such as Springs, attempted to resolve the problem on their own by making plans for the establishment of new African location, but found that the acquisition of land for that purpose rather difficult.<sup>7</sup> In March 1947 a meeting of local authorities from Pretoria, the Witwatersrand and Vereeniging proposed the establishment of a Witwatersrand Regional Committee to consider the question of housing for Africans in the whole region. In May of that year the idea was formally accepted with the formation of the Witwatersrand Advisory Council for non-European Housing.<sup>8</sup> The main question discussed by this Council was the possibility of having 'jointly-sponsored native towns to serve the whole Reef.' For example, it considered the idea of a joint African township for the East Rand towns of Brakpan, Springs, Benoni and Boksburg.<sup>9</sup> These plans were not implemented during

the United Party's rule but they indicated the general trend of thought among regional and urban planners. To a certain degree the basis of their support for the National Party's schemes was laid in the pre-1948 era.

The slow and changes in United Party policy occurred too slowly and made little real impact on the urban areas. But the indecision of the central government was not the only obstacle faced by advocates of regional planning. Local authorities were often also slow in responding to the crisis faced by their respective areas. For example, many municipalities were reluctant to take responsibility for the establishment of new townships and provision of housing for blacks.<sup>10</sup> They complained about the heavy financial burden such development would place on their shoulders. Under the Housing Act of 1948, municipalities had sole power to initiate public housing schemes.<sup>11</sup> Non-compliance from them could result in delay tackling the worsening conditions in which an increasing number of black people had to live. By the end of their term of office very little had been achieved in the way of deciding on the establishment of new locations or in addressing the dire shortage of housing for Africans and blacks in general. These issues were to be vigorously pursued by the new government, although it took a few years before it could formulate clear plans.

#### **The Nentz Commission and regional planning for Africans**

In the early 1950s the Department of Native Affairs, under H.F. Verwoerd's leadership, attempted to bring the development and planning of African locations under its control and to impose its plans on local authorities. The first indication of the direction in which Verwoerd was heading was the appointment of the Nel Commission to investigate the siting of African locations in Pretoria. Initially Verwoerd felt compelled to hold 'semi-public'

meetings to consult other interested bodies on regional planning. But, he increasingly shifted to a greater reliance on the work of committees such as those of Nel and Mentz.<sup>12</sup> Regional and local planners were generally not involved in these committees, unless they shared Verwoerd's vision. Plans were formulated by these committees and imposed on local authorities. This shift reflected the impatience of government leaders like Verwoerd with the slow progress in tackling the urban crisis. By the early fifties the government began shifting attention more seriously to the urban areas:

The time has come to review the whole position with the aim of replanning the townships of the Witwatersrand, as far as it is possible.... The bigger centres on the Witwatersrand are all strongly industrialised and mainly dependent on Native labour. It is necessary in virtually all of these centres to acquire more land for location purposes... In view of the fact that land requirement for Natives will be much greater than that for Asians or Coloureds, this Department is particularly interested in regional planning of any sort...

*T.E. Dönges, Minister of the Interior, September, 1950.*<sup>13</sup>

Squatter chaos, overcrowding of existing Native plots, illegal lodging in white yards, the removal of those who refuse to work and thus don't belong in the city, can only be combatted once large enough legal townships for Natives are established close to the towns... The most complicated problem of this character in the Union, exists in the area from the north in Pretoria to the Vaal River, and in the east from Springs till far in the west to Krugersdorp and Randfontein...

*Press release of H.F. Verwoerd announcing the formation of the Mentz Commission in 1952.*<sup>14</sup>

By the early fifties National Party leaders were clearly becoming impatient with the lack of progress in dealing with the urban crisis. The government's problem was that it did not have a plan to impose on local authorities. Four years after coming to power and two years after the promulgation of the GAA there was little evidence of progress on key aspects of its election platform, viz, control of the black urban population and the imposition of compulsory segregation. Furthermore, the rate of black urbanisation continued unabated from the time of the Nationalist's election victory. Equally serious from the perspective of the white population, was the increase in black political opposition in the early fifties. The 1950 stayaways and the Defiance Campaign did not augur well for the new government. Thus, partly in anticipation of the election in 1953, the government stepped up a gear and made concerted efforts in 1952-3 to formulate plans for the development and restructuring of the Witwatersrand. A number of committees and commissions were established at the time to investigate matters relating to the siting of African locations, industry and the future of coloureds and Indians in the region. These were the years in which the policies of social engineering finally took shape and the various committees established played a critical role in the reshaping of the cities. In 1952 Verwoerd appointed the Mentz Committee to investigate the "question of township for Natives in the Witwatersrand and Vereeniging region".<sup>15</sup>

The decision to establish this committee came after a meeting held in Pretoria at the end of 1951<sup>16</sup> with 'interested parties' to discuss the planning of African locations. At this conference various proposals were presented without any consensus being reached about how to proceed. The Mentz Committee was ostensibly created to "thoroughly investigate the different proposals in an attempt to make recommendations which would have the unanimous, or at least the majority support of the participants".<sup>17</sup> The terms of reference of the committee was

not specified and Verwoerd presented it as a fact-finding body.<sup>18</sup> Yet, as will be shown, the recommendations of this 'fact-finding body' became the main guidelines for government policy in the planning and development of African locations on the Witwatersrand, and in particular on the East Rand.

The composition of the committee was an indication that Verwoerd had much more in mind for it than the gathering of information. The chairman, F.E. Mentz, was a member of the Native Affairs Commission, J.H. Moolman was a leading figure in the Natural Resources Development Council, M.C. Barker was prominent in the Land tenure Advisory Board and C.A. Heald came from the Native Affairs Department. These men were therefore all key figures in matters relating to 'native affairs' and were instrumental in the formulation and application of government policy on the Witwatersrand. The committee was formally appointed in August 1952 and by the end of that year it had completed its investigation. It presented its report to the minister in 1953. The Witwatersrand was divided into five sub-regions: Johannesburg and environs; West Rand; Far West Rand; Vereeniging and Vanderbijpark and the East Rand. The Committee convened hearings in each of these sub-regions to discuss with local authorities, businesses and interested individuals.<sup>19</sup> Of course it did not consult with black people. In its report the committee made various recommendations for the respective areas. Here we will concentrate on its proposals for the East Rand.

Although it necessarily had to consult local authorities, the Mentz Committee operated within a framework developed by the Department of Native Affairs. The basic principles applied to the siting and planning of African townships were presented in the Senate in May 1952. They were:

1. The site should be at an adequate distance from the European town;
2. It should preferably adjoin the location of a neighbouring town, so as to decrease rather than increase the number of Native areas;
3. It should preferably be separated from the European area by an industrial buffer where industries exist or are being planned;
4. It should have provision for an adequate hinterland for expansion stretching away from the European area;
5. It should be within easy distance of the town or city for transport purposes, by rail rather than by road;
6. It should have a road of its own connecting the location site with the city, preferably running through the industrial areas;
7. It should possess open buffer zones around the proclaimed location areas, the breadth of which should depend on whether the location borders upon a densely or sparsely occupied European area; and
8. It should be at a considerable distance from main, and more particularly national roads, the use of which as local transport routes for the location should be totally discouraged.<sup>20</sup>

According to Mabin these principles were enunciated by Verwoerd in a speech to the senate on 'native policy'.<sup>21</sup> It is unclear what discussions preceded their formulation. However, many of these ideas were already in use. For example, the siting of townships such as Orlando, were guided by these principles before Verwoerd's speech. Nevertheless, his announcement in parliament elevated these ideas to government policy. So, while the committee entertained representations from different bodies, it rarely recommended anything which did not comply

with these principles. In fact it would not countenance any proposal that contradicted the abovementioned guidelines. Moreover, Verwoerd's Department insisted on close adherence to them. Recalcitrant municipalities found that the central government made it difficult for them to gain access to housing funds. In this sense, therefore, they were bullied into accepting the political framework set out by Verwoerd.

There was, however, very little opposition from East Rand municipalities and employee representatives, which all seemed to agree with the abovementioned principles. The Boksburg Council, for example, concurred that industrial areas should serve as the main buffer between African locations and white residential areas. In the case of the East Rand this meant white areas would generally be located in the north and African locations in the south, with the industrial areas and the main railway line separating the two.<sup>22</sup> Part of the rationale behind this was that it obviated the need for Africans to travel through 'white areas' to their places of employment. In addition the industrial areas and railway line were regarded as useful buffer zones, an absolutely essential aspect of town planning. The municipalities were particularly sensitive about the proximity of locations to their white residential areas. Thus the Farmers Association of Roodekop strongly objected to the idea of expanding Natalspruit too close to their areas. Heidelberg, on the other hand, objected to this expansion because it would bring the location too close to the national road.<sup>23</sup> Having mostly agreed with the government's principles on the siting of locations and the concept of regional planning the municipalities busied themselves with securing the best siting of the locations for their particular areas.

After considering the proposals of the various municipalities the committee "concluded that there are presently three areas which lend themselves to natural planning of Native

locations".<sup>24</sup> 'Natural planning' of course meant that the locations could be developed in accordance with the principles set out by the government. The recommendation of the commission created the basis for the development of the two main township complexes of the East Rand - Katorus (Kathlehong, Tokoza and Vosloorus) and KwaTsaDuza (KwaThema, Tsakane and Duduza).<sup>25</sup> The identification of sites for the establishment of joint locations represented an unequivocal success for the ideas of regional planning of African locations advocated by the Native Affairs Department. The concept was to be replicated in other urban areas. The creation of these large townships, of which Soweto is of course the prime example, more than anything else signifies to millions of ordinary people the essence of apartheid planning.

Another crucial notion underpinning the recommendations by the commission was the preference of the government for bigger townships in place of small locations which were scattered all over the Witwatersrand.<sup>26</sup> From the perspective of the government these locations epitomised uncontrolled urbanisation of Africans. The early 1950s represented the key transition phase from the old location to the modern day townships. Having identified where the new townships would be located the committee then had to deal with the existing locations. For them and the government the answer was clear - they had to be removed. The committee did not hesitate to recommend the relocation of the residents of those location to the new townships. It is for this reason that the Mentz Committee became popularly known as the 'black spots' commission. The Mentz Report was published in December 1953,<sup>27</sup> but was only formally adopted by the government two years later. In August 1955 the Native Affairs Department announced the recommendations of the commission: The Payneville location in Springs and the Brakpan and Dunnotar locations were to be moved to the

KwaThema and Vlakfontein (KwaTsaDuza) areas. The old locations of Germiston, Alberton, Boksburg and Elsburg were to be relocated to the Natalspruit (Katorus) area.<sup>28</sup> The government declared itself happy with the Mentz Committee and proudly announced that

Every area has been planned with a view to the creation of the necessary buffer zones and availability or possible provision of the necessary transport services, so that the Natives living there will be able to get to work with the least inconvenience... The Mentz Commission has thus completed the planning of the whole Reef area from Heidelberg to Vereeniging, and found solutions to both the short and the long-term problems. The local authorities can now go ahead on this basis with no uncertainty about the future.<sup>29</sup>

The reasons why it took more than two years for the recommendation of the commission formally to be adopted by Verwoerd are not known to me. It is likely, however, that the government would probably have waited for the work of other committees to be completed so that the plan for African locations could be integrated into the broader plans for the restructuring of the Reef (see below). Furthermore, the plan to remove 'black spots' all over the Reef was probably held in abeyance pending the outcome of the Western Areas Removal Scheme. The government's success with the latter and the lack of effective resistance must have convinced the Native Affairs Department that it would be able to proceed with its plans without too much hindrance. It does also seem that liberal individuals in some municipalities on the East Rand were opposed to the 'directives' from the Department of Native Affairs. Jack Ellis, a Councillor in Springs, was indignant about the interference by central government in matters which he regarded as municipal affairs:

KwaThema and Viakfontein (KwaTsaDuza) areas. The old locations of Germiston, Alberton, Boksburg and Elsburg were to be relocated to the Natalspruit (Katorus) area.<sup>28</sup> The government declared itself happy with the Mentz Committee and proudly announced that

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We as Municipalities know the best place for our locations, but in the future somebody from Pretoria, who knows nothing about our conditions, will tell us where to put our locations whether it is convenient for us or not... The whole thing is like a vicious circle, ... You cannot establish an area for a future location unless you have the funds for Native Housing on hand. Industrial expansion will mean an influx of native labour, an influx of native labour means new locations and new locations provide the labour for industrial expansion. Stop the establishment of new locations and you stop everything.<sup>30</sup>

This tirade did not move beyond rhetoric, which characterised the nature of the opposition to the government's plans. Most local authorities accepted the underlying principles propounded by the government in relation to urban planning and the development of African locations in particular, which made any opposition from individuals very difficult. The basic plan which evolved in relation to the development of African locations may have had its origins in the government, or specifically in the Native Affairs Department, but it quickly gained currency among other planners on the Witwatersrand. A.J. Cutten, a liberal town planner, concurred with the essence of the government's thinking. In a memorandum dealing with township development he agreed that "the entire economic structure of European life in South Africa is so dependent upon Native labour, it is important that such labour be housed in townships located conveniently close to the labourer's place of work".<sup>31</sup> Locations, he argued, could only be established in the south or north because the main urban development on the Reef occurred along an East - West line.<sup>32</sup> The United Party opposed the recommendations of the Mentz Committee and established its own Tucker Committee to formulate alternative plans.<sup>33</sup> In March 1954 this committee announced its recommendations which coincided largely with those in the Fagan Commission.<sup>34</sup> It called for the recognition of Africans as permanent

residents in the urban areas, but also agreed that influx control was necessary. The Turner Report specifically rejected the Mentz Committee's proposal to remove Africans from various integrated locations.<sup>35</sup> However, by 1954 the United Party was wracked by internal division, especially over the Western Areas Removal Scheme and it failed to mobilise any kind of opposition to Mentz.<sup>36</sup>

The Mentz Committee concentrated on formulating plans for the development of new African locations. From the perspectives of the state and capital the restructuring of the urban areas consisted of two prongs. Firstly, African people had to be removed from integrated locations and resettled in suitably situated townships. This was the most important task and received priority attention from the state. Secondly, other blacks - coloureds and Indians - also had to be located in segregated townships. These two aims had to be realised within the context of regional planning. Therefore, while the Mentz Committee functioned the government also initiated more investigations to address other aspects of urban planning, such as the siting of industrial townships and the division of the whole Reef into group areas. It is to the most pertinent of these schemes that we now turn.

#### **Subsidiary planning committee: regional planning of group areas**

The idea of centralised location for coloureds was first raised in November 1951 at a conference convened by I.D. du Plessis, Commissioner of Coloured Affairs, to discuss the position of coloureds in the Witwatersrand. The conference was attended by municipalities from all over the Witwatersrand, as well as by senior politicians, including prime minister Malan, P. Sauer (acting minister of Internal Affairs) and W.W.M. Eiselen (Secretary for Native Affairs).<sup>37</sup> In his address I.D. du Plessis explained that the need for the conference arose from

meetings he held with municipalities on the Reef and deputations he had received from among others, the *Transvaalse Kleringvolkbond*. The "coloured man" he argued, "found himself in a very special position that had already been described as 'a brown island in a black sea'.<sup>38</sup> It was revealed in the conference that coloureds constituted only 1,5% of the total population in the Transvaal and just on 3% in the Witwatersrand.<sup>39</sup> Alluding to the existence of numerous integrated locations the conference noted that

This problem this problem required immediate attention in view of the fact that it was the Government's policy that the coloured community in the Transvaal also (sic) be enabled to develop (sic) as an independent group.<sup>40</sup>

Reflecting the general trend to adopt a regional approach in matters dealing with the black housing the conference resolved "that the principle of centralised ... residential areas be adopted for the East, Central and West Rand Areas, respectively, and that all aspects and implications of this motion be investigated in consultation with local and other authorities with a view of drafting concrete proposals."<sup>41</sup> These ideas were essentially adopted by the committee created to co-ordinate regional planning of 'group areas' for the Witwatersrand.

On December 2, 1952, the acting Minister of Economic Affairs, J.F. Naude announced the establishment of the Subsidiary Planning Committee (SPC) under the chairmanship of Dr J.H. Moolman, also member of the Mentz Commission.<sup>42</sup> In his motivation to the press Naude suggested that the idea of a more permanent planning committee for the Witwatersrand area originated with Verwoerd at the time of the establishment of the Mentz Commission.<sup>43</sup> At least five ministries and the Administrator of the Transvaal were consulted on the formation

of the SPC. Although it was declared to be merely an advisory body, the SPC was also expected to "provide a lead in the planning of the region on a much wider basis."<sup>44</sup> The SPC was to function under the auspices of the Natural Resources and Development Council (NRDC), created by the United Party in 1947. The committee would, however, also consist of senior members from the Departments of Mining, Native Affairs, Transport and Internal Affairs.<sup>45</sup>

At its first meeting held in January 1953, the chairman of the NRDC, F.J. du Toit explained to delegates the essential purpose of the new committee:

In the past the one department or local authority seldom knew what its neighbours were planning and each one was just carrying on its own... this Committee will provide an opportunity for automatic consultation with the result that various aspects of development will no longer clash with one another.<sup>46</sup>

The directive from the government was unambiguous - *ad hoc* planning and development of the Witwatersrand had to come to an end. Henceforth, planning and co-ordination would characterise the state's attitude to urban planning, especially where this involved black people. It was envisaged that the SPC would play a key role in co-ordinating the planning of the Witwatersrand. The future development and planning of industry, mining, transport and residential areas would be co-ordinated by this body. The committee, one delegate proposed, "should aim at the preparation of a master plan within which private enterprise can operate... Development can follow the pattern outlined by the Committee."<sup>47</sup> It was agreed that "co-ordination can only be achieved through voluntary co-operation" but in the event that

'voluntary co-operation' was not forthcoming the government threatened to proclaim an area a *controlled area*, which would make consultation with the SPC compulsory<sup>48</sup> The recommendations of the Mentz Committee would be accepted by the SPC and any future racial planning for the region would occur in consultation with the committee. At a conference held in Johannesburg to inform other role players of the establishment of the SPC Du Toit promised that the committee would urgently give attention to the big problem of residential racial integration.<sup>49</sup>

The SPC agreed that various *ad hoc* committees would be established to investigate the different aspects of urban and regional planning for the Witwatersrand. Two of the most important of these committees were the Minerals and Mining committee, and the Group Areas committee. The latter would be headed by M.C. Barker, another member of the Mentz Commission. Other members of the *ad hoc* committee came from the Departments of Native Affairs, Coloured Affairs and National Housing. This committee played a crucial role in the division of the region into 'group areas' for coloureds, Indians and whites. Here we will only be concerned with the proposals it made in relation to the East Rand and the Springs areas in particular. It seems from the report of this committee that there was minimal consultation with local authorities. There are no records of public hearings or investigations as occurred with the Mentz Commission. By this time the government had dispensed with the formalities of public hearings and left urban planning in the hands of its committee-men.

In its report the Subsidiary Planning Committee explained its basic 'principles and work methods', which not surprisingly coincided largely with those set out by the Native Affairs Department. The committee aimed, in accordance with the GAA, to devise a system of

"planning that would allow each group the opportunity to develop on their own and at the same time to ensure the most convenient transport to workplaces without the need for one group to move through the area of another group to reach their workplaces".<sup>50</sup> By the beginning of 1955 the committee had completed its investigations and put forward very detailed plans for the region. Its report on the East Rand included maps with clear demarcations of 'group areas' for the region as well as for the individual towns. The proposals presented by this committee, as with the Mentz Committee, were profoundly to influence the future planning and development of the East Rand. A basic tenet of these committees was the understanding that the various towns would be dominated by the white population. Black people would be located in townships where they could develop on their own. As far as coloureds and Indians on the East Rand were concerned the committee argued that,

... the present number of non-whites, excluding natives, in the different municipalities is so small and the fact that separate schemes for such small groups in these towns would be uneconomical, the committee attempted as far as possible to combine the racial groups of two or more municipalities into a single region.<sup>51</sup>

This report therefore replicated the Mentz Commission's regional planning of African townships to coloureds and Indians on the East Rand. In its report on Springs the committee suggested that the coloured population from Germiston, Springs, Boksburg and Brakpan be moved to one township. It was proposed that this regional township be located south of Boksburg, not too far from where Reigerpark is situated.<sup>52</sup> This area was regarded as suitable because of its proximity to the industrial areas which would serve as an adequate buffer

between coloureds, Africans and whites.<sup>53</sup> The committee also suggested that the 510 'malays' of the East Rand be located in a single area, within the proposed coloured township.<sup>54</sup> It was calculated that the 'malay' population would probably grow to about 4000 in 60-70 years and that enough land had to be made available for future expansion of their residential area.<sup>55</sup> The planning of residential areas for Indians and Chinese were similarly conducted, with proposals for the creation of townships on the far east rand and in the Germiston/Boksburg area.<sup>56</sup> The Mentz and Subsidiary Planning Committees were crucial components in the government's schemes to restructure the Witwatersrand. Their recommendations, which fused racial segregation with urban planning in an industrialising country, guided state policy for the next two decades.

It took much longer for agreement to be reached on the establishment of regional townships for coloureds and Indians, and this was the source of much debate and conflict between the municipalities. In April 1952 the Springs Council responded to Du Plessis' conference, advising him "that the Council intends to establish its own township for Coloureds and that it does not subscribe to the principle of centralised residential areas for Coloureds."<sup>57</sup> The central government's intervention in these matters was less severe than in the planning of African locations. Thus by the mid 1970s a dual situation arose of joint locations between some municipalities (Actonville for Indians) and others having their townships, eg. Bakerton in Springs. In fact the proclamation of 'group areas' was often delayed because of the lack of agreement between different bodies on the siting of these townships. Furthermore, the precise recommendations of the committee were not always adopted, but it nevertheless formed the basic guidelines for the development of 'group areas' on the East Rand.

The initiatives by the government to institute and co-ordinate greater regional planning were not the only ones attempted on the Witwatersrand. There were also independent plans by municipalities on the Reef to co-ordinate their work in relation to blacks. In 1952 the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs was formed as a liaison body for managers of African locations. In the same year a conference of Reef municipalities proposed the formation of a regional body - the Witwatersrand Regional Planning Council - "whose function would be to plan on a regional basis the provision of Native housing on the Witwatersrand with due regard to the present and future industrial and other development of the areas."<sup>58</sup> These initiatives were indicative of the successful conversion of most town planners to the idea of regional planning by the mid fifties. The early initiatives of the central government ensured that the important decisions on the planning of regional development and co-ordination for blacks would rest with it and would occur within the political framework set out by the National Party. These principles came closest to representing a blue print for urban development, and to a large extent they determined the racial restructuring of the cities in fifties and sixties.

Thus by the mid fifties the reshaping of the urban areas begun in earnest. The provision of houses to African urban dwellers accelerated. In Johannesburg for example, three times as many houses were built between 1950 and 1960 than in the whole period from the city's founding in 1886 to 1950.<sup>59</sup> The mass provision of housing in the urban areas indicated the government's recognition of the permanency of Africans in the cities. However, the siting of these locations was also designed to keep Africans separate so that they did not become too integrated in the city. They were generally located close to industrial areas so that the main purpose allowing Africans in the cities was not lost, viz, to provide labour to industry. The

mushrooming of large African townships was central to the reshaping of the cities. This process was carried on through the 1960s, although the provision of housing declined until it came to a virtual standstill in the early 1970s.

The commission established by the government preempted the sittings of the LTAB/GAB on the East Rand and although local authorities were integrally involved in the planning of 'group areas' they found themselves functioning within the parameters already laid down by the central government. In fact, the tendency to centralise matters dealing with blacks was continued over the next period as local authorities were denuded of their power in these matters. The establishment of the Native Resettlement Board in 1954, to undermine the influence of the JCC in the Western Areas Removal Scheme, was the precursor to the establishment of the Bantu Affairs Administration Boards in the early 1970s. Similarly departments of Indian and coloured affairs were also established. The regional planning schemes which emerged from numerous committees set up by central government in the early 1950s were therefore absolutely crucial in the National Party's social engineering plans. It is within the context of the evolution of these plans that the following chapters will discuss forced removals, resettlements and the making of 'group areas' in Springs.

## NOTES

1. Mabin, A: "Conflict, Continuity and Change: locating "Properly planned native townships" in the forties and fifties", p.308
2. *ibid*, p.331
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## CHAPTER FOUR

### The post-war crisis in Springs

From its inception the development of Springs was typical for an East Rand town. After the initial discovery of gold deposits in Johannesburg, prospectors followed the Reef to the east and the East Rand. Mining camps were established wherever gold was discovered, and these formed the basis of many of the existing towns in the Witwatersrand. From the thirties, and especially in the forties East Rand towns such as Springs, Germiston and Brakpan were transformed as they experienced relatively rapid economic development. The burgeoning secondary industry in this area also had crucial social and political consequences. Deteriorating living conditions radicalised the black population, who engaged in numerous struggles during this period. The Communist Party of South Africa played a prominent role in these struggles on the East Rand and its members were often in the forefront of many of the campaigns waged by communities during this period. In turn, government created structures such as the location Advisory Boards were also radicalised and reflected the interests of the community more than in any other time in their history. Throughout the forties and into the early fifties the housing crisis in the East Rand locations deteriorated, making living conditions a nightmare for the majority of blacks. From about 1952 the central government began intervening more directly in the urban crisis, representing an important turning point in the development of the East Rand. In order to understand fully the actions of the government and local authorities in the fifties it is necessary to come to terms with the conditions in the forties which gave rise to the later developments. This chapter looks at some of the key features of Springs in the forties and early fifties and sketches the background to some of the themes dealt with in the following two chapters

### **Springs: from mining camp to industrial town**

The founding and initial growth of Springs, like other Reef towns, was integrally linked to the fortunes of the mining industry. Springs started as a mining camp and was initially almost entirely dependent on the coal mining industry. For a time it appeared that the mining camp would not last long as the prospects of coal mining dwindled. However, the discovery of gold assured the permanency of the settlement and its development into a town. The 1930s and 1940s were boom decades for gold mining in the region and some Springs mines were among the most profitable in the world. In the 1940s mines in the municipal area produced approximately 25% of the country's gold and in the late 1940s the Daggafontein mine was the largest single producer in the world.<sup>1</sup> The mining industry laid the basis for industrial development, at first on a small scale initially. From the late 1930s the council also intervened more directly in stimulating the development of secondary industry. Its efforts were particularly successful in the late 1940s,<sup>2</sup> with investment from national and foreign companies transforming the town's industry from its parochial focus on mining to being rapidly integrated into the national industrial economy.

The economic development of Springs, especially of secondary industry, resulted in a steady growth of the town's population. In 1930 the total population of Springs was 34 455 but nearly doubled in the next five years to 60 000 as a consequence of the gold boom.<sup>3</sup> By 1940 the population stood at 102 800. Then the overall growth rate slowed slightly so that by 1950 the figure was 124 100.<sup>4</sup> Whites constituted about thirty percent and Africans close to seventy percent of the total population. The Indian and coloured population remained very small having a combined total of no more than 2000 in 1950.<sup>5</sup>

When blacks first moved to Springs in search of work on the mines they had to take responsibility for their own accommodation. Originally there was no planning of black housing, resulting in the development of a shanty settlement on the outskirts of the town. However, the existence of such an 'uncontrolled' area became increasingly problematic for the Council in the early 1920s. Besides the overcrowding and unhealthy conditions under which blacks had to live, the area became a hotbed for various 'illegal' activities. Foremost among these was the illicit brewing of beer, an activity in which 'a large percentage' of the locations residents were involved in.<sup>6</sup> This proved to be of particular concern to the mine management who complained to the Council that mine workers flocked to the location over weekends and returned to work on Mondays in "a hopeless state of intoxication, some of them incapable for their work, others insolent and aggressive in their manner, the latter class being the cause of many assaults and disturbances in the compounds."<sup>7</sup> For the authorities the primary problem with illicit beer brewing, was that it represented the inability of the state to control the lives of urban blacks. The struggles by workers in the post World War One period and the subsequent activities of the Industrial and Commercial Workers Unions (ICU) on the East Rand, albeit without much success, made local authorities more anxious to assert greater control over blacks. In the early 1920s the government passed various pieces of legislation to achieve this aim. It attempted to impose stricter pass controls and passed the Native (Urban Areas) Act and in 1923.<sup>8</sup> The Act encouraged the establishment of locations as mechanism allowing local authorities better control over their black workers. These factors led the Council to establish a formal location 1½ miles north of the town. In 1924 the old shanty town had been cleared and the black population moved to the new location, Payneville.

### **Payneville: home to a "strange nation"**

From the time of its establishment Payneville was an integrated black location, with a majority African population but also including Indians, coloureds and a very small group of Chinese. The location was divided into two sections, a small Asiatic Bazaar and the main African section. The Asiatic Bazaar (later renamed Bakerton after the Baker, the Non-European Affairs manager) consisted of Indian and Chinese people and was the main commercial section of the location. There were numerous small trading stores there which catered mainly for the people in the location and miners in the compounds. The African and coloured section of the location was surrounded by a fence designed to enforce strict control over any movement in and out of the location. Municipal police, especially *blackjacks* as the black police were known, guarded the few entrance points to the location checking permits and passes. However, people frequently cut holes in the fence making access freer for residents and hostel dwellers. The location consisted of a men's hostel, municipal houses and privately owned houses. The owner built houses added variety to housing in the location as people used all sorts of material, from baked clay to bricks and cement to construct their houses. The municipal houses were built in *rounds* at the centre of which were communal toilets, taps and washbasins. Municipal houses did not have any of these amenities and the facilities had to be shared by the residents. Not surprisingly therefore, the *rounds* were the centre of activity in the location. This was where children played all day and where women congregated daily, making these areas the communication nodal points of the location. In the centre of the location a few *rounds* were allocated for the occupation of the one thousand coloured people of the location. This area was known as *Cape Stands* by the residents because it was believed that all coloureds came from Cape Town.<sup>10</sup>

Payneville was initially a single integrated location but the physical separation between the Asiatic Bazaar and the location made integration between the inhabitants of the two areas difficult. Over time the two sections were transformed into separate entities. Payneville was the centre of entertainment with its shebeens, live entertainment and the only place where blacks could watch films. There were no such facilities in Bakerton and it was inevitable therefore that some interaction would occur between the people from the two sections. However, the religious and cultural differences remained pronounced and maintained a certain social distance between them. For one there was virtually no religious interaction. Indians were primarily Hindu and Muslim, whereas coloureds and Africans were mainly Christian.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Bakerton was governed by the Asiatic Bazaar Regulations which controlled occupation and trading practices there. There was little integration in the workplaces because those Indians who were not employed in shops generally sought employment outside Springs. In 1951 the Council set up an Advisory Committee for the area but it had even less powers than the location Advisory Boards and dealt with matters such as cleaning roads and petitioning the Council for places to keep animals.<sup>12</sup> These factors tended to reinforce the idea of separateness between the two areas, so that in the minds of most people there were in fact two locations. The main connection between Payneville and Bakerton was at a commercial level. Kenny Madalane, leader of the campaign to reclaim Payneville, remembers the relationship between the residents:

I was right there in Cape Stands where the coloureds were. . . We had a very good relationship with coloured families. We married one another, it was just mixed marriages. When you take it with the Indian community, we used to go and shop there. they used to come and visit. they used too come and sell bananas, samoosas and other

things. They went house to house and there was nothing wrong. I don't remember having a problem with the Indians and Chinese, who also came into the township with what we called *FaFee*. Then the police would come and chase them away. We enjoyed seeing that.<sup>13</sup>

The main integration thus occurred within Payneville between coloureds and Africans. The so-called *Cape Stands* sections, separated from the rest of the location by Central avenue, was originally intended to be exclusively for coloured occupancy. This was impossible to enforce as coloureds and Africans, especially those living as lodgers, generally chose to live wherever they wanted. Jimmy "5000" Jacobs' background was similar to at least some and probably many coloured youths in the 1950s. He was born of coloured mother and Zulu father, and was generally unaware of his official identity as a coloured.<sup>14</sup> Although he attended a coloured school in *round four* he was fluent in Afrikaans and Zulu, and most of his social activity occurred within an integrated environment. He recalls being harassed for a pass on numerous occasions and only his ability to speak Afrikaans fluently convinced policemen that he was coloured.<sup>15</sup> For Jimmy Jacobs "There was no such thing as colour in Payneville. It was just when you went to school you went to a coloured school. There was no such thing as he is a coloured or he is a black. Except for the ones who wanted to be whiter than whiter."<sup>16</sup> The integration between Africans and coloureds was strengthened by their shared religious beliefs and inter-marriage. In the post-apartheid era many of the interviewees now remember Payneville as an ideal location in which race played no role in the lives of people. In fact the campaign to reclaim Payneville is strongly infused with the idea of resurrecting the 'racial harmony' of the location in the pre-apartheid days.

It would be a mistake, however, to ignore the undercurrents of racial tension, which were enhanced by forced racial segregation. The existence of separate schools and even churches maintained a certain separateness. Coloureds were not subjected to the same racial controls, such as pass laws, as Africans and there is little indication that they participated in large numbers in any of the struggles conducted by Africans. A memorandum from the Springs branch of the Transvaal Coloured Peoples' Association to the Council in 1950 gives some indication of the consciousness of a layer of coloured people. The essence of the memorandum was an appeal to the Council to establish a coloured location. In its motivation the association argued that,

For all the years we have lived among natives in circumstances which are foreign to our customs and habits. Under these circumstances the younger generation degenerates very quickly.

When we arrived here we were promised that our residence here was temporary, but in spite of repeated applications for the removal of the coloureds, nothing positive has been done for us in this direction; on the contrary all privileges have been denied us.

We are concerned to learn that the Asiatic, a foreigner, has been exempted from all these circumstances wherein we, the coloured population, suffer. We are very much concerned to learn that after all these years of living with and faithfulness to the European authority we are compared with the native.<sup>17</sup>

The memorandum concluded by appealing to the Council to provide "Facilities for the furtherance of the coloured on economic and industrial grounds" and made clear that its aim was to ensure the "furtherance of coloured interests in general as a separate race with its own tradition and national pride."<sup>18</sup> The memorandum was signed by 105 people, indicating

support for segregation among some coloureds of the location. The memorandum came in the wake of the passage of the GAA, giving these people hope of having their own location. An underlying concern of some coloureds, especially the petty bourgeois, was that they were not permitted to be involved in any form of economic activity because Payneville was a 'native location'. This undermined the growth of a coloured petty bourgeoisie. Furthermore, coloureds did not have any political representation in the city. The Payneville Advisory Board was exclusively for Africans and its members generally were only concerned with their own advancement and that of the African petty bourgeoisie. On the one hand, therefore, there were those coloureds, like Jimmy Jacobs, who saw themselves as part of the black population and were not interested in defining themselves as a separate 'race' from Africans. On the other hand, there were those for whom the apartheid policies of the National Party presented an opportunity to advance their specific class interests. For poor coloured people the idea of a separate location also held the promise of improving their lot. For some the fact that they lived in an African location was the reason for their misery. From the mid fifties the demand for a separate coloured location would become stronger.

#### **Housing crisis in Payneville**

When the location was established it was designed to accommodate 8000 people. In 1933 the location's population stood at 5441 but by 1939 the number almost doubled to 10 000.<sup>19</sup> By 1952 the population had more than trebled to 33 000<sup>20</sup>, four times more than was originally catered for. Of the total population coloureds (or Euraficans<sup>21</sup> as they were called by the Council until 1950) numbered just under 800 and the number of Indians in the Asiatic Bazaar totalled nearly 1000.<sup>22</sup> The majority of African lived on the mines. For example, in 1952 the African mine population was 53 321, of which only 1560 were women.<sup>23</sup> In addition almost

8000 blacks were estimated to live on white owned properties in town.<sup>24</sup> This rapid population increase, especially of Africans, was a result of the growth in the manufacturing industry and the gold mining boom of the 1940s, and reflected the general trend on the whole Reef. A survey conducted on behalf of the Council by the National Building Research Institute in 1953 revealed that about 40% of Payneville's population resided there for less than 10 years.<sup>25</sup> This confirms the high rate of urbanisation from the late 1930s and is probably itself an underestimate because it appears that backyard lodgers were excluded from the survey.

The dramatic increase in Payneville's population resulted in a concomitant decline in living standards. Overcrowding became endemic mainly because the Council did not build any houses between 1939 and 1951,<sup>26</sup> reflecting the general inertia in housing provision for blacks in the whole country. This resulted in the mushrooming of shanties on the existing stands. A survey of black Council employees conducted by the town engineer revealed that the average number of people living in a room was 6.1, but there were examples of up to ten people occupying a single room.<sup>27</sup> Banzi Bangani, renown jazz trumpeter (for the African Inkspots) of the fifties and sixties recalls the conditions on his father's stand:

My father had a stand in Payneville, which he bought from a previous owner. The main stand had four rooms and at the back we had three rooms. So you could say we had a seven roomed house. In the main stand we had nine people and at the back there was a man with his wife and also a single man in one room. There were about 16 to 18 people on our stand. There was not very much space left on the stand. Maybe just enough to hang up the washing. In each round there were six toilets. So you had more than 120 people for those toilets.<sup>28</sup>

From the above it may be surmised that in all likelihood the number of people living in backyards was nearly the same as those living in the houses. The figure of 1000 lodgers indicated by the Council in 1950<sup>29</sup> was thus clearly an underestimate. In 1953 the town clerk estimated the number of lodgers to be 8000.<sup>30</sup> This figure is far more realistic and was calculated after the establishment of the emergency camp and the removal of some people (mainly lodgers) to KwaThema. By the early 1950s Payneville resembled other inner city locations such as the Western Areas townships or the Brakpan location. The overcrowding and lack of adequate sanitation gave rise to extremely unhealthy living conditions. From the late 1940s the medical officer constantly complained of the dangers of outbreaks of poverty diseases such as of tuberculosis and diphtheria. In 1950 there was an outbreak of diphtheria<sup>31</sup> and over 800 people reported at the clinic with tuberculosis.<sup>32</sup> A further indication of the poverty in the location was the high rate of infant mortality. In 1952/53 the infant mortality rate among Africans and coloureds was 383.77 and 166.66 per thousand live births respectively, compared to only 41.01 for whites.<sup>33</sup>

The majority of African adult males were employed either in industry or by the Council. Most Council employees earned between £1.06.00 and £1.08.06 a week, with only a handful of office workers earning slightly more than £2.<sup>34</sup> Although most adult males were employed the pittance which they earned had to feed an increasing number of mouths as more families settled in the urban areas. Thus the survey of the National Building Research Institute showed that 47% of families in the location could not afford to pay rents without resorting to informal means of generating income.<sup>35</sup> In this regard women involved in illicit beer brewing played a crucial role in supplementing incomes. However, the Council attempted to undermine the home beer brewing industry with the construction of a municipal beerhall and constant raids

on beer brewers.

The abovementioned survey further reveals that Payneville residents were most dissatisfied with the housing conditions. Less than twenty percent indicated any degree of satisfaction with housing.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand residents were generally satisfied with education (58%) and transport(50%).<sup>37</sup> In the case of the former there were numerous church sponsored schools which helped to alleviate the education crisis. Transport was generally not a problem because of the close proximity of the location to the town centre. Payneville was also directly linked to the rest of the Reef by the easily accessible railway line. The deteriorating living conditions of the black population in Payneville created ideal conditions for the mobilisation of residents against the authorities.

#### **Popular resistance against control in Payneville**

From the start Payneville posed numerous problems for the authorities. Like other locations on the Reef the state found it extremely difficult to assert any real control over the activities of the population. Not surprisingly, therefore, these locations became hotbeds of opposition - by formal political organisations and also by numerous forms of independent and 'anti-social' activity. Gang activity was regarded as a normal part of location life and was particularly attractive to the youth, for whom there appeared to be no future. It was estimated that there were about 800 unemployed juveniles in the location in 1951.<sup>38</sup> On the one hand, this was because many employees refused to employ youth whom they regarded as unreliable and not strong enough to undertake hard manual work. On the other hand, many urban youth loathed the discipline imposed by industry and chose not to be employed. Their rebellion against the regimentation of factory work was enhanced by the fact that crime held the possibility of a

better income than the low wages of manual work. Furthermore, educational facilities in the location was inadequate and was mostly the responsibility of various churches. The Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Seven Day Adventist churches all organised their own schools, whereas the state generally neglected the education of black children. In spite of these efforts the schools in the location could only accommodate one third of the youth of school going age.<sup>39</sup> Even in Bakerton there was only a primary school and children had to travel to other East Rand towns to attend high school.<sup>40</sup> In the early 1950s the Council considered building more schools<sup>41</sup> but these plans were put on hold when the future of the location became uncertain. It was only with the establishment of KwaThema and after the passage of the Bantu Education Act that the state built proper schools for African children.

These factors created ideal conditions for the growth of gangs among the youth who were attracted by their anti-social and anti-establishment cultures. They revolted not only against the oppression and exploitation of the system imposed on them by white authorities but also against parental authority.<sup>42</sup> As in other locations, Payneville gangs acquired elaborate names such as the "Ringo Stars" and "Mashalashala". Each gang held sway in a particular part of the location where they had a monopoly over their main money making activities such as pickpocketing, robbery and dealing in stolen goods. Jimmy Jacobs, who was not a gang member, nevertheless found their way of life very attractive:

I left school when I was very young. I tried a few jobs but just couldn't come right. Maybe I did not like working then. Then I got arrested for handling a stolen starter. We went to court and I got acquitted because I was able to defend myself very articulately... The magistrate told my uncle to put me into school but this did not

work... I tried to make a living by pickpocketing here and there, doing whatever I could put my hands on. Then in 1955 I decided to go straight. I come from a very Christian home. My grandfather was a dean in the church and my mother was very holy. I could not smoke in the house. She would not even allow you to come into the yard with liquor. But you always go against the grain. I wanted to taste the things they were forbidding me to do.<sup>43</sup>

After a few failed attempts at going straight Jimmy Jacobs got lucky and won a £5000 lottery in the sweepstakes in 1960 and earned himself the name "5000". Jimmy's luck lifted him out of the morass of poverty and employing a bit of entrepreneurship (and more luck) he made a reasonable success of his life as a taxi operator, undertaker, driving school instructor, soccer club owner and boxing promoter.<sup>44</sup> Most other petty criminals and gangsters were not as lucky. They were pursued by the authorities and often had to live in the forest between the location and the Welgedacht mine.<sup>45</sup> Gang fights were common in the location and these sometimes took on a racial character as coloured and African gangs fought each other. Miners often complained that they were waylaid by coloured gangsters on their way to the location over weekends, but these 'racial' incidents did not seem too serious as there were never reports of serious racial conflict. In any event inter-gang rivalry and fighting rarely spilled over into the community. Fights between location gangs did not compare in its ferocity with the gangs fight on the mines and hostels. Here the *Russians* and *Hlubis*, which were different factions among Basuto workers, were frequently involved in bloody feuds. These fights generally occurred in the hostel, especially the Nuffield compound,<sup>46</sup> but on occasion they would also fight in the location. In the early 1950s the Payneville Advisory Board became so concerned with crime in the location that it proposed the establishment of a Civil

Protection Unit.<sup>47</sup> Crime remained a big problem in the location throughout the fifties and sixties, occupying much of the Advisory Board's time .

Illicit beer brewing was a key component in the people's resistance to municipal control over their lives. Women were of course central to this resistance as they were the main brewers. They were probably the most marginalised section of the black population in the urban areas. Industrialisation did not hold many employment benefits for women and formal unemployment was thus much higher among women. Domestic work was the main sector in which women were employed,<sup>48</sup> but wages were notoriously low and there was little guarantee of long term employment. In a situation of low incomes deriving from male employment and an the increasing cost of living many women entered into illicit beer brewing to supplement incomes. However, this activity also represented a crucial form of resistance by women against control by the white authorities and male domination. For decades the Springs Council attempted to stamp out beer brewing through new laws and daily raids on brewers. But the women successfully resisted everything thrown at them and it was therefore almost natural that they would play a key role in the general opposition to the white authorities. Dinah Maile, Communist Party and Advisory Board member, is remembered by most former Payneville residents as the main political organiser of the people. She was at the centre of most of the resistance organised in the location from the 1940s.

The most important struggle initiated by Dinah Maile was against the municipal beerhall which was established in the location in 1937.<sup>49</sup> These beerhalls were created by the Councils specifically to undermine the illicit brewing by women. Furthermore, considerable profits could be derived from beer sales. Profits from beer sales in the location were indeed very

good: surplus revenue from 'kaffir beer' sales in £42 026, £38 143 and £55 387 in 1948/49, 1949/50 and 1951/52 respectively. This of course also represented a loss in real disposable income for women brewers and aggravated poverty among the people. The beerhall thus became the focal point of conflict between women and the local authorities. In 1945 matters came to a head when women called on location men not to frequent the municipal beerhall. On the 8 July the Communist Party called a public meeting where Dinah Maile's support "for domestic brewing of Kaffir beer" was "loudly applauded".<sup>50</sup> The following day a man who had bought beer at municipal hall was stoned, resulting in the arrest of three women. That night 500 hundred women, led by Dinah, demanded the release of those arrested. For the next two weeks there were regular protest meetings and marches through the location.<sup>51</sup> On July 22, two thousand women demonstrated in front of the beerhall to prevent men from entering. The attempt by the police forcefully to disperse the protesters sparked a riot which went on the whole day and soon spread to the whole location.<sup>52</sup> The violent response of the police transformed the anti-beerhall protest into an open conflict against the local authorities. A *Rand Daily Mail* reporter captured the extent of the revolt:

The windows of the beer hall, the municipal police station, the native administrative offices and residences of officials were smashed. After the crowd had been dispersed many of them went to the lower end of the township and smashed portion of the iron fence surrounding it.<sup>53</sup>

At the end of the day at least four people were killed by the police and eleven hospitalised. Twenty policemen were injured and reinforcements were called in from all over the East Rand to quell the riot.<sup>54</sup> The demand for the closure of the beerhall did not succeed but the struggle

of the women shook the authorities to the core. Illicit brewing continued as women were determined not lose this source of income or give into the control of the authorities. Subsequent protests against the beerhall mainly took the form of the demand that it operate on a non-profit making basis. In 1949 residents protested against the decision of the government to use profits from the sale of beer to build houses. The Residents' Protest Committee objected to this 'indirect method of taxation' and requested that people be allowed to brew beer at home.<sup>55</sup> The Payneville Advisory Board also recommended that the price of beer be reduced from 2/- to 1/- per gallon.<sup>56</sup> However, the joint pleas in the early 1950s by the Advisory Board and the ANC to reduce the price of beer made went unheeded.

An important feature of protest politics in Payneville at the time (at least until 1950) was the leading role played by Communist Party activists, such as Dinah Maile. As in other localities<sup>57</sup> the party focused its attention on bringing the Advisory Board under its political sway, in order to use it as a vehicle for protest. E.J. Baker, the Non-European Affairs manager noted in 1945 that the Communist Party had four members on the Board and basically controlled that body. In fact the recalcitrance of the municipality in the face of the protest by the women was strongly influenced by the role of the communists in those struggles. According to Baker, "The Communist section undoubtedly felt that it would be a tremendous feather in their cap if during the term of office of their 4 members on the Advisory Board, the administration could be compelled to accede to the demand for domestic brewing."<sup>58</sup> Under these circumstances the authorities feared that any concession by them would have boosted the standing of the Communist Party. It would rather risk a riot than make such a concession to the communists. Nevertheless, the Party's standing in the community was enhanced by its role in community struggles and at the time it was the main political organisation in the location.

At this stage the Advisory Board reflected the general interests of the location residents far more than in later years. In 1952 a prominent board member, Absolom Khumalo, was arrested for urging residents to support the stayaway call in 1950.<sup>59</sup> In spite of this he was returned to the board with the highest number of votes. The monthly public meetings held by the board seems to have been the place where popular pressure was asserted on representatives. Undoubtedly, however, the role of the Communist Party was crucial in radicalising the board and making it far more sensitive to the needs of the people of the location. As in the case of the Brakpan location, the forties represented the most radical period in the history of Payneville. After the banning of the Communist Party and the radicalisation of the ANC, many previous party activists shifted their activities to the ANC. Dinah Maile, Khumalo and Legodi, all Advisory Board members, became prominent ANC leaders in the location. Under these circumstances support for the ANC grew rapidly in the early 1950s as it came to be viewed as the popular representative of the people.

#### **Tentative steps towards reform**

By the end of the 1940s the housing problem in Payneville reached a crisis point. The lack of any development in housing and amenities resulted in unbearable pressure on the limited resources of the location. In the late forties there were also increasing and frequent reports of squatting on farm lands adjacent to the town.<sup>60</sup> The rapid increase in the town's black population was viewed as a crisis by the municipality and the white population. The local employees were particularly concerned about the uncertainties experienced by the African workforce:

Inter-related with the industrial and mining development is the urgent problem of

housing for both Europeans and Non-Europeans... We have got to catch up on a cumulative position of shortage, build on a basis of unavoidably inflated costs, due principally to the increase in labour costs and provide housing at a rental within the means of the average owner. As businessmen employing large numbers of natives, this position is of vital importance to us in that the natives cannot be expected to seek employment and consequent spending power in a town where they cannot obtain suitable accommodation.<sup>61</sup>

From the mid forties business in Springs pressurised the Council to address the severe housing crisis in the location. They were especially concerned that Springs would become unattractive to potential labourers if housing could not be provided, which would in turn adversely affect possible investment in the town. Moreover, the increasing militancy displayed by the location's residents in the 1940s raised the spectre of the 'black peril' among whites. The close proximity of Payneville to the town centre and white residential areas became a cause for much concern. The overcrowding in the location resulted in hundreds of blacks seeking accommodation in the backyards of whites, increasing the latter's fear of being engulfed by a black tide. Under the circumstances, tensions ran high between whites and blacks. This situation was exacerbated by reports of gang fights between blacks and whites. In 1945 a few whites were killed by black gangs resulting in an outcry. (The exact circumstances of these killings are not known to me, as they were mere / reported in shrill terms as murders of whites by blacks). The white population panicked and convened a "black peril" public meeting.<sup>62</sup> Both capital and the white population of Springs wanted the Council to take responsibility for bringing the black population under control. As a result of these pressures the Council seriously turned its attention to resolving the housing crisis in the location. In the

late forties the Council built the Nuffield Hostel to accommodate single male workers, many of whom were living in white areas. However, early in 1950 the Council complained that workers were reluctant to move into the hostel, partly because of the stricter control over their lives which would exist in there.

As early as 1939 the Council had recognised the "dire necessity of having to provide additional accommodation for natives in the area". But it took a decade before the various interested parties could agree on a suitable site for a new location.<sup>63</sup> Before this the Council identified at least four areas but the opposition from mining companies prevented development from starting. The refusal by mining companies to countenance the use of some of their land for black locations was to re-emerge as an obstacle in the late fifties and early sixties. Only in 1948 could the Council, the mining houses, land owners and central government agree on a site, the farms Vlakfontien and Rietfontein which were 4 to 5 kilometres south of the town.<sup>64</sup> However, it took another three years before the Minister of Native Affairs formally agreed to the establishment of KwaThema.<sup>65</sup>

Yet the housing crisis in Payneville cried out for an immediate resolution. The residents found the overcrowding intolerable and demanded action from the authorities. In March 1950 a public meeting was held in Payneville to discuss the housing shortage. Fifty people decided to march into town to demand houses. By the time they reached the police station on the edge of the town the number of marchers had swelled to about one thousand. The residents of Payneville were determined to end the overcrowding in their location.<sup>66</sup> In the context of increasing militancy by blacks the Council moved rapidly to implement a recommendation by the Native Commissioner (in February 1950) that an "emergency camp" be built adjacent

to the main location.<sup>67</sup> By May the Council had secured a loan of £96 850 to build 1700 rooms in the emergency camp, which they estimated would accommodate between 700 and 800 families.<sup>68</sup> By 1951 hundreds of people moved to "temporary housing scheme", known as Jabavu by the residents. The scheme was intended to alleviate the overcrowding in Payneville and accommodate some of the squatters on the farms.<sup>69</sup>

The emergency measures of the Council only brought minimal relief to the residents of Payneville. The dire shortage of houses, which epitomised the situation of blacks in urban areas, remained a serious crisis and all parties demanded a solution. The continuously deteriorating living conditions suffered by blacks laid the basis for the growing opposition from all sectors in the location. The struggles in Payneville in the forties were unprecedented and remained unmatched in the next period. For capital and the white population this situation was untenable and their pressure on the municipality eventually led to some efforts by the authorities to deal with the housing crisis. But the wheels of the bureaucracy turned slowly, especially because it was accompanied by indecision at the highest level of government. This was a crucial period in the history of Springs and of the black population in particular. It witnessed the transformation of the town into an important industrial centre. In this situation black people began playing a more prominent role in the life of the town. The housing crisis in particular thrust itself onto the centre stage of politics in the town, demanding immediate resolution. Yet, this period is characterised by the lack of solutions and stop-gap measures in addressing this dire problem. However, in so far as agreement was reached to establish KwaThema this period at least laid the basis for the transformation of the town in the next period.

## NOTES

1. Gilfoyle, D: "An Urban Crisis: The town council industry and the black working class in Springs", Honours Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1983, p.5
2. *ibid*, p.15
3. *ibid*, p.6
4. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/25, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee*, Annual report of the medical officer for the year ended 30th June, 1950
5. *ibid*
6. Bonner, P: "Divisions and Unity in the struggle: African political organisation on the Witwatersrand in the 1920's and early 1930's", p. 13
7. Quoted in *ibid*, p.15
8. *ibid*, p.15
9. This is the description given to the location by Moses Magudulela, see Interview with *Moses Magudulela*, Springs 9 June 1995
10. Interview with *Jimmy "5000" Jacobs*, 20 June 1995 in Geluksdal
11. Interview with *Abou Khan*, present mayor of Springs, 29 June 1995, Springs
12. Interview with *G. Khan*, 23 June 1995, Bakerton
13. Interview with *Kenny Madlana*, 12 June 1995, Springs
14. Interview with *Jimmy "5000" Jacobs*
15. *ibid*
16. *ibid*
17. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/25, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee*, Translated memorandum received from the Springs branch of the Transvaal Coloured People's Association, October, 1950
18. *ibid*
19. Gilfoyle, D: *An Urban Crisis*, p.21
20. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/39, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee of 4/7/57*. This appears to be a revised figure. In 1952 the medical officer reported that the total population for Payneville was 18 243. However, the records do not indicate the reasons for

this massive discrepancy. The figure of 33 000 is probably more accurate because in 1954 the figure stood at 24 000, after the removal of a few thousand people to KwaThema.

21. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/25, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee*, Annual report of the Non-European Affairs manager, July 1950

22. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/28, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee*, Preliminary report of the medical officer of health for the year ended 30th June, 1952

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24. *ibid*

25. Germiston, East Rand Administration Board records, H5/57/14, *Final report of the socio-economic survey at Payneville location, Springs, undertaken to collect necessary data for the design of the new native township of KwaThema* by the National Building Research Institute, July 1953

26. Gilfoyle, D: "An Urban Crisis", p.21

27. *ibid*

28. Interview with *Banzi Bangani*, 01 July 1995, KwaThema

29. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/25, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee*, Annual report of the manager of Non-European Affairs, July 1950

30. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/31, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee*, Report of the Town Clerk

31. Springs and Brakpan Advertiser, 2 March 1950

32. *ibid*, 27 December 1950

33. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/31, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee*, Preliminary report of the medical officer of health for the year ended 30th June, 1953

34. Gilfoyle, D: "An Urban Crisis", p.25

35. Germiston, East Rand Administration Board records, H5/57/14, *Final report of the socio-economic survey at Payneville location, Springs, undertaken to collect necessary data for the design of the new native township of KwaThema* by the National Building Research Institute, July 1953

36. *ibid*, p.23

37. *ibid*

38. Gilfoyle, D: "An Urban Crisis", p.29

39. *ibid*

40. Interview with *Mr G. Khan*

41. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/25, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Affairs Committee*, July 1950

42. Glaser, C: "Tsotsis, Youth Politics and the PAC", in Bonner, P, *et al* (eds): *Apartheid's Genesis*, p.300

43. Interview with *Jimmy "5000" Jacobs*

44. *ibid*

45. Interview with *Mrs Zenzile Tshabalala*, whose son was a gang member and was arrested on numerous occasions. 14 June 1995, KwaThema.

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47. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/28, *Minutes*, Report of Payneville Advisory Board meeting held in December 1951

48. Bonner, P, *et al* (eds): *Apartheid's Genesis. Introduction*, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, p.15

49. Gilfoyle, D: "An Urban Crisis", p. 27

50. CAD, NTS 7676, 110/332, Report of the Springs police District Commandant

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56. CAD, MSP 1/3/5/1/28, *Minutes of the Public Health and Non-European Committee*, 'Memorandum of the Payneville Native Advisory Board and the African National Congress (Springs branch) to the hon. the Minister of Native Affairs as a plea for the reduction of the retail price of kaffir beer in Springs'

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64. *ibid*
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66. Springs and Brakpan Advertiser, 31 March 1950
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## CHAPTER FIVE

### The making of an apartheid town

From the time of its founding Payneville, like other integrated Reef locations, represented an anomaly in a country characterised by racial segregation. These locations were generally overcrowded and poverty stricken, but they were also places where race often became a relatively insignificant factor in the lives of its inhabitants. Today it is not uncommon for former residents of Payneville to describe it as a place where a "strange nation was born and bred... and lived together quite nicely".<sup>1</sup> As long as these 'black spots' remained isolated they were tolerated by the regime. But the massive urbanisation of black people from the late 1930s placed a big question mark over the future of these locations. By the end of World War Two the integrated locations had become terribly overcrowded and centres of struggle by black people. The urban demographic revolution of the forties presented the ruling class with its most serious crisis to date. The National Party's solution to the problem was stricter and compulsory racial segregation. In this scheme integrated locations were regarded as an absolute aberration and had to be eliminated. This is the fate that faced Payneville and other 'black spots' in the fifties. These locations represented everything the National Party was against: racial integration, lack of control by authorities and increasing working class militancy. Their continued existence was not only anomalous to enforced racial segregation but also posed a threat to the control by the state and capital over the black working class. Their removal thus became an essential component of the National Party's social engineering plans.

The 1950s was a period of intense restructuring of the urban areas. One of the first aims in

this process was to resolve the 'native problem'. This meant placing effective curbs on the influx of African people into the towns and to impose stricter control over the lives of those who were permitted to remain in the urban areas. The establishment of the new townships was viewed as a crucial part in this plans. The Springs municipality thus expended much of its energy in establishing KwaThema and removing Africans from Payneville and the white areas. It did so as part of the broader regional plan conceived by the government through the Mentz Committee in 1952/3. An integral part of this scheme was the provision of houses to the thousands of people living in overcrowded conditions in Payneville. By the end of the fifties the municipality felt that it had brought crisis faced by it in the late forties under control.

This period also witnessed the GAA machinery getting fully into gear. By the mid fifties the Springs municipality was deeply involved in developing plans to divide the town into 'group areas'. These plans did not affect the white population as they were generally allowed to remain in the areas which they already occupied. But the 'group areas' plans had a profound influence on the future of Payneville. The Council's intention to declare the location a 'group area' immediately jeopardised the character of the location. It placed a question mark over the future of those people who would become 'disqualified' in the event of a 'group areas' proclamation. The essential aspects of the urban replanning in Springs were the following: the disestablishment of Payneville as an African location and the removal of all Africans to the new township, KwaThema; the imposition of tighter influx control over the African population so that their numbers in the municipality was as close as possible to the labour needs of industry; and the creation of 'group areas', especially for Indians and coloureds. This chapter focuses on the first part of this process, as it unfolded in the fifties.

### Making of 'group areas' in Springs

On the 31 March 1951 the GAA came into operation in the Transvaal and Natal and the two provinces were simultaneously declared *specified areas*.<sup>2</sup> The aim of this step was to ensure that "further inter-penetration is effectively curtailed, and [to establish] group areas so that a process of segregating ownership and occupation of the different groups may be set in motion whereby the existing state of inter-penetration may in the course of time be eliminated."<sup>3</sup> From this time the LTAB urged the co-operation of local authorities to "bring about the desired state of affairs".<sup>4</sup> Municipalities were requested urgently to follow certain steps in this regard: to identify areas to be declared *defined areas* and 'group areas, and to compile a "group survey map". The LTAB wasted no time in placing much of the responsibility for the implementation of the GAA with the local authorities. The circular outlining these proposals was sent to all municipalities and set into motion a flurry of activity in numerous towns to meet the requests of the Board. It is within this context that the Springs Council began formulating plans for the division of the town into 'group areas'.

The initial response of the Council to 'group areas' plans was ambiguous. On the one hand, some Council members took their cue from the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA). For example, they found the input of V.G. Hiemstra, a strong supporter of the GAA, at a conference of SABRA on the Act, "a very useful analysis for future reference, as it sets out the main essentials of the Group Areas Act in an unusually clear and understandable form."<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the liberal Councillors (who generally took their cue from the South African Institute of Race Relations and the Joint Councils) were influential and convinced the Council to object to the impact of the GAA on black people:

Council feels that it must express its deep concern at the uncertainty, fear and hostility to which the Act has given rise.

Council is convinced that only by the way of inter-racial co-operation and consultation, and not by the way of more separation or of solution imposed on one section of the community by another, is peace to be found.<sup>6</sup>

In spite of this protest, the Council proceeded to draw up plans for 'group areas' in Springs. The first contentious issue it dealt with was the presence of Indian businessmen in the town. Although the number of Indian businesses there was minimal and confined to one section, there was nevertheless continual opposition from white businessmen to their presence. The Council was split on the approach to be taken on this question. Some insisted that Indian traders be removed immediately, while others favoured a softer approach. In terms of the regulations pertaining to *specified areas*, which applied to the whole Transvaal, Indian people could acquire no new property in white areas. The Council was concerned that they would be able to extend their existing properties and therefore applied for those plots to be declared *defined areas* to prevent occupation by Indians of any extension to properties in town.<sup>7</sup> However, the decision regarding Indians was reviewed because of opposition from a number of Councillors. At a meeting in October 1952 a motion in support of the above recommendations could not secure majority support.<sup>8</sup> At least one Councillor was concerned that the removal of Indians from the town would occur without proper compensation. The municipality therefore entered its first negotiations with the Board with no clear position regarding the future of Indians residing and carrying out business in predominantly white areas.

The municipality's first official recommendation about the creation of 'group areas' to the Board indicates its uncertainty about how to deal with the allocation of 'group areas' for coloureds and Indians. Predictably, it recommended that all "predominantly European Areas... be declared Group areas for occupation and ownership by the White Group only."<sup>9</sup> With regards to the black population it proposed:

That Payneville Native Location, KwaThema Native Location..., the Nuffield Hostel and all Native compounds within the municipal area be declared Group Areas for occupation by the Native Group only; provided that where Cape Coloured persons at present reside in the Payneville Native Location. they be permitted to remain there until such time as the Council has acquired land for occupation by Cape Coloured persons only;

That the Asiatic Bazaar and the extensions thereto be declared a Group Area for occupation by Asiatics only;<sup>10</sup>

A number of issues arise from these recommendations. Firstly, at this stage the Council was not yet considering the disestablishment of Payneville as an African location. From its point of view the creation of KwaThema was designed to ameliorate the overcrowding in Payneville, to accommodate the influx of new people into Springs and to provide proper shelter for those who lived in the backyards of white owned houses. Secondly, the Council continued to view the Payneville/Bakerton complex as a location where Africans, coloureds and Indians could live together, even if different sections of it were declared for specific 'groups'. At this stage it did not envisage the complete removal of all Africans from this area. Thirdly, the Council was determined that Springs should have its own coloured and Indian

locations, rather than subscribe to the notion of regional townships for these 'groups'. It specifically rejected the proposal by the Commissioner of Coloured Affairs that coloured residential areas should be planned regionally because the municipality would be in danger of losing the people to areas with bigger populations.<sup>11</sup> Towns such as Germiston and Boksburg were regarded as better sites for the construction of regional locations of this kind. The Council was however aware that the acquisition of land and the building of houses depended on money being made available by the National Housing and Planning Commission.<sup>12</sup> This was a crucial trump card in the hands of the central government, which was prepared to consider the plans presented by Springs, but insisted that the siting of a new coloured location should be "acceptable from the point of view of the regional planning of the areas."<sup>13</sup>

At its first meeting with the LTAB to discuss the proposals for 'group areas,' the Council found the board amenable to its proposals. However, it was informed not to concern itself with representations regarding 'group areas' for Africans.<sup>14</sup> Presumably, the Board was taking its directions from the central government on this matter and was awaiting the findings of the Mentz Committee. The Board urged the Council to identify land for a coloured 'group area' and to apply for Bakerton to be declared a 'group area' for Indians only. The Board did not commit itself to the Council's proposals but did not raise any objections to them. It also suggested to the Council that Indian businesses in town be permitted "to remain in occupation on temporary permit" and that the permit be valid for a period of three years.<sup>15</sup> The future of Payneville was not considered at the first meeting with the LTAB and only became an issue after the Mentz Committee presented its recommendations. The findings of the Mentz Committee and other bodies established by the government to investigate urban replanning

on the Witwatersrand fundamentally affected the outlook of municipalities on the Reef. In most cases the Councils tamely conceded to the government's schemes. It was within this context that the Council's initial proposals changed in the years leading to Group Areas Board sitting in the town in 1957. Various factors, including the government's proposals regarding Payneville, plans for regional coloured and Indian townships and representations from people in Payneville, all impacted on the plans for 'group areas'.

After the 1953 meeting with the LTAB little progress was made with the creation of 'group areas' in Springs. This was due to at least two factors. Firstly, there was a lack of enthusiasm among some Council members to implement the GAA. The Council agreed in principle with the GAA but indicated to the Board that it would take "no action in regard to the implementation of the Act in the municipal area."<sup>16</sup> This meant that unless the central government took action little would be done by the Council to establish 'group areas'. Secondly, the obstacles faced by the LTAB impeded the implementation of the GAA. Only after the amendment to the GAA in 1955 was the Board in a position to proceed more expeditiously with its task of proclaiming 'group areas'. While the functioning of the Board was delayed, the Mentz Committee completed its report on regional planning for African locations on the Witwatersrand. On 28 May 1954 the Secretary of Native Affairs informed the Springs municipality that "I have the honour to inform you that it is the intention of the Mentz Committee to recommend to the Minister that the residents of Payneville be removed to KwaThema areas and that it eventually be abolished."<sup>17</sup> Although this had not yet become law, it was clear that the Native Affairs Department intended to implement the recommendations of the Mentz Committee. The Department instructed the Council to apply the same conditions which were approved by the minister in the case of Munsieville location

in Krugersdorp. These were:

- a) that the inhabitants of the location in due course be removed to the KwaThema area;
- b) that, as the first step in this direction, the renovation of and improvements to dilapidated and unhygienic houses be not allowed; the inhabitants of such buildings to be removed to the new area as soon as circumstances permit;
- c) that, in regard to the erection of new schools and churches, these should be allowed, to ensure that the requirements of the Payneville community are met, on condition that the relative buildings are of a utilitarian and luxurious construction.<sup>18</sup>

This represented an important turning point in the history of Springs and in particular for the inhabitants of Payneville. The central government's position on the future of Payneville was unambiguous: all the location's African residents had to be moved to KwaThema. This directly contradicted the Council's proposal of retaining the location as a 'group area' for Africans. As will be shown below this did not represent too much of a problem for the Council in so far as the African population was concerned because of the establishment of KwaThema. But the decision to remove all Africans from the old location changed the Council's view about what 'group area' Payneville should be proclaimed. This introduced an important new element in the Council's schemes for the racial carving up of the town'. The decision by the government to disestablish the old location made it possible for the Council to recommend its proclamation as 'group areas' for coloureds and Indians.

By 1955 the Council was becoming "anxious" to resolve the future residency of coloureds and Indians. It was concerned that the "Provision of housing for the coloured and Asiatic people of Springs [was] becoming a matter of urgency" and urged the central government to decide on the fate of Payneville as soon as possible.<sup>19</sup> In February 1955 the Council received a petition from Indian residents requesting that it create a 'Municipal Housing Scheme' for the poorer residents of Bakerton. The petitioners complained that they were the victims of unscrupulous rich landlords who wanted to eject them from their places of residence because they could not afford to pay the high rentals and goodwills.<sup>20</sup> They indicated their preparedness "to accept any kind of scheme that Council can provide, we do not ask for luxury houses from the Town Council [and] we would like to pay rentals to the Council."<sup>21</sup> Overcrowding in Bakerton was often much worse than in Payneville with reports of up to twenty people living in one house.<sup>22</sup> The Council was therefore under pressure also to resolve the housing crisis of the Indian people. But no new development could occur before the proclamation of 'group areas'. The LTAB was however not overly concerned about the 'urgency' of these matters and wanted to ensure that Payneville's future be resolved in the context of a regional plan. It therefore indicated to the Council in August 1955 that the future of Payneville and Bakerton would not be decided in a hurry.<sup>23</sup>

In 1953 the Council had identified land to the west of Springs and bordering on the Brakpan municipality as a possible site for a coloured township<sup>24</sup>. The LTAB was in general agreement with this idea and its proposal virtually coincided with that of the Council.<sup>25</sup> In 1956 the Council, and in particular the Non European Affairs Committee, reviewed its position in the light of the government's decision to remove Africans from Payneville. It was noted that the areas previously identified for coloured occupancy by the Council were being considered for

white residential areas. The area identified by the Board was too close to an existing white area, which the Council found 'undesirable'. The Council also considered "that it was undesirable to have a coloured township on the main road from Springs to Johannesburg."<sup>26</sup> After careful consideration the Council decided Payneville and Bakerton would be the best areas for coloureds and Indians. It recognised that the removal of Africans would incur some costs for the Council in payment of compensation but believed the resale of properties to coloureds would recover some of these. Also, by not removing Indians from Bakerton the Council would not have to pay compensation.<sup>27</sup> This was a crucial decision which was to have long term repercussions for Payneville. From this point the Council vigorously pursued the idea of proclaiming Payneville/Bakerton a residential area for coloureds and Indians. But the LTAB held a different view. It proposed that the area west of Springs (the New Era Syndicate ground) up to Kwathema should be set aside for coloured occupation and that the Payneville/Bakerton complex be reserved for the exclusive residency of Indians.<sup>28</sup> The Board acknowledged the Council's right to raise objections formally but insisted that until it took a decision about the demarcation of 'group areas' no progress could be made about the future of the coloured and Indian residents of Springs.

Within weeks of this stalemate being reached between the Council and the Board, the latter initiated a series of meetings between the different East Rand municipalities to discuss regional planning for 'group areas' for coloureds and Indians. At a meeting held in Pretoria on 17 February 1956 it was decided that Springs, Brakpan, Benoni, Heidelberg and Nigel would "combine their efforts and recommend regional areas for Coloureds and Asiatics to the Group Areas Board".<sup>29</sup> In response to this meeting the Springs municipality reversed its original decision to oppose regional planning and now favoured of a regional township for

coloureds and felt that Springs, Brakpan and Benoni should co-operate on this matter.<sup>30</sup> It also recommended that the whole of Springs, excluding KwaThema, should be proclaimed a 'group area' for whites only. It appears that at this stage the Council considered giving up on the idea of developing Payneville for coloureds and Indians. It now subscribed to the principle of regional planning for coloureds and Indians, and reversed its initial proposal of proclaiming Payneville/Bakerton 'group areas' for blacks.

However, in March of the same year the municipality reverted to a previous proposal. It was dissatisfied with the suggested regional townships for coloureds and Indians, and resolved to recommend to the Board that Payneville and Bakerton be proclaimed for coloureds and Indians.<sup>31</sup> The area was regarded suitable because of the availability of approximately 5000 stands which according to their calculation would take 70 years to fill. Furthermore, they believed there would not be dissatisfaction if coloureds and Indians lived adjacent to each other, especially if a buffer strip was put in place.<sup>32</sup> Although the Council preferred to develop areas for Indian and coloured occupation it was also concerned that such a development would lead to an influx into the town. Some members even suggested that some influx measures be considered to keep out unwanted coloureds and Indians.<sup>33</sup>

#### **The GAB sitting in Springs**

At its final preparation meeting before the sitting of the Board the municipality debated whether coloureds and Indians should be given freehold rights, the issue of compensation and the presence of Indian traders in town. It was noted that the Council could face compensation claims of about £150 000. It was concerned that the government had not specified who would be liable to pay compensation, especially because the GAA did not provide for the payment

of compensation.<sup>34</sup> The issue causing most debate was whether to grant freehold rights to coloureds and Indians with some Councillors raising the fear the ownership for Indians would lead to uncontrolled influx into Springs.<sup>35</sup> At the end of a lengthy debate in which resolutions were passed and then amended, the Council resolved among other things:

That the Indians and Coloured persons be given freehold rights in the area to be set aside for them when group areas are declared in Springs;

That trading by Indians also be confined to their residential areas;

That Indian traders be allowed a period of two years within which to leave the town after the proclamation of their group area;

That Coloured and Indian areas be referred to the Group Areas Development Board in regard to the payment of compensation.<sup>36</sup>

It was with these proposals that the Council entered the hearings of the Board in Springs on 11 November 1957. Over the previous five years the Council's position on the proclamation of 'group areas' for blacks had undergone numerous changes. However, there are no records of any consultation by the municipality with the people who were most affected by these plans. For the people of Payneville the Board hearing in fact represented the first opportunity for them formally to respond to the recommendations put forward by the Council and Board about where they would be allowed to live in the future.

Unfortunately, the available records of the Board hearing do not indicate whether Payneville's

African residents made any submissions. The Payneville Advisory Board reported that the residents appointed Advocate Harold Wolpe to represent them at the hearings but there is nothing to show whether this actually occurred. There are also no official records of submissions by coloured residents. The main representations to the hearing, other than the Council's proposals, came from Bakerton residents and the mining companies. Submissions from companies such as the Anglo American Corporation mainly recommended the proclamation of certain areas as white 'group areas'. The most important representation came from the Geduld Proprietary Mines, which owned parts of the land Payneville and Bakerton were built on.<sup>37</sup> In its written submission the mining company indicated its preference to have Payneville proclaimed a white 'group area'. According to them the "area is very badly situated for the purpose of housing the Indian and Coloured community of the town in view of the fact that most of the industries in Springs are situated south and west of the town and therefore a large number of the residents would have to travel to and fro to work through the town daily."<sup>38</sup> In a veiled threat to the Council, the company indicated it would want to be compensated if the land was used for anyone other than whites.<sup>39</sup> At the hearings the companies also indicated their support for the proposal by the Mentz Committee that the development of locations for Africans should be dealt with regionally and urged the Board to take a similar approach in relation to coloureds and Indians.<sup>40</sup> Part of their motivation was that the existence of too many residential areas could adversely affect further mining in the region.<sup>41</sup> Their primary concerns were therefore to protect the specific economic interests of mining and to ensure the best available land was proclaimed for white residency.

The main opposition to the proclamation of 'group areas' in Springs came from the Indian community, primarily businessmen. From their written submissions it is apparent that there

was some preplanning involved, possibly with the assistance of the Transvaal Indian Congress and advocates Ishmail Mohamed (now Justice Mohamed) and A. Fischer (Braam Fischer). Common to many written submissions from Indian businessmen was their rejection of the proposals of the Board and Council, which they asserted "will have the result of depriving us of our means of livelihood and will ruin us economically."<sup>42</sup> The impassioned appeal of the owners of Standard Tailors in the centre of town was indicative of the desperation felt by many Indian businessmen. Their handwritten submission in broken English speaks volumes of the uncertainty bedeviling Indian businessmen at the time:

I am tailor and hereby wish to place on record my objections the above notice on various grounds that the above ideas as proposed on map in town hall at Springs will have the result of depriving me of my livelihood and will ruin me altogether. It will drastically effect (sic) my wife and children and upset my brother and his wife and children in health and belonging.

I am resident in Springs since 1934 and I am in tailor at stand 40 together with my brother. I had no complaints whatsoever with members of the European or other races. No enquiries from the police and other. It will be noticed that we have not caused hardships or annoyance to anyone and that we have always lived amicably with our neighbours. Beside tailoring I do not know any other trade or profession. I see that there is no Afrikaaners tailor. I understand my Afrikaaners cutumers (sic) are very pleased with us.<sup>43</sup>

The advocates representing the community called on the government to halt the proclamation of 'group areas'.<sup>44</sup> Braam Fischer appealed to the Council to "lay off the Group Areas Act"

and was boggled by the implication "that the Indian community of 1,100 seriously affected a total population of 128,000 persons, or that the four stands they owned in Springs and the one in Geduld made in any impression on one of the Union's greatest commercial, industrial and mining centres."<sup>45</sup> Ishmail Mohamed told the chairman of the Board that Indian residents would not comply with its decisions if 'group areas' were imposed on the people.<sup>46</sup> In spite of these protestations by the Indian community and their legal representatives the Board proceeded with its plans to demarcate various 'group areas' in Springs. The absence of other opposition to the 'group areas' schemes made the task of their proponents considerably easier. In fact, the one reported submission from coloureds supported the proclamation of 'group areas'. An unnamed woman who spoke on behalf of coloureds from Payneville argued that if coloureds had their own location they would turn it into a better place than that which they had to live under with Africans.<sup>47</sup> This position was supported by a memorandum sent to the Council prior to the meeting of the Board. The memorandum, signed by the principal of the coloured school in Payneville, Mr J.D. Jacobs, urged the Council "to declare Payneville a Coloured area as soon as possible" because life for coloureds "is terrible in the native location".<sup>48</sup> Interestingly, on the second day of the sitting of the Board the town Council rescinded its decision to support freehold rights for coloureds and Indians. It resolved "That Indian and Coloured persons be given occupational rights in the area to be set aside for them ... and that the question of freehold rights be deferred sine die."<sup>49</sup> The precise reasons for this turnabout is unclear. One may surmise, however, that opposition from the Board and business would have convinced those Councillors initially in support of granting freehold rights to coloureds and Indians, to change their minds.

By 1957 the Board had overcome most of the legal obstacles confronted by it in the early

1950s and was beginning to proceed speedily with the proclamation of 'group areas'. It specifically had the powers to ignore opposition representations, as it did with the objections from the Indian community of Springs. The Board's report and recommendations coincided largely with the proposals of the town Council. It supported the removal of all Africans in Springs to KwaThema and the proclamation of Payneville/Bakerton for *occupation* of Indians and coloureds.<sup>50</sup> The Board also satisfied itself that its recommendations did not interfere with mining activity and that the proposed development of residential areas for coloureds and Indians was sufficiently separated from white development. It opposed the destruction of Payneville and Bakerton because of the capital already invested there.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, the removal of coloured and Indian people to other areas would mean additional expenditure which the government and the Council wanted to avoid. With the exception of KwaThema, Payneville and Bakerton, the rest of Springs was earmarked as a 'group area' for *ownership* and *occupation* by whites only. Thus, eight years after the passage of the GAA it seemed the most influential parties, viz., the government, municipality and white capital in Springs, all agreed on the racial demarcation of the town and all that remained was for the plans to be implemented. This agreement, together with the rapid growth of KwaThema, led the Council to believe that the restructuring of its town would be effected rapidly.

#### **The decline of Payneville and the rise of KwaThema**

The future of Payneville was also integrally linked to the establishment of KwaThema, first as an attempt to alleviate the overcrowding in Payneville and then from 1954 as the alternative African location in Springs. From its establishment in 1952, KwaThema became the main project for the housing of Africans in Springs. Its development formed part of the general trend to concentrate on the building of massive townships all over the Reef. In the

period from 1952 to 1959 the Council built an unprecedented number of houses for Africans. This reform was central to its response to the crisis faced by the town in the late forties and early fifties. But the establishment of KwaThema was also an attempt to assert greater control over the African population than was possible in the old location. As in other centres, the creation of these big townships was accompanied by the systematic removal of people from the integrated locations. The Mentz Committee proposed the removal of Payneville as part of the government's general plan to eliminate all 'black spots' which had become notorious for the lack of control the government was able to assert over them. An important principle underlying the government's schemes was to create a reliable and cheap source of black labour, and simultaneously to place strict curbs on the influx of surplus labour from the rural areas. The disestablishment of Payneville and the creation of KwaThema must be viewed within the context of these dynamics, which influenced the attitude of the Council and the response of Payneville residents to the various plans of the government and municipality.

The siting of KwaThema was consciously chosen to meet a number of requirements: it was placed 3½ miles south west of the town and the main white residential areas, indicating the Council's intention to keep Africans away from the white areas. However, the township was only two miles from the New Era industrial area to ensure easy access for Africans to their workplaces. Building started in KwaThema in March 1952 and by the end of that year close to 1100 houses had been built and about 5000 people mostly from Payneville, had been settled there.<sup>52</sup> Between July 1952 and June 1953 an average of 95 families per month had been allocated houses in KwaThema.<sup>53</sup> These figures indicate the rapidity with which the houses were being built in the new township and the demand for housing among African people. Nature played its role in removing people from Payneville after a tornado struck

Jabavu in December 1952. The storm easily ripped apart the cheaply constructed houses resulting in eleven deaths and hundreds were left homeless.<sup>54</sup> Over four hundred people were moved to the single quarters at the Nuffield and Payneville hostels. However, the majority of those affected, 270 families, were moved to KwaThema and located in an area which is still known as *Tornado*.<sup>55</sup>

The construction of houses in KwaThema continued apace and by 1954 no less than 2226 municipal houses had been built and the Township's population had grown to 13 894.<sup>56</sup> By 1958 there were over 6000 municipal houses and the population had swelled to 34 838<sup>57</sup>, nearly trebling in four years. Between 1952 and 1957 the population in Payneville underwent a precipitous decline from 33 000 to 9820,<sup>58</sup> indicating a massive transfer of the old location's people to Kwathema. Significantly, these transfers were primarily *voluntary* because people were attracted by the provision of houses. It is now argued by some previous residents of Payneville that the removal of people affected by the tornado was not voluntary.<sup>59</sup> However, this does not detract from the fact that the period from 1952 to 1958 witnessed a voluntary mass migration by thousands of Africans out of Payneville. By 1957 the municipality had borrowed £1 716 214 from the National Housing and Planning Commission for the provision of housing and other amenities in KwaThema.<sup>60</sup>

The development of KwaThema had a profound impact on the consciousness of the thousands of residents who lived in unhealthy and overcrowded conditions in Payneville. For the lodgers and squatters who were forced to cram into small rooms and corrugated iron constructions, the idea of living in their own house seemed like a miracle. Jimmy "5000" Jacobs was possibly the last person to leave Payneville in the late seventies and therefore witnessed the

decline of the location from the early fifties. For him the rush to get a house in KwaThema was understandable because people "would rather be a landlord somewhere in the bundu than be subservient to a landlord in the location."<sup>61</sup> Not surprisingly, therefore, the official number of lodgers in Payneville declined by nearly 80% in the five years between 1953 and 1958.<sup>62</sup> In fact by the end of the fifties the Council succeeded in restoring the housing situation in the old location to what it had been at the beginning of the forties. With a population of just under 10 000 the location was still overcrowded but living conditions had improved since the early fifties. Indeed many previous residents remember this period as the best in Payneville and some of them do not recall there being a housing problem in the location.<sup>63</sup>

Lodgers and squatters were not the only people ready to leave the old location. Banzi Bangani remembers that as a newly married young man, he was absolutely thrilled at the prospect of moving out of his father's overcrowded house in Payneville and acquiring his own house:

It was a relief when the Council said you are now going to get your own place. You'll have your own toilet and you can put in your own bathroom. People said this is nice. Young and middle aged people owned no stand in Payneville, and particularly those who lived in the backyards. All of them, they welcomed the idea coming to KwaThema township. I also thought I could have my own house. It was something beautiful to have a house. People welcomed the idea of having a three roomed house with a toilet, it was a lovely thing.<sup>64</sup>

Payneville represented a dead-end for many young people. The lack of development there diminished the prospects of them ever having their own houses. Moreover, the amenities provided in the new township were considerably better than in Payneville. Houses with toilets

and running water, street lights, numerous public schools, a new hall and better shops -all these represented major improvements in the lives of African people. The development of KwaThema attracted many more people to Springs. Newly urbanised people often moved to Payneville as lodgers, knowing that they stood a good chance of being considered for housing in Kwathema. For all of these people KwaThema was seen as a reform. A resident from Payneville felt so strongly about the development in the new township, he took the unusual step of writing to the local newspaper:

The community of Payneville cannot help but feel proud of its Town Council, which is one of the best in solving Native housing problems...

The economic scheme is viewed with great expectations and it is the pride of the township.<sup>65</sup>

The creation and development of KwaThema did not proceed without hiccups, even in the first years of its existence. Numerous problems arose which impacted not only on Kwathema but also on the old location. Rents in KwaThema were generally higher than in Payneville and the government shifted away from providing sub-economic houses thereby placing a greater burden on the majority of the people, who were poor. Furthermore, the state of the new houses was not always satisfactory and within the first years of construction many tenants complained about impending dilapidation.

The development of Kwathema also meant that the Council expended less money on development in the old location. In 1951 the Council promised Payneville residents that it would construct 100 stands in Payneville extension for private ownership.<sup>66</sup> In 1947 the

Council also promised residents that it would sell houses to them, but the authorities reneged on both these promises once houses were constructed in KwaThema.<sup>67</sup> At the same time the Council also refused the request from the Advisory Board that a swimming pool and old age home be built. The virtual termination of development in Payneville was largely due to the Council's belief that more facilities were not needed in the location and the any expenses incurred should be directed to development in Kwathema. This meant that even though overcrowding was being resolved, all the other social and health problems in the old location generally remained the same.

The Springs municipality presented KwaThema as a model township and its plans were held in high esteem by other municipalities. It conducted thorough research on housing needs and township planning before embarking on the construction of the new area. It also employed local African labour in the building of houses. It was the first local authority which built an African location with street lights installed all over.<sup>68</sup> But the Springs Council's emphasis on finding a quick solution to the housing problem impacted negatively on the quality of houses constructed in KwaThema. In general of course authorities did not give too much attention to quality in building houses for African people and the houses in KwaThema were no exception. In 1952 the Payneville Advisory Board requested that the internal walls of the new houses be plastered but this was rejected by the Council on the basis of the cost being "prohibitive". Instead, they suggested that residents white wash their new homes.<sup>69</sup> In 1955 the KwaThema Advisory Board complained that houses started cracking in less than three months after their construction. Board member, Mr Ngakane, succinctly presented the views of many people when he told the Council that "If perhaps these cracks came out after say a period of a year no one would have reason to complain. But the fact that the houses

cracked as soon, almost, as the houses were completed, the Board felt that not much care was exercised in the building of the houses.<sup>70</sup> The Council's response to this criticism was to promise the appointment of an inspectorate to investigate the matter. The overwhelming bulk of houses in the new township also did not have electricity. The official position was that only when 60% of people in area wanted electricity would it be provided. In addition it was estimated that the installation of electricity would probably cost about £50 per house, thus placing it well out of the reach of most people.<sup>71</sup> Although there was increasing concern about the state of the houses in the new township this did not have a major impact on the desire of many to move there. This was especially true of people who did not have houses in Payneville and were probably more willing to make do with whatever quality house was being built for them.

More serious, however, was the difference in rent between the two locations. The socio-economic survey commissioned by the Council in 1952 concluded that the overwhelming number of residents earmarked for removal to KwaThema would barely be able to afford sub-economic rents.<sup>72</sup> Rather than build affordable houses for everyone the municipality built both economic and sub-economic dwellings irrespective of whether people could afford the rents. By 1956 the initial excitement over Kwathema was wearing thin and people started raising objections about the living conditions there, and in particular over the high rents. In October 1955 the government passed legislation stipulating that no African person whose annual income exceeded £180 was entitled to sub-economic housing. Moreover, the Director of Native Affairs in Springs reported to the KwaThema Advisory Board that after the construction of 1979 sub-economic houses in KwaThema the Council could not get any more funding for such houses and that it would only be able to build economic houses.<sup>73</sup>

At that stage sub-economic rentals varied between £1.2.6 to £2.2.6, whereas economic rentals ranged between £2.15.0 and £3.00.<sup>74</sup> In Payneville the majority of occupants of municipal houses paid less than £1.18.0 per month<sup>75</sup>. For lodgers, who formed the majority of new tenants in KwaThema the rent increase was more severe. These rent increases placed a heavy burden on African people. It was estimated that the average income of a black male in 1955 was about £11,<sup>76</sup> meaning that the majority could not afford to live in economic houses. Even those who earned in excess of £15 a month found it difficult to pay economic rentals. The government's calculations did not take into account that many families only had one wage earner and that £15 was far below the cost of subsistence for a family which was calculated to be about £20.<sup>77</sup> In addition Kwathema residents had to bear the extra costs of transport to town and their workplaces. By the beginning of 1957 the discontent in the community found expression in a joint meeting of the Payneville and KwaThema Advisory Boards where a motion was tabled by Absolom Khumalo and Dinah Maile arguing,

that the Council should discontinue building Economic Leeting (sic) houses for the simple and obvious reason that they impose an unnecessary financial burden on the occupants of such dwellings. Occupiers of such houses are unable to pay high rents. The reason why some of the people hardly occupy the houses for at least six months and why arrears in rent in Kwa-Thema reach a sum of £2,600 should be obvious to the Council. It would be reasonable enough if the wages of the people could be brought to what the government at present as an Economic level (i.e. £15), or else the line of demarcation for a person to qualify under the Economic group be at least £25 ... the high rents imposed on ill-paid people cause an unsettlement in the location.<sup>78</sup>

Although the "unsettlement" among residents did not spill over into open and organised

opposition, many people simply boycotted paying the high rents which led to an escalation in arrears. The authorities responded by expelling people from the township but found it very difficult to replace them with people who could afford the rent. In 1958/59 a total of 224 people were forced to vacate their houses. Of these 59 people were expelled from the location and 111 were transferred to cheaper houses. In addition 104 people were transferred from economic houses to sub-economic houses because of rent defaults.<sup>79</sup> The increasing problems faced by the residents of Kwathema influenced the attitude of the remaining people in Payneville, who became more reluctant to leave the old location. Interestingly, the population of Payneville increased for the first time between 1957 and 1958 since the development of KwaThema.<sup>80</sup> This was partly because less houses were built in KwaThema but also indicated the return by some people to Payneville, especially those expelled from KwaThema. In 1959 the Council attempted to deter such behaviour of people by proposing an increase in rents by as much as 100% in Payneville. It hoped in this way to make Payneville less attractive economically and thus undermine the growing resistance to the removal of the location.

In spite of these problems which arose in relation to KwaThema in the late fifties, the Council became more determined to disestablish Payneville as a 'native location', remove all the Africans to the new township and proclaim the old location residential area for coloureds. From 1956 the Council seriously begun making arrangements for the disestablishment of Payneville. In April of that year it was reported that there were no unauthorised structures left in Payneville and the Council felt it was in a position to implement the directive of the Native Affairs Department to remove all Africans from Payneville.<sup>81</sup> After considering the financial implication of removing African people from the old location the municipality concluded that it would be in its best financial interests to proceed with the immediate demolition of the

temporary housing scheme (Jabavu) and the "gradual transfer of (the) population from Payneville to Kwa-Thema".<sup>82</sup>

The Native Affairs Department set out clear guidelines for the abolition of an African location. Among its stated objectives was to soften the blow that removal might bring:

The cardinal idea is to give the Native satisfaction as far as it is reasonable possible to do so. It must be remembered that the sentimental value of their homes is really more important than the intrinsic value and while the authorities know that the demolition of such houses is for the benefit of all, it is not always a simple matter to persuade the Natives who have built or bought their homes to realise this.<sup>83</sup>

Furthermore, the departmental procedures indicated that the abolition of a location would only be considered after all Africans had been removed and the issue of compensation had been finalised.<sup>84</sup> These altruistic noises made little material difference to the fate of African people living in integrated locations such as Payneville as the government was determined to have them removed as soon as it was possible. The response of the Payneville Advisory Board reflected the petty bourgeois interests of its members. They were ambiguous about the removal of Payneville and were primarily concerned with how they would be able to finance the building of their new homes. Speaking on behalf of those people who made a living from sub-letting and professionals such traders, taxi-owners, teachers and ministers of religion, the Advisory Board wanted assurances that they would be able to carry on with their livelihoods.<sup>85</sup> They also requested that freehold rights be granted to those who moved to KwaThema. In November 1955 the Payneville Advisory Board "humbly request[ed] the Town

Council with all possible respect to withdraw the removal of Payneville from its present site for the following reasons:-

- (a) This Township was removed some time ago from New State Areas.
- (b) Shop buildings and houses are expensive in Kwa-thema.
- (c) We travel to and from Town by bus at 6d. and by taxi at 1/-.
- (d) We are near Town
- (e) It will be unreal to be silent without reference to the removal of Payneville.<sup>86</sup>

Most of these requests were not acceded to and the Council proceeded with its plans to disestablish Payneville. The one obstacle that did arise was the discovery of further coal deposits on land earmarked for expansion of KwaThema. As a result the Council could not proceed immediately with its plans to demolish Jabavu. However, the Council also conceded that other reasons for the delay included "factors such as the inability of the sub-economic tenant living below the poverty datum line to pay the rentals applicable in K-wa-Thema, the shortage of sub-economic housing and the additional transport costs to and from the Kwa-thema".<sup>87</sup> It took until 1958 for these plans to be implemented and for the people to be moved to KwaThema.

#### **Opposition to influx control**

It was previously explained that the establishment of big townships by the authorities was integral to the plan to assert greater control over African labour. Although the government recognised the necessity of black labour in industry, it did not want to see an influx of 'unnecessary' or surplus African labour into the cities. The Springs municipality took a similar

approach and throughout the fifties it not only conducted more raids on Africans but continuously attempted to extend pass laws to women.

In 1953 the Council published its plans for industrial expansion. Verwoerd was reportedly "perturbed at this news" because one of its implications would be the need for more African labour. Verwoerd let the Council know that he was "not in favour of a larger Native location for Springs than the whole of the existing Kwa-Thema areas."<sup>88</sup> The minister was particularly concerned that industrial development should not lead to an uncontrolled influx of Africans who might not be placed in a controlled township such as KwaThema. The Town Clerk wrote a lengthy report to convince the Native Affairs Department that the intended industrial expansion and the concomitant demand for African labour would not require additional land for African residential occupation. The Council also complained about the "large numbers of unemployed Natives [that] take up accommodation in the locations... The Council feels that it would assist greatly to conserve accommodation in the locations if such Natives could be permanently removed."<sup>89</sup> Thus the Council and the central government concurred on the need to control influx and to ensure as far as possible that occupation in townships be reserved for Africans employed in the urban areas.

In February 1954 the Council resolved to enforce section 10 of the Urban Areas Act and restrict the influx of African women into the urban areas.<sup>90</sup> In 1955 the Payneville Advisory Board noted that inspectors were chasing African people from the town and even fined women £1 if they did not have permits. Board members reported that there was an outcry from ordinary people about the refusal by officials to grant women permits.<sup>91</sup> Throughout this period the Advisory Boards concentrated much attention to opposing influx control measures

and repeatedly complained to the Council about arrests of 'bona fide' residents who did not have permits.<sup>92</sup>

These incidents were only the tip of the iceberg as the authorities harassed thousands of people for passes and permits. The seriousness of this issue was reflected in the attention given to it by the Advisory Boards which called for the abolition of the pass system. They particularly objected to the extension of passes to women. However, their opposition was derided by Council official who argued that "The native male has always treated the female of the species as a chattel who must till his soil, cook his food and provide him with a multitude of children."<sup>93</sup> A reflection of the seriousness with which the Advisory Boards viewed the extension of passes to women is the fierce debate which occurred between the KwaThema Advisory Board and members of the Council in May 1954. In that discussion a board member expressed himself thus:

Europeans are perturbed about the many Africans coming into towns... The Government does not believe in Africans being permanent residents in urban areas. It behoves us to go a little deeper into the economic roots of the cause of the influx. These women (Skokisaan Queens) must necessarily sell liquor to help the family budget. The disease must be diagnosed. These people come here because they are starved in the rural areas ... and not because they are intent on producing illegitimate children. Immorality will not be stopped by passes.<sup>94</sup>

In January 1958 more than two thousand African women were issued with passes in Springs. A delegation of women informed the Council they objected strongly to the carrying of passes

but the local authorities insisted they had no choice but to carry out the law passed by central government.<sup>95</sup> In May of that year the police arrested all the mourners from a KwaThema funeral who had come to the cemetery in Payneville.<sup>96</sup> The Payneville Advisory Board objected to the extension of passes to women because it "is not acceptable to the Africans as a Nation. The Board maintains that the National Pride of African womanhood has been degraded and the Board beg[s] for redress."<sup>97</sup> In 1958 ANC women members campaigned openly against the pass system and attempted to organise a public meeting in Payneville in November. The Council prevented the organiser of the campaign, Mrs J. Radebe ("a known leftist"), from holding this meeting.<sup>98</sup> The authorities were well aware of the sensitivity of the issue and of the campaigns in other areas against the pass system. The opposition by the Advisory Boards to the pass system represented its most important political campaign of the fifties. This was partly because the imposition of passes affected residents on a daily basis and was one of the main national political issues. However, the continued presence of former communist leader, Dinah Maile, and other radicals such as Legodi was critical in keeping the Boards in touch with the needs of the people. The Boards also increasingly focused their attention on the specific needs of the small petty bourgeoisie class in the townships. Thus much of its contact with the Council was taken up by requests for trading rights. Absolom Khumalo was a good example of someone who used his position on the Board to influence the Council to award trading sites and licences to him.

In a certain sense the continued presence of people like Maile and Legodi on the Boards was becoming anomalous, at a time when the Congress movement had shifted away from using the Boards as vehicles for struggle. These Boards, especially the one in Payneville, remained vehicles of semi-opposition to the authorities. But in the fifties they also became much less

inclined to be involved in mass action, than was the case in the forties. Although the ANC was the main political organisation in the townships, especially in Payneville, there is little evidence of it being active during this period. This was partly a reflection of the general decline in mass struggles after the Defiance Campaign, which was only reversed from the mid fifties. Besides influx control, the main issues facing blacks in Springs were the removal of Payneville and the proclamation of 'group areas'. Yet, there was no organised opposition from the ANC or any other party to these developments, bar the intervention of the Transvaal Indian Congress at the hearing of the Group Areas Board. It has been argued here that the main factor undermining struggles against these schemes was that they were in fact regarded as reforms by the people most affected by them. The provision of housing for tens of thousands of Africans and the promise of exclusive residential areas for coloureds and Indians were welcomed by these communities. In the mid fifties these developments were not regarded as a danger to the future of Payneville. People's hatred of racial segregation did not prevent them from taking advantage of the housing provided by the government.

From the late fifties numerous problems linked to KwaThema begun to emerge. The high cost of living, bad housing and the stricter control in the new township caused many people to consider returning to Payneville. Opposition to these problems began to emerge from different quarters. This coincided with the general revival in the black opposition movement nationally. But in a certain sense the opposition to forced removals and the GAA came too late - the dye was cast. The transformation and restructuring of Springs was well underway. From 1952 the biggest social engineering project undertaken by the municipality, viz., the development of Kwathema, gathered pace. By 1958 the new township was well established with a much bigger population than Payneville. The central government's decision that all Africans should

be removed from Payneville virtually determined the future of that location. Its role as the centre of integration and racial unity was brought to an abrupt end. From that point the Council wanted to convert the old location into a 'group area' exclusively for coloureds. At the end of the fifties it appeared as if the main tasks in the disestablishment of Payneville were completed. It also seemed therefore that the removal of the rest of the African population from the location and its proclamation as a coloured 'group area' would occur quickly. However, this was not to be the case. It took until the early 1970s before the last African families were removed and even then the Council did not succeed in having the location proclaimed a coloured area. The reasons behind these developments are the subjects of the last chapter.

## NOTES

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7. *ibid*, 13 March 1952
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9. *ibid*, Report of the Acting Town Clerk, October 1952
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## CHAPTER SIX

### Removals and resettlements in the sixties and seventies

The 1960s stand out as the decade of the consolidation of apartheid and the silencing of the black opposition movement. The banning of the ANC and PAC, and the arrest of thousands of political activists represented the high point of control by the government over the black population. In the first decade of its rule the Nationalist government did not have everything its own way but by the end of the decade it had set in place many of its plans to effect control over the black urban population. In particular, the establishment of massive new townships epitomised the apartheid ideal of herding Africans into isolated areas, safely away from white areas but close enough for them to reach their places of work. The initial success of this exercise in social engineering had much to do with the fact that it provided a better standard of living for many urban Africans, in spite of the overriding aim of entrenching racial segregation.

However, these reforms were not long lasting. The townships soon became overcrowded and the residents were subjected to a much higher cost of living than they were accustomed to. In addition, the state attempted to enforce much greater control over the lives of the people through influx control and other coercive measures. Under the premiership of H.F. Verwoerd the government sought further to entrench and extend racial segregation. The experiment of urban racial restructuring was now extended to encompass the whole country. The bantustan system was designed to curb the influx of Africans to the urban areas. The policy of "separate development" was advocated to give the impression that the government was actually interested in the development of the African people. From the mid sixties the government

expended more resources on the development of its bantustan policies, partly at the expense of the development of black townships in the urban areas. As a result the rapid development of the African townships in the fifties was not sustained in the sixties. This was also due to the government's belief that it had brought the "native problem" under control and was thus less anxious to attend to Africans in urban areas. Furthermore, the *verkrampies* in the Afrikaner alliance were campaigning for the removal of Africans from the urban areas. They, therefore, resisted any further development of townships because it encouraged the permanent settlement of Africans in urban areas.

On the East Rand the slowdown in the development of African townships hampered the development of regional townships for coloureds and Indians. The decline in housing provision for Africans meant that those who resided in the integrated locations could not be removed and the proclamation of those locations as 'group areas' could therefore not be proceeded with. As a result various East Rand towns were confronted with a situation where the racial restructuring started with such vigour in the fifties was slowing down, much to the chagrin of the local authorities. An important and debilitating consequence of this development was the uncertainty it created in the lives of thousands of black people all over the East Rand. Especially affected were the residents of integrated locations. The uncertainty about the future of the old location also meant that the various municipalities were unwilling to spend money to improve them, which led to a further decline in the living standards in those locations. However, such was the nature of the political defeat of the black population by this time that they were generally ineffective in opposing the policies and plans of the government. The Advisory Boards, some of which had become radicalised in the late forties and early fifties, for the most part retreated from oppositional politics and focused their

attention on self aggrandisement and serving the interests of the small African middle class.

In Springs the Council's attitude towards the town's black residents underwent important shifts. In the period leading up to the sitting of the Group Areas Board in Springs, the Council was strongly in favour of retaining the Indian and coloured populations of the town and opposed the regional plans of the government. However, in the next decade it reversed its position. In 1952 the Council wanted Payneville to retain its coloured and African population but by 1957 it supported the old location as a 'group area' for coloureds and Indians. By the late sixties its position had further shifted to support for the declaration of the area as a white 'group area'. These changes in the Council's position reflected the shifts in its relationship with the government, from being semi-independent to embracing all the main tenets of apartheid policy. A further and more detailed study than is provided here is required to show the changing relationship between the Council, its constituency and the state. It seems that from the early sixties, especially after the creation of the Management Committees (1961), the Council became more susceptible to pressures from the central government and less so from their constituency. The Springs Council certainly became more conservative in its relationship with the towns' black population which is revealed in the harsher treatment meted out to residents removed from Payneville from the mid sixties. This change was in some measure reflected in the Councils' shift from using English as the only official language to a predominant use of Afrikaans by the early seventies.

#### **Group Areas in the sixties and seventies: uncertainty and declining living standards**

At the beginning of 1958 it seemed that the proclamation of 'group areas' in Springs would be completed within a short period of time. The Group Areas Board, the Town Council and

the major business interests agreed at the end of 1957 on the essentials of the racial demarcation and restructuring of the town. It was agreed that the removal of African people from Payneville to KwaThema should occur expeditiously. The latter township would also become the only area for African occupancy in Springs. Payneville would be proclaimed a residential area for coloureds and Bakerton for Indians. The rest of the town would be declared a 'group area' for whites. In November 1959 the municipality sought ministerial approval for the final disestablishment of Payneville and was confident that a stage had been reached where this could be effected.<sup>1</sup> However, the proclamation of 'group areas' in Springs only occurred in 1964 and then only for white areas. Throughout the sixties and up to the mid seventies the future of Payneville and its residents remained in the balance. The uncertainty embracing the black residents of Springs was only partly due to problems within the town. The final proclamation of 'group areas' for coloureds and Indians also depended on the progress made in the development of regional townships. From the late fifties most African people knew they would have to move to KwaThema. The main uncertainty confronting them was not knowing when their removal would occur. Coloureds and Indians, on the other hand, were made to believe that they would get their own townships in Springs. By the mid sixties this position changed. These people were to be relocated to regional townships. However, problems in the development of regional townships for coloureds and Indians further delayed their removal from Payneville. Hundreds of black families thus lived in continuous uncertainty as the central government and local authorities vacillated over the final racial demarcation of the East Rand.

One of the major stumbling blocks to the disestablishment of Payneville as an African location was the 'strenuous opposition' of the Grootvlei and Geduld mining companies to the

use of the land for residential areas for coloureds and Indian people.<sup>2</sup> In a letter to the Council the Grootvlei Proprietary Mines informed them that,

the attitude of [the] Company is that it is opposed to your Council's proposal to use the land for Asiatic and Coloured occupation. Furthermore, it is felt that, as the original purpose for which your Council was granted the right to occupy the land, viz. a Native Township, is being abandoned, it is only right that [the] Company should now regain the use of its own property for which it never received any compensation from your Council.

... there is a distinct possibility that the ground to the east of the present Payneville Township will be required for mining purposes and purposes incidental thereto.<sup>3</sup>

There is little to indicate that the mining company was seriously intent on using the land for mining and it seems likely that its real motivation for opposing the Council's proposal was that it preferred the land to be used for white occupation only. At this stage the Council remained adamant in its support for the proclamation of this area for the occupation by coloureds and Indians, but it was forced to recommend that the deproclamation of Payneville as an African location be withheld pending a decision about the future use of the land owned by Grootvlei Mining Company.<sup>4</sup> This was because in the event of the location being deproclaimed, ownership of the land would revert to the mining companies, which would give them sole authority over the future use of the land.

In spite of these problems, the Council still planned that coloured families should occupy houses vacated by Africans. It aimed to reserve about 300 and 100 houses for coloureds and

Indians respectively in Payneville.<sup>5</sup> The Council's determination to house coloureds and Indians on this land was confirmed by its repeated petitioning of the central government to act in its favour against the mining companies. Some councillors even suggested that the land in Payneville not owned by the mining companies be proclaimed 'group areas'. The Council feared that Grootvlei mining company might want to sell the land directly to coloureds and Indians, which would mean the Council would not be compensated for the investments it had made in the location since 1923.<sup>6</sup> The objections of the mining houses did not prevent the Council from pursuing its policy of removing Africans from the location. This was not the point of contention with the mines. On the contrary, they concurred that African should be moved to the new township. The Council merely wanted to ensure that the deproclamation of Payneville as an African location should not occur until it was guaranteed of being able to proclaim it a 'group area' for coloureds and Indians.

After considerable discussion and pressure applied by the Council on the GAB and government departments, the Department of Mines indicated it would not oppose the Council's proposed demarcation of the area.<sup>7</sup> However, both the Geduld and Grootvlei mining companies were unmoved by this and reiterated their opposition to the Council's plans for Payneville. They also claimed that the Department of Mines had not discussed the matter with them and they were not bound to decisions made by that ministry.<sup>8</sup> In 1961 the GAB suggested that the proclamation of a 'group area' in Payneville might invalidate the objections of the mining companies. Furthermore, the Department of Mines supported the GAB's proposal to amend the Surface Right Permit to include coloureds and Indians.<sup>9</sup> But nothing came of these plans and the objections of the mines remained a constant problem which the Council was forced to consider when formulating plans for the location. Nevertheless, with

the support of central government the Council realised the problem was not insurmountable and continued pressurising the GAB to proclaim the area. It took the best part of two years for the Council to deal with the objections of the mining companies, albeit with only partial success. It was therefore unable to make definite plans about the provision of housing for Indians and coloureds. The situation was further complicated by the government's insistence that no African location could be deproclaimed as long as Africans were resident there. Initially this was intended as a justification to accelerate the removal of African people from integrated locations. However, following the slowdown in housing provision for Africans in the new townships, this policy became an obstacle in the deproclamation of the old locations.

While faced with these problems the Council came under increasing pressure from the coloured and Indian communities to improve and develop their areas. As noted in the previous chapter, members of the coloured community, especially professionals and other middle class elements became increasingly vocal in objecting to the limits placed on their development because they resided in an African location. In 1960 the Coloured Welfare Committee opposed the proposed rent increases and the imposition of a levy fund for the erection of a school in the location. According to them, the coloured community did not benefit from any improvements made in the location and they declared that they would only pay the increased rents under protest.<sup>10</sup> At this time the Welfare Committee was the main organisation representing coloureds in the location. It is unclear what the actual strength of the Committee was in the community, but its recognition by the Council made it the official voice of coloureds from Payneville. Moreover, its most prominent members, J.D. Jacobs and D.S. Isaacs, were well supported and regarded as the leaders of their community.<sup>11</sup>

The Welfare Committee claimed to represent all the coloured people, but it mainly wanted to further the interests of the aspirant coloured middle class. Thus they primarily objected to the restrictions faced by coloureds who wanted to open businesses in the location. In a letter to the secretary of the Department of Community Development they complained that

... because Payneville is a Native location. Coloureds are not allowed to trade or own taxis. These rights are enjoyed exclusively by Natives... The Natives are able to trade in Payneville and in KwaThema, their new location, and we are forced to buy from them and use their taxis.

We respectfully ask you to do everything in your power.. to proclaim Payneville a Coloured area, as soon as possible.<sup>12</sup>

For these leaders a crucial benefit deriving from the creation of 'group areas' would be the elimination of competition from African and Indian businessmen. In a 'group area', coloured businessmen would have almost exclusive access to the purchasing power of the coloured community. On the one hand, apartheid limited the development of the coloured middle class by its preferential treatment of whites. On the other hand, it gave them some protection from the competition of other black businesses. This played an important role in the support given to segregation policies by elements from the African, coloured and Indian middle classes. These people generally tended to collaborate with the government to further their specific class interests. They also became more prominent in their communities after the defeat of the liberation movement and the silencing of the more progressive elements of the black middle class.

The Indian residents of Bakerton were similarly becoming impatient with the lack of development in their area. As in Payneville, living conditions were deteriorating quickly. Overcrowding reached unbearable proportions because of the absence of any construction of houses. The last house building in Bakerton had taken place was in 1939. Since then the population had increased from about 700 in 1940 to 860 in 1950 and 1233 in 1969.<sup>13</sup> The removal of Payneville also meant that the availability of entertainment facilities declined dramatically. In 1960 M.R. Khan and A.B. Gani applied to the Council for a stand to open a cinema "for the sole purpose of entertaining Asiatics and Coloureds".<sup>14</sup> The Council refused this request because its policy towards Indians in Springs was again under review. In an interview with the GAB, the chairman of the Non-European Affairs Committee argued that the Springs Council did not necessarily want Indians to stay in the municipality and favoured their relocation to a regional township.<sup>15</sup> The implication of the shift in the attitude of the Council was that it would no longer even consider improving the living standards of the Indian community. They would have to continue living in overcrowded conditions until such time as the government finally decided to move them to the regional township for Indians.

As far as coloureds were concerned the Mayor was of the opinion at the time,

that it might be to the advantage of Springs if all the Coloureds were to establish themselves in Springs. Coloureds had attained a higher level of development and were more reliable than natives. Coloureds usually earned higher wages and would accordingly have a greater purchasing power.<sup>16</sup>

However, by 1963 the Council shifted from its original opposition to a regional location for

coloured people. Now it firmly supported regional townships for Indians and coloureds. In an interview with government officials, including the secretary of Community Development, the mayor of Springs, Mr. Dyssel, argued that the Council initially thought that coloureds should be retained in Springs as replacement labour for Africans. However, it was now of the opinion that coloureds would never be beneficial in the industrial development of the town.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, he noted that the upgrading of facilities in the old location would be very expensive and preferred that a totally new place should be found for coloureds. Bearing these considerations in mind, he supported the removal of coloureds to the regional location planned in Boksburg. The only problem the Council would then face would be whether it would be required to make a financial contribution to the Boksburg Council.<sup>18</sup> With regards to the residents of Bakerton, the Council raised its concern that conditions were deteriorating rapidly there. It proposed that some upgrading of the area take place considering the removal of Indians was anticipated to take a few more years. In fact the Council did not think that the removal of Indians would occur *'holus bolus'*, but envisaged that it would take between 10 and 15 years.<sup>19</sup>

The changes in the attitude of the Council, or of individual members among its ranks, were indicative of the uncertainty that prevailed in the local authority and government about what to do with Payneville and its coloured and Indian residents. The Council's indecision reflected the problems faced by the GAB in finalising its plans for regional townships for coloureds and Indians. In 1963 the secretary of Community Development enumerated some of the reasons for the delay in the proclamation of 'group areas' in Springs:

1. The biggest section of the proposed coloured and Indian area forms part of

proclaimed mining land;

2. It would be uneconomical to purchase mining land for the purposes of a coloured 'group area', which would in any event have to re-planned;

3. 'Group areas' cannot be proclaimed in Springs until the Indian regional area in Benoni had reached a reasonable point of development.

4. The replanning and development of the Indian regional township in Benoni cannot be proclaimed until the coloureds living there were removed.

5. The removal of coloureds from Benoni to Boksburg was dependent on the removal of Africans from Stirtonville and Galeview.

6. The proposed area for coloured and Indian occupation in Springs cannot be effected until Africans were removed from there.<sup>20</sup>

Clearly, it was taking some time for the regional plans of the government to come to fruition. The Springs Council found it difficult to make any long term plans until the other parts of the regional jigsaw puzzle fell into place. In 1962 the government informed the Council that according to the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, coloureds living in African locations had to be resettled by the end of that year. However, it conceded that in the absence of alternative accommodation they should be allowed to remain in Payneville until such time that finality was reached about where they would be settled.<sup>21</sup> At this stage the Council officially supported the idea of regional locations for coloureds and Indians, and wanted Payneville to

be considered as the regional area for coloured occupation. The prevarication of the Council, and the contradictory positions of its various members, aggravated the uncertainty experienced by the people from Payneville and Bakerton. This was particularly disconcerting for the residents because at no stage were they consulted about the changes in the Council's position. They were most anxious to see improvements in their lives, whether this occurred in the old location or in the new regional townships.<sup>22</sup> More importantly, they wanted these changes to occur as quickly as possible. But they were to be disappointed as the government and the Council continued to vacillate over the future of Payneville.

On the 21 February 1964 the government officially proclaimed Springs as a white 'group area'.<sup>23</sup> At the same time the Payneville/Bakerton complex was provisionally proclaimed as a 'controlled area'. Indians businessmen operating in town were allowed to continue trading there but had to find residential sites elsewhere.<sup>24</sup> These proclamations did little to ease people's anxieties. They hoped the proclamation would lead to a speedy resolution of their problems and continually pressurised the Council to improve their living conditions, but to no avail.<sup>25</sup> The municipalities responsible for the development of regional townships for Indians and coloureds, namely, Benoni and Boksburg respectively, indicated that progress was slow in this regard. The Springs Council thus prepared itself for a policy of 'patient waiting',<sup>26</sup> while at the same time taking steps to ensure that the future use of the land under question be resolved before the black population was finally removed. In its opinion the best way to proceed with this was to recommend that Payneville and Bakerton be declared 'group areas' for whites.<sup>27</sup> This would deal with the objections of the mining houses and simultaneously ensure the removal of the black population from the area. In making this recommendation the Springs Council reached another important turning point in its policy

regarding Payneville and its residents. It no longer entertained the idea of having Indians and coloureds in its municipality and wanted the old location to be used for the exclusive benefit of the white community. According to this plan KwaThema would be the only area in Springs for black occupation. This would take care of the town's labour needs and the people not essential to industry, that is to say, the coloured and Indians could be disposed of and moved to another town.

In May 1968 Bakerton was advertised for proclamation as a coloured 'group areas' by the GAB.<sup>28</sup> I have not been able to locate the records of the GAB for this period and therefore do not know what motivated the Board to suggest this. The Council records do not reveal whether they were even consulted on this matter. Nevertheless, the Council was strenuously opposed to the idea because they wanted the whole Payneville/Bakerton complex to be proclaimed a white 'group area'.<sup>29</sup> The main reason cited for this change was that coloureds and Indians were to be accommodated in other towns on the East Rand and therefore the Springs municipality was not required to have its own townships for these people. But what was probably more significant was the concern of the Council and government that Payneville was located too close to developing white areas and a main road connecting two white residential areas.<sup>30</sup> By 1971 the central government had not taken any action with regards to the above proposal and the Springs Council became anxious that a proclamation be passed speedily. This was partly because residents of Payneville and Bakerton were demanding improvements and development in their respective areas. For example, the Orient Social Club from Bakerton requested permission to establish a recreational centre next to the existing township but could get no answer from the Council because of the uncertainty of the future location of Indians from this area.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile in 1965 the Council, under pressure from the Coloured Welfare Committee, agreed that those coloured families living as lodgers in the location and in white residential areas would be accommodated in municipal houses left by African families.<sup>32</sup> By 1967 the lodgers in Payneville were still living under the same conditions. The main reason for not moving coloured lodgers to better accommodation was because the Council had not built any new houses in KwaThema. This meant that municipal houses in Payneville were not being vacated by Africans.<sup>33</sup> Coloureds from the location further complained that they were constantly raided by the police, were refused permits by the Superintendent and wanted to be treated as a separate group from the African people. However, the delegation from the Welfare Committee conceded that if the Council acted partially towards coloureds living illegally in the location, it would create "racial friction".<sup>34</sup> The Council responded by agreeing to allow coloureds to occupy owner-built houses bought by the Council from African residents. These interim measures became more urgent because the regional township located in Boksburg, viz. Reigerpark, could not yet accommodate the coloured population from Springs.<sup>35</sup> By this time, not surprisingly, the coloured community in Payneville was becoming restive with the lack of progress in finding them alternative accommodation. In a memorandum sent to the Council in March 1967, the Welfare Committee urged that action be taken urgently:

on behalf of the community, the committee humbly requests to proclaim Payneville or any other area in Springs as a coloured 'group area' to give the people an opportunity to develop as an independent nation with its own identity. The inexplicable delay in the proclamation of an area for our people has now become unbearable. We have reached a point where we can no longer exercise any patience. We feel, and you cannot blame us for this, that you have neglected your role as guardians over us... For over 40 years we have been legally exploited by the Natives... We therefore require urgent assistance and

protection.<sup>36</sup>

However, these appeals were ignored by the authorities. By 1967 it had become apparent that Reigerpark would not be able to accommodate the coloured people from Payneville and the authorities began considering alternative sites for a coloured township.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, the government concluded that there was no urgent need to find alternative accommodation for coloureds because they could reside in Payneville for another five years. Thus the identification of a new 'group area' for coloureds from Springs and Nigel was indefinitely postponed.<sup>38</sup>

By 1971 the proposal to proclaim Payneville a white 'group area' had the support of the Springs Council and the Departments of Indian and Coloured Affairs, as well as from Mining and Development.<sup>39</sup> In a detailed memorandum outlining the motivation behind the proposed proclamation, the Department of Development argued that the proclamation of Payneville as a white 'group area' would accelerate the resettlement of the location's residents to their rightful townships on the East Rand, that is to say, Indians in Actonville and coloureds in the new township in Nigel.<sup>40</sup> In February 1973 a top level discussion was held between the Springs Council and the ministers of Planning, Community Development and Indian Affairs to consider the future of the location.<sup>41</sup> The meeting confirmed that the cabinet supported one residential area for Indians on the East Rand, namely, Actonville. However, due to the lack of facilities there it appeared likely that the residents of Bakerton would have to reside in the old location until the late seventies.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, the new location for coloureds in Brakpan, Witthok, was not nearing completion and it was anticipated that they would have to remain in Payneville there for at least another three years.<sup>43</sup>

In October 1973 some of these proposals were rescinded. At a meeting between the Group Areas Boards and the Departments of Planning, Mining and Community Development it was decided that the Indian communities from Springs and Nigel should not be moved because there was not sufficient space for them at Actonville.<sup>44</sup> Extensions to the latter township were opposed by the Brakpan Council and the Department of Mining.<sup>45</sup> This marked a shift from the state's previous insistence that all the Indian people from the East Rand should reside in one location. The relentless pressure from the affected communities for improvements in their lives also affected the outlook of the government. By the early 1973 it acknowledged that any further procrastination could potentially lead to a souring of relations between it and the Indian community.<sup>46</sup> Under these circumstances the National Party felt that it could deviate from its policies developed in the early fifties and agree to the creation of more Indian townships on the East Rand. It was also agreed not to oppose the possible creation of a coloured township in Alberton. These decisions were endorsed by the cabinet in September 1973.<sup>47</sup>

The question of what should happen to the coloured people from Payneville still remained unresolved, however. In February 1973 the Council undertook a social survey of the location and in particular of the living conditions of coloureds (at that point there were only a handful of African people left in the location). They found that "there is a considerable amount of dirt and filth scattered around" and the toilets in the hostel were "dilapidated... to an extent that it would be impossible to clean...properly."<sup>48</sup> According to the Council the required improvements to make the location habitable would be too expensive and suggested that temporary dwellings be constructed for coloureds in KwaThema until such time that they could be moved to Withok.<sup>49</sup> This proposal was supported by the Minister of Coloured Affairs

and the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration, Punt Janson.<sup>50</sup> However, the coloured community rejected the proposal.<sup>51</sup> Although no reasons are cited for the Welfare Committee's opposition, it would be safe to assume that they remained opposed to living so close to African people. The Council accepted their objections and agreed to invest in minimum upgrading, such as the installation of pans and the improvement of street lighting.<sup>52</sup> These improvements did not make much difference, and when Helen Suzman visited the location in the late seventies she described it as "the worst slum in the Transvaal".<sup>53</sup> At this stage the terrible conditions in Payneville was threatening to become a political embarrassment to the government and it hastened the process of relocating the coloured people. However, the idea of moving them to a township in Nigel had been abandoned and they were then moved to the new coloured township in Brakpan, namely, Geluksdal.

#### **Payneville in the sixties: resistance and forced removals**

In the first six years of its existence KwaThema rapidly grew into one of the biggest African Townships on the Reef. By 1960 close to 6000 houses were built and the population of the township rocketed to about 37 000. The Council could boast that it was the first township to be built entirely by African labour and the £140 000 spent on street lighting made it one of the best lit residential areas in the whole country.<sup>54</sup> Occupants of municipal houses and homeowners were reluctant to leave Payneville. The latter group had the most to lose. Many of them had invested a considerable amount of money and time on their homes over many decades and were not impressed with the alternative accommodation in KwaThema.<sup>55</sup>

In the late fifties and early sixties the Council proceeded cautiously in its dealings with

Payneville residents, partly because of the increased political activity in the location. The refusal by the authorities to grant women permission to hold an anti-pass meeting was indicative of the fear that "agitators" would challenge their control in the location. In March 1960 the anti-pass campaigners called on the community to boycott union festivities. A pamphlet urged people not to celebrate their oppression and to reject passes and Bantu Education.<sup>56</sup> Under these circumstances the opponents of the removal of Payneville became more vocal. In the sixties the homeowners represented primarily by the Payneville Advisory Board became the main opponents to the removal schemes. The Board raised all sorts of objections to the plans of the Council to delay the final removal of the location and the relationship between it and the Council remained tense throughout this period. Already in 1958 the Board had indicated its shock that the Council had advertised Payneville to be proclaimed a 'group area' for coloureds and Indians.<sup>57</sup> When a similar advertisement was placed in the Advertiser in 1959 the Board was confronted by residents who accused them of being "sell outs"<sup>58</sup> because it was assumed that they were aware and consented to the Council's plans. This showed that the authorities rarely consulted with black people about plans affecting them, which was confirmed by complaint from the Advisory Boards as well as the coloured and Indian communities.

The main area of contention between the residents of Payneville and the Council was over the compensation to be paid to homeowners on their removal to KwaThema. The Department of Native Affairs set out the guidelines for the payment of compensation in a memorandum, which recommended the appointment of assessors to determine the value of properties.<sup>59</sup> The basis of compensation approved by the Minister of Native Affairs was that owners would be paid the standing value of the house less the value of any material retained by them. In

addition people would be compensated for costs incurred for demolition of the building and transport to the new township, unless these were carried out by the local authority.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, the municipality could pay homeowners a "consolation" fee "for the loss of the home which is demolished and in consideration of the inconvenience and expense incidental to removal".<sup>61</sup> This was mainly to be paid to people deriving income from subletting. However, government policy stated that the amount to be paid could not exceed 25% of the value of the house and recommended that only be 15% because of the "inflated value of properties".<sup>62</sup>

From the start the Payneville Advisory Board indicated its intention to secure the best deal for Payneville residents and to use the process of valuations to cause further delays. When asked by the Council to appoint an assessor to represent the people of the location, the Board resolved to postpone this by a month to allow it "adequate time to consider the matter fully."<sup>63</sup> In January 1960 the Board presented the Council with a detailed memorandum outlining its major concerns about the removal of Payneville's African residents. Some of the most important questions raised for the consideration of the Council were the following:

a) As we belong to the poorest paid section of the Community, we would like to know how are we then expected to finance the building of our new homes at Kwa-Thema. This point troubles us very much and we consider other factors in this regard to be of secondary importance.

We, therefore, suggest that a loan system should be introduced by Council, payable under reasonable terms and conditions.

b) ... the Board is of the opinion that people resident in Municipal dwellings, who have

effected improvements in the form of additional rooms, be compensated for improvements made.

c) ... we are of the opinion that Kwa-Thema is so planned that when fully developed will be a big modern Township, and we do not visualise its removal being contemplated within the foreseeable future... In the circumstances, we, therefore, request very respectfully the Town council of Springs to consider the request of allowing us the right of freehold tenure, or alternatively a 99 year lease.<sup>64</sup>

The Council was amenable to the proposal of making loans available to those who wanted to build their own homes and indicated that loans of up to 95% were permissible if the value of the house did not exceed £250. However, it rejected the other proposals arguing that residents of municipal dwellings already had the benefit of their improvements and could not expect to be paid for those improvements when they left. Also, the government's policy was against the granting of freehold to Africans and the maximum period of a lease was 30 years.<sup>65</sup> The Board also questioned the underlying reasons for the removal of the location, arguing that they could not see how this action accorded with the government and Council's claim to "give the Native satisfaction". The Council argued that they did not push for the removal but that it was an instruction from the government which they were merely carrying out.<sup>66</sup> The Board also proposed a formula for the valuation of properties which would increase the amounts received by owners<sup>67</sup> and declared the Town Engineer's valuation of properties carried out in 1956 to be null and void.<sup>68</sup> This was also rejected by the Council which accepted the valuation method outlined by the government. The response of the Council to the memorandum did not satisfy the Board and for the next few years it continued campaigning for its demands.

After the completion of valuations, the Council decided that homeowners should be offered a price not exceeding two-thirds of the valuation of their properties. Furthermore, it kept the location's residents in ignorance of the original valuations so that homeowners did not know what offers to accept from the Council for their properties. The Board strenuously objected to this behaviour and accused the Council of not following the guidelines as set out by the government.<sup>69</sup> The unhappiness expressed by the Board was reflected in the mood of residents. By mid 1962 only seven people had approached the Council with offers to sell their properties.<sup>70</sup> By the end of that year the number of people offering to sell their properties had increased to 59 and the Council anticipated to spend R34 923 on these properties. However, this was still less than 5% of the R900 000 the Council expected to pay to residents.<sup>71</sup> The Payneville Board pursued its objections and in 1961 appointed attorneys to assist it in dealing with the local authorities. The Council agreed to meet a deputation consisting of the Advisory Board and its lawyers "for the sake of good relations".<sup>72</sup> At the end of 1962 the same attorneys demanded that the Council make available the valuations to the Board and homeowners. Failing this, the Board threatened to take the matter to the Supreme Court.<sup>73</sup> The Council dismissed the demands of the Board and argued that the problem rested with the Minister of Bantu Affairs. At a meeting of the Advisory Board the acting Director of Non-European Affairs stated that valuation would only be disclosed "when a forceful disestablishment was underway".<sup>74</sup> For the Board this attitude could only be interpreted as an attempt by the Council to minimise the amount paid to homeowners. Board member, W. Sokhupe, berated the Council for their selfishness:

Today we are told of a new thing, that people were moving voluntarily. Why were valuers employed? Why is Council refusing with the valuations? Why does the

Council want to buy our houses? The Springs council is a surprising body, it would not do anything that could benefit its Non-European Community. It is monopolistic in that it wants to own all the business interests in the townships. We want our valuations as we may lose them with the march of time.<sup>75</sup>

In January 1964 the Board requested the Department of Bantu Administration to withdraw the authority it had granted to the Council to deal with the above matters.<sup>76</sup> However, the objections from the Board were ignored and the Council continued with its plans. By the beginning of 1964 only 82 homeowners were paid out by the Council, representing an increase of only 23 over the 1962 figure.<sup>77</sup> The slow progress in removing people from Payneville hardened the attitude of the Council and in June 1964 it concluded that forceful measures would be necessary to move occupants of municipal houses to KwaThema. The authorities were prepared to undertake these measures even though they acknowledged that the main reason for people's unwillingness to leave the old location was because they could not afford the higher cost of living in KwaThema.<sup>78</sup>

The rate of the removals was also affected by the slowdown in the construction of new houses in KwaThema. Moreover, the natural increase of the new township's population also placed demands on the new houses. For example, it was agreed that the 832 houses built in the early sixties would probably mostly be taken up by residents of KwaThema rather than Payneville.<sup>79</sup> It was only in the late sixties with the construction of a further 800 houses that the removal from Payneville gained momentum. Between October 1961 and mid 1968 only 287 privately owned houses and 199 municipal houses out of a total of 879 and 565 respectively, were demolished.<sup>80</sup> Between 1968 and 1969 a further 102 private homes and 139

municipal houses were demolished, indicating the greater availability of new houses in Kwathema.<sup>81</sup> However, residents also remember that the Council acted more sternly against them. For many of them this period witnessed the worst period of forced removals from the old location at the time. As in other locations the Council would pin notices to the doors of people to be removed, often giving them only a few day's notice. Municipal trucks would come into the location and collect people's belongings, whether they were ready or willing to move or not.<sup>82</sup> By this time the Council was anxious to proclaim the location a white 'group area' and wanted the black residents out of there as soon as possible. In the end the Advisory Board could not offer effective resistance to the authorities and people were forced to accept the compensation paid by the Council. Today, this issue has come back to haunt the Springs authorities as people claim that they were robbed by the Council and are demanding proper compensation for their lost properties. Kenny Madalane's mother was paid only R560 for her house in 1969. According to him the house which had five rooms, a pantry and outside rooms was worth much more than that.<sup>83</sup>

The tension between Payneville's African residents and the Council did not just centre around the question of compensation. The introduction of higher economic rentals in Payneville in 1958 caused further opposition from residents and the Advisory Board. The Council complained that it was incurring heavy losses in Payneville and was thus compelled to increase rents, although not for those living in sub-economic dwellings.<sup>84</sup> However, the increases for occupants of economic houses were considerable: the rent for type A.1 houses was increased from £1.5.0 to £3.0.0., for type B.1 houses from £1.0.0. to £2.8.6. and for type C.1 houses from £-18.0. to £2.5.0.<sup>85</sup> The Advisory Board strongly objected to these increments. P.P. Legodi, a radical member of the Board, argued that the community opposed

the increases because:

- a) Payneville had redeemed all its loans and rents should therefore decrease rather than increase.
- b) Sanitation in the location was outmoded, resulting in the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis.
- c) In view of the impending removal of the location and the decision of the authorities not to make any further improvements to the location the rental were unacceptable.<sup>86</sup>

Rather, the Council was urged to increase the wages of its workers so that they could afford to pay for the increasing cost of living. Legodi also argued that residents were not necessarily against the increased rents but were only prepared to pay these in the new township where there were better facilities.<sup>87</sup> In this sense of course he did not represent the views of the majority of residents who wanted better facilities but could not afford the higher rents in KwaThema. Nevertheless, the oppositional stance of the Payneville Advisory Board was one of the main features of the area in the sixties and was in sharp contrast to the conservatism of the KwaThema Advisory Board. The latter pursued the narrow interests of its members and the petty bourgeoisie of the township. Hence it was concerned mainly with matters such as trading licences and the acquisition of more shops. The Payneville Board was also alert to these issues and particularly wanted guarantees that traders in the old location would be assured of businesses in Kwathema.<sup>88</sup> However, the removal of residents and the declining living conditions in the old location, often forced the Board into confrontations with the Council.

Two examples would suffice to indicate the different approaches of the two Boards. The KwaThema Advisory Board raised no objections to the passage of the Urban Bantu Council's Act of 1961 but the Payneville Board would have nothing to do with it at the time. Members of the latter Board argued that the Act offered no improvements in the lives of Africans. Moreover, they regarded it as a step in the wrong direction because,

The Board was looking forward to the time when Native Councillors would sit side by side with their White Counterparts and not a Council elected on a tribal basis to implement tribalism... the Urban Native has reached a stage where he had got used to the Western Culture way of living; for him there is no going back to the Kraal... Natives already resident in Urban Areas, were detribalised...<sup>89</sup>

By 1965 the Board had changed its viewpoint and agreed to the establishment of a joint Urban Bantu Council with the KwaThema Board.<sup>90</sup> This was at least in part due to the dramatic political changes which occurred in the intervening four years. The smashing of the black opposition and the strengthening of the state made it extremely difficult for a body such as the Advisory Board to stand out against the laws implemented by central government. Therefore the opposition of the Payneville Board, however ineffective, remained significant under the circumstances and especially when compared to the attitude of its counterpart in KwaThema. The conservatism of the KwaThema Board was perhaps best expressed in its message of condolence to the government on the death of Verwoerd:

The Hon. Dr. H.F. Verwoerd was a man of great experiments in the world, whose aim

was to make this country a happy place for all of us, European and Bantu. The cruel blind evil deprived him to witness these experiments.

We may add that the Hon. Dr. Verwoerd as Minister of Bantu Affairs and Development signed the proclamation which proclaimed KwaThema a Bantu Township.

The residents of KwaThema further wish to congratulate his Hon. Mr. B.J. Vorster for being elected our Prime Minister.<sup>91</sup>

No similar message came from Payneville and it was left to the Township Manager to pay tribute to Verwoerd on behalf of the residents of Payneville and Bakerton.<sup>92</sup> However, the Payneville Board was by no means radical, as its call for Kwathema to be declared a "Bantu Homeland" shows.<sup>93</sup> In a certain sense the Advisory Board acted in much the same way as the coloured's Welfare Committee, which worked exclusively in the interests of coloured people, even if it was to the detriment of other people. In 1963 the Payneville Board acted to the fact coloured people were given preference to occupy houses vacated by African people.<sup>94</sup> It argued that the local authorities favoured coloured residents who even came from other areas to occupy houses in the location. This meant that African people who qualified in terms of the Influx Control Regulations could not find houses in Payneville, in spite of the fact that the location was specifically designed for Africans. The Board proposed that coloureds people should not be allocated houses in the location unless all Africans were housed.<sup>95</sup>

This was indicative of the deteriorating relations between the people in Payneville. The apartheid policies of the government and the declining living conditions brought about by

those policies, tended to polarise the community along racial lines over the struggle for dwindling resources. In the absence of an organisation to direct the discontent of the people against the state, the people turned against each other. The heightened racial consciousness was exacerbated by the middle class leaders who saw in segregation and separate development an opportunity for their own upward social mobility. The sense of community and integration (and at times even working class unity) which had existed from the mid twenties was torn asunder by the success of apartheid in the sixties. Under the circumstances existing in the sixties it seemed as if people would only advance as racially defined groups. In any event the government would not tolerate anything else.

Opposition to the Group Areas Act and forced removals was virtually absent in the sixties, precisely at the time when thousands of people suffered as a consequence of their implementation. The crushing of the liberation movements had a devastating effect on the consciousness of the population. Moses Magudutela remembers that "everyone in the location was afraid. Very few people tried to do something but they failed."<sup>96</sup> The fear of detention and even death forced people into acquiescence. The Council also threatened people with deportation to the bantustans and a handful of residents accepted this rather than be moved against their will to KwaThema.<sup>97</sup> Businessmen in Bakerton were hard hit by the removals as their clientele base was virtually wiped out in the sixties. But they also felt powerless to oppose the authorities. Instead some of them fetched people from KwaThema and the mines to their shops as a desperate measure to prevent bankruptcy.<sup>98</sup>

In the absence of opposition to the schemes of the authorities, they could proceed with the racial restructuring of Springs and the whole East Rand, irrespective of the consequences to

the black population, with virtual impunity. The lack of development in the Payneville/Bakerton area resulted in a terrible deterioration of living conditions which the authorities seemed mainly unperturbed by. In 1972/73 the last African families were forcibly removed from the location and for the next few years Payneville was exclusively occupied by just under two thousand coloured people. They were finally removed in 1978/79, leaving only Bakerton with its original residents.

## NOTES

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## CONCLUSION

This dissertation has attempted to highlight some of the key processes in the making of apartheid in Springs. The racial social engineering of the fifties and the sixties had devastating consequences on the black population of that town. Today, Payneville lies in ruins with heaps of rubble indicating where houses once stood. The only building still remaining is the old clinic which has been used as a police station for many years - a potent symbol of apartheid oppression of the residents of this former integrated location. It is likely that some residents will get some compensation for losses suffered during the removals, but the majority of previous Payneville residents will in all likelihood remain in their present townships, KwaThema and Geluksdal.

It has been argued in this dissertation that when the National Party came to power it did not do so with a clearly worked out plan to enforce racial segregation. The essence of the meaning of apartheid was contested within the Afrikaner alliance throughout the fifties and sixties. It has also been shown that the "practical" faction, representing the interests mainly of capital, tended to hold sway over government policy. But their ideological dominance was continually contested by the "purist", who became increasingly influential in the sixties.

In 1948 there was no guarantee that the apartheid government would succeed in its aims. It was not able simply to impose preconceived plans on the growing black urban population. Indeed the fifties stand out as a period of intense conflict between the state and the oppressed majority. The struggle against class and racial control permeated virtually every facet of urban society. Workers, youth, women and squatters in factories, locations and squatter camps

resisted the apartheid onslaught and struggled for a better life. These struggles profoundly influenced the making of apartheid and contributed to delays in the implementation of apartheid. The defeat of the liberation movement in the early sixties represented a crucial turning point in the development of apartheid. From that point the National Party was able to pursue its policies almost without hindrance.

The absence of a 'blueprint' is also revealed by the Group Areas Act which was hailed as the main legislation to achieve racial segregation. However, weaknesses in the Act and opposition from different quarters made the functioning of this cornerstone of apartheid virtually impossible in the first half of the fifties. By the end of the fifties the government had sorted out most of the legal problems related to the Act and was able to proceed speedily with the proclamation of 'group areas'. It has been argued, therefore, that by the early sixties the government had set in place the legal and administrative mechanisms to effect compulsory racial segregation.

The creation of 'group areas' formed an important component of the racial reshaping of the urban areas. Together with influx control, forced removals and the Native (Urban Areas) Acts, the GAA was designed to bring the rapidly expanding urban black population under control. The fifties thus witnessed attempts by the government to implement its racial plans in the main towns and cities. The Witwatersrand was especially targeted and in the early fifties the government expended much time in formulating plans for the reorganisation of this region. This dissertation has also argued that regional planning was essential in the National Party's racial social engineering. The destruction of the old integrated locations and the relocation of its inhabitants to regional townships was a vital aspect of the reshaping of urban areas. The

apartheid city emerged out of these schemes. The plans developed for regional and urban planning by the Mentz Committee, among others, showed the determination of the National Party to ensure the success of apartheid. From the early fifties the central government intervened more directly in the reshaping of the cities. It was determined to assert maximum control over the black population without having to operate via local authorities.

The formulation of regional plans in the early fifties also represented a turning point in the history of Springs. The Mentz Committee's recommendation that Payneville should be disestablished as an African location, set in motion a chain of events which culminated in the complete abandonment of the old location. The developments in Springs epitomised the making of urban apartheid. In the forties the town experienced massive urbanisation and militant struggles by the Payneville population. In response to this crisis the Council initiated the creation of KwaThema. From the early fifties a key preoccupation of the Council was the 'group areas' demarcation of Springs and the removal of Africans to KwaThema. These developments impacted seriously on the relationship between the residents of Payneville and Bakerton. From the late fifties, different middle class leaders, organised specifically to further the interests of particular 'racial groups'. This seriously impeded the emergence of a united black opposition to apartheid. It has also been argued that the creation of new townships represented a *reform*, albeit very limited, for those people crammed in overcrowded locations. This impacted negatively on the ability of the liberation movement to mobilise these people against the GAA and forced removals. By the time the ephemeral character of the reforms had been exposed in the early sixties, the state had smashed the black opposition movement which made any resistance extremely difficult. In the sixties the people of Payneville experienced a decline in their living standards as the authorities prevaricated over their future.

The nature of this study has unfortunately been limited and there are a number of issues which require further research. For example, the changing relationship between the central government and local authorities, and the impact of racial social engineering on the consciousness of the black population are issues which are dealt with only very cursorily here.

The organisers of the 'Return to Payneville campaign' argue that they want to reclaim the spirit of the old location. They remember a location without racial tension and hardships. In a certain sense they want to turn back the clock to the pre-apartheid days. This romantic view of the old integrated locations is not uncommon. Previous residents of Sophiatown and District Six also remember the 'good old times'. It is unlikely that the old Payneville will ever be resurrected. But the support the campaign has received from African and coloureds bears testimony to the devastation inflicted on their lives by apartheid.

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