

**Memories of Everyday Life and Forced Removals in South Africa:  
A Case Study of Cato Manor, Durban, c. 1930-1960**

By

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**Supervised by Professor Goolam Vahed**

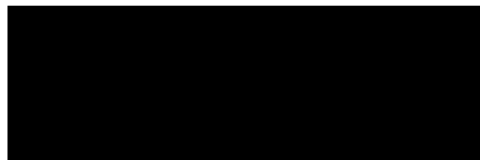
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## **Abbreviations**

<b>ANC</b>	African National Congress
<b>CBD</b>	Central Business District
<b>DC</b>	Durban Corporation
<b>DCC</b>	Durban City Council
<b>GAA</b>	Group Areas Act
<b>KZN</b>	KwaZulu-Natal
<b>NP</b>	National Party
<b>NIC</b>	Natal Indian Congress
<b>PAC</b>	Pan Africanist Congress
<b>SACP</b>	South African Communist Party
<b>SAIC</b>	South African Indian Council

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The Ngidi, Nduli, Phewa, and Dhlomo families were important in my upbringing, and always showed unconditional love that aided my growth into an adult. Coming from a polygamous family, I also extend my appreciation to my mothers, MaSigwaza, MaNdlovu and MaKhwela. To all my maternal and paternal brothers, sisters, and cousins, your presence is an unconditional present for my survival. I thank my wife Ndondoehle Ngidi for her encouragement and for inspiring me to complete this project. Her sacrifices are truly appreciated.

To everyone who is part of my life, including my friends and acquaintances, you deserve unconditional credit for my accomplishments. *Ngiyabonga kakhulu.*

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Thokozisile Mavis Nduli, who tragically died in July 2011, the year I completed my undergraduate degree. You never reaped the fruits that you watered for 23 years but I know that wherever you are, you are proud of the blossoming tree that you unwillingly left. All credit for my achievements must go to you.

You are a woman who went through much pain, travelled a thorny path, and committed your utmost to help me grow from a boy to the adult that I am today. I salute your efforts and sacrifices, warmth and care, and will forever be thankful for your endeavours. I know that whenever you look down, you smile. May your ever-present spirit give me continued strength for more success. Mother, you are gone but never forgotten. I am a proud son of a domestic helper (maid) and a petrol attendant.

To my maternal brother, the late Sphamandla Ian Nduli, who also died tragically in March 2012, my achievements are your achievements; may your soul rest in peace. To your child, Sinodumo Nduli, this is for you, grow up and achieve more than what my brother and mother wished me to achieve.

My family's custom commands that a child belongs to the grandparents; hence this PhD is not for me but for the man I pride myself on: Velindaba kaSimawuza, kaNsadula kaThontwane Ngidi.

- Mphumeleli KaNkosiyami KaVelindaba KaSimawuza kaNsadula kaThontwane Ngidi

## ABSTRACT

This study interrogates the historical geography of Cato Manor in Durban which, like District Six in the Cape and Sophiatown in Gauteng has a deeply entrenched history of community destruction under the infamous Group Areas Act of 1950, which pioneered forced removals. Passed by the orchestrators of apartheid, the National Party (NP) government, this Act destroyed many established multi-racial communities to serve its purpose of building separate communities based on racial categorisation; that is, Whites, Africans, Indians, and Coloureds. Cato Manor, popularly known as Mkhumbane and located a few kilometres from Durban, was witness to forced removals where a long-settled community of Africans and Indians, and a small number of Coloureds, who had lived together for many years were resettled and relocated to townships such as KwaMashu and Umlazi for Africans, and Chatsworth and Phoenix for Indians.

The study examines Cato Manor's historical development and offers insights into the legacy of segregation from the pre-apartheid era. In examining everyday life in Cato Manor/Mkhumbane, a picture emerges of how former residents developed a sense of place, establishing religious institutions, schools, community halls and various welfare support organisations, notwithstanding the myriad of challenges they faced. Mkhumbane emerged as one of the epicentres for the production of a vibrant popular culture among Africans in Durban. Beer brewing and the consumption of beer was a central component of this culture and was the main economic strategy through which many urban African women survived. The bosses and apartheid authorities wanted African men to drink, but on their terms. They sought a monopoly of the beer trade by brewing the beer and selling it in their beer halls and did not tolerate home brewing by women as it constituted an economic threat to the state, and gave women a freedom that the state could not countenance. Beer became a compelling reason for raids in townships and hostels across the country. When women's livelihoods came under threat they took to the streets to protect their socio-economic interests.

The 1949 riots were a major episode in Cato Manor's history. Memories of the tensions between African and Indian communities from 1949 continue to impact race relations in the contemporary period, and this study investigates how this conflict is remembered today. One of its concerns is the evolution of the Group Areas Act in Durban and how its implementation contributed to the destruction of Cato Manor, the relocation of its residents, socio-political, economic and cultural conditions in KwaMashu where many Cato Manor residents were resettled, how the forcibly removed residents negotiated challenges in their new environments, and how this process of relocation is remembered by displaced people.



Oral history is an important research tool in this study. While there are many macro studies on the impact of forced relocations nationally, this study focuses on a sample of individuals at a personal level, and, using the qualitative methodology of oral history, reconstructs the impact of forced relocations at a micro level to enhance understanding of the removals. In addition to oral history, local newspapers in the Zulu language form a key part of the interpretation of the life and times in Cato Manor.

The study considers the reliability of oral history as a source of information, its value, and how it can transform how we study the past when it is moved from the margins to the centre of historical research. It is a vital means to capture respondents' memories as well as their experiences of the near past. Oral history can play a crucial role in documenting the story of marginalised communities and in the process adding to social history narratives in the KwaZulu-Natal region.

## Introduction

### The People's Mkhumbane – the “Other” Cato Manor

Arriving at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in 2006 to enrol for my undergraduate LLB degree, little did I know that my academic journey would lead me to Cato Manor or Mkhumbane, which was just a stone's throw from the Howard College campus. Although it does not cover the whole jurisdiction, as is argued by some of the area's residents, its vast expanse is plainly visible when one climbs the floors of UKZN's Memorial Tower Building (MTB) where the History Department is located.<sup>1</sup>

The Cato Manor that I am referring to continually rang in my ears when I was growing up in Inanda, then a sprawling semi-rural area on Durban's northern outskirts. Known as Mkhumbane to local residents of Inanda, a point explained below, for most non-residents the area was associated with gangsterism, crime, prostitution, homosexuality, riots, and liquor, as depicted in radio dramas, theatre, the literature, and oral sources.<sup>2</sup> Growing up, the elders' stories influenced me and many of my contemporaries to assume that Mkhumbane was a 'no-go' area in the mid-twentieth century. It was commonly held that there was little that was good about the area.

As the eldest child in the family, my mother had to leave school in Standard one (now known as Grade three) in the early 1970s and seek work in the suburb of Durban North where she was employed as a domestic worker from the age of 13 until her untimely death in 2011 in her early fifties. She returned home once a month with groceries for the family. I was born during the year of the great floods in KwaZulu-Natal (then KwaZulu) in October 1987.

From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, with a new era dawning in South African history as the more than four-decades long apartheid reign was ending, a bloody war broke out between the African National Congress (ANC) and the Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). Political territories were drawn in the community, and Inanda was at the centre of the violence until the situation was relatively calm before the first-ever democratic election in the country in 1994.

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<sup>1</sup> The Memorial Tower Building is the Howard College campus' tallest building and an iconic one that can be seen from most parts of Durban. It was built in the 1940s to commemorate students who died in World War II and was declared a national monument in 1986. Source: South African History Online (SAHO). Available at: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/places/howard-college-building-and-memorial-tower-building-university-natal>. Accessed 20 March 2017.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Alan Paton's *Mkhumbane: A New Folk Musical*; Alfred Duma Nokwe's *Uyukile Umkhumbane* (Umkhumbane Has Risen); Steve Dyer and Sipho Gumede's popular jazz songs titled *Umkhumbane* and *eMkhumbane*, respectively; *Happiness Through the Mist* directed by Zeph Nzama, and many other works.

In this busy period of South African history, as democracy loomed, many stories emerged in the area, with everyone seemingly having one to tell. Some were fallacies that could not be verified, but they are part of legend. Stories of a man who walked after his head had been chopped in half or another who could change into an orange or chicken when enemies sought him became prevalent in the area. As children, we believed these stories and sometimes could not sleep as fear gripped us. Looking back, some of the stories that stirred us may seem laughable, but we took them seriously. Of course, it would seem that in the violence governing people's lives in the 1980s, these stories of violence and murder had a deeper meaning.

Mkhumbane had its own stories, such as Pelwane butchering people or one of the soldiers being dispossessed of their armour while they were drunk. These could not be verified but were believed by community members and passed on to younger generations rather than by the print or electronic media. The power of communication and knowledge remained with the tongue.

In 2004 at the age of 16, I moved and resettled at my father's homestead in rural Mgangeni in southern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) to complete Grades 11 and 12. My parents never married. They met while my mother was a domestic assistant ("maid" in local parlance) and my father a petrol attendant in Durban North. The house where my mother worked was close to the garage. It is still there. It was during this period that my intense interest in and affection for history began to develop.

Although not formally educated, my father, Nkosiyami Ngidi, is an ardent historian. He would tell us stories of the family background and the history of the community, and the interpretations and the meanings behind the names of the mountains, important sites, and certain spots in the wider community. With my family being of a polygamous nature from as early as the 1820s when the family forebear, Thontwane Ngidi, arrived in Mgangeni, to this day, my father understands and relates the family lineage, history and stories passed on by his grandfather, Simawuza, and those before him. When my father told us how they grew up with their mother, my grandmother MaShezi Ngidi, the stories of *gavini* came into the picture. As I discuss in Chapter four, the family's source of income was MaShezi's sale of *gavini*. Growing up with my dreams of attending university being out of the picture, the dream of telling historical stories stuck with me.

My perceptions of Mkhumbane changed dramatically in December 2013. I had just completed my Master's degree in History and was invited to a KZN Department of Arts and Culture conference on forced removals from Cato Manor. In what was a pilot study, I listened to the stories of former residents of the area who spoke of their lives in Cato Manor and experience of forced removals. The speakers of African origin spoke in one voice as they nullified publicised narratives that their area was notorious and 'very bad'.

At Inanda, Mkhumbane stories were told like fairy tales by my younger uncle. At Mgangeni, the story of my grandmother brewing *gavini* and my father's oral histories provided a foundation for this research. At the time, it was a very local history for me. It is a coincidence that at Mkhumbane, there was also a section known as Mgangeni. The word is literally translated from *ukuganga*, which means 'a naughty act'.

Following the 2013 conference, I wanted to hear more stories of the infamous Mkhumbane. My interest had been sparked and merged with my experiences of growing up in Inanda and Mgangeni. As a young, emerging scholar, this inspired me, and I almost instinctively became determined to take on this project for my doctoral dissertation and to retrieve and capture these memories before their possessors passed on, as many were old and some ailing. Oral testimonies of the former residents of Mkhumbane were supplemented with newspaper reports, and secondary and archival information.

From the conference where the former residents spoke and in the interim stages of the research, I garnered information that showed that Mkhumbane was a no-go area full of what informants described as notoriety and filth. I wanted to unearth this "generalisation"; hence I started to read published oral histories from other parts of the country. Using the case of Coloured and African identities, Kamish warns against generalisation because belonging to a racial group does not mean that 'identities are a given'.<sup>3</sup> With this study, I had to go with an unpopular choice of focusing on African people's memories of daily life up until forced removals in Mkhumbane. As opposed to oral tradition, I would call this oral testimony, which refers to informants' recollection of events that they have lived through or personally experienced; in other words, first-hand accounts of things that happened in their own lives and how they experienced them. I enjoyed doing this research and found it highly stimulating because people were at the centre of the project.

An irony arises because most of the interviewees in the December 2013 pilot study as well as in my subsequent interviews, argued strongly that it was propaganda that was probably started by the Durban City Council (DCC) and passed on in various settings that their 'community' was terrible. They argued

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<sup>3</sup>Ammaarah Kamish, "Coloured and Black Identities of Residents Forcibly Removed from Blouvillei", *South African Historical Journal*, 60, 2, 2008: 243.

that the 'reality' was the opposite - Mkhumbane was a stable community in which people respected one another. This interested me as I wanted to uncover what this community was about and I took on the project even though there are some detailed, outstanding studies of this area, with the work of Iain Edwards and Brij Maharaj being prime examples,<sup>4</sup> although neither has as strong an oral history component as this study.

Political violence and social injustice were features of my upbringing. Growing up in Inanda when South Africa was undergoing its transition from apartheid to a post-apartheid state in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the political conflicts between the ANC and IFP were part and parcel of our lives, including the necklacing of so-called "spies". Though too young to experience the worst atrocities of apartheid, these realities were passed on to me through our elders' graphic stories. They included the narratives of some White people in the form of the stories that I would inadvertently overhear from the employers of my mother who worked as a domestic assistant in White suburbs like Glenashley, Sunningdale, La Lucia, and Umhlanga, all of which are just north of Durban. From around the year 2000, when I was 13, I assisted my uncle, who worked as a 'garden boy' in these areas. Though we were well into the post-apartheid period, the racist attitudes of Whites were still evident. From my mother, uncle, and other elders, I got a sense of the horrors of "hard-core" apartheid.

Perhaps because of the oral history passed on by my elders, I had a passion for studying history from my school days, and this was sustained through my university years even though I had intended to study law. I wanted to know more about the past and the historical basis of the oppression of "my" people. I included History as a subject, eventually majored in it, completed my Honours and Masters degrees, and secured a position in the Department of History at UKZN. This doctoral dissertation is part of my journey to become a historian with a focus on the urban history of Durban, and in particular African communities, during the twentieth century, a subject about which much has been written, but much more remains to be researched and written.<sup>5</sup>

With the adoption of neo-liberal policies, quantification of research output, and excessively high workloads, the study of African history has virtually ceased in KZN. A decade or so ago, people like

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<sup>4</sup> Maharaj, B. "The Group Areas Act in Durban: Central-Local State Relations", PhD thesis, University of Natal, 1992 and Edwards, I. L. "Mkhumbane Our Home. African Shantytown Society in Cato Manor Farm, 1946-1960", PhD thesis, University of Natal, 1989.

<sup>5</sup> A good entry point is the edited collection by Paul Maylam and Iain Edwards, *The People's City: African Life in Twentieth-Century Durban* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1996) but there is clearly a need for further research. One reason for the dearth of research on African history in Durban is the virtual demise of the History Department at UKZN, as a result of merging disciplines into clusters; the demise of that great historian of nineteenth-century Zulu history, Jeff Guy; and the overbearing bureaucracy which has resulted in outstanding historians like Keith Breckenridge moving to Wits University, Thembisa Waetjen going to the University of Johannesburg, Jabulani Sithole joining the Luthuli Museum in Groutville, and Vukile Khumalo taking up a position with the KwaZulu-Natal Archives Repository, while Julie Parle and Mandy Goedhals have retired. Some, not all, of them have been replaced, but with heavier teaching loads, it will take a while for the younger historians to make their mark.

Jeff Guy, John Wright, Jabulani Sithole, Vukile Khumalo, and others devoted their time to this task. For one reason or another, these historians have moved on (sadly, deceased in the case of Professor Jeff Guy), and the university has failed to replace them adequately. The department has shrunk and the few permanent academics have different research interests. There are virtually no local scholars engaged in similar research at the current time and this is indeed cause for concern.

### **Focus of this study**

The Group Areas Act of June 1950 resulted in the destruction of many established (mainly Black)<sup>6</sup> communities throughout South Africa. The local state in Durban instituted segregation measures from the late nineteenth century<sup>7</sup> and more systematically from the 1930s when steps were taken to prevent Indian and African “penetration” into so-called “White” areas.<sup>8</sup> Group Areas intensified this process and was far more encompassing. As Paul Maylam pointed out, Group Areas ‘endorsed and formalised much of the segregationist thinking and practice that had deep roots in Durban’s history’.<sup>9</sup> Thousands of mainly African and Indian residents were forcibly relocated from communities such as Cato Manor, the Magazine Barracks, Riverside, Baumannville, the hostels for African migrant workers in Bell Street, Ordinance Road and Somtseu Road in Durban, and elsewhere to apartheid created townships such as KwaMashu and Umlazi for Africans, and Chatsworth and Phoenix for Indians.<sup>10</sup> According to Maylam, these removals ‘represented a devastating assault on the underclasses.’<sup>11</sup>

This study focuses specifically on memories of life in and forced removals from Cato Manor/Mkhumbane, which is located within five miles of the Durban city centre.<sup>12</sup> Named after George

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<sup>6</sup> Race is a complex issue in South African history. During the apartheid period, there were four broad racial categories, viz., African, White, Indian / Asian, and Coloured. In the post-apartheid period, these racial categorisations remain in force due to affirmative action considerations. Black, as used here, refers to Africans, Indians, and Coloureds as used from the late 1960s with the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement led by Steve Biko.

<sup>7</sup> M.W. Swanson, “The Durban System. Roots of Urban Apartheid in Colonial Natal”, *African Studies*, 35, 1976: 159-176.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Maylam, “The ‘Black Belt’. African Squatters in Durban, 1935-1950”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 17, 1980: 413-428.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Maylam, “The struggle for space in Twentieth-Century Durban”, In P. Maylam and Iain Edwards (eds), *The People’s City: African Life in Twentieth-Century Durban* (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1996), 1-32, 22.

<sup>10</sup> See Brij Maharaj, “The Group Areas Act in Durban. Central-Local State Relations”, PhD thesis, University of Natal, 1992; D. Scott, “Communal Space Construction. The Rise and Fall of Clairwood and District”, PhD thesis, University of Natal, 1994; K. Subramony, “A history of Chatsworth: impact of the Group Areas Act on the Indian Community of Durban (1958-1975)”, MA thesis, University of South Africa, 1993; Maynard W. Swanson, “The Joy of Proximity: The Rise of Clermont”, In P. Maylam and Iain Edwards, (eds), *The People’s City. African Life in Twentieth-Century Durban* (University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1996), 274-298; and, L. Torr, “Lamontville. A History, 1930-1960”, In P. Maylam and Iain Edwards (eds). *The People’s City: African Life in Twentieth-Century Durban* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1996). 1996, 245-273.

<sup>11</sup> P. Maylam, “The struggle for space”, 1996, 23.

<sup>12</sup> Popke writes that Cato Manor is ‘an area of some 4500 ha of undulating land located only 7 km west of the [Durban] city center’, E. J. Popke, “Modernity’s abject space. The rise and fall of Durban’s Cato Manor”, *Environment and Planning A*, 33, 2001: 737-752, 743.

Cato, the first mayor of Durban, by the 1940s the area was home to 40 000 Indians and 120 000 Africans who were living in 'shackland sprawls'.<sup>13</sup> While Indians had settled in Cato Manor from the turn of the twentieth century, and many flourished as market gardeners on land that they owned. Africans began moving into the area from the early 1930s when industrialisation and urbanisation took effect. They rented land from Indian shack lords. This settlement was destroyed when the City Council demolished the shacks between 1958 and 1966. African residents resisted violently during 1959 and 1960, but this protest gave way to what appears to have been resignation to their inevitable fate.<sup>14</sup> Residents faced myriad social, economic, and political challenges as they transitioned to the new townships. Many were making a living on the city's margins and had to travel long distances to work; women's opportunities to work were limited; the extended family could not be accommodated in tiny council houses, and there were few amenities.

The study utilises a mix of life histories and community case histories to explore memories of life in Cato Manor, the human costs of forcible relocation, the removals themselves, and the difficulty of establishing "home" in the new townships. Its working hypothesis is that the former residents of Mkhumbane were subjected to terrible living conditions; that forced apartheid-era displacement exacerbated this situation and had devastating social, cultural, and economic consequences; that this experience was traumatic, and that those that were forcibly removed carry memories of historical suffering.

## Literature Review

The Group Areas Act spawned a vast body of literature on the Act itself as well as its ramifications for Black South Africans.<sup>15</sup> Group Areas was an extreme and unique form of urban social engineering in South Africa in that the division was not merely between Black and White, or coloniser and colonised, as was the case in many colonial situations, but racial division also extended to dividing Blacks according to Africans, Indians, and Coloureds. It was also comprehensive as Africans were excluded from urban areas through influx control, and there was a distinct racial hierarchy.<sup>16</sup>

There are several strands in the historiography on forced removals. One theme examines the origins, implementation, and consequences of the Act. Some scholars argue that Group Areas was a continuation of urban settlement patterns in South Africa rather than a departure from preceding laws; others suggest

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<sup>13</sup> I. Edwards, "Cato Manor. Cruel Past, Pivotal Future", *Review of African Political Economy*, 61, 21, 1994: 415-427, 416.

<sup>14</sup> See Ladlau, "Cato Manor Riots, 1959-60", 1975.

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the historiography pre-1995, see P. Maylam, "Explaining the Apartheid City. 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1, 1995: 19-38. For the Group Areas Act in Durban, see B. Maharaj, "Apartheid, Urban Segregation and the Local State. Durban and the Group Areas Act in South Africa", *Urban Geography*, 18, 2, 1997: 135-154.

<sup>16</sup> Jeremy Seekings, "Race, Class and Inequality in the South African City", CSSR Working Paper, No, 283, November 2010. Available at <http://www.cssr.uct.ac.za/sites/cssr.uct.ac.za/files/pubs/WP283.pdf>. Accessed 8 January 2014.

that forced relocation was part of the state's project of creating cities based on modernity, which was comparable to major cities in other parts of the world except that race defined what was "modern";<sup>17</sup> and yet others focus on the process of forced removals and its impact on uprooted individuals.<sup>18</sup> This literature emphasises the contrast between affluent, posh White suburbs and Black townships that lacked infrastructure.<sup>19</sup>

Most of the work on forced removals focuses on Gauteng and the Western Cape, possibly because of iconic sites like District Six in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg. Studies on District Six and Sophiatown have documented some of the themes that this study is concerned with.<sup>20</sup> Otter's study is based on the life histories of Coloureds and Africans who were forcibly removed in the Cape and provides some insights for this study.<sup>21</sup> A firm reference is also drawn from the case of Rylands, a former "Indian" area dispersed in the Cape Flats, where Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie conducted valuable interviews with former community members.<sup>22</sup>

As far as Durban is concerned, research has shed light on the impact of both Group Areas as well as legislation passed prior to the NP coming to power, which, some have argued, served as a model for urban segregation in the 1950s.<sup>23</sup> The presence of African workers who came to the city in search of work, as well as ex-indentured Indians who settled on the periphery of Durban prior to 1932, when the city's boundaries were expanded, is well documented.<sup>24</sup> Subsequent work focused on how the state

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<sup>17</sup> See D. Scott, "Creative Destruction: Early Modernist Planning in the South Durban Industrial Zone, South Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29, 1, 2003: 235-259; and M.W. Swanson, "'The Durban System': Roots of Urban Apartheid in Colonial Natal", *African Studies*, 35, 1976: 159-176.

<sup>18</sup> See L. Platzky and C. Walker, *The Surplus People. Forced Removals in South Africa* (Ravan Press: Johannesburg, 1985); and E. Unterhalter, *Forced Removal: The Division, Segregation and Control of the People of South Africa* (London: IDAF Publications Ltd, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> J. Seekings, "Race, Class and Inequality in the South African City", CSSR Working Paper, No, 283, November 2010. Available at <http://www.cssr.uct.ac.za/sites/cssr.uct.ac.za/files/pubs/WP283.pdf>. Accessed 8 January 2015.

<sup>20</sup> See S. Jeppie and C. Soudien, (eds), *The Struggle for District Six. Past and Present* (Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1992); D.H. Hart, "Political Manipulation of Urban Space. The Razing of District Six Cape Town", *Urban Geography*, 9, 6, 1988: 603-628; A. Proctor, "Class Struggle, Segregation and the City. A History of Sophiatown 1905-1940" in Bozzoli, B. (ed.), *Labour, Townships and Protest. Studies in the Social History in Witwatersrand* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1979), 49-89; T. Lodge, "The Destruction of Sophiatown", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 19, 1, 1981: 107-132; P. Gready, "The Sophiatown Writers of the Fifties. The Unreal Reality of their World", *Journal of South African Studies*, 16, 4, 1990: 139-164; G.H. Pirie and D.M. Hart, "The Transformation of Johannesburg's Black Western Areas", *Journal of Urban History*, 11, 1985: 387-410.

<sup>21</sup> See H. Trotter, "Trauma and Memory: The Impact of Apartheid-era Forced Removals on Coloured Identity in Cape Town" in Mohamed Adhikari (ed.), *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> See U. Dhupelia-Mesthrie, "Speaking About Building Rylands (1960s to 1980s): a Cape Flats History", *Social Dynamics*, 2014: 353-370. Available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02533952.2014.932174>. Accessed 17 July 2014.

<sup>23</sup> B. Maharaj, "Apartheid, Urban Segregation and the Local State. Durban and the Group Areas Act in South Africa", *Urban Geography*, 18, 2, 1997, 135-154; Swanson, 'The Durban System,' 1976; P. Maylam and I. Edwards, *The People's City. African Life in Twentieth-Century Durban* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1996); and D.R. Bagwandeem, "The Question of Indian Penetration in the Durban Area and Indian Politics. 1940-46", PhD thesis, University of Natal.

<sup>24</sup> B. Freund, *Insiders and Outsiders. The Indian Working Class of Durban 1910-1990* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995); M.W. Swanson, 'The Durban System' 1976; and M.W. Swanson, "'The Asiatic



destroyed these settlements under Group Areas legislation. Di Scott examined the devastation wrought by Group Areas on Indians in Clairwood where established temples, schools, halls, and clinics were destroyed as the residents were forcibly removed to Chatsworth, south of Durban; Ariyan focused on relocation to Phoenix, a township to the north of Durban which was established for Indians in the 1970s under the Group Areas Act;<sup>25</sup> Brij Maharaj shows how the local state worked with the central state to implement Group Areas in Durban; Subramony and Karthi Gopalan focus on the formation of Chatsworth in their respective dissertations;<sup>26</sup> and Maharaj's story of the Warwick Avenue Triangle (WAT), an inner city site in Durban, shows how a non-racial, settled community defied forced removal under the Group Areas Act.<sup>27</sup>

Given the size of its population, and close proximity to the city, as well as the fact that Indians and Africans lived contiguously, and that this area bore the brunt of the 1949 race riots between Indians and Africans, it is not surprising that substantial work has been done on Cato Manor by Iain Edwards, Brij Maharaj and Ronnie Govender in particular.<sup>28</sup> Maharaj's focus is on local state policy in the making of apartheid society. Edwards' study focuses very specifically on the Mkhumbane shantytown society. His concern is how forms of housing affect social structure and ideas of class, community, and politics, and in particular, how ordinary people mounted struggles against established power in the city. His outstanding examination of social divisions amongst Africans in Cato Manor shows that various groups had different interests in preserving the shacklands. Edwards also examines the role of the ANC. Where this study differs is in consulting Zulu-language newspapers and interviews several decades after the removals to gauge how that period is remembered. While Edwards' study is exceptional in its treatment of the politics of the period, this study places much emphasis on everyday lives.

Govender's *At the Edge* comprises narratives of life in Cato Manor from the 1940s until the late 1950s. He portrays an economically struggling but vibrant community that suffered enormously when it was bulldozed, and its residents were forcefully removed. While Govender's work is valuable in providing

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Menace': Creating Segregation in Durban, 1870 – 1900", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 16, 3, 1983: 401-421.

<sup>25</sup> D. Scott, "'Creative Destruction': Early Modernist Planning in the South Durban Industrial Zone, South Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 29, 1, 2003: 235-259 and L.L. Ariyan, "The Impact of the Group Areas Act upon Indian South Africans Resident in Natal. A Historico- Phenomenological Study", PhD thesis, University of Durban-Westville, 1999.

<sup>26</sup> Brij Maharaj, "The Group Areas Act and Community Destruction in South Africa: the Struggle for Cato Manor in Durban" *Urban Forum*, 5, 1994: 1-25; K. Subramony, "A history of Chatsworth: Impact of the Group Areas Act on the Indian Community of Durban (1958-1975)", MA thesis: University of South Africa, 1993; K. Gopalan, "Identity, Place and Belonging: The destruction of the Magazine Barracks and remaking of 'community' in Chatsworth, 1960-2010", PhD thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2015.

<sup>27</sup> B. Maharaj, 'The Integrated Community Apartheid Could Not Destroy,' 1999.

<sup>28</sup> For example, see I. Edwards, "A nice little house down Mashu way – perhaps a little car one day": State, Capital and the Building of KwaMashu, 1947-1965", *Collected Seminar Papers*, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1990; pp. 186–194.; B. Maharaj, "The Group Areas Act and Community Destruction in South Africa: the Struggle for Cato Manor in Durban", *Urban Forum*, 5, 1994: 1-25, and Ronnie Govender, *At the Edge and other Cato Manor Stories* (Durban: Manx, 1996).

insight into life in Cato Manor, his focus is almost exclusively on Indians, and his work is fictional. Since Cato Manor was the epicentre of the 1949 riots, a great deal of research on the area focuses on Afro-Indian relations in the 1940s.<sup>29</sup> These studies are important in showing how the social and material conditions bred the conditions that made Durban ripe for such an outbreak of violence and that the riots were not caused simply because Africans and Indians were antagonistic towards one another.

Two other valuable sources on Durban are the *Durban Housing Survey* of 1952 which provides rich statistical information on this area,<sup>30</sup> and Maasdorp and Humphries' 1975 study *From Shantytown to Township*, which offers early insights into changes in the life of shantytown dwellers as a result of their relocation to KwaMashu. Their study mainly focuses on the economic consequences of relocation.<sup>31</sup>

The day-to-day lives of ordinary residents of Cato Manor and the impact of the destruction of this once vibrant community on residents have not been studied systematically or in depth.<sup>32</sup> This dissertation makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge and understanding of how Group Areas operated in Durban and its impact on communities, particularly a large working class one where racial boundaries were often fluid; it also enriches our understanding of the day-to-day relations between Africans and Indians and perhaps what triggered the riots; and how people remade their lives in their new settings. This study's essential dimension is memory since it is based on oral history and investigates how people remember these events.

There is a rich body of work on memory in the South African context; however, the study of memory should also be located in a broader global context of how forced removals, displacement and segregation shaped people's memories, identities and sense of belonging. Whilst South Africa may be unique in the context of apartheid and forced removals, globally, many communities experienced displacement in times of war and conflict and this shaped their identities in critical ways.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See, for example, D.R. Chetty, 'The Durban Riots and Popular Memory,' Paper presented at the History Workshop on 'Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid', University of Witwatersrand, 6-10 February, 1990; Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed, *Monty Naicker. Between Reason and Treason*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter, 2010: 232-254; I. Edwards and T. Nuttall, 'Seizing the Moment: the January 1949 Riots, Proletarian Populism and the Structures of African urban life in Durban during the late 1940s,' Paper presented at History Workshop on 'Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid', University of Witwatersrand, 6-10 February, 1990; S.L. Kirk, "The 1949 Durban Riots. A Community in Conflict", MA, University of Natal, 1983; T. Nuttall, "'It seems peace but it could be war': The Durban Riots of 1949 and the Struggle for the City", unpublished paper, nd.

<sup>30</sup> Natal Regional Survey, *Durban Housing Survey*, 1952.

<sup>31</sup> G.M. Maasdorp and N. Humphries, *Urban Reallocation and Racial Segregation. The Case of Indians in South Africa* (Durban: University of Natal Press, 1997).

<sup>32</sup> Freund, *Insiders and Outsiders*, 1995 and Maasdorp and Pillay, "Urban Reallocation and Racial Segregation", 1997.

<sup>33</sup> For international perspectives, see David Cesarani, Antony Robin Jeremy Kushner, Milton Shain (eds), *Place and Displacement in Jewish History and Memory: Zakor V'makor* (Michigan: Vallentine Mitchell, 2009); Meir Litvak (ed) *Palestinian Collective Memory and National Identity* (Michigan: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Françoise S. Ouzan, Manfred Gerstenfeld (eds), *Postwar Jewish Displacement and Rebirth 1945-1967* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

This study employs the methodology of oral history to record the memories and experiences of some of the people who felt the wrath of the Group Areas Act. It deviates from the common perception that former residents of Cato Manor were simply victims of the Act or perceived themselves as victims. During the interviews, it became apparent that some of the ex-residents felt that their lives improved following forced relocation while others “removed” themselves before the Act removed them. Jacob Dlamini’s *Native Nostalgia* helped the writer to understand this process as it provides an intriguing account of a scholar who tries to move beyond the “victim” mentality in African township living and capture the complexity of African people’s experiences.<sup>34</sup> This study outlines both the positive and negative perceptions and experiences of former residents of Mkhumbane.

### **Objectives of the study and Key Research Questions**

This study is concerned with people’s memories of life in Cato Manor, the experience and impact of forced removals, and how they remade their lives in new settings. The key research question was: what social, cultural, and economic consequences did forced removals have on the former residents of Cato Manor and how did relocation impact African identities?

As such, the study focused on the following key areas and issues:

The first set of questions concerns the Cato Manor experience. This focused on how this urban settlement emerged historically and the methods used by the local state to segregate urban space in the pre-apartheid era. The study maps out the actual conditions – social, economic, political – (based on available statistics and secondary material) and how these conditions of life are remembered. Given the 1949 race riots, the consequences of which linger in the present, an essential aspect is former residents’ recollections of “race relations” in Cato Manor.

The second set of issues examined in this study relates to the Group Areas Act and its implementation in the wider Durban region. What were the forces at play that forged the final Group Areas plan for Durban, which resulted in the total destruction of Cato Manor and the relocation of its residents to distant areas at enormous cost to the state when it would have been more logical and cost-effective to keep these areas “Black”? How is the process remembered by former residents, and did resistance/cooperation impact on the outcome of forced removals?

The third set of issues relates to the social, economic, political, and leisure conditions in the areas to which people were relocated and some of the critical challenges faced by residents. What mechanisms did former residents use to survive and seek redress (e.g., civic organisations)? A significant concern is the impact of relocation on identity and community formation.

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<sup>34</sup> Jacob Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia*. (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2009).

Finally, and central to this dissertation, is the use of oral history as a research tool. This study considers how reliable it is as a source of information, its value, and how it has transformed how we study the past. This issue will focus specifically on issues of memory and nostalgia.

The decades from the 1950s onwards were witness to rapid change. It began with the concerted implementation of apartheid and political repression by the state in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and this phase came to an end with the unravelling of apartheid by the late 1980s. The lives of residents were deeply affected by these broader structural changes, and one of the challenges in this study was to examine whether the outsider's perception of people's lives being bounded by townships holds. These changes included such things as a tightening of racial boundaries, the growth of anti-apartheid protest, opening of factories, expansion of education and the emergence of a professional class, and with it economic mobility, and the deregulation of the labour market, trade liberalisation, and, eventually, the end of White minority rule.

While apartheid structural barriers placed severe limits on people's life chances, this study focused on what these "victims" of apartheid did within the context of broader structural constraints. An important component was to capture how the residents themselves remember their experiences. Life histories and memories provided the means to track changes across generations.

The broader issues investigated include the following:

The meaning and impact of segregation and apartheid. One concern is whether apartheid was a unique and radical departure from the segregation policies that preceded it or whether there was continuity. In other words, while the map of Durban was radically redrawn by apartheid and Group Areas racial engineering, did the apartheid ideologues depart dramatically from their predecessors, and did they achieve their grand design?

The inclusion of life histories as a methodology assists in understanding how individual lives were impacted by local, national, and even global changes. This is related to the ongoing debate in the social sciences over the balance between agency and structure in understanding individual lives' trajectories. This research allows us to critically examine this methodology.

Closely related is memory. Memory, Annette Kuhn writes, 'is neither pure experience nor pure event. Memory is an account, always discursive, always already textual'.<sup>35</sup> The past remembered at the individual and collective level and memorialised may not always be accurate and will be contested in many cases. Accurate or not, what is remembered has truth value for those doing the remembering.<sup>36</sup> This study sought to understand how memory worked with this group of interviewees.

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<sup>35</sup> L. Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 79.

<sup>36</sup> Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 79.

Another broad concern was the notion of Group Areas as racially bounded containers. We need to determine whether this was indeed the case or whether there was movement and interaction within and across the racially demarcated groups. This study is concerned with how geographical mobility/immobility impacted individual and communal identity. This includes class, race, gender, and religious identification. Gender is an important category of analysis and this study takes this into account and, indeed, discusses the 1959 women's protests in Chapter four. It is held that gender is socially constructed. As Barbara Shetland points out, gender is not immutable: 'What it means to be male and female changes over time, is socially determined, and is embedded within a system of power relations.'<sup>37</sup>

## Sources and Methodology

This study adopts a case study approach by focusing on Cato Manor and its ex-residents, mainly Africans, exploring the lives of those, both men and women, who are currently growing old, who were affected by the relocation from Cato Manor to KwaMashu and other areas. Such an approach can provide a more profound sense of how people lived and experienced change, and this makes it possible to reflect on broader developments.<sup>38</sup>

The Durban Town Clerk's (DTC) files, which are housed in the Durban Archives Repository, contain important information on workers who were employed by the Durban Corporation and this archive helped to create a picture of life in Cato Manor and highlight the role of voluntary bodies and networks that residents created, both at work and at "home". Similar material was found at the Killie Campbell Collections, which is part of UKZN.

Of particular interest and value were the interviews conducted by researchers with residents in the 1980s that the staff at the Killie Campbell Collections made available. They were conducted by researchers Deanne Collins and Andrew Manson as part of an Oral History Programme started at Killie Campbell in 1979. These interviews are invaluable in recording regional history, and the Killie Campbell Collections and the researchers must be applauded for this undertaking. In turn, I will provide the transcripts of the interviews to Killie Campbell to benefit future researchers.

Several files at Killie Campbell were consulted, including minutes of meetings and secondary books, as well as Zulu and English-language newspapers such as *Ilanga LaseNatali*, *UmAfrika*, *The Leader*, *The Graphic*, *the Daily News*, and *The Natal Mercury*. Some of these newspapers were accessed at the Gandhi/Luthuli Documentation Centre on the UKZN Westville campus. In quoting from the Zulu-

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<sup>37</sup> Jan Bender Shetland, "Introduction," in Jan Bender Shetland, *Gendering Ethnicity in African Women's Lives*, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2015: 3-29, 7.

<sup>38</sup> L. McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," in *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30, 3, 2005: 1771-1800.

language newspapers, I use included the actual quote in Zulu and the English translation. This is in line with my institution's mission; UKZN was the first university in the country to introduce Zulu as a compulsory language when it did so in 2014. Beyond that, I am a Zulu praise-singer and strongly advocate that language be decolonised and equal footing be given to African languages. People should be permitted to submit their dissertations in a non-English language should they wish to do so.

It is important to note that the Killie Campbell library houses data on people who lived, owned property, or were tenants at Cato Manor before demolition. Not a day passed during my research without a descendant of a former Cato Manor resident approaching the librarian to verify their information. This is because the government offered to compensate former Cato Manor residents for the forced removals in terms of section 34 of the Restitution of Land Rights Act, No 22 of 1994. I also had access to interviews conducted by researchers of the KwaMuhle Museum, formerly the Department of Bantu Affairs, during the apartheid era. These included interviews with former Department of Native (Bantu) Affairs officials who detailed numerous stories and experiences of Mkhumbane. Such information, together with oral sources, was crucial in (re)constructing life and work in Mkhumbane and helping me extrapolate what was lost due to their removal and what, if anything, was gained.

The Cato Manor files housed in the Durban Archives contain, amongst other things, the process of removal, information on the work of voluntary bodies in Cato Manor, and grievances expressed to the authorities by both individuals and organisations. Since the bulk of the African residents of Cato Manor were relocated to KwaMashu and Umlazi, these sources helped to trace life before and after the removals and highlight their impact, as well as residents' efforts to reconstruct "community" in the new setting. Books were important for secondary research, while photographs were extremely rich sources that showed what life was like in Cato Manor and the new settings. I found some of the photographs at the Killie Campbell Collections but others were in the private collections of individuals. Photographs are not included in this dissertation, but they did deepen my understanding of life in Cato Manor.

Newspapers, particularly the Zulu language *Ilanga LaseNatali*, provided a context for the period under study and helped track changes over three decades. I consulted *Ilanga* at Killie Campbell. Newspapers also depicted how the laws were communicated in the press and expressed and understood by those affected. Interactions between community organisations in Cato Manor, and then Umlazi and KwaMashu, and the local state helped shed light on the challenges residents face in their new places of residence. Several secondary studies (already cited) deal with various issues affecting residents in Cato Manor, and these helped to map the various challenges affecting residents and supplemented other sources of information.

Secondary sources on Group Areas helped map the evolution and implementation of the Act and enabled comparison between the Cato Manor community and other areas in Durban and nationally. Secondary literature on African cities was also relevant in understanding forced removals in the broader context.

Despite their racial heterogeneity, comparisons with cities in other parts of Africa are uncommon in South African urban historiography.<sup>39</sup> This comparative literature helped to delineate ways in which Group Areas and forced removals were unique/different in urban history continent-wide.

Qualitative interviews, entirely voluntary, were used to track the life histories of selected individuals. Oral history formed an important component of the research for this dissertation. Two women and four men who either experienced forced removals or whose families were relocated, spoke of their experiences. As an aside, one of the findings that emerged at the 2013 conference and when I was searching for interviewees was that some individuals from Mkhumbane's neighbourhood of Chesterville disregarded the jurisdictions and regarded themselves as the members of the Mkhumbane community. They indicated that they only became aware of the geographic distinction when they were much older.

As Cato Manor falls under the "forced removals" umbrella in South Africa, some of those who participated in the research and the earlier 2013 conference hoped that this research would assist in restitution and compensation claims for losses suffered in the process of dispossession. Furthermore, people wanted to relate their stories, possibly as a form of catharsis, and interviewees gave me contact details for other interviewees. This is known as snowball sampling in the research process. However, I utilised a limited number of interviews for several reasons. As can be seen in the Bibliography, I conducted four interviews in June 2015. Thereafter, I began teaching and the commitment of a full time job prevented me from focusing on the dissertation. I got back to the project at the end of 2019, and conducted interviews in January and December 2019, and March 2020.

The methodology employed was to assess the interviews and do some writing to give rise to a set of specific and focused questions for interviewees. Sadly, further interviews were not possible because the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the government introducing lockdown measures, making face-to-face interviews impossible. I attempted telephonic interviews with most interviewees, but this was not easy, while e-mail correspondence was a non-starter as most interviewees were not familiar with the technology.

While more interviews would have been welcome, this should not be seen as a limitation since the emphasis was on qualitative in-depth data from which detailed life histories could be gathered. In addition, notes made at the 2013 conference on Cato Manor provided important insights and I had access to the interviews conducted in the 1980s by Collins and Manson as part of Killie Campbell's Oral History Project, as well as those conducted by a government official Colin Shum (who was well regarded

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<sup>39</sup> B. Freund, "Contrasts in Urban Segregation. A Tale of Two African Cities, Durban (South Africa) and Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire)", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27, 3, 2001, Special Issue for Shula Marks: 529 and B. Freund, *The African City. A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

by residents of Mkhumbane and had an area named after him, Shumville) and academic Iain Edwards for his doctoral dissertation.

Part of the planned research in the future, once the lockdowns ease and the country returns to a sense of “normality”, is to research people’s perceptions and narratives of life in the new townships. The broader conception for this project is how migration and movement, and dislocation shape and transform urban spaces. This includes migration from rural areas to cities (Mkhumbane) and further movement to KwaMashu (and elsewhere, like Umlazi and Chatsworth), where new communities and neighbourhoods were formed.

Although there was a set of core questions, the flow of discussion varied from interview to interview depending on where the responses led. In general, however, the focus was on individual and communal lives and aspects of day-to-day lives in Cato Manor as well as KwaMashu, uMlazi, and Chesterville, work experience, economic challenges resulting from relocation, work, household and family, involvement in social welfare bodies, cultural and religious practices, and opportunities for children’s education. It must be stressed that my intention was to go back to interviewees with some final questions. However, as noted, the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, which is the worst infectious disease crisis in South African history since the influenza epidemic of 1918, resulted in the government instituting a lockdown, which prevented further interviews. While this was to the slight detriment of the final project, it did not alter the final conclusions.

While the oral interviews provided rich information, oral history has advantages but also pitfalls and memory in particular is not trouble-free.<sup>40</sup> Memory is selective, and is not ‘just a recall of past events and experiences in an unproblematic and untainted way. It is rather a process of ‘remembering; the calling up of images, stories, experiences, and emotions from our past life, ordering them, placing them within a narrative or story, and then telling them in a way that is shaped at least in part by our social and cultural context’.<sup>41</sup>

As such, memories are not pure, but influenced by people’s desire to portray themselves positively or even inflate their role and contribution to an event. I kept this in mind when analysing interviewees’ testimony. Furthermore, narrative research comprising of qualitative interviews involves the researcher, myself in this case, retelling the participant’s story by organising the raw data into themes that emerge from the testimony. However, the advantages of oral history far outweigh the disadvantages, and this study would not have been as insightful without this important contribution.

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<sup>40</sup> See B. Allen and W.L. Montell, *From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981); and R. Perks and A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader* (Routledge, New York, 2006).

<sup>41</sup> See Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2010), 78-79.



As noted previously, I attended a conference convened by the KZN Department of Arts and Culture in December 2013 and identified several individuals willing to participate in the project. Elders in my family and community also referred interviewees. The KZN government's endeavour in the period from October to December 2014 to get former community members of Cato Manor to register their details at the Killie Campbell Library for the purposes of land restitution over forced removals also enabled ready access to interviewees.<sup>42</sup> This provided a readymade data list. In 2014 I was also involved in a project spearheaded by the KwaZulu-Natal Society of Arts (KZNSA) that interviewed people from Chesterville, with their photos used to recapture their histories. I interviewed ten residents for that project, which led to the building of a database of former residents of Cato Manor, who now reside in KwaMashu, uMlazi, or Chesterville. As a result of this networking and involvement in various projects, it was possible to call upon ready data. That project is the property of the KZNSA and has not yet been published in any form.

Once the interviews were completed for this project, an attempt was made to transcribe them but the process was exceedingly long in a context where academics have a heavy teaching load and deadlines to meet. Fortunately, the School of Social Sciences provided a grant to assist with the transcription, editing, and translation of interviews. Ntokozo Zulu, a Master's graduate as a Language Practitioner from the Durban University of Technology, was employed to transcribe the interviews. Although the software programme Nvivo could have been used to analyse the data, it was difficult to become familiar with it in the limited time available and the method used was to manually highlight critical themes from the interviews, which worked well for this study.

Beyond the coronavirus pandemic being an obstacle in fine-tuning the dissertation, I encountered several problems in trying to complete this work. The most obvious was trying to balance teaching with research and writing. I teach in Pietermaritzburg, and travel to KwaMashu was time-consuming. It was compounded by the fact that potential participants would agree to an interview and then postpone or decline at the last minute, sometime after I got to their homes. I would have to reschedule and go there once again. One of the unexpected problems I encountered was potential interviewees who assumed (or directly suggested) that I should give them 'something' to allow me to interview them. For ethical reasons, I could not, and did not do so.

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<sup>42</sup> The land claim follows a historic settlement, the Cato Manor Land Claims Settlement Agreement, which was signed in May 1997. The restitution agreement provided for financial compensation, alternative land in Cato Manor and, where feasible, restoration of the original land holding. 'Key Dimensions (Land Reform)', [www.cmda.org.za/landreform.htm](http://www.cmda.org.za/landreform.htm), accessed 16 January 2015.

## Theoretical framework

This study encompasses several critical theories: race, class, identity, place, and community. One of its major contributions is its examination of the notion of identities.<sup>43</sup> I subscribe to the social constructionist position that people have multiple identities, with some ‘primary’ identities.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, identity is not static, but rather a relationship that revolves around how an individual identifies him or herself in relation to others and is therefore continuously negotiated in response to changing economic, political, and social factors.<sup>45</sup> The state imposed legal racial categorisation on all South Africans and this had important consequences. As Jenkins observes, identifications have ‘material consequences’<sup>46</sup> and in South Africa state categorisation carried legal weight and limited choices in a racially hierarchical structure. Yet, the different “races” were also heterogeneous in terms of class, language, religion, and ethnicity and this intersection of identities is an important part of the story.

The fact of Africans being categorised as homogeneous as a racial category by the state should not lead to the assumption that there were no tensions or conflicts in the townships because people were of the same race, and that all such interactions and problems were between Africans and “Whites” and “Indians” as racial groups. As Jamieson points out, ‘being labelled does not necessarily mean that people take on the label as an aspect of self-identity. It also does not necessarily mean that people see themselves as sharing something with others so labelled or as belonging to a meaningful social group with others so labelled’.<sup>47</sup>

Race, social scientists point out, is not a biological but a human construction. This is well argued by anti-racist scholars such as Mitchell, who asserts that the human race is the only race, and any notion of race is a myth.<sup>48</sup> Beasley argues that biological differences between “races” are far smaller than differences within each “race” in terms of morphology, intelligence, and genome.<sup>49</sup> Racial ideas are thus

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<sup>43</sup> See A. Brah, “Non-binarised identities of similarity and difference”, in M. Wetherell, M. LaFleche & R. Berkeley (eds), *Identity, ethnic diversity and community cohesion*. (London: Sage, 2007); A. Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting identities* (London: Routledge, 1996); and R. Jenkins, “Categorization. Identity, social process and epistemology”, *Current Sociology*, 48, 3, 2000: 7-25.

<sup>44</sup> Jamieson, “Theorising Identity, Nationality and Citizenship”, 2002.

<sup>45</sup> In part two of his book co-authored with Rogers Brubaker, 59–90, Cooper discusses the concept of identity in Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, (California: University of California Press, 2004); and Brah, ‘Non-binarised identities’, 141.

<sup>46</sup> R. Jenkins, “Categorization. Identity, Social Process and Epistemology”, *Current Sociology*, 48, 3, 2000: 7-25, 9.

<sup>47</sup> L. Jamieson, “Theorising Identity, Nationality and Citizenship: Implications for European Identity”, *Sociologia*, 34, 6, 2001: 507-532, Available at <http://pisonromain.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/europeanidentity.pdf>. Accessed 12 January 2015, 514.

<sup>48</sup> J.P. Mitchell, *The Jig Is Up. We are One. Race is a Hoax that Fails American Education*. (New York: IUniverse, 2010), 23.

<sup>49</sup> For a more detailed analysis of race see E. Beasley, *Victorian Reinvention of Race. New Racisms and the Problem of Grouping in the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 2010); M. Omi and H. Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States From the 1960s to the 1990s*. Second Edition (New York: Psychology Press, 1994), 56; D. Williams, *Race, Ethnicity and Crime. Alternative Perspectives* (Arizona: Algora Publishing, 2012), 6; Fritz G. Polite and Billy Hawkins, *Sport, Race, Activism, and Social Change. The Impact of Dr. Harry*

historically formed and are used differently in different settings. This is crucial in understanding how the differential arrival of Indians and Africans in the city, their geographical juxtaposition, and competition for scarce resources generated race tensions.

While the apartheid state sought to restructure society based on race, class remained important in how people were positioned within particular racial groups and how it influenced access to resources. Class identification was intertwined with race, religion, gender, and other identities.<sup>50</sup> Class experiences cannot be ignored and changing class relations over time as well as everyday relations between classes must be studied. Factoring in class helped provide an understanding of why some residents of Mkhumbane were eager to relocate to KwaMashu and others were not. It underscored the social distinctions among Africans who did not constitute a homogenous group.

There is a longstanding debate in the social sciences on structure and agency: to what extent are individual lives controlled and shaped by external events, and to what extent do people play a role in shaping events in their lives? Among others, Williams and Jenkins argue that when we emphasise 'agency', we tend to see historical processes as rational beings' subjective outcomes. Such a perspective also ignores the unequal distribution of cultural, social, and other capital and power relations. Emphasis on structure leads to identity being seen as the result of membership of particular groups, whether by choice or imposed. Giving equal primacy to structure and agency results in identities being seen as being mutually constituted in the interaction between individuals.<sup>51</sup> As Jamieson argues, 'the adequacy of attempts at balancing or dissolving the duality, "structure" and "agency", is therefore sometimes judged by success in both acknowledging agency and explaining constraints on people's identity making capacities'.<sup>52</sup> Clearly, the apartheid state imposed numerous structural constraints on people's life chances and options, but within those structural barriers, ordinary Africans, especially women, found ways to exercise agency to carve a niche in the urban economy.

Place and community are central to this study as the subjects lived in bounded places, first in Cato Manor and then the townships of relocation. Did space and proximity generate community? The concept of community can be used in several ways. It can refer to a 'fixed and bounded territory' or a type of relationship to refer to people who have 'a sense of shared identity'.<sup>53</sup> Cato Manor residents lived in a

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*Edwards' Scholarship and Service* (Georgia: Cognella Press, 2011); B. Hawkins, *The New Plantation. Black Athletes, College Sports, and Predominantly White NCAA Institutions* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); and J.M. Hoberman, *Darwin's Athletes. How Sport Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

<sup>50</sup> See S. Lawler, "Getting Out and Getting Away. Women's Narratives of Class Mobility" in *Feminist Review* 63, 1999: 3-24; Rosemary Crompton and John Scott, "Class Analysis. Beyond the Cultural Turn", in Fiona Devine, Mike Savage and John Scott, (eds), *Rethinking Class. Culture, Identities and Lifestyles* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 186-203.

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion on this concept, see Jenkins, *Social Identity*, 1996; and R. Williams, *Making Identity Matter. Identity Society and Social Interaction* (Durham: Sociology Press, 2000).

<sup>52</sup> Jamieson, "Theorising Identity", 2001, 520.

<sup>53</sup> A.P. Cohen, *The symbolic construction of community* (London: Tavistock, 1985), 12.

closely confined space, shared common experiences, and formed groups to deal with challenges communally. Was this the glue that held these communities together?

The sense in which community is used in most discourses is connected to place and space. Doreen Massey tells us that space is not fixed but dynamic: ‘it is never finished; never closed.... [We must] uproot “space” from that constellation of concepts in which it has so unquestionably so often been embedded (stasis; closure; representation) and to settle it among another set of ideas (heterogeneity; relationality; ... liveliness indeed) where it releases a more challenging political landscape.’<sup>54</sup> Spaces are experienced differently by those who occupy them – men, women, young and old. What seems to the outsider to constitute community may be experienced differently by those on the inside.<sup>55</sup> The fluidity of space and internal differentiation does not mean that space did not matter but that it should not be taken as an unproblematic given. The residents of Mkhumbane created a vibrant community under harsh conditions. They shaped their lives, leisure and socio-economic activities around the communal structures and activities that they created.

### **Structure of the dissertation**

This introduction outlined the inspiration for undertaking this study and its broad aims and purposes. It reviewed the existing literature, and discussed the study’s contribution to that body of literature. The critical questions that it sought to answer were stated, as well as the theoretical framework employed. In addition to this introduction, the thesis comprises of six other chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter One, ‘Cato Manor - from the Colonial Period to Apartheid, 1890s to 1950s,’ is primarily based on secondary sources, and traces the settlement of Cato Manor and its residents’ social, economic, and political lives from the colonial to the early apartheid period. Aside from political and economic concerns, those aspects of life that residents regarded as constituting “community”, such as voluntary organisations, places of worship, schools, family life, and leisure time activities, were investigated. Of particular interest is the factors that ushered in the 1949 racial riots.

Chapter Two, ‘Daily Life and Politics in Mkhumbane,’ examines how people remember life in Mkhumbane in all its manifestations, including living conditions, working lives, gender arrangements, leisure-time activities, education, and the inter-racial relations and coexistence between Africans, Indians, and other groups. This chapter seeks to establish whether there are differences in how the past

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<sup>54</sup> D.B. Massey, *For Space* (California: Sage Publications, 2005) 9.

<sup>55</sup> See J. Silk, “The dynamics of community, place, and identity”, *Environment and Planning A*, 31, 1, 1999: 5-17; G. Day, *Community and everyday life* (New York: Routledge, 2006); and G. Delanty, *Community. Key Ideas* (London: Routledge, 2003).

is remembered as opposed to the documentary evidence. In other words, whether there was a counter-memory that may perhaps remember that period as one of interracial harmony.

Chapter Three, 'Remembering the Mkhumbane "riots" of 1949, 1959, and 1960,' examines three notorious disturbances which shaped the history of Mkhumbane in the mid-twentieth century. There is a wide range of scholarly publications on the 1949 and 1959 disturbances, although the latter receives less attention than the former. The 1960 event is usually mentioned in passing and has not received significant attention, most likely because both the state and Mkhumbane lost this "battle". Ten years apart, these riots are remembered and interpreted in various submissions. Part of retrieving the plot of these stories involves recollections by the former residents. African-oriented newspapers such as *Ilanga laseNatal* and *UmAfrika* reported widely on the disturbances, and they served to corroborate and provide additional information to the memories. This chapter discusses the causes, and describes what happened, who was involved, and the aftermath of the three disturbances.

Chapter Four, "'Meleko! Meleko! Meleko!': "Illicit" Liquor, Police Raids and Resistance at Mkhumbane,' discusses memory and recollections of law enforcement and municipal raids in Mkhumbane. Central to the raids are the stories of various home-brewed distils widely brewed in Mkhumbane by women. This is integral because home-brewed liquor attracted raids as it was deemed illicit to brew and sell under municipal laws. The stories of social and political resistance to raids are discussed in this chapter.

As the title denotes, Chapter Five, "'Where to from our home?" – Mkhumbane residents' experiences of "forced" removals' focuses on telling the Mkhumbane stories of forced removals. These recollections by former residents discuss how the message of forced removals was interpreted by residents, the resistance/response to removals, and the process of destroying and applying the removals.

Chapter Six, '*Ikhaya Elisha* ("KwaMashu our new home"): Housing, communal facilities, and transport dilemmas!!!' focuses on lives in the new townships. Residents experienced sharp increases in living expenses as workers were forced to travel long distances to work and many lost the means to earn a living through informal work. Women, in particular, were unable to supplement their income through informal employment. The chapter focuses on how the broader structural changes impacted residents and their descendants. It focuses on how this impacted service institutions in the new townships and educational opportunities. The chapter also examines whether smaller homes constrained family size, whether families were split as a result of removals, the impact on marriage patterns and choice of partners, and how religious practices, sporting activities, and leisure-time activities were affected. The information in this chapter was sourced from newspapers and recollections of former residents.

The final chapter, 'Summary and Conclusions', summarises this study's main findings against the hypothesis.

## Chapter One

### Historical setting: Cato Manor / Mkhumbane

Recently, I was at the Workshop (a shopping mall in the Durban city centre) to catch a taxi and when I arrived it had around four or five people inside. I then asked them if the taxi was going to uMkhumbane. They responded and said ‘No, it is not going there, it is going to Chesterville’. I realised that these people are still young and have less information. Umkhumbane has a lot of history.

- Babo Mbatha, Chesterville.<sup>56</sup>

Cato Manor, as it is known today, and its surrounding areas are not the historically-rich Mkhumbane that elders such as Mr Mbatha described. For them, Mkhumbane holds vivid memories and experiences that the younger generation is oblivious of. In some oral history traditions, the area that came to be known as Cato Manor to some and Mkhumbane to others is reported to have been settled by African communities during the pre-colonial era. The city of Durban was initially established as a trading settlement in 1824 and provided a platform from which Europeans expanded inwards in south-east Africa.<sup>57</sup> These English settlers originally occupied Port Natal and were concentrated around the harbour and the Berea, which is on the ridge, a few kilometres to the west of the city.

Boers, the term that refers to European settlers of Dutch and French Huguenot background whose descendants are the Afrikaners, who had fled the Cape in the 1830s in response to what they saw as oppressive British policies, arrived in Natal and declared the Voortrekker Natalia Republic in 1839. This republic was short-lived as it threatened the hegemony of the British, who feared that the Boers might forge an alliance with other European powers, and so annexed Natal in 1843.<sup>58</sup>

The city that developed around the port was known as Port Natal to Portuguese and Dutch sailors and the British when they first arrived, while the Zulu referred to it as eThekweni which translates to ‘the horns of a bull, as seen in the curvature of the bay’.<sup>59</sup> It was renamed Durban in 1835 after Lieutenant-General

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<sup>56</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Anna Christina Bjorvig, “Durban 1824-1910: The Formation of a Settler Elite and its Role in the Development of a Colonial City”, PhD thesis, University of Natal, 1994, xiii. It is reported that the first small group arrived in 1823 and the larger group in 1824. See Beverley Ellis who writes that the ‘small group of white hunter-traders’ arrived in 1824. Beverley Ellis, “White Settler Impact on the Environment of Durban 1845 - 1870”, in *South Africa’s Environmental History: Cases & Comparisons* (eds) Stephen Dovers, Ruth Edgecombe and Bill Guest (Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers, 2002), 34.

<sup>58</sup> Bjorvig, “Durban 1824-1910”, xiii.

<sup>59</sup> Jenni Karlsson, “Reforming the City School in South Africa: Mapping the History from Apartheid Durban to Post-Apartheid eThekweni”, In Pink W.T., Noblit G.W. (eds) *International Handbook of Urban Education*. Springer International Handbooks of Education, 19, 2007. Available at [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5199-9\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-5199-9_5), Accessed 27 June 2018, 104.

Sir Benjamin D'Urban, one time Governor of the Cape Colony<sup>60</sup> and was declared a borough by the British government in 1854.

### The 'Cato Manor' and 'Mkhumbane' debacle

George Christopher Cato, after whom Cato Manor Farm<sup>61</sup> was named, was one of the earliest settlers in Natal and owned extensive land around the Durban bay. The British expropriated Cato's land for military purposes and in return compensated him with 5 000 acres of land beyond the Berea, approximately seven kilometres west of central Durban.<sup>62</sup> According to Maharaj, the land was of variable quality and consisted 'partly of a marshy, animal-infested jungle'.<sup>63</sup> Popke describes the land as 'undulating'.<sup>64</sup> Cato hoped to settle newly arriving White settlers on the land, but Whites regarded the area as 'undesirable' as it had neither the sea views nor cooling sea breezes of the coastal areas.<sup>65</sup> In contemporary times, the area is roughly defined by Bellair Road and Jan Smuts Highway in the east, the N3 highway in the north, the N2 Ring Road in the west, and Mkhumbane River in the south.<sup>66</sup>

Cato was a prominent early settler, being a trader and customs official, and in 1854 he was appointed as the first mayor of Durban. Cato Manor was named after him and the family farmed on land for many decades.<sup>67</sup> Towards the end of Cato's life and following his death most of the land in his estate was sold

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<sup>60</sup> Sir Benjamin D'Urban (1777-1849) arrived in the Cape as Governor in 1834 and shaped frontier policy. He opposed the expansion of Boers into the interior and ruled that they fell under British legal control, although the Boers rejected this. He also annexed large tracts of African land in the Eastern Cape. This endeared him to White settlers who renamed the town of Port Natal, Durban after him in 1835. J.L. Smail, *From the Land of the Zulu Kings* (Durban: A.J. Pope, 1979), ii.

<sup>61</sup> In his thesis on the history of Cato Manor Edwards describes the area of Cato Manor Farm as an 'official title for all the land bordered by the white suburbs of Bellair and Seaview, white residential areas along the Berea Ridge, the Indian residential areas of Sydenham and African township of Chesterville and the African freehold areas of Chateau and Good Hope Estates'. See I. L. Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home. African Shantytown Society in Cato Manor Farm, 1946 – 1960", PhD thesis, University of Natal, 1989, vi. In today terms, the area 'stretched from the University of Natal (Howard Campus) as far as Westville, Mayville and Hillary' (The North Central and the South Central Metropolitan Substructure Councils of the Durban Metropolitan area (first applicant) and the Inner West Local Council of the Durban Metropolitan Council (second applicant) in the matter of an Application in terms of Section 34 of the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994).

<sup>62</sup> Edwards, "Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future," 416.

<sup>63</sup> Brij Maharaj, "The Residential Segregation in South African Cities: The Group Areas Act in Durban," Paper presented at the XV Indian Geography Congress, November 4–6, 1993, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, 3.

<sup>64</sup> E. Jeffrey Popke, "Modernity's Abject Space: the Rise and Fall of Durban's Cato Manor", *Environment and Planning A*, 33, 2001: 737 -752, 743.

<sup>65</sup> J.F. Butler-Adam and W.M. Venter, Occasional Paper No. 11, "The Present Residents of Cato Manor: Gathered Fragments of a Dispensed Community," Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Durban-Westville, Durban, June 1984, 12. The authors write that Cato Manor is identified as 'a large, rather vague area lying west of the Berea Ridge, north of the Umbilo River, and south of Brickfield'. (J.F. Butler-Adam and W.M. Venter, *The Present Residents of Cato Manor: Gathered Fragments of a Dispersed Community* (Durban: Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Durban-Westville, Occasional Paper 11, 1984), 14.

<sup>66</sup> J.F. Butler-Adam and W.M. Venter, Occasional Paper No. 11, "The Present Residents of Cato Manor: Gathered Fragments of a Dispensed Community," (Durban: Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Durban-Westville, June 1984), 12.

<sup>67</sup> Jackson, 'Cato Manor Revisited', 24.

to Whites and Indians, who were mostly market gardeners.<sup>68</sup> Cato would not have foreseen that his estate would, by the 1930s, become one of the most fiercely contested peri-urban areas in South Africa, mainly between Indian landlords, and Indian and African shacklords<sup>69</sup> as the rapidly urbanising African population sought accommodation in the city.

This area is known interchangeably as Cato Manor and Mkhumbane,<sup>70</sup> the latter after the stream that ran through the estate.<sup>71</sup> Iain Edwards provides the following explanation in his doctoral dissertation on Mkhumbane:

African shantytown residents gave the name to the area of densest shack settlement. This area lay on Booth Road's side from the intersection of Booth and Bellair roads up to Chesterville. The name Mkhumbane came from the Mkhumbane stream, which flows through the area. The precise reason for and time when the stream became known as the Mkhumbane is not known. However, it is interesting to note that the remnants of a pre-Shakan iron foundry and Shakan-period pottery have been located in the area. Furthermore, there is another Mkhumbane river: where the Zulu clan settled in northern Zululand.<sup>72</sup>

Various sources support Edwards' version of the Mkhumbane River in northern Zululand. Zulu, the son of Malandela, regarded as the founder of the Zulu royal dynasty, was said to have settled in the Mkhumbane River basin, and his grave is close to the Mkhumbane Spruit on a slope of the Ntonjaneni hills.<sup>73</sup> Now a tourist site, the homesteads of various Zulu kings were built in this area which is located close to Ulundi, at one time the capital of Zululand.<sup>74</sup> Shaka, regarded as the king who forged the Zulu nation, built his capital on the banks of 'the Mhodi, a small tributary of Mkhumbane River in the Babanango district' in Zululand.<sup>75</sup> Senzangakhona, the father of Shaka, was the last 'inkosi of the Zulus whose world was bounded by the basin of hills framing Mkhumbane valley'.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Edwards, "Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future", 416.

<sup>69</sup> A peculiarly South African term that refers to shack dwellers who rented out their shacks to others.

<sup>70</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", vi.

<sup>71</sup> Stefan Goodwin, *Africa's Legacies of Urbanization: Unfolding Saga of a Continent* (Lanham, Md: Lexington Books, 2006), 266.

<sup>72</sup> Iain Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", vi. Shaka Zulu was the king of the Zulu people between 1818 and 1828. The Zulu people now form the majority of people living in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

<sup>73</sup> J.J. Oberholster, *The Historical Monuments of South Africa* (Cape Town: Rembrandt van Rijn Foundation For Culture, 1972), 272. Located a few kilometres from Ulundi, the area where Zulu was buried is now a tourism site known as EMakhosini Valley and it houses the graves of Zulu kings such as Nkosinkulu, Phunga, Ndaba, Senzangakhona, Zulu, Mageba and Jama. The area is at the heart of the the history of the Zulu kingdom and is sacred.

<sup>74</sup> Ian Knight, *The Zulu War 1879* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2003), 12.

<sup>75</sup> Sherri Ferguson, *My Heritage ABC, Volume 1* (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2013), 70.

<sup>76</sup> Ian Knight, *Companion to the Anglo-Zulu War* (Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Military, 2008), 237.



While Edwards makes the point that a part of Cato Manor was known as Mkhumbane, most of my interviewees and several other studies suggest that most Africans referred to the whole of Cato Manor as Mkhumbane. Erlmann states that Mkhumbane was the name that Zulu-speakers gave to Cato Manor.<sup>77</sup> It was thus the ‘unofficial’ name for Cato Manor. Mkhumbane was ‘commonly referred to as Cato Manor by White South Africans’.<sup>78</sup> La Hausse also writes that the shantytown was ‘officially’ known as Cato Manor but the residents were determined to call it Mkhumbane.<sup>79</sup>

Sighart Bourquin, Director of Bantu Administration in Durban, stated that the UMkhumbane stream gave Cato Manor its Zulu name ‘Mkhumbane’.<sup>80</sup> A reputable Zulu linguist and military historian, Bourquin was the Chief Director of the Port Natal Administration Board from 1950 to 1979. During his tenure, Africans were moved from Cato Manor to KwaMashu, and he played a critical role in this regard. Given the consensus around the use of Mkhumbane amongst Africans, this dissertation will use this name, although it is sometimes used interchangeably with Cato Manor. In most cases, the subsequent chapters use Mkhumbane as most interviewees referred to the area by that the name.

### **Indian landownership in Mkhumbane, 1890s - 1940s**

Indian settlement in Mkhumbane dates back to the late nineteenth century. Indian landowners were ‘a complex and a culturally rich’ group comprising ‘both a growing middle-class professional and trading stratum and from the Indian working class which had quickly understood the value of the immovable property.’<sup>81</sup> The area was subdivided into smallholdings in 1914, which were sold to landowners who, in turn, leased them to Indian market gardeners, mainly ex-indentured labourers who arrived from 1860 to work on the colony’s sugar estates.<sup>82</sup> Indentured Indians who had completed their contracts, their descendants, and ‘passenger’ Indians, the term that refers to Indians who came on their own accord outside of the indentured system, dominated “non-European” trade in the city, as retail traders, hawkers, and

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<sup>77</sup> Veit Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), 83.

<sup>78</sup> P.L. Bonner, *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality, and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa*. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989), 195.

<sup>79</sup> Paul la Hausse, *Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A History of Liquor in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988), 61.

<sup>80</sup> Bourquin, ‘30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots’, 5. Mkhumbane with an (e) at the beginning can be literally understood to imply (at)Mkhumbane.

<sup>81</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 416.

<sup>82</sup> Allan Jackson, ‘Cato Manor Revisited,’ *Metrobeat*, Issue 87, April 2006, 24. Between 1860 and 1911, 152 000 Indian indentured workers arrived in Natal to work mainly on the colony’s sugar estates. After completing their indenture, most settled in and around Durban and Pietermaritzburg where they took to market gardening and supplied local markets. See Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed, *Inside Indian Indenture. A South African Story 1860-1911*, (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2010) for a discussion of Indian indenture in Natal and I.G. Halliday, “The Indian Market Gardeners of the Peri-Durban Area”, M.A. dissertation, University of Natal, 1940, for a discussion on market gardening.

market gardeners who supplied most of the city's fresh produce, while White traders were concentrated in the 'larger scale commerce of the port, municipality and industry'.<sup>83</sup>

Indian market gardeners in Cato Manor, Springfield, and the suburbs around Durban ensured that the city had an adequate supply of fresh fruit and vegetables.<sup>84</sup> Cato Manor was one of Durban's primary sources of fresh fruit and vegetables to that extent that the recollections of both Indian and White residents were of 'images of lines of carefully tended vegetable patches, groves of sweetly smelling avocado, mango and pawpaw plantations and the daily early morning clatter of donkey carts carrying produce to the city market'.<sup>85</sup>

Control of urban settlement in Natal was directed more at Indians than Africans in the late nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century because they were present in much larger numbers and were seen as direct competitors by White traders and workers alike.<sup>86</sup> This would change after World War One as African urbanisation began to take effect. Durban was South Africa's second-largest city after Johannesburg and it attracted rural Africans in search of employment.<sup>87</sup> Like other cities in the country, Durban instituted urban segregation policies that aimed to restrict Indians and prevent African settlement and land ownership through the Durban System, the Native Beer Act, pass laws, and many other decrees. Initially, this was disguised as "sanitation" rather than racism.<sup>88</sup>

### **African urbanisation**

The African population in Durban numbered around 19 000 in 1904. The number of African males employed in the city rose from 1 777 in 1871 to 18 653 in 1904 (there were around 700 women).<sup>89</sup> The last decade of the nineteenth century witnessed a small number of Africans moving to the growing city

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<sup>83</sup> For a discussion on Indian trade in nineteenth-century Natal, see Goolam Vahed and Surendra Bhana, *Crossing Space and Time in the Indian Ocean: Early Indian Traders in Natal - A Biographical Study*, (Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2015); S. Bhana, "Indian trade and traders in colonial Natal", In *Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony*, Edited by B. Guest and J. Sellers (Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press, 1985): 235-264; and Goolam Vahed, "Control and Repression: The Plight of Indian Hawkers and Flower Sellers in Durban, 1910-1948", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 32.1 (December, 1999): 19-48.

<sup>84</sup> See Goolam Vahed, "'A Public Nuisance': The Victoria Street Squatters' Market in Durban, 1910-1934," *South African Historical Journal*, 40 (May 1999): 130-153 and Bill Freund, *Insiders and Outsiders. The Indian Working Class of Durban 1910-1990*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995:11-28.

<sup>85</sup> Edwards, "Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future", 416.

<sup>86</sup> See M.W. Swanson, "The Durban System: Roots of Urban Apartheid in Colonial Natal," *African Studies* 35, 3-4 (1976): 159-176 and M.W. Swanson, 'The Asiatic Menace: Creating Segregation in Durban, 1870-1900,' *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 16, 3, (1983): 401-421.

<sup>87</sup> Michael R. Mahoney, *The Other Zulus: The Spread of Zulu Ethnicity in Colonial South Africa* (USA, Duke University Press, 2012), 119.

<sup>88</sup> Edwards, "Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future," 415. Also Paul La Hausse, "The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, The Ematsheni and Popular Culture in Durban, 1902-1936", MA dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1984 and J. Lambert, "The Impoverishment of the Natal Peasantry, 1893-1910", in *Enterprise and Exploitation in a Victorian Colony. Aspects of the Economic and Social History of Colonial Natal*, E.B. Guest and J. Sellers (eds). (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1985): 287-307.

<sup>89</sup> Mahoney, *The Other Zulus*, 119.

of Durban. La Hausse writes that these mainly male workers were channelled into four main labour markets: ‘Togt workers, washermen, rickshaw-pullers and monthly workers.’ Of these, the state feared the presence of ‘togt’ (casual) workers the most because they:

... seemed to embody those forces most subversive to the form of state. The disquieting freedom of the togt worker was based on the fact that he was employed daily although still subject to the dictates of capital, enjoyed comparatively greater freedom of movement and power to bargain for higher wages.<sup>90</sup>

Togt workers formed the largest group of African workers, and most worked on the Durban docks and in overland transport of goods.<sup>91</sup> Africans employed in and around the docks increased from an estimated 12 000 to 31 400 workers after World War II.<sup>92</sup> Other urban African workers included hawkers, police, rickshaw-pullers, sanitary workers, and *Amawasha* (laundrymen), whilst the small number of African women worked as domestic servants or as beer-brewers.<sup>93</sup> According to the 1936 census, of 43 500 employed Africans in the city, 14 121 (32 percent) were domestics, 4 781 were ‘traders’, 4 369 worked in industry, and the rest were ‘unskilled miscellaneous’.<sup>94</sup>

The influx of Africans (and Indians) to Durban by the mid-twentieth century is reflected in the following table.

**TABLE ONE: Racial Composition of Durban's Population**

YEAR	Whites	Coloureds	Indians	Africans	Total
1904	31 302	1 980	15 631	18 929	67 842
1911	31 903	2 497	17 015	17 750	69 165
1921	46 113	4 000	16 400	29 011	93 515
1931	59 250	4 240	17 860	43 750	125 100
1936	88 065	7 336	80 384	63 762	239 547
1949	129 683	11 280	123 165	109 543	373 771

**Source: University of Natal, *The Durban Housing Survey* (Durban: University of Natal, 1952), 35**

<sup>90</sup> Paul la Hausse. “Drinking in a Cage: The Durban System and the 1929 Riots,” *African Perspective*, 20, 1982: 63-75, 64.

<sup>91</sup> Mahoney, *The Other Zulus*, 119.

<sup>92</sup> Maylam. P, *The People’s City: African Life in Twentieth Century Durban*, (Portsmouth, NH: University of Natal Press Heinemann, 1996), 16.

<sup>93</sup> Mahoney, *The Other Zulus*, 119.

<sup>94</sup> Goolam Vahed, “Control of African Leisure Time in Durban in the 1930s”, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 18 (1998): 67-123, 69.

This table shows that despite the efforts of the local and national state to prevent African settlement in urban areas, this proved impossible. Nevertheless, the local state failed to take any steps to meet the crisis head-on. As the number of women and children increased in urban areas, ‘the difficulties of sustaining a permanent household became more pressing’,<sup>95</sup> but also harder as the state was determined to prevent Africans from having a permanent foothold in the city. According to a 1950s report in a local newspaper, the DCC ‘paid scant heed to the settlement of homeless Natives’ and remained ‘indifferent’ even when Mkhumbane grew at a rapid pace, crime increased, and disease became ‘rampant’.<sup>96</sup> Apart from the creation of Lamontville in 1934, ‘very little was done’ to provide family housing.<sup>97</sup>

White minority governments had historically made a special effort to keep African women out of urban areas because of the understanding that their presence would inevitably lead to stable family units and a permanent African presence, demanding permanent residence. The Bantu Labour Act and Urban Areas Act, particularly Section 10, restricted African residence in urban areas. These restrictions were particularly onerous for women who found it virtually impossible to legally enter and live in South Africa’s cities. Nonetheless, African women found niches through which they acquired a sense of belonging in the city and vehemently resisted any attempts to curtail these activities.<sup>98</sup>

### **Barracks and Beer Halls**

At the turn of the twentieth century, the new African urban dwellers were housed in single-sex hostels, shack settlements, and outhouses.<sup>99</sup> The Native Location Act of 1904 made provision for areas to be set aside for locations, while the Native Beer Act of 1908 gave the local state monopoly over beer production, with the profits used to administer Africans. In other words, Africans paid for their own housing and administration.<sup>100</sup> The idea of barracks originated in Durban in the 1870s to house Indian indentured municipal labourers and in mining compounds in Kimberly to house African workers on the diamond mines. They comprised of rows of single-roomed ‘timber-framed structures with corrugated-iron roofs and walls’ which were without water, electricity, toilets, and even kitchens, but enabled employers to

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<sup>95</sup> Edwards and Nutall, “Seizing the moment”, 5.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Dark Chapter of the Cato Manor Slum is Closing’, *The Natal Daily News*, 21 May, 1956.

<sup>97</sup> Bagwandeem, “The Question of Indian Penetration”, 44.

<sup>98</sup> There are a number of important works on women and resistance during the period covered by this study. They include J.C. Wells, *We now Demand!: The History of Women 's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993); Cheryl Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (London: Onyx, 1982); and Katherine D. Sadler, “Trouble was Brewing”: South African Women, Gender Identity, and Beer Hall Protests, 1929 and 1959’ Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002.

<sup>99</sup> Goolam Vahed, “Control of African Leisure Time in Durban in the 1930s”, *Journal of Natal and Zulu History*, 18 1998: 67-123, 68.

<sup>100</sup> Vahed, “Control of African Leisure Time in Durban in the 1930s”, 69.

maintain control over workers.<sup>101</sup> These Acts, culminating in the Group Areas Act (GAA) of 1950, helped to ‘limit the movement of African labouring bodies in the name of an efficient macroeconomic policy and to reinforce a racial economy’ in which Africans languished at the bottom.<sup>102</sup>

There were barracks for African workers in Durban at the Point, Somtseu Road (known as Msizini Barracks to local African residents), the Central Togh Barracks, the Gaol Barracks, Dalton Road Barracks, and the Greyville South African Railways Barracks in Depot Road. There was a barracks for African women in Grey Street and another in Jacobs south of Durban.<sup>103</sup>

From early on, Durban's Whites were alarmed by the influx of Africans (and Indians) to the city and their opposition sometimes 'took the form of a violent racism.' In 1897, for example, there was opposition to the arrival of Mohandas K. Gandhi in Natal because local working-class Whites believed that several hundred Indian artisans accompanied him.<sup>104</sup> An early organisation formed to counter African urbanisation was the Natal Native Reform League. Founded in 1904, it argued that African industrial and domestic labour threatened ‘civic order and labour discipline’.<sup>105</sup> This ‘subversion’, it was held, was caused by instances of African men in shebeens ‘brawling and fighting’ and in the interests of the Borough, ‘radical change’ was implemented by the government.<sup>106</sup> An example of ‘brawling and fighting’ was the “riots” in the barracks at the Point, Durban Harbour in 1929, where 227 African labourers locked horns with the Borough police when the latter tried to arrest a barrack resident for being drunk, but were overpowered by the residents attempting to release their co-worker.<sup>107</sup>

The growing number of mixed-race urban communities prompted local state authorities to act to keep the different racial groups as far apart as possible. There was a strict division between White areas and African spaces to preserve Durban for ‘white civilization’. African labourers were necessary for urban areas but they were viewed as temporary visitors who should be confined to rural ‘reserves’ where so-called ‘native

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<sup>101</sup> Carlos Nunes Silva, *Urban Planning in Sub-Saharan Africa: Colonial and Post-Colonial Planning Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 63.

<sup>102</sup> Patrick Lynn Rivers, *Governing Hate and Race in the United States and South Africa* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 75.

<sup>103</sup> Joel Cabrita, *Text and Authority in the South African Nazareth Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 101.

<sup>104</sup> Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed, *The South African Gandhi. Stretcher-Bearer of Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 23-24.

<sup>105</sup> S.W. Swanson, “The Durban System”: Roots of Urban Apartheid in Colonial Natal,” *African Studies*, 1, 1975: 159-172, 159. Available from: [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/233450034\\_The\\_Durban\\_System\\_Roots\\_of\\_Urban\\_Apartheid\\_in\\_Colonial\\_Natal](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/233450034_The_Durban_System_Roots_of_Urban_Apartheid_in_Colonial_Natal), Accessed Dec 8, 2015.

<sup>106</sup> La Hausse, P. “Drinking in a Cage: The Durban System and the 1929 Riots,” *African Perspective*, 20, 1982: 63-75, 67.

<sup>107</sup> Mahoney, *The Other Zulus*, 120.

law still held sway'.<sup>108</sup> This assertion makes reference to the policy devised by Theophilus Shepstone, as Secretary of Native Affairs between 1853 and 1877, who created a system of 'reserves' in which Africans were administered according to customary law rather than the general law of the colony. They were meant to live in the reserves and move to urban areas only when their labour was required.

This view of racialising Durban was succinctly described in a 1904 report by James Stuart, Durban Magistrate, in a speech to the Durban Division of the Reform League:

[Africans] should, for many years to come, be regarded as mere visitors to the town ... and though they give us labour, they ... have no right to share in the same privileges that regular citizens do.... It seems to me it will always be a fair argument to say Natives may not do acts which tend to admit them, directly or indirectly, to the society of the more civilised race, simply because they do not understand the privileges sought. And if individuals do here and there understand, it is advisable and expedient in the interests of the community, whites as well as Coloured, whilst making allowances in favour of those who are educated, nor to accord them these rights, on the ground that they should nor dissociate themselves from the mass to which they belong.<sup>109</sup>

Legislation was enacted to deal with 'non-productive' individuals in the cities.<sup>110</sup> This was euphemistically referred to as influx control, and Durban had its own unique policies that came to be known as the "Durban System". It is essential to discuss this system in detail, as it influenced the rapid growth of Mkhumbane. The interviewees recounted many stories, which are discussed in the chapters that follow, regarding how they were blocked from entering Durban or confined to stipulated hours, and their treatment by *Ozinti* (the city police).<sup>111</sup> It was mainly because of these strict laws that those who had no permit to enter the city tended to end up in Mkhumbane, where it was difficult for the authorities to monitor and police them.

The authorities were concerned that uncontrolled African urbanisation was 'dangerous' and initiated the Durban System to 'control the influx of African people by requiring them to have permits to be in

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<sup>108</sup> E. Jeffrey Popke, "Modernity's Abject Space: the Rise and Fall of Durban's Cato Manor," *Environment and Planning A*, 33, 2001: 737-752, 739.

<sup>109</sup> Swanson, 1976, 168, quoted in Timothy Strode, *The Ethics of Exile: Colonialism in the Fictions of Charles Brockden Brown and J.M. Coetzee* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 141. One of the goals behind the formation of the Natal Reform League was to curb Africans' "social pestilence" and prevent the 'use of sidewalks by the Natives', M. Swanson, 1976, "The Durban system: roots of urban apartheid in colonial Natal," *African Studies* 35, 1976: 159-176, 167.

<sup>110</sup> Popke, "Modernity's Abject Space", 740.

<sup>111</sup> Interviewed by Brian Xaba about the name KwaMuhle and *oZinti*, Gaza, a policeman of African descent, said he was not sure of the meaning but he thought that: 'the place was called KwaMuhle because it is where people could get help and obtain jobs. When I first came here the place was called KwaMuhle. Some people referred to this place as KwaZinti. *OZinti* are the people who were responsible for the whole working process in KwaMuhle in such a way that if you were eligible to find work in Durban they were the ones who would issue decisions'. (Gaza, interviewed by Brian Xaba, 99/4200, Old Court Museum, Durban, 1).

town.’<sup>112</sup> Influx control restricted Africans from occupying areas termed White areas, such as the city’s West Street, Berea, and other areas alongside the sea. The local state viewed the Durban System as a ‘solution’ to answer the question of ‘who shall pay?’, thus enabling the government to tighten social control.<sup>113</sup> La Hausse writes that, in this sense, the “Durban System” became a model for administering urban Africans throughout South Africa.<sup>114</sup>

Under the Durban System, municipalities in Natal supplied *utshwala* (sorghum beer) to Africans and used the profits from that trade to govern them. Whelan points to several motives that underlay this policy. It enabled municipalities to control Africans’ drinking habits and leisure-time; restricted illegal beer-brewing; and raised revenue for various Native Affairs Departments (NADs), which was used to administer Africans.<sup>115</sup>

For David Hemson, the Durban System was an important part of the process of creating a segregated city by limiting and controlling African access to it. The narrative of African drunkenness rallied support for the policy.<sup>116</sup> Hemson suggests that the strategy of getting Africans to fund their governance commenced with the ‘toch’ system as early as the 1860s and 1870s. He explains that “toch” referred to ‘a day labor system and to work by day you had to register and once you are registered, the money was taken to pay for the police force so you could pay [for] yourself being bashed over the head and kicked out of the city.’<sup>117</sup> He added that this ‘repressive’ system was:

... particularly vicious in my view because it held back an inevitable development. And it also had this very odd side to it – it had a kind of paternal veneer, layer over it, which made it seem to most white people to be not vicious, and it seemed as though you could do something with it, but it was actually at the same time very effective at holding things back.<sup>118</sup>

Influx control, argued Rowley Arenstein, a South African Communist Party (SACP) member until the party’s banning in 1950, was an economic strategy that failed. For him, it was introduced because African labour was needed in the city, but ‘in the end, of course, it did not work’ because African urbanisation continued to grow rapidly.<sup>119</sup> However, T. Roche, an employee of the Influx Control Department,

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<sup>112</sup> Jackson, ‘Cato Manor Revisited’, 24.

<sup>113</sup> Swanson, “The Durban System”, 159.

<sup>114</sup> La Hausse, “Drinking in a Cage”, 67.

<sup>115</sup> Debbie Whelan, “eMatsheni: The central beer hall as social and municipal infrastructure in twentieth century Pietermaritzburg,” *Historia*, 60, 1, 2015: 75-91, 76. See also P. du Plooy, “Beer and Native Administration: An Introductory Study of the Beer Hall System in Pietermaritzburg, 1908–1937”, BA Honours (Historical Studies) University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1987.

<sup>116</sup> La Hausse, “Drinking in a Cage”, 67.

<sup>117</sup> Interview, Mr David Hemson, 99/4216, Old Court Museum, 18.

<sup>118</sup> Interview, Mr David Hemson, 99/4216, Old Court Museum, 19.

<sup>119</sup> Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 30.

commended the Durban System.<sup>120</sup> He argued that it was ‘very necessary’ and preferable to an ‘Open Sesame System’ because there was a ‘certain amount of accommodation and influx depended on the availability of such accommodation and the availability of employment.’<sup>121</sup> Roche dismissed the notion that people who worked at the Influx Control office took ‘personal, sort of perverse pleasure in declaring people out’.<sup>122</sup> Instead, they relied on certain criteria:

What service, what type of service did this man render to this city? - which, you had a look at in his reference book. What was his length of service with various employers? Was it concise, or did he work with employers for a considerable period? What category of service did he provide? Was he working in flats as a domestic, in commerce, in industry or as a builder or what have you ... it wasn’t “ordered out” – you merely requested him as I usually say, to “*hamba khaya, phumula*, (Zulu) “Go home, have a rest, look after the goats for six months and come and see us.” And that stage there was possibly vacancies for his type of service and then he was issued with a permit to seek work which was valid for a period of 14 days.<sup>123</sup>

The KwaMuhle Museum in Bram Fischer Road (formerly Ordinance Road) in central Durban is located on the site where the Native Administration was situated. The name KwaMuhle has an interesting genealogy. Interviewed by Brian Xaba about the name KwaMuhle and *oZinti*, Gaza, an African policeman, stated that he was not sure of the meaning but he thought that:

The place was called KwaMuhle because it is where people could get help and obtain jobs. When I first came here, the place was called KwaMuhle. Some people referred to this place as KwaZinti. Ozinti are the people who were responsible for the whole working process in KwaMuhle in such a way that if you were eligible to find work in Durban, they were the ones who would issue decisions.<sup>124</sup>

When Bourquin was interviewed, he stated that ‘KwaMuhle’ or ‘Muhle’ was ‘associated with labour, not only in Durban but in other local authorities countrywide. Some Transvaal towns’ labour offices were known in the past as ‘the KwaMuhle’ of that particular town. Having taken their lead from Durban, the idea was transferred by migrant labourers who asked, “where is your KwaMuhle here?” and when people responded, “what do you mean?”, they said, “Well, the place where one finds work”.<sup>125</sup> Bourquin added:

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<sup>120</sup> Mr T Roche also worked in the influx control department at KwaMuhle. He said he worked in most departments and most sections of Bantu Administration but worked for about a decade as an assistant welfare officer. His Zulu name was “*Madol’enkonyane*” because of his thin knees. He was also called “*Umlungu uthanda abantu*”, literally translated to ‘the white man that liked Africans’ and he was ‘very proud of that’. (Interview, Mr T. Roche, 99/4202, Old Court Museum, 23).

<sup>121</sup> Interview, Mr T. Roche, 99/4202, Old Court Museum, 1.

<sup>122</sup> Interview, Mr T. Roche, 99/4202, Old Court Museum, 1- 2.

<sup>123</sup> Interview, Mr T. Roche, 99/4202, Old Court Museum, 2.

<sup>124</sup> Gaza, interviewed by Brian Xaba, 99/4200, Old Court Museum, Durban, 1.

<sup>125</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, Durban, 17.



KwaMuhle arose for an excellent reason.... It served to commemorate the deeds of the department's first head, who brought six or seven thousand Zulus from the Transvaal goldmines to Natal at the outbreak of the Anglo Boer War. Moreover, that deed itself, which required a lot of preparation and great attention, was so appreciated by the Zulu people that for that deed alone, they gave Marwick, the man concerned, the Zulu name, "Muhle – The Good One". And then obviously when he became the first head of the Municipal Department of Bantu Administration, which at the time was housed in the old courthouse where the Local History Museum is situated today, according to Zulu custom, that building was known as "The Place of Muhle – KwaMuhle". Moreover, when Marwick, not Marwick personally but his successors and the department, was transferred from that building in which we are today, that building carried the name of the old Bantu Administration office, KwaMuhle – "The Place of the Good One."<sup>126</sup>

Arenstein,<sup>127</sup> however, disagrees with Bourquin's version that the name KwaMuhle was kept throughout the years because 'it protected the people'. He stated that 'the system was wrong, so nobody should have been stopped from coming into towns.... There should not have been all these drastic laws and certain people being protected and certain people not being protected'.<sup>128</sup>

With its beer monopoly secured, the municipality established a network of beer halls across the province to brew and sell beer to finance the Durban System. The first Municipal Beer Hall was opened in January 1909.<sup>129</sup> Prior to the Natal Native Beer Act of 1908 there was 'no efficient legal control over the manufacture and possession' of beer by Africans in Durban.<sup>130</sup> The Act gave municipalities 'the sole right to brew and sell beer within their boundaries'.<sup>131</sup> It stipulated that profits from the beerhalls were to be channelled into the Native Administration fund, which was later renamed the Native Revenue Account, and were to be used to establish locations, schools, hospitals, and other facilities for African urban dwellers', such as hostels, and finance the Native Administration departments in Durban and Pietermaritzburg.<sup>132</sup> This monopoly had a political agenda as the profits were used to exert control over

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<sup>126</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, Durban, 17.

<sup>127</sup> Rowley Arenstein was sent to Durban by the Communist Party in 1942 as an organiser. He remained in Durban where he got married. He then joined the army and was in Italy for two years. On his return in 1947 he established a law firm to fight apartheid legally. Arenstein is an interesting figure because as a CP member he did a great deal for African workers and trades unions, but in the 1980s he became an advisor to Mangosutho Buthelezi and the Zulu nationalist movement, Inkatha. Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 7.

<sup>128</sup> Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 6.

<sup>129</sup> Jackson, 'Cato Manor Revisited', 24.

<sup>130</sup> La Hausse, "Drinking in a Cage", 67.

<sup>131</sup> Jackson, 'Cato Manor Revisited', 24.

<sup>132</sup> Magubane *et al*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 105.

Durban's Africans.<sup>133</sup> The beer halls generated enormous profits and upon these profits rested the elaboration of the 'Durban System'.<sup>134</sup>

Roche explained that:

All the facilities there were provided in the townships; namely, welfare, sports, recreation, losses occurred on housing – were funds made available by the profits of sorghum beer sale, that sorghum beer was a great source of revenue. At that stage, the department owned three breweries and at least nine different beer halls, which were a great revenue source and provided great entertainment to the residents. It took a lot of sorghum beer to make a chap drunk because it could not be more than 3% [alcohol] by law. The brewery was situated here in Ordinance Road [renamed Bram Fischer Road after street name changes in Durban]. There was one in Sydenham, and there was one at South Coast Junction called 'Ndembesi'. At Ndembesi, we had a chap called Ike van der Schyff an old chap that had a specific knack of brewing, and people from all over Durban would prefer to go and buy that beer... When I have subsequently spoken to the locals and asked them what they think about the local beer, the youngsters would say, "Yes, it's fine". The older chaps would say, "Hey no, this Ijuba in packets ... is rubbish by comparison with the beer that the Council used to sell us in the old days where for sixpence we could get literally a half a gallon of beer and sit down and drink with our friends all afternoon." They used to drink and they used to call the beer halls, "Imajeni". Now you might ask why "Imajeni"? Virtually all over the Republic the beer halls are known as "Imajeni". Now, Imajeni means the place of the stones. Now, what happened was when the first beer hall was built by the Council in Grey Street, very, very many years ago in the eighteenth century, the contractors or the council or what have you, left a big pile of stones outside and did not bother to clear them and when a man would ask his friend, "Where are you going"? He would say, "Oh, I am going to the place of stones. I am going to Imajeni". Furthermore, the word "Imajeni" has stayed ever since.<sup>135</sup>

African beer-brewers refused to abandon their way of earning a living; hence, the authorities carried out regular police raids on African residences to 'stamp out the illegal brewing and selling of beer'.<sup>136</sup> Mkhumbane was one of the areas that were raided to stamp out the "illicit" beer trade. Abandoning the brewing and selling of beer would have meant the loss of a means of earning a living for many Africans, especially women. They did not stop despite regular police raids; brewing became a clandestine act in their backyards and shacks. Police raids and the fact that prices in municipal beer halls were higher 'led

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<sup>133</sup> La Hausse, "Drinking in a Cage," 67.

<sup>134</sup> La Hausse, "Drinking in a Cage", 67.

<sup>135</sup> Interview, Mr T. Roche, 99/4202, Old Court Museum, 24 – 27. The appropriate Zulu word is "eMatsheni" which literally translates to "the place with stones". "Imajeni" is not a correct word but its use is understood here since the writer was not a Zulu first language speaker. See Debbie Whelan, "eMatsheni: The central beer hall as social and municipal infrastructure in twentieth century Pietermaritzburg," *Historia*, 60, 1, 2015: 75-91.

<sup>136</sup> Jackson, 'Cato Manor Revisited', 24.

to great bitterness and outbreaks of violence'.<sup>137</sup> These included the 1929 beer hall riots, which began at the Durban Point barracks, then home to around 250 African labourers.<sup>138</sup> While there were multiple causes, the root cause was the African boycott of beer halls in protest against the municipality's monopoly.<sup>139</sup> These protests also saw the involvement of one of the first women active in the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), Josie Mpama, known by her struggle name of Josie Palmer.<sup>140</sup> The boycott included a pass-burning campaign and marked a turning point in 'the history of urban struggle in Durban.'<sup>141</sup> These "riots" would be re-enacted in the now well-known and chronicled Beer Riots, which gained heat in Mkhumbane in June 1959. They are discussed in detail in Chapter three.

While the network of hostels expanded, urbanisation intensified at a much more rapid pace, such that the barracks failed to accommodate all urban Africans and compelled many to organise their own shelter; hence the growth of slums.<sup>142</sup> Bagwandeem has estimated that of the 83 000 Africans in Durban in 1944: 36 200 were housed by their employers, either in servants' quarters on private properties or in compounds; about 16 400 were accommodated in municipal townships or hostels, and about 2 200 were housed in private licensed premises. This left about 28 000 people who had to find some kind of informal accommodation for themselves.<sup>143</sup>

Most of them made their way to Mkhumbane.

### **Africans in Mkhumbane, 1930s to 1950s**

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<sup>137</sup> Jackson, 'Cato Manor Revisited', 24. For an extensive discussion on beer halls see also P. la Hausse, *Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A History of Liquor in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988); P. la Hausse, "The Struggle for the City: Alcohol, the eMatsheni and Popular Culture in Durban 1902–1936", MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1984; P. la Hausse. "Beer, Social Control and Segregation: The Durban System and the 1929 Beerhall Riot", Honours thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1980; P. Du Plooy, "African Reaction to the Beerhalls", In J. Laband and R. Haswell (eds), *Pietermaritzburg 1838–1938: A New Portrait of an African City* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter, 1988), 142; and P. du Plooy, "Beer and Native Administration: An Introductory Study of the Beer Hall System in Pietermaritzburg, 1908–1937", BA Honours (Historical Studies) University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1987.

<sup>138</sup> Michael R. Mahoney, *The Other Zulus: The Spread of Zulu Ethnicity in Colonial South Africa* (USA: Duke University Press, 2012), 120.

<sup>139</sup> Apollon Borisovich Davidson, Irina Filatova, Valentin Gorodnov and Sheridan Johns, *South Africa and the Communist International: Socialist Pilgrims to Bolshevik Footsoldiers 1919 – 1930* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), 229.

<sup>140</sup> K.E. Sheldon, *Historical Dictionary of Women in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 192-3.

<sup>141</sup> La Hausse, "Drinking in a Cage", 68.

<sup>142</sup> Bagwandeem, "The Question of Indian Penetration", 44.

<sup>143</sup> Bagwandeem, "The Question of Indian Penetration", 55.

It was after the First World War that the rapidly urbanising African population began finding accommodation in Mkhumbane.<sup>144</sup> They were labelled as ‘temporary’ sojourners by the city officials, and included workers, traders, artisans, domestic workers, policemen, public servants and even ministers of religion.<sup>145</sup> Mngadi recounted how Mkhumbane came into being:

*... phela uMkhumbane uze udaleke nje kwakuye kuhlangu umuntu wesilisa nowesifazane bese bethola ingane baqube phansi komlungu. Ithi ingakhula ingane athi umlungu ‘ayi manje isikhulile ayifuneki la umthetho awuyivumeli’; bese beyofuna indawo emaNdiyeni eMkhumbane bakhe lelo thinyana bahlale khona waze wanela-ke uMkhumbane. Wawubona uMr Shum ukuthi awuhleli kahle uMkhumbane wayesewulungisa.*<sup>146</sup>

(The reason behind the creation of Mkhumbane was because of relationships. Once the couple’s child grew old, the White employer would tell the couple that the law does not permit the dwelling of children in the workplace or his house or hostel. The couple will then seek accommodation from Indian landlords at Mkhumbane. They would build the house made of corrugated iron. This process repeated itself until Mkhumbane became vast. Mr C.N. Shum foresaw that Mkhumbane was not a good place hence he tried to improve the area).

Mkhumbane’s residents formed an important component of Durban’s workforce as they constituted about twenty percent of city workers.<sup>147</sup> These squatters rented land from Indian landowners, with ‘enterprising squatters’ building larger shacks and subletting to other African tenants.<sup>148</sup> For example, one shack in Ridgeview Road consisted of 12 rooms which accommodated 14 family units with 71 people.<sup>149</sup> This symbolises the scramble for accommodation in urban areas as urbanward migration intensified.

There were more than 500 shacks in the area by 1932.<sup>150</sup> Due to its close proximity to the city of Durban, Mkhumbane functioned as ‘a dormitory area for urban-based workers’ who had come to seek work in the city.<sup>151</sup> The area housed a wide ‘spectrum of Africans’ from various social classes who came from rural areas from as far afield as the Cape Colony and northern Natal, and slums in areas such as the Bluff,<sup>152</sup> as well as Africans ejected from areas such as Overport and Puntans Hill by the DCC.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> ‘Dark Chapter of the Cato Manor Slum is Closing’, *The Natal Daily News*, 21 May, 1956.

<sup>145</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 1.

<sup>146</sup> M. Mngadi, KCAV 326, by C. Shum, KwaMashu, 11 August 1980 and 22 September 1980.

<sup>147</sup> Bernard Magubane, Philip Bonner, Jabulani Sithole, Peter Delius, Janet Cherry, Pat Gibbs and Thozama April, ‘The Turn to Armed Struggle’, in SADET, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa Volume 1 (1960 – 1970)* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2004), pp. 43-145, 107. According to its website [www.sadet.co.za](http://www.sadet.co.za), SADET ‘was established as a project Trust after President Thabo Mbeki indicated his concern about the paucity of historical material on the arduous and complex road to South Africa’s peaceful political settlement after decades of violent conflict’.

<sup>148</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 1-2.

<sup>149</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 2.

<sup>150</sup> Jackson, ‘Cato Manor Revisited’, 24.

<sup>151</sup> Butler-Adam and Venter, ‘The Present Residents of Cato Manor,’ 14.

<sup>152</sup> Bonner,  *Holding Ground*, 195.

<sup>153</sup> Maharaj, ‘The Residential Segregation,’ 3.

The rapid growth of the peri-urban slum and shack settlements was a result of the Council's failure to provide housing within the Borough and the high cost of land.<sup>154</sup> Areas outside of the Durban Borough were exempt from paying municipal rates and were outside of local government's control. The incorporation of eight areas into Durban in 1932, which extended its boundaries, was based on the Durban Boundaries Commission's recommendation and was supported by the DCC. In advocating for boundary expansion, the commission 'noted that the absence of effective Council control in the "Black belt" had permitted the erection of temporary shelters, huts, and shanties without adequate water supply, lighting, and sanitation'. Furthermore, the DCC wanted to promote industrial development and had to ensure that no other municipality controlled areas in the South Coast Junction, which was across the Umbilo River and beyond the Borough boundary. A number of factories were already established there.<sup>155</sup> In other words, as Bill Freund has written, the municipal boundary was extended 'both in order to allow for economic development and to control or eliminate undesirable, illegal and untaxed activities of all varieties and by inhabitants of all colours'.<sup>156</sup>

Mkhumbane was one of the areas incorporated into the Durban Borough. Before the incorporation of these 'added areas', the racial composition of Durban was such that 'approximately 48% of the population was of European descent, 34% of African descent, 14% of Indian descent, and the balance being Coloureds'.<sup>157</sup> The incorporation of these areas, most of them occupied by Africans and Indians, changed the city's racial composition. It necessitated the development of these "new" areas. "Development" implied building housing and infrastructure. Mkhumbane had poor housing and no water, electricity, clinics, schools, and other social services.

However, despite its incorporation, Mkhumbane remained a 'neglected area in terms of services and facilities'.<sup>158</sup> Yet, ironically, in terms of the city's by-laws, the incorporation meant that shacks were now deemed 'illegal'. The authorities could not enforce this provision because of the lack of adequate housing; hence, people continued to build shacks on land rented from Indian landowners who regarded subletting their land as more profitable than market gardening. As Freund has observed, 'market gardening gave way to shack renting, with the great expansion of the African urban population during and after World War II. This provided more remuneration for less effort than farming'.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Bangwandeem, "The Question of Indian Penetration", 35.

<sup>155</sup> Report of The Durban Boundaries Commission (1930: 5 and 13) and *The Durban Housing Survey* (1952: 28); cited in Bagwandeem, "The Question of Indian Penetration", 36 - 37.

<sup>156</sup> Bill Freund, *Insiders and Outsiders. The Indian Working Class of Durban 1910-1990* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995), 25.

<sup>157</sup> Bagwandeem, "The Question of Indian Penetration", 34. The author extracted information from The Durban Housing Survey, 1952: 35.

<sup>158</sup> Maharaj, "The Residential Segregation", 3.

<sup>159</sup> Freund, *Insiders and Outsiders*, 25.

The 1930s and 1940s not only marked a racial transition for Mkhumbane as a result of the influx of Africans, with market gardening giving way to shack lords, but there were several significant changes in the broader Durban area as ‘the local state underwent a change from a segregationist to an apartheid state’.<sup>160</sup> Edwards points to several such changes: incorporation of the ‘added areas’; the building of economic and sub-economic housing for Indians without developing infrastructure; anti-Indian legislation to curb Indian land purchases; and the mass influx of Africans to Mkhumbane.<sup>161</sup> This included women. Between 1936 and 1946 the number of African women in Durban doubled from 14 234 to 28 523.<sup>162</sup>

In addition to Mkhumbane, by the 1930s some Africans were housed in the Lamontville location which had been created and was controlled by the DCC as well as in Chesterville.<sup>163</sup> The DCC also acquired Umlazi Mission Reserve to the south of Durban in the 1930s, where it built a temporary Emergency Camp in 1952 to ease the overcrowding in Mkhumbane, before purchasing KwaMashu, north of Durban, in 1956. These areas were used to voluntarily and more often forcibly resettle Africans. Many Africans desired land ownership, and in the 1930s a small number of the *kholwa* (mission-educated Christian elite) class bought freehold land in the Chateau and Good Hope Estates adjoining Mkhumbane.<sup>164</sup> These “elites” would not be immune to the axe of forced removals.

During the course of the Second World War, Durban’s economy was stimulated by increased demand for locally manufactured goods and war materials, and this increased the need for African labour.<sup>165</sup> The anomaly was that this labouring class could not be accommodated in the city. The housing shortage became a “problem” for both employers and workers. It was under these circumstances, la Hausse observes, that large numbers of workers and their families settled in shacks in Mkhumbane.<sup>166</sup> There were around 30 000 squatters in Mkhumbane by 1945.<sup>167</sup> Just over a decade later, by the late 1950s, the area was home to around 100 000 Coloureds, Indians, and mainly Africans, most of whom lived in slum conditions.<sup>168</sup> This was in addition to a further 32 000 people living in adjoining African townships, such as Chesterville, established in the 1930s.<sup>169</sup> Walker writes that, by the end of the 1950s:

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<sup>160</sup> Bagwandeen, “The Question of Indian Penetration”, 31.

<sup>161</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 417.

<sup>162</sup> Maylam, *The People’s City*, 417.

<sup>163</sup> A. Manson, “From Cato Manor to Kwa-Mashu: Class Formation and Political Opposition in Kwa-Mashu Township, 1958-1980,” *Reality*, 13, 2, 1986: 10-15, 10.

<sup>164</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 417.

<sup>165</sup> Siphesihle Cyril Molefe, “Leisure and the making of KwaMashu 1958-1989”, MA Thesis, Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 2010, 16.

<sup>166</sup> La Hausse, *Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts*, 61.

<sup>167</sup> Jackson, ‘Cato Manor Revisited’, 25.

<sup>168</sup> Saleem Badat, *The Forgotten People: Political Banishment Under Apartheid* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2013), 142.

<sup>169</sup> Walker, *Landmarked*, 151-2.

Land ownership in Cato Manor was divided almost equally between Indian landowners ... and white owners and the City Council, on the other, but people classified as African constituted two-thirds of the population. The land ownership was distributed as follows: 48% Indian, 28% white, 22% Durban City Council and 2% 'Coloured'. Out of a total of 16 309 households, 10 000 were classified as African, 5692 Indian, 524 'coloured' and 193 white'.<sup>170</sup>

The Cato Manor Emergency Camp was built in 1952. In their work on the area, Maasdorp and Humphreys estimate that the camp comprised of 4 427 sites, each containing four rooms and a kitchen, and housing an estimated 4-5 families.<sup>171</sup> The camp had improved necessities such as street lighting, refuse removal, clinics and nursery schools, and sport and recreational services. These were provided by the DCC. Maasdorp and Humphreys point out that the population of the camp increased from 85 000 and 120 000 at its peak; it hence proved incapable of accommodating the ever-increasing population.<sup>172</sup> This resulted in further housing provision in the form of the Lamont Extension Economic Housing Scheme, which was completed in 1958/9, and provided 640 houses.<sup>173</sup>

The failure of the City Council to provide satisfactory housing for the African working class forced them to erect shacks wherever they could rent land or to rent housing cheaply.<sup>174</sup> The two themes cannot be separated. African urbanisation and housing developed together and must be examined 'within the wider context of the South African political economy'.<sup>175</sup> While on the one hand, shacks constituted a problem for the local council, they also saved the City Council and employers from housing the daily increasing number of workers.<sup>176</sup> Mkhumbane became the centre point as its rapid growth gave rise to an increased number of activities other than working in the city.

Durban's urban population's rapid growth became a significant topic on what the post-World War II society should look like. According to Edwards, several factors shaped the debate. This included...

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<sup>170</sup> Walker, *Landmarked*, 152.

<sup>171</sup> Maasdorp, G and Humphreys, A.B., *From Shantytown to Township: An Economic Study of African Poverty and Rehousing in a South African City* (Cape Town: Juta, 1975), 15.

<sup>172</sup> Maasdorp and Humphreys, *From Shantytown to Township*, 15-17.

<sup>173</sup> See Louise Torr, "The Social History of an Urban African Community: Lamont, c 1930-1960", MA thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1985.

<sup>174</sup> Bagwandeen, "The Question of Indian Penetration", 55.

<sup>175</sup> Jabulani Russell Manzi, "The Manifestation of Apartheid Legacy on Housing Within the Durban Metropolitan Region, a Case of KwaMashu Township", Honours thesis, University of Zululand, 1994, 44.

<sup>176</sup> Bagwandeen, "The Question of Indian Penetration", 55.

the relative weakness of the state, desire of segments of local capital to restructure the urban workforce, the increasingly vociferous racial demands of Durban's white ratepayers, and the assertiveness of ever-larger numbers of proletarianised Africans and Indians.<sup>177</sup>

Africans and Indians were not powerless and malleable in this debate:

State and capital attempted to effect short-term remedies, deflect public anxiety, and gain fuller control over the city. Reacting to these initiatives and seeking to seize opportunities for advancement in a situation of flux, the underclasses fashioned an aggressive politics of their own.<sup>178</sup>

Mkhumbane was becoming a massive 'headache' to the city and in the face of a wave of (White) public dissatisfaction, the Council had to act. The City Health authorities regarded Mkhumbane as 'a fearsome threat to the health of the whole city'.<sup>179</sup> Bourquin wrote that rainwater and domestic water either thrown out or collected from stagnant puddles in this densely built-up and heavily populated shack area caused 'damp and unhygienic conditions in between the shacks'.<sup>180</sup>

The *Daily News* reported in 1956 that 'sewers were being laid, ablution blocks built and piped water' provided in an effort to clean up the worst sources of disease. Many shacks were demolished. Some semblance of order was achieved'.<sup>181</sup> However, the so-called "illegal" spaza shops continued to trade under 'clouds of flies', negating health and hygiene in the backyards of shack clusters 'to meet public demand'.<sup>182</sup> Bourquin noted that alcohol was brewed under unhygienic conditions:

Not only is the ground littered with garbage, but it is also cluttered up with the tins, drums, and other containers used in the brewing of sorghum beer or illicit alcoholic concoctions.... Filth and litter accumulate and endanger people's health but blunt their senses and causes them to adopt an indifferent and casual attitude. While they serve some purpose if adequately designed and controlled, open drains here foul the soil and fill the air with a stench; with small children playing around, they constitute a distinct hazard. Seepage from pit privies, the only toilet facilities in these areas, finds its way into these drains.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Iain Edwards and Tim Nutall, "Seizing the moment: the January 1949 riots, proletarian populism and the structures of African urban life in Durban during the late 1940's", Paper presented at History Workshop on "Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid", University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 6-10 February, 1990, 5.

<sup>178</sup> Edwards and Nutall, "Seizing the moment: the January 1949 riots", 5.

<sup>179</sup> 'Dark Chapter of the Cato Manor Slum is Closing', *The Natal Daily News*, 21 May 1956.

<sup>180</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 2.

<sup>181</sup> 'Dark Chapter of the Cato Manor Slum is Closing', *The Natal Daily News*, 21 May 1956.

<sup>182</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 3.<sup>183</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 3.

<sup>183</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 3.



African occupants, the “new settlers”, determined the expansion of shacks and activities. Brewing home-made traditional beer is part of African culture. Beer brewing and entrepreneurship sparked tensions between beer-brewers and sellers and the authorities. Jackson writes that such tensions were prompted by the question of ‘who had the right to brew and sell the low-alcohol sorghum beer, or *utshwala*, which was such an essential part of African culture’.<sup>184</sup>

By this time, Mkhumbane was commonly viewed in terms of filth and disease due to the area’s unsanitary conditions and popular “immoral” activities.<sup>185</sup> The area lacked sanitation and water provision, and as the population increased, conditions deteriorated. The ‘evil-rivulets of sickness’, run-off water, wastewater from shacks, and seepage from pit privies all ran into the Mkhumbane stream.<sup>186</sup> This was the river which provided Mkhumbane’s residents with water to drink, for their laundry and ablution facilities. Unhygienic conditions were also a health hazard for children. According to Bourquin, ‘2.5 children under the age of two years died each day of filth diseases such as gastro-enteritis’.<sup>187</sup>

A 1956 report in a local newspaper warned that crime was occurring with ‘almost monotonous regularity’ in Cato Manor, while “shebeen queens”<sup>188</sup> prospered.<sup>189</sup> However, no official statistics were found to prove whether crime was increasing or declining. The *Daily News* report did not provide any statistics; thus, such statements could have been a scare tactic to get the DCC to act.

Working-class men did not have ‘time and space for brewing their own beer’; thus, entrepreneurs, mainly women, stepped in to earn a living by bringing home-brewed beer ‘into town and selling it to the thirsty populace.’<sup>190</sup> As the Durban authorities sought African labour around the city, beer brewing became a ‘thriving industry’?<sup>191</sup> Mainly women brewers served their male clientele at their homes and ‘out of their own homes’.<sup>192</sup> The DCC was faced with a massive problem with no obvious solution.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Jackson, ‘Cato Manor Revisited’, 24.

<sup>185</sup> Popke, “Modernity’s Abject Space,” 745.

<sup>186</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 5.

<sup>187</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 3.

<sup>188</sup> Aneshrie Naidoo described shebeen queens as ‘tough-talking, no-nonsense women of the townships who put their traditional brewing skills to use to keep their families from dire poverty during the oppressive apartheid years. But as apartheid legislation eroded the quality of life of black South Africans, women used their traditional skills to keep liquor flowing, defying the prohibition on black South Africans drinking and brewing alcohol. Their illegal – and hence dangerous – activities provided a regular source of income for their fragmented families’, Aneshrie Naidoo, “Long reign of the South African shebeen queen,” Media Club South Africa, 12 August 2014. Available at <http://www.mediaclubsouthafrica.com/culture/3975-long-reign-of-the-south-african-shebeen-queen#ixzz5AipP6a3o>. Retrieved on 25 March 2018.

<sup>189</sup> ‘Dark Chapter of the Cato Manor Slum is Closing’, *The Natal Daily News*, May 21, 1956.

<sup>190</sup> Jackson, ‘Cato Manor Revisited’, 24.

<sup>191</sup> Jackson, ‘Cato Manor Revisited’, 24.

<sup>192</sup> Mahoney, *The Other Zulus*, 119.

<sup>193</sup> ‘Dark Chapter of the Cato Manor Slum is Closing’, *The Natal Daily News*, 21 May 1956.

### **Afro-Indian “rivalry”**

According to Freund, Cato Manor or Mkhumbane was ‘the site of the most mixing between Indians and Africans. Africans were tenants of Indian landowners, customers of Indian shopkeepers, and neighbours.’<sup>194</sup> A considerable number of Indian landowners, who had formerly engaged in market gardening in Mkhumbane began renting shacks to Africans from the 1920s as it proved more lucrative. While there was inter-racial co-existence, Africans remained the renting class as they could not legally own property in the city, and Indians were the landowning class, creating a clear divide. To compound the racial dynamics, retail stores, and transport infrastructure, particularly buses, were also Indian-owned. Many Indians were themselves tenants who formed the poorest strata of Indian society. The majority of market gardeners in Mkhumbane did not own land.<sup>195</sup>

As a result of this influx, Africans soon outnumbered Indians in Durban as well as in Mkhumbane. Indians in Mkhumbane slowly gave way to African numerical superiority as they began renting sites out to Africans. Coupled with the African shacklords’ growing authority, ‘the *de facto* authority of Indian owners grew less effective’.<sup>196</sup> The DCC provided housing for the first time to Indians in Mkhumbane in 1939. This consisted of 50 economic (for purchase) and 50 sub-economic (letting) units, and by 1943 a further 50 sub-economic units had been built for municipal employees.<sup>197</sup>

As the 1940s progressed, contestation over housing and other resources intensified and took on racial dimensions. For the African population, settlement in an urban setting meant a ‘victory’ for their well-being as ‘illegal’ traders proliferated, African shack lords’ authority grew, and the area became ‘home to a widening range of cultural and illegal commercial activities’.<sup>198</sup> Edwards notes that ‘the central issue was whether Mkhumbane was Indian or African’.<sup>199</sup>

There was also politics. Most Indians in the area supported the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), which, by this time, had ‘become rejuvenated and radicalized’ through the support it received from trade unions and ‘urban social movements in Indian residential areas actively struggling for increased urban amenities and rights’.<sup>200</sup> This was not the case for Africans. Edwards writes that during the 1940s, the ANC, which was formed in 1912 and which would arguably emerge as the premier political organisation amongst Africans in the 1950s, was ‘badly organised with a pitiful membership in Durban’. One reason was that its Natal

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<sup>194</sup> Bill Freund, *Insiders and Outsiders. The Indian Working Class of Durban 1910-1990*. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1995: 38.

<sup>195</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 417.

<sup>196</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 418.

<sup>197</sup> Gavin Maasdorp and Nesen Pillay, *Urban Relocation and Racial Segregation. The Case of Indian South Africans*, (Durban: University of Durban-Westville, Department of Economics), 24.

<sup>198</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 418.

<sup>199</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 418.

<sup>200</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 417.

leader, A.W.G. Champion, ‘treated the organisation as his private chiefdom, was anti-Indian and espoused a belligerent and conservative form of Zulu populism’.<sup>201</sup> Given this political void, the people of Cato Manor organised into ‘localised community groups, squatter associations, consumer and cooperative societies, women’s associations, church groups and cultural and sporting bodies which exercised power’.<sup>202</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the changes in Durban's political economy, which resulted in large numbers of Africans flocking to the city, many of whom made their way to Mkhumbane. This resulted in an end to market gardening in the area, as Indian and White landlords found it more lucrative to collect rent than to farm, and the racial composition of the area changed dramatically. White fears of being overrun by Africans at the local level, coupled with the apartheid state’s racial segregation imperatives, would result in the state taking drastic action to reshape the city. The following chapter examines the Group Areas Act, the redrawing of the map of Durban and its impact on the African residents of Mkhumbane in particular.

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<sup>201</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 417.

<sup>202</sup> Edwards, “Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future”, 417-8.

## Chapter Two

### Daily Life in Mkhumbane: Work, Crime, Entertainment, and Sexuality

#### Mkhumbane

See how dark it is, how quiet,  
Hardly anything is moving.  
Only some early buses in the street,  
Taking early persons to the town  
from Mkhumbane.

But soon the light will come.  
The sun will rise out of the Eastern sea  
And show to you this place,  
This Mkhumbane.

Soon you will hear a story  
Like all the stories of men;  
Of love and faithfulness;  
Of courage and wickedness;  
Life and death.  
Mkhumbane.

Mkhumbane, you are my home.  
Goodman and evil are your life.  
Let the people awake – let the day begin,  
The day of our story –  
Mkhumbane.

- Alan Paton (1960)

By the end of the Second World War, Mkhumbane was a vibrant community of people from diverse backgrounds. The area comprised of a variety of social categories. As observed by Edwards, its people were:

... from various strata of society: teachers, nurses, government clerks, policemen, preachers, as well as masses of skilled, semi-skilled, menial and casual workers ... and also some who earned a living through the extensive array of adventures and enterprises that constitutes people's capitalism.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 116.

The boisterous Mkhumbane became the primary place of residence of employees in Durban's fast industrialising city. Alfred Nokwe, a playwright, actor, and musician, often described as the "son of the soil" of Mkhumbane, noted that:

Big employers of cheap labour were the Shipping Companies, Non-Ferrous Metals, Textile Mills, Bakers Limited who by the way, had no modern equipment like what is used these days, but men kneaded the dough with their feet – we were told. Deliveries for milk, bread, ice, etc. were by horse cart. Guess who cleaned up after the horses?<sup>204</sup>

This chapter examines how the newly arriving migrants to Mkhumbane worked to create a place from the space and how this impacted on identities. It examines themes such as social distinctions among residents, crime and criminality, music, fashion, and sexuality.

### Space and identity

With Mkhumbane providing most of the city of Durban's workforce, Indians, Africans, and Coloureds often lived side by side and shared space in the area. The nature of Mkhumbane society inspired numerous aspirant and established leaders, political organisations, social workers, Advisory Board members, etc. to use it as their chief testing ground.<sup>205</sup> While seen by outsiders as constituting a single mass, the area had many different sections which locals gave names to, most of which were of Zulu origin.<sup>206</sup>

According to Mphostoli Mngadi, a former Mkhumbane resident residing at D. 1490 KwaMashu, it was Colin N. Shum, whom the interviewees refer to as the area manager of Mkhumbane, who influenced the naming of sections of Mkhumbane as part of his attempt to organise it into a manageable and healthy, liveable society.<sup>207</sup> Mngadi was born in Mnambithi (Ladysmith) in 1920 and started living in the Mkhumbane Two-stick section in 1939, while working at Rommy Owens in Durban's West Street. It is

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<sup>204</sup> "The History of Cato Manor", *Cato Manor Development Association*, Vol. 2: April 2001, 2. Available at [https://www.cmda.org.za/IZWI/Izwi\\_Apr01\\_pg2.htm](https://www.cmda.org.za/IZWI/Izwi_Apr01_pg2.htm). Accessed 02 October 2017.

<sup>205</sup> Cato Manor', *Ilanga Lase Natal*, 13 January 1951, 15.

<sup>206</sup> The area had different sections which had names, such as Mjafethe, Khumalo, KwaKhanyile, Bhanki, Draaihoek, Benoni, Mpompini, New Look, Mount Carmel, Mokoena, Ndlovu, Dabulamanzi, Transit Camp, Tin Town, Orlando, Manasa, North Bank Road, Mnyasana, Mtimkhulu, Shumville, Chateau Estate, Cabazini eMhlangeni, Fairbreeze, New Clare, Matatiele, Mathonsi, Jeep Coat (Jibhakhothi), Good Hope Estate, KwaKhanyile, Two Sticks, Benoni, Mgangeni Dabul'amanzi, Madlebe, Ramsigh Road, Ezimbuzini, Bonella Road, KwaBhengu, Rickben Crescent, Emergency Camp, Brickfield Road, Shumville, Mnyasana, Mgenge, KwaMnguni, Gezizandla, Bhanki, Thusini, Mkhalandoda, Kito, Mathilamini, Nsimbini, Mthimkhulu, Mjafede, Sinyameni, Manasa, Cabazini, Rawundi Thebuli, Benoni, Mkhon'unodaka, Pelwane, Mpanza, Langwane, Bhaca, Babulamanzi, Zimangweni, Nettleton Road, Dromore Road and many others.

<sup>207</sup> M. Mngadi, KCAV 326, by C. Shum, KwaMashu, 11 August 1980 and 22 September 1980. Colin N. Shum was employed by the municipality to head a survey, introduced in 1951, which aimed to provide the city with estimates of the number of African people who were staying in the shack settlements. In describing his job, Shum said that his duty was to perform a survey in the shack areas which was not punitive as he had to ignore their offences, passes, etc. He added that he had to gain residents' trust in order to introduce control. (Shum Papers; C.N. Shum, Personal Memorandum, 3 September 1960). A section in Mkhumbane, Shumville, was named after him.

not clear what kind of business this was as it no longer exists, and an online search did not yield any results.

Ambrose Afrika, a former Mkhumbane resident who was a trader at KwaMashu Supermarket in the 1980s said that such names did not exist in KwaMashu and Umlazi, where the sections were known by letters of the alphabet (*akukho gama lapha njengalapha eMkhumbane*).<sup>208</sup> She mentioned other Mkhumbane sections which were not popular, such as Mqalandoda and Dabulamanzi. According to Afrika, the names were given by local residents and not Shum, and this was an old practice even during precolonial times.

Ambrose Afrika elucidated:

*... aqanjwa ithina abantu. NjengoMyazane. UMyazane kwakuyiNdiya iplazi lalo kwakunguMyazane. Kwabakhona oTwo Sticks ababephathwa abaphatha izinduku ezimbili kushaywana kwathiwa Two Sticks. Esinyameni kwakuhlala khona izinsizwa ezazithi aziwona amadoda. EMjafethe kwakuyiNdiya elalikhona lapho. Kwakukhona izindawo ezaziqanjwa abantu ngezidumo ezazikhona lapho. NjengeNsimbini, iNsimbi kwakuyibutho lakhona elaliqhamuka eNsimbini elalilwa kakhulu ... eziNkawini kwakugcwele izinkawu eziningi kwase kuthiwa iseziNkawini. Kodwa konke kwaku uMkhumbane.*<sup>209</sup>

(The names were coined by us the people - Myazane for example. Myazane was a farmer whose farm was known as Myazane. The name Two Sticks came from people who carried and fought with sticks in that particular area. At Esinyameni gay men lived there. Mjafethe was the name of an Indian person who lived there. Some of the areas were named after the incidents that occurred in the area. For example, Nsimbini was named after a strong regiment which was known as Nsimbi, which used to be strong fighters ... the eZinkakwini area had monkeys [*inkawu* in Zulu]). These areas all belonged to the vast area of Mkhumbane).

This arguably reflects the fact that people came to make this space into place, home, and the naming suggests an attachment and fondness for place.

The Nsimbini section was considered the 'headquarters' of Mkhumbane due to the section's influence on the politics of the shantytown. Mzimela emphasised this point:

*UMkhumbane ila kwaqala khona ukuphuma izihlabani zemidlalo ngemidlalo nezepolitiki. Bese kuba khona indawo okwakuthiwa iseNsimbini okwakuyiyona headquarters yoMkhumbane ... Ingoba ikakhulukazi abaholi bepolitiki babevamise ukuqhamuka khona. Njengo Chief Luthuli babewayele ukubambela khona imihlangano yabo ngoba kwakuyindawo eyayisesidlangaleni esikahle ... Ehhe! Kwakuyimijondolo. Elinye igama elalisetshenziswa kwakuthiwa isemagogogweni. Kokunye*

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<sup>208</sup> A. Afrika, KCAV 300, C. Shum, KwaMashu, 25 September 1980.

<sup>209</sup> A. Afrika, KCAV 300, C. Shum, KwaMashu, 25 September 1980.

*sasiqamba lamagama ngoba seqisela abelungu. Abanye abantu babengazi ukuthi uMkhumbane mkhulu kangakanani.*<sup>210</sup>

(Mkhumbane produced a lot of soccer stars and politicians. There was a place called Nsimbini which was regarded as the headquarters of uMkhumbane ... It is because most of the politicians came from that place. Even Chief Luthuli and others used to have their meetings there as it was a nice open area ...It had shacks. There was a name that was used and it was called eMagogogweni. Sometimes we used these names just to mislead Whites. Some people did not know how big uMkhumbane was).

The last part of this quote suggests that naming aimed to assist locals to identify with areas and make it easier to meet and connect as opposed to a large area that would be unfathomable. Most of the names were known to local residents who used them so that outsiders, especially the police, would not be able to unearth “internal” information and activities considered by the government to be illegal. Baba Mbanjwa explained:

*Le ndlela esasibiza ngayo amagama yayiwuvikela uMkhumbane ngoba ngisho kufike umuntu owumseshi sasivele sizikhulumele ngenye into. Kwakuyisiza sobaba mkhulu lapho babehlangana khona bekhukuma izinto zabo zemizi noma ipolitiki.*<sup>211</sup>

(The way we used to refer uMkhumbane protected it because even if an investigator came we spoke about something else. It was an area where our forefathers met to discuss family matters and politics).

Standing outside the high hill where Mbanjwa’s house is situated, where we conducted the interview, Themba Ngcobo pointed out some of the areas to the interviewer:

*Kukhona u-Wiggins Road no-Belair Road uza neno. Abantu babehlala lapho besebenza namaNdiya. Ilapho ke okwaqala khona izi-komplaas esinye kwakuthiwa ise-Gomora lama-rasta, esinye kuthiwe iseNtalashishi eBonella. Ugudle ke uyofika e-Police Station kwa-Kito, kwakwakhe amaNdiya ke la eduze komgwaqo. Phakathi nendawo kwakukhona amangcwaba Amasulumane. Ngaphesheya lapho sekukhona isiteshi sikagesi kwakukhona ibharekisi yamaphoyisa ayengaphansi kukaMasipala kukhona indawo yawo yokuhlala. Kwakungamaphoyisa ayefaka okhakhi engabophi egada kuphela ezibhedlela nasemawadini. Ibhasi lalihamba ngo-Bellair lidlule kwaKito uma ethanda amaphoyisa ayevele alimise ibhasi abuze ipasi.*<sup>212</sup>

(When you approach this area (Mkhumbane), there is Wiggins and Bellair Roads. People stayed there and worked for Indians. That is where the farms started, and one of them was called Gomora lama Rasta (Rastafarian’s Gomorrah), another one was called Ntalashishi at Bonella. After that, you would

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<sup>210</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>211</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>212</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015. Mr Themba Ngcobo was born in Mkhumbane in 1947. His mother was originally from Vryheid, northern KwaZulu-Natal. Ngcobo chose not to provide further details about his family.

go through to the police station; Indians had houses along the road. At the centre there was a Muslim Cemetery. Opposite that, there is a power station now, and back then, there was a police base owned by the Municipality and stayed there. And the police would stop the buses using that route).

This is a quite remarkable recollection after so many years. The respondent recounted exactly where the graveyard was and that it was for Muslims. Also telling is the description of a farm as Gomorrah, the biblical city destroyed by God for its wickedness. A sign perhaps that the farm too was a place of wickedness for African workers? The division of place by race is also clear in this recollection.

At the present time the area is congested with businesses and residential areas. Ngcobo continues:

*Abelungu babekhona nabantu abamnyama. Wawuke uboshwe uya emsebenzini kuthiwa awuthelile okusho ukuthi awunapasi ukhishwe ehasini. Kuthiwe isipesheli sakho sokuyofuna umsebenzi usuphelile. Phezulu ku-Denver roard kunesi-Komplaas okuthiwa Isezindaweni. Lasekukhona i-ground u-SASOL namafemu kwakukhona i-ground lapho. Kwakukhona namafemu okwakuthiwa ikwa-curry amaNdiya kwenziwa wona. Kwakukhona nesonto lamaWeseli elalikhona eskomplazi okwakuthiwa iKwaMafutha. Lapho sekuyiThekwini college kwakukhona indawo eyayiyi-beer hall eyayilapho idayisa utshwala kungeka Kwapeletsheni kuthiwa ikwaGezizandla ... [Kwakuthiwa ikwaGezizandla] ngoba uma abantu sebegede ukuphuza utshwala babegeza izandla bagoduke.<sup>213</sup>*

(There were both White and Black cops. Some people were arrested on their way to work because they did not pay for their permits. People were given passes to go to search for work. There was another farm at the top on Denver Road called Ezindaweni; that place now has a Sasol garage. There were firms owned by Indians that made curry, and that place now has eThekwini College. Around that area was a beer hall, which was called Mafutha. All these areas were called Gezizandla ... [The area was called Gezizandla] because people would drink and on their way out would wash their hands).

Before Shum introduced some of these names, said Mngadi, the area's residents only knew it as Mkhumbane. For Mngadi, Shum was trying to better the lives of the people of Mkhumbane as he 'loved' them wholeheartedly and dedicated his energy to them not because he assumed his colour meant superiority, but due to his devotion to the people.<sup>214</sup> 'We thank Mr. Shum for everything he did for us whether he is still alive or dead,' Mngadi said. Edwards concurs with the interviewees' version of Shum, who, he stated, was well respected amongst residents whose trust he gained even though he was a White man.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

<sup>214</sup> M. Mngadi, KCAV 326, by C. Shum, KwaMashu, 11 August 1980 and 22 September 1980.

<sup>215</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 204.



Although subjected to severe overcrowding, crime, widespread disease, and other socio-economic problems, this 'community was a very organised one' in that its residents established religious institutions, schools, community halls, old age and children's homes, etc., from their own pockets, and at the same time managed to develop 'their own political and welfare organisations'.<sup>216</sup> Mbanjwa reiterated that community members contributed to the structures in their area:

*Izinto ezazenziwa abantu abamnyama ngoba ogogo babemandla ngezishimeyane nezingodo, sasiboshelwa nesizulu. Abanye bebhidilisha khona emajalidini ngama-washing. Enye yezinto eyasiza ukuthi bakhande izikole izitokofela ezazidlalwa.*<sup>217</sup>

(There were many things done by Black people as even older women were very active in selling alcohol they made for themselves. Some worked for Whites as maids. One thing that also contributed and helped in building schools was the *stokvels*).

As indicated by Mbanjwa, *stokvels* played an important role in the development of Mkhumbane. Elizabeth Maphumulo explained how the *stokvels* worked:

Interviewer: Did you pay for *stokvels* through monthly instalments?

Maphumulo: We paid for it right on the day when it occurred, and then monthly.

Interviewer: How did it operate?

Maphumulo: We gave each other money. There were a number of us and we put the same money every month and took turns to get money. That was a platform to make money.

Interviewer: Everyone contributed?

Maphumulo: Yes, people gave out money, danced and had fun. You would ask anyone to buy a certain plate of food. And someone would counter that and the bet would go on and on ... (One buys a plate of food with his / her money and someone comes and bids with more money than the first person for the food, and so on)

Interviewer: What plate was it, for food?

Maphumulo: Yes.

Interviewer: So you exchanged homesteads? (They would go from one home on one weekend to another the next time)

Maphumulo: Yes, we exchanged homesteads and we did them differently from what is done now. Now, you can't give someone you do not know your money.

Interviewer: Some would run away with it?

Maphumulo: Some would vanish during the times when we have to separate the money.

Interviewer: They usually do it.

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<sup>216</sup> The North Central and the South Central Metropolitan Substructure Councils of the Durban Metropolitan area (first applicant) and the Inner West Local Council of the Durban Metropolitan Council (second applicant) in the matter of an Application in terms of Section 34 of the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994.

<sup>217</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

Maphumulo: Some would even plan with crooks as they would tell them when the date to separate money is.

Interviewer: Were there any incidents of that nature?

Maphumulo: No.

Interviewer: Which means you had a good time?

Maphumulo: It was really nice.<sup>218</sup>

Besides schools, community members and businesspeople contributed to the building of churches, as Mzimela emphasises:

*Yebo! Bazakhela bona abantu. Kwaze kwafika i-Mission yamaRoma. Ifika nje bayazakhela abantu. Amasonto bazakhela abantu. Lamasonto aye-poor iwona angaphumelelanga njengebandla laseTopiya, naseSalveshe. OMabaso, oNgema, oGama bem kahle benazitolo benengqondo zokuhlakanipha besuka emakhaya.*<sup>219</sup>

(Yes! People built the schools themselves. Later a Roman Catholic Mission arrived. People also built churches themselves. Poor churches did not survive, like the Church of Ethiopia and the Salvation Army. There were rich black people like Mr Mabaso, Ngema, and Gama, who had shops. They were intelligent and came from rural areas).

Nomadiphu Khumalo, a former resident of Mkhumbane, agreed that Mkhumbane was a self-governed area that needed little intervention from the authorities. She recounted:

*Uyabona-ke eMkhumbane abantu babeziphathela umthetho. Iphoyisa lalingangeni. Lalifika nje mhlazane kuvele okuthize, liza ngoba libiziwe. Njengokuthi nje mhlawumbe sekufe umuntu, futhi ezifele, engabulewe.*<sup>220</sup>

(People of Mkhumbane held the law in their own hands. The police would not come to the area but would only come if there is a particular incident. They would only come if summoned. For instance, if someone has died a natural death, not killed by anyone).

This 'self-governance' also meant that most people did not need to go to Durban to shop. Elizabeth Maphumulo stressed that Mkhumbane had everything that residents wanted and they did not make their

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<sup>218</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019. Mrs Maphumulo was born to the Njoko family before marrying Mr Maphumulo who, she says, owned rented cottages at the Dabulamanzi section before forced removals. She said that she was the one who collected R2 monthly rentals from the tenants. The Maphumulo family initially resided in KwaMathonsi section in Mkhumbane before moving to Cabazini section. When residents were relocated and offered sites at KwaMashu and later Umlazi, Mrs Maphumulo said that her husband did not want to live there and instead moved to rural Mbumbulu to pursue other business interests. Her husband was murdered in Folweni, south of Durban due to what she termed 'jealousy' over his businesses in the area. He left eight wives and many children.

<sup>219</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, Interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>220</sup> Nozizwe Madlala and Sizakele Mkhize (eds), 'EMkhumbane. uNomadiphu Khumalo', (Pinetown: Pinetown Printers, 1992), 6.

grocery purchases in Durban. People mainly went to Durban to buy clothes.<sup>221</sup> For Mrs Maggy Dube, there was no need to go to town because many things were sold in Mkhumbane.<sup>222</sup> Mbanjwa echoed these sentiments:

*Kuyadayiswa lana. Kundayiswa amagwinya, amakinati ofishi, amaqanda yonke into ... Sasithenga khona la. Kodwa lalela indaba yasedolobheni ... yabona ngemali yamanje uma uphetho u-R30 noma ake ngith u-R25 wawubuya ubhaskidi ugcwele igilosa kanye nazo zonke izithelo. Kwakukhona inyama kasheleni inkahlankahla yenyama engaka eMkhumbane kudliwa kahle. Kwakungahlushekwa eMkhumbane.*<sup>223</sup>

(There was so much money you even picked it up on the ground. There was so much money at uMkhumbane. Do not be misled by the current situations where people are poor ... People were selling all over. People were selling vetkoek, peanuts, fish, eggs and everything else ... We bought everything here. Let me tell you ... you see that when you had about R30 or R25, you came back with a basket full of groceries and all the vegetables. There was much meat that cost 10 cents. People ate well at uMkhumbane).

Another interviewee, Mrs. Dube, also testified that there was little poverty or need in Mkhumbane:

No, there was no such thing as poverty. I usually tell my kids that if uMkhumbane was not shut down, I would be rich because there was a lot of stuff sold. Sometimes we would pick up tomatoes from the market area and go sell it back in the rural areas.<sup>224</sup>

While the older persons were hawkers and entrepreneurs, the interviewees said that younger people also found various means to make money. Some of the items sold were stolen. Mrs Maphumulo, stated that when they were young, they used to cross Jibhakhothi (actually Jeepcoart, but the name was “Zulufied” to Jibhakhothi as was the norm for many foreign terms) and go to ‘Indian homesteads in Westville to take mangoes which we came back with’ and sold in Mkhumbane.<sup>225</sup>

Other informants emphasised that, unlike many of today’s youth, stealing was not an option:

*Mbanjwa: Thina izinto esasizifuna sasizicabanga ukuthi sizozenza kanjani hhayi indaba yokucelana nabantu abadala imali.*

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<sup>221</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>222</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019. Mrs Dube does not remember the exact year she arrived in Mkhumbane but recalled that it was ‘1950 something’. What she is sure of is that she arrived after the 1949 Afro-Indian riots. She stayed with her family in KwaBhengu section, shortened and known as KB by the residents, a subsection in Mjafethe. Her family was reallocated to Umlazi A section.

<sup>223</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>224</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019.

<sup>225</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

*Mzimela: Kokunye kwakuthi uma izinkomo zikababa uThwala zihlakazekile siziqoqe sizifake esibayeni sakhe futhi wayewumnumzane ethanda nokoselwa, ngalokho ke wayesipha otiki sihole.*

*Mphumeleli: Lezi zinkomo zidla kuphi?*

*Mbanjwa: Zidla ngaphakathi khona la emphakathini.*

*Mzimela: Kokunye sasiphathisa amaNdiya ayehlala moMawoti naseVerulam eyogibela estobhini esasilapha osekulu Engen garage khona. Uma kuwuMgqibelo wawenza imali yangempela uma uqale kusukela ngo-8 kuya ku-1 nakhona uyeka nje isakhona i-busy. Mhlawumbe wawenza i-1 pound 10. Ngaleyo mali sasihamba sothenga izinto esasingenazo zesikole, sihambe siyobuka imidlalo yebhola kwakudume i-Curries Fountain siyibuka lapho imidlalo. Sasingayisweli imali thina noma ke sasibuya late emakhaya sishawe ke.<sup>226</sup>*

(Mbanjwa: We would think of ways we could use to get things we wanted and not ask for money from the elders.

Mzimela: In some instances, we would gather Mr Thwala's cattle if they were scattered and take them to the kraal. He was a respected man who liked to braai and serve meat, and for that he would give us money.

Mphumeleli: Where did the cattle graze?

Mbanjwa: They would eat within the same place we stayed in.

Mzimela: In some cases, we would help Indians that stayed at Amawoti by carrying their groceries and other stuff when they were going to get transport by the place which has an Engen garage now. We would make a lot of money on Saturdays if we started working from 08:00 to 13:00 and you would find that as you stop it was still busy. We would use that money to buy school stationery, go watch soccer games at Curries Fountain. In the early 1960s we had some exciting soccer where Indians and Coloureds and Africans played. We would be beaten by our parents when we came home late!).

One of the problems with oral history is nostalgia, which refers to sentimentality about the past, which is remembered in more positive ways than was actually the case. This appears to be the case here; for a while, residents have positive memories of life in Mkhumbane. The reality was that Mkhumbane was 'overcrowded, unhealthy, and crime-infested'. However, it attracted people because the rent was cheap, it was close to the city, people were 'relatively free of the constant surveillance by police and authorities,' and there were other attractions.<sup>227</sup> With the area being a threatening one during the apartheid era, these factors glued residents together; hence the winds of "unity" blew among the residents of Mkhumbane.

## **Crime and criminality**

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<sup>226</sup> Baba Mbanjwa and Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>227</sup> Walker, *Women and Resistance*, 231.

Most of the interviewees refuted the stories of Mkhumbane as a notorious area. Mzimela, for example, insisted:

*Ayi! Ayi! Ayi! eMkhumbane kwakumnandi kabi izwa ngami ngase ngikhulile mina. Yabona laphana kwakukhona o-tsotsi abangamaqembu. Uma umiswa wawuvamisa ukuzikhiphela wena ubanikeze lokho osuke unakho. Emva kwalokho ngeke bakwenze lutho bazoshaya isicathulo phansi uvele ubaleke uhambe kakhulu. Kwakungabulawa muntu laphana ngaphandle uma kukhona izingxabano singeke sazi. Kodwa ke mina ngazi ukuthi eMkhumbane kwakungabulawa muntu ... into eyayijwayelekile abantu ababegwazana uma bexabene. Kodwa kwakungabulawana.*<sup>228</sup>

(No! No! No! It was very peaceful at Mkhumbane. At that time, some *tsotsis* were divided into groups. When they stop you, you would take whatever you have yourself and give it to them. After that, they will not do anything to you. They will just hit the floor with their foot then you would run away. No one was killed unless there were quarrels ... One common thing was people stabbing one another if they quarrelled. However, there were no killings).

Hamilton Dlamini, who grew up in the Mjafethe section, spoke of a 'peaceful' atmosphere in Mkhumbane: 'It was a lot more peaceful than in the townships, where all you see on Saturdays are funeral processions. People did not die as often in Mkhumbane, and funerals were a rare sight'.<sup>229</sup>

The reported notoriety mostly had to do with crime, prostitution, and gangsterism in the area. However, in the presence of Mzimela, T. Ngcobo did not deny that there was crime in Mkhumbane but insisted that it was lower than reported in the media. Mrs Maphumulo claimed that 'it was very nice' at Mkhumbane and that she 'did not see any crime'.<sup>230</sup> For Ngcobo, although there was less crime:

*Kwakungebuningi ubugebengu. Wawuthola umuntu eshonile kodwa engagwaziwe engakukhuzwanga. Kwakungukulwa nje nabantu bamshaye bamshiye kanjalo ... Ayekhona kodwa ayelwa wodwa. Ayenamagama, lapha eThekwini kwakukhona ama-Rashiya, ama-Lion nama-Japhani.*<sup>231</sup>

(Some people would be found dead on the streets with their belongings, and it would be evident that they were beaten and there was no intention to rob ... They (gangsters) were there, but they fought with one another. They had names, and there was a group called Russians, the Lions, and the Japanese).

In contrast with what Ngcobo referred to as an inter-gang fights, there were reports of gangsters troubling the community. *Ilanga laseNatal* reported on the mischievous deeds of the Russians in 1959:

*Kade kunzima eMkhumbane ngoMgqibelo nangeSonto abantu beshayiswa okwezilwane ... enye intombazane bayishaye bayishiya iyisinabe. Labantu asebeximbezele ngokulimaza abantu kangaka*

<sup>228</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>229</sup> Hamilton Dlamini, interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, November 1997.

<sup>230</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>231</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

*eMkhumbane kuthiwa bazibiza ngamaRussia. Bafaka izingubo ezikhakhi bahamba beyidlanzana behamba beshaya noma ubani abahlangana naye. Ngobusuku bangeSonto ... kwaba sengathi kukhona ifu elimnyama phakathi noMkhumbane Abantu sebezivalele ezindlini bengasafuni ukuba baphumele phandle. Omunye umlisa wayesebanga usizi esehamba ezihloma nje ezindlini zabantu, nabo bakhuze bathi akaphume ngoba hleze abalethele impi emzini yabo. Wagcina ngokuba elokhu ehla enyuka engazi lapho eya khona.*<sup>232</sup>

(There were threatening conditions in Mkhumbane on Saturday and Sunday where people were sometimes beaten like animals ... I remember one girl was beaten until she fell unconscious. These people who have made it usual to injure people at Mkhumbane call themselves Russians. Dressed in khaki outfits, they walked in several groups and beat whomever they met along the way. On Sunday night ... it seemed like dark clouds overshadowed Mkhumbane. Residents hid indoors to protect themselves from the outside onslaughts. One distraught man injured by the gang was seen wandering, trying to enter the residents' apartments. People chased him away with the fear that they might be on the receiving end of the war).

For Ngcobo, members of these gangster groups were mostly outsiders, people who were not residents of Mkhumbane. An article in *Ilanga laseNatal* seems to concur:

*Abantu baseMkhumbane bathanda ukuba bakhononde ngokuthi labantu abadala iziphithiphithi akubona baseMkhumbane kodwa sengathithi ngabaqhamuka edolobheni.*<sup>233</sup>

(Residents of Mkhumbane complain that these people who are causing chaos are not from the area but are perhaps coming from town, Durban).

There were, however, few sources to verify this information. When the interviewer pressed Ngcobo about the existence of criminal activity and especially housebreaking in the area, he vehemently stated that there was no such thing because one would be 'seriously beaten up if you were found stealing'.<sup>234</sup> If there was no criminal activity but 'educated people who came here for work,' then where did such stories emerge? Mzimela stepped into the conversation and responded that *izinto eziningi ezazibhalwa zazishiwo amaBhunu ngoba befuna ukucindezela uMkhumbane* (most of the things that were written were influenced by the Afrikaners as they wanted to continue with their propaganda).<sup>235</sup>

Former residents' denial of Mkhumbane's notoriety mainly relied on claims that negative stories were orchestrated propaganda by the White-owned media. Mbanjwa denied the stories of gangsterism and Mkhumbane as a place of disrepute:

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<sup>232</sup> 'Zivimbezele Izigebengu eMkhumbane', *Ilanga laseNatal*, 22 August 1959, 4.

<sup>233</sup> 'Zivimbezele Izigebengu eMkhumbane', *Ilanga laseNatal*, 22 August 1959, 4

<sup>234</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

<sup>235</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

*Ayi! Ayi! Ayi! eMkhumbane kwakumnandi kabi izwa ngami ngase ngikhulile mina. Yabona laphana kwakukhona o-tsotsi abangamaqembu. Uma umiswa wawuvamisa ukuzikhiphela wena ubanikeze lokho osuke unakho. Emva kwalokho ngeke bakwenze lutho bazoshaya isicathulo phansi uvele ubaleke uhambe kakhulu. Kwakungabulawa muntu laphana ngaphandle uma kukhona izingxabano singeke sazi. Kodwa ke mina ngazi ukuthi eMkhumbane kwakungabulawa muntu.*<sup>236</sup>

(Ay, ay, ay (shaking his head), take it from me, Mkhumbane was a great place. None of that (criminal activity) is correct. It might be that not all stories got to me. I have never heard of people being killed in Mkhumbane. The only story that all that might be coming from is one by a man who went by the name of Ngawini. They used to say he kills and rapes women, but since his mother was a *sangoma* (traditional healer), some stories explained how the police would lose him due to Zulu magic. However, I do not know if the story was true. Gangsters were there; they just did not affect people in the community).

Mbanjwa added that ‘wrong stories’ were told about Shaka Zulu, the Zulu king who is famous for uniting different clans to build the Zulu nation in the early nineteenth century, in order to characterise him as a person who was ‘inhumane and irrational. Have you ever seen a person who does not laugh?’ he asked, throwing his hands up in the air.<sup>237</sup>

In contrast, Mrs Dube agreed that there were criminals in the area but ‘not that much’, and mentioned that ‘there was one old man I knew who worked at Durban Corporation as a bus driver and he returned around 2:00 am, and nothing happened to him’.<sup>238</sup> Asked if there was any form of crime, Mrs Maphumulo responded:

*Hhayi. Babukhona nje ... kodwa hhayi ngale Ndlela. Kwakungekho bugebengu laphana, angikaze ngibone bugebengu lapha esasikhona. Ngisho izingubo zazinekwa emnyango akazi ufike kuthiwa kutshontshiwe.*<sup>239</sup>

(Yes, it was there but not too much. But, I did not witness any form of crime around my neighbourhood. We would even hang clothes on the washing line for the whole night, and nothing happened to it).

Despite the fact that, as indicated by Bourquin, in Mkhumbane ‘you could walk around the shacks, and things were very normal’, incidents of crime were reported by newspapers and some oral testimonies.<sup>240</sup> For example, *UmAfrika*, reported on the robbery of Maggie Xhakaza on 20 April 1958 by three men who

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<sup>236</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>237</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>238</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019.

<sup>239</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>240</sup> S. Bourquin, interviewed by Iain Edwards, 8 September 1980.

wielded guns at her general dealer store.<sup>241</sup> The close-knit structure of Mkhumbane made it a no-go area for outsiders, and it proved difficult for the authorities to gain entry. For example, in 1959, *UmAfrika* reported that the Department's official that issued business licenses was 'petrified' to raid Mkhumbane to check licenses without being accompanied by police. The unnamed official was quoted as saying, 'it would be stupid to raid Mkhumbane and arrest people without police presence; that would be inviting trouble'.<sup>242</sup>

Mrs Thuleleni Msiya, who was born in Mkhumbane's Mgangeni section, stressed that it was not as safe for women as it was for men and that men usually accompanied women to and from work at night to protect them from pick-pockets.<sup>243</sup> Mrs Msiya remembers that they used to travel as far as areas called Mjafethe and Jeep Court. Mjafethe, a vast section of Mkhumbane, is where the Westville prison currently stands, while Jeep Court (Jibhakhothi) is where Albert Luthuli Hospital is located. The hospital is also located in the greater area of Raincoat section where subsections such as Second River were located. The bushy surrounding area also had a name. Mzimela explains that it was called Mdakamfene ... *Isemdakamfene ... Ingenxa yesiqatha. Izimfene zaziphuza zidakwa ziphoseke emgodini. Sasiphila nezilwane* (It is because of the sorghum beer that was made by the women in the bushes, the baboons would steal and drink it and get drunk. We lived with animals).<sup>244</sup>

*Mfene* is a Zulu word for baboon whilst *mdaka* is derived from *ukudakwa* which translates to being drunk. When baboons stole brewed beer they became drunk, hence the name Mdakamfene.

As Colin Shum reflected, the differences in perceptions of the area may perhaps be caused by the uncertainty and the unpredictable nature of Mkhumbane:

There was [sic] those moments when you could just sense that things were not right. On the surface everything was OK, but there was an edge in peoples' voices. Later you would hear that so-and-so had been killed, or someone's shack burnt down and people had become edgy. It was then that things could easily turn nasty.<sup>245</sup>

Still on the 'peace' question, Ndlovu indicates that since different races and characters lived side by side, there were those whom one could observe were:

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<sup>241</sup> 'EzaseMkhumbane: Usinde Ekufeni uNkk. Maggie A. Xhakaza', *UmAfrika*, April 12, 1958, 3.

<sup>242</sup> 'AbaHloli BamaBhizinisi Baswela Ukuphelezelwa NgamaPhoyisa', *UmAfrika*, March 7, 1959, 1.

<sup>243</sup> Mrs Thuleleni Msiya (presentation, Library, Archives, Museum and Language Services Conference, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture, International Convention Centre, Durban, November 26 -28, 2013).

<sup>244</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>245</sup> Interview, Mr C.N. Shum, interviewed by Iain Edwards, 20 June 1985.



*Kwakukhona abantu owawubona ukuthi basenesizotha, kukhon izixhwanguxhwangu ezazithi uma sezintswantswa zithuke izinhamba ongakaze uzizwe. Namakholwa ayekhona. Ayekhona amasonto amabandla ahlukene.*<sup>246</sup>

(... humble whilst some were mischievous to an extent that when intoxicated they would hurl hardcore insults and there were also worshippers of various church organisations).

Several informants were keen to add that prostitutes operated in the area and in Durban. Language, known to residents as *tsotsi taal*, was a key factor in crime, as it was in prostitution. One informant stated:

*Kokunye wawubathola uma uphuza bese eza kuwe ethi ucela umphuzise. Ekutshela ukuthi khululeka ngizoliwasha iketela. Uma ungazi ke uyozibuza ukuthi lingena kuphi ke iketela la? Kanti usho ukuthi nizohamba niyolala.*<sup>247</sup>

(Back then, they had words they used when they wanted to say things like stabbing was called *ukumesa* and *ukulola*. And in some instances, you would meet clown cashes (prostitutes). [It is not clear why they were called clown cashes]. Some would find you drinking and would ask you to allow her to drink. They would assure you that you will ‘wash the kettle’. If you did not know, you would not understand what the kettle interferes, only to find out that she means you would go and engage sexually).

*Mese* is a knife; hence, when one says *ngizokumesa* he or she literally means, ‘I will stab you’. *Ukulola* is to sharpen; this was another way the *tsotsis* would tell the person that she or he would be stabbed. Mzimela added that these female prostitutes were from Mkhumbane and chose certain places to operate:

*Kwakungezakhona lapha. Abanye babeqwayiza e-Maydon Wharf, ezitimeleni abanye, kukhona esingabasho nangamagama esikhule nabo ababekwenza lokho ... Babesebenzisa amashibhi, uyazi ukuthi uma eya eshibhini vele uzothola abantu abaphuzile abazophuza bese befuna umuntu wesifazane. Kodwa ke i-rape yayingekho.*<sup>248</sup>

(They were from around the area (Mkhumbane). Some used to go for prostitution at Maydon Wharf, in the trains, there are some we can mention whom we grew up with. They used drinking places, you know, that is when a person is drinking they would want women. There were no rape cases though).

Hamilton Dlamini insisted that Mkhumbane was not the notorious and crime ridden shantytown represented in films, documentaries, the print media, and official municipal reports. He said that life in the area:

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<sup>246</sup> Ndlovu, *Bakhona Abafazi*, 3.

<sup>247</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>248</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

...was very pleasant ... nothing like you see in the township today with its funeral processions every Saturday.... One rarely saw that in Mkhumbane, as anybody who was born there can tell you. And I grew up in the neighbouring township of Chesterville.<sup>249</sup>

### **Durban's Hot Spot: Music**

This dissertation took five years to complete, and, in the course of doing so, I often listened to “old school” *Kwaito* music, a South African music genre that emerged in the 1990s. This is the kind of music I grew up listening to. My music collection includes 1990s classics by Mdu Masilela, TK Zee, Mandoza, Brothers of Piece, Mawillies, and Brenda Fassie, as well as later artists like Msawawa, Mzambiya, and Mapaputsi. As I wrote this chapter, the 2001 *Kwaito*<sup>250</sup> song, *Bowungakanani* (How old were you?) by Msawawa and featuring Mzambiya was playing. The lyrics go:

Mzambiya: *‘Uma kudlala lesgubhu bajaiva bonke eSophia bejaivela umfana omncane uMsawawa’*. (IsiZulu).

(When this rhythm plays everyone in Sophia (town) dances, dancing for the young boy Msawawa).

Once the two have sung their verses interchangeably, the following chorus is repeated four times:

*“Bowungakanani uma sidlala ezaseMkhumbane sishaya ama get downs zingikhumbuza iSophiatown.”* (IsiZulu).

(How old were you when we were dancing in Mkhumbane? Dancing the “get downs” reminiscing of Sophiatown?)

“Get downs” was a dance that got its name from participants going down and getting up. While this is an old song, released in the early 2000s, its lyrics took on a new significance in relation to this dissertation in several ways. It emphasises the similarity in the histories of Sophiatown and Mkhumbane (and District Six and, by implication, other cosmopolitan areas destroyed by apartheid-era forced removals). The song also highlights the importance of music and dance for the residents of Mkhumbane and Sophiatown, as depicted in popular literature and interviews.

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<sup>249</sup> Hamilton Dlamini, interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, November 1997. Sazi Dlamini describes Hamilton Dlamini as a ‘Cato Manor-born car-salesman, band-leader and tenor saxophonist’. See Sazi Stephen Dlamini, “Township Music: the Performance and Compositional Approaches of Three Neotraditional Musicians in Durban”, Master of Music Dissertation, University of Natal, 1998, 28.

<sup>250</sup> The *Kwaito* music genre emerged in the 1990s in Johannesburg, South Africa, and is a variant of township styles. It became part of mainstream popular music in the post-apartheid 1990s and is composed of house music beats at a slower tempo, *marabi* of the 1920s, *kwela* of the 1950s, *mbhaqanga* and *maskandi*, bubblegum of the 1980s, African diaspora hip hop and many other varied forms. The lyrics are mainly in Zulu, Sesotho and *tsotsi taal*. (Information from South African History Online, ‘*Kwaito*’. Available at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/performing-arts/kwaito>). Accessed 17 January 2016.

These areas were places where fashion, music, and popular culture flourished in the 1950s. This included not only *Kwaito* but other genres of music, theatre, drama, and popular literature. Mkhumbane, ‘famed for its social and political turbulence, and a diversity of leisure-time practices’, left a lasting legacy of musical performance, fashion, and popular culture.<sup>251</sup> This section draws on interviews that the author conducted and several conducted by Sazi Dlamini, whose thesis unpacks the experiences of three neo-traditional musicians who talk of Mkhumbane. Published work is also drawn on to paint a picture of the 1950s fashion, music, and popular culture in Mkhumbane.

Mkhumbane was the epicentre for artists who showcased their talents in the streets, the shebeens, and in the back and front yards of the shantytown. The area was boisterous during the weekends, attracting people from Mkhumbane and the surrounding areas and Durban. There were many festivities to choose from. Although there was sport, music and dance topped the art genres’ chart, drawing crowds and bonding residents together. Mbanjwa shared that he was a dancer in his heyday and he and his peers used to dance for crowds in Mkhumbane: ‘I used to be a *nikabheni* here at uMkhumbane’ he said with a smile.<sup>252</sup>

I had never heard the term *nikabheni*. Not much has been documented or written about it, but the interviews conducted by Sazi Dlamini offer some details on *nikabheni* performances.<sup>253</sup> Sazi interviewed one Hamilton Dlamini who had knowledge of mid-twentieth century *nikabheni* performances. Dlamini stated that the earliest known *nikabheni* performances were:

... associated with a marf which everybody only knew as Malarha, descended of African-European parentage and thus a ‘Coloured’, or more commonly referred to derogatorily as a ‘Boesmari’, which is Afrikaans for ‘Bushman’.<sup>254</sup>

Ntshangase, another informant, identified a different source:

*Nikabheni* was largely an invention of one Q. Majola, a pianist from eSidunjini Mission, near Appelsbosch. It came from tap dances that took place at the ICU Hall, whose performers wore shoes with iron-tipped heels and toes. Majola had succeeded a pianist who was known as Bhayoyo.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Dlamini, “Township Music”, 4.

<sup>252</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015. Dlamini describes the *nikabheni* as a set of practices comprising the early urban forms of proletarian, street musical performance in and around Durban. Centred around the peri-urban shantytowns such as Cato Manor (Mkhumbane), on-lookers threw coins at the performers’ feet. The *nikabheni* dates from the city’s colonial and early industrial period up to the beginning of the 1960s (Dlamini, “Township Music”, 23-29, footnote 1).

<sup>253</sup> In an interview with Muziwendoda ‘Madala’ Kunene conducted by Sazi Dlamini, the former explains that *Nikabheni* ... ‘was when you got together, a gang of young boys all growing together. One of you would play guitar ...a three-string guitar, another one would dance and money would be thrown on the ground by spectators. It was something like that’ (Kunene, April 1997).

<sup>254</sup> Dlamini, “Township Music”, 29.

<sup>255</sup> Simon Ntshangase, interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, November 1997.

The performances called for much preparation, from painting the uncovered parts of the body to the attire. Such performances provided the young boys with pocket money and where this was not the case,, there were other means:

*Sasithatha insizi sizipende ngaayo bese sifaka izikhindi ke. Bese sifika sima esidlangalaleni sicule abantu baphose imali ke. Indaba yobugebengu sasingayenzi. Siwasha amabhasi amaNdiya, sidayise amabhodlela. Leyo mali sasiyisebenzisa ukuya kumabhayiskobho kanje. Ukuntshontsha kufike nalesi sizukulwane samanje. Uma ingekho impela imali sasiphathela ngisho abadlali bebhola njengo-Sugar Ray Xulu izikhwana nabashayi sibhakela.*<sup>256</sup>

(We would take remains of burnt coal and use it mark ourselves with, and then we would wear shorts. We would find an open space and stand there and perform. Then people would throw money. We were not used to crime. We would wash Indian buses and also sell bottles. We would use that money to go to the movies. Stealing came with the current generation. If there were no money, we would carry bags for soccer players like Sugar Ray Xulu and boxers).

For the *nikabheni* to perform, they needed a crowd to entertain:

Usually around Christmas and New Year, one would encounter the 'nikabheni' performers, moving around in groups and entertaining onlookers. Sometimes they would stop outside a household, singing and blowing on whistles as they played on their drums. People would then come out onto the street to look, throwing pennies, farthings and other coins towards the performers. Usually barefoot, the performers wore red skirts and white paint on their faces. On their heads they put on old hats or some other 'raggy' headgear, which gave them all a tattered appearance. They were males, and most of their members seemed to fit an average age of thirty years and above.... The performances died out with the demolition of Mkhumbane.<sup>257</sup>

Mbanjwa and Mzimela corroborated the sentiments shared by H. Dlamini above. The former noted that they would visit different places:

*Mbanjwa: Uma izikole zazivaliwe sasihamba sidansela abelungu. Ubude bomdanso wawuya ngenani lemali.*

*Mzimela: Kwakukhona oniphethe oniholelayo uma senidansile.*<sup>258</sup>

(Mbanjwa: When schools were closed we would go and dance for Whites. The more you dance the more money you get.

Mzimela: There was a leader who would pay you after you have danced).

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<sup>256</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>257</sup> Hamilton Dlamini, interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, November 1997.

<sup>258</sup> Baba Mbanjwa and Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

This is still practiced today with artists performing their craft, and spectators throwing money on the ground. The most popular place for these performances in Durban is at The Workshop, a shopping centre in central Durban with an outdoor amphitheatre where performances are held. During performances, spectators throw the money on the ‘dance floor’ or give it to the group leader. Kunene said that, during the *nikabheni* performances coins such as stivers, farthings, half-pennies, shillings, and tickeys were thrown on the ground.<sup>259</sup>

Shebeens and gatherings of *stokvels* were the most popular sites for *nikabheni* performances. *Stokvels* bind people together, and Mrs Maphumulo explained that they ‘would go to anyone’s place on weekends, especially when there were *stokvels*, we would go there and have fun’.<sup>260</sup> The interviewer asked Mbanjwa and Mzimela if the money collected from the dances was shared equally. Mbanjwa responded that the group proportionately shared the money because they were always with their leader when it was counted (*Sasihamba naye ekhona uma sesibala imali*).<sup>261</sup>

The ethno-music star and poet Muziwakhe ‘Madala’ Kunene, known as the King of the Zulu guitar,<sup>262</sup> and one of the world-renowned figures born in Mkhumbane, shared similar experiences:

We all shared equally with an adult person who acted as manager for our group. He would collect the money while we played, and when we had finished, he would pay us all equally and pay himself ... the same amount as the rest of us. This went on until the time we were told to leave, dismantle our homes and move to KwaMashu.<sup>263</sup>

The *nikabheni* performers, mainly African male youth with a few performers over the age of 30, would perform for the community of Mkhumbane and outside the area. As noted above by Mbanjwa, they would even go to White areas during school holidays. Dlamini writes that, ‘the young boys’ *nikabheni* performance practice had come to characterize the cosmopolitan spirit of the shantytown’s multi-cultural society’. Madala recalled that the *nikabheni* performers would also visit sections of Mkhumbane which were predominantly settled by Coloured and Indian residents<sup>264</sup> Kunene noted:

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<sup>259</sup> Madala Kunene, interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, April 1997. Stivers, farthings, half-pennies, shillings and tickeys were the South African coins at the time.

<sup>260</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December, 2019.

<sup>261</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela and Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June, 2015.

<sup>262</sup> Kunene was dubbed the King of the Zulu Guitar by fans of his music in 1996 when he toured the UK with his King of Zulu Guitar Vol. 1.

<sup>263</sup> Madala Kunene, interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, April 1997. Kunene was born in Mkhumbane in 1951 but grew up in KwaMashu where his family had been forced to relocate. Against the background of forced removals Madala started playing the guitar at a very young age, performing on street corners. Kunene, who played soccer for African Wanderers, bought his first guitar in 1963 and shifted his full focus to music. He worked with many artists including his homeboy Siphso Gumede on the project Freedom Countdown produced by the latter in 1993.

<sup>264</sup> Dlamini, “Township Music”, 48.

We used to leave the Jibhakhoti vicinity of Mkhumbane and go to play where the Coloured and Indian people lived ... There was a place known as EmaKhaladini, down there near Abrahams, where we used to perform during New Year and Christmas holidays. We would come back with a mound of tickeys, farthings, half-pennies, half-crowns, and shillings. We would walk back to Jibhakhothi to sit down and share the pickings.<sup>265</sup>

Not only did the *nikabheni* collect money during their performances; musicians and young boys also performed and money was thrown to them:

*Nokungebeleka kwakhona. Kwakukhona uMalahle indoda yesigubhu nomunye ubhuti wakwaCele owayeshaya isiginci wayeshaya amaculo esonto ehambe ekoleka imali. Nathi ke genge encane sasinemidlalo yethu okwakuthiwa amanikabheni bese kuba khona ababedlala i-gum boots dance, kube khona abama-violin. Uyabona ngezimpelasonto kwakuphithizela sasihamba sibe ngamaqembu sihambe sicula ke sithole imali.*<sup>266</sup>

(There were a lot of nice things. There was a man by the name of Malahle who played the drum and one brother with the surname of Cele who played the guitar and sang gospel songs and collected money when he was performing. As the young ones, we had our own games, and others did gum boots dances, and some played the violin. Weekends were jam-packed; we would go in groups and sing for people then get money).

### **Fashionistas**

The people of Mkhumbane claim that the area was Durban's fashion and music hub as its residents listened and danced to music and were also fashionistas 'of the highest grade', especially men. In discussing the history of Mkhumbane, music, and fashion are part of the same picture, with the one complementing the other. At *stokvels* and other gatherings such as in the beer halls and meat and grill spots, residents showcased their fashion trends while listening to or playing music. Former residents spoke fondly of their taste in fashion. Ngcobo boasted that people from the area 'dressed very well,' while Mzimela clarified:

*Uma usuka la uya koMashu, Mlazi, Claremont uvakashile nihleli niphuza wawubonakala ukuthi ungowaseMkhumbane ... Wawuhluka ngayo yonke into. Ngokukhuluma, ngokugqoka nangokuhamba kwakho.*<sup>267</sup>

(If you are from around and you visit places like uMlazi, Clermont, and KwaMashu, they would know from the way you speak and the way you dress that you were from Mkhumbane... You would be different in all aspects, from the way you dress and the way you talk).

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<sup>265</sup> Madala Kunene, interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, April 1997.

<sup>266</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

<sup>267</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

Mzimela agreed with Ngcobo that Mkhumbane was home to fashionistas:

*Lapha eMkhumbane bekugqokwa kakhulu kodwa kungagqokwa njengoba sekwenziwa manje. Wawufaka amateki, ufake i-jacket u-ayine iblukwe ebese ufaka ikapisi kodwa abanye babengawafaki. Izigqoko zazifakwa obaba kushawa nendlela ekhanda laba ababengazifaki izigqoko. Le ndlela eyeyishawa uMandela kwakuyisitayela sobaba uma ungayishayile nje kwakuvela sengathi awuyena ubaba ... Kwakukhona ama-laaitie okungamabhungu, uma ukhula lapha uya ekubeni i-rakheti, uma usuka lapho ke usungubaba ke.<sup>268</sup>*

(People from uMkhumbane were very stylish and liked fashion but not compared to what is happening now. One used to wear takkies, a jacket, pants, and then a cap, but others did not wear caps. Older men wore caps. Others used to have a haircut line as a style on their heads, but that was done by those that did not wear caps or hats. The line they did was similar to the one that was done by Nelson Mandela, and if you did not have one, you were not fully regarded as a man... Some were called laaities, who were young males, and when you grew, you were referred to as a rakheti, meaning that you were a father).

Age and class became a differentiating factor in the social environment as in the above case of *laaities* and *rakhetis*. The beer halls popular sites of self-identification and differentiation for the community of Mkhumbane. Status and class were also born in these areas. Alcohol consumption in beer halls became a platform where people could show off their status. Black people, especially, created competition between traditional beer such as sorghum beer and clear beer.

Fashion was showcased at every opportunity, as long as there was a crowd. As the following conversation with two informants reveals, where there were people, there was fashion:

*Mzimela: Kwakukhona ababeshaya isibhakela ngezikhathi zo-December njengakoGoli kanti lapha ke abanye behamba beshaya iziginci.*

*Mbanjwa: Kwakukhona izincwasimende. Izinto ezaziswenka zigqoka isudi.*

*Mphumeleli: Zigqokwa kuyiwaphi?*

*Mzimela: Mhlawumbe ececeni okanye ehholo kuyoculwa isicathamiya.*

*Mphumeleli: Ngicela nibahlukaniseni ke?*

*Mzimela: Kwakukhona oswenka, amaraketi, ama-laaitie okuyilaba ababesebancane behamba ngeyabo indlela.<sup>269</sup>*

(Mzimela: There were those who played boxing in December like it is done in Gauteng and around some played guitars.

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<sup>268</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

<sup>269</sup> Baba Mbanjwa and Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

Mbanjwa: There were men who dressed very nice and clean.

Mphumeleli: Did they dress for any special occasions?

Mzimela: When they attend *icece* (an event) or if ever there is a *Scathamiya* contest at the hall.

Mphumeleli: Could you please categorise them for me?

Mbanjwa: There were those called *oswenka*, *amaraketi*, as well as the *laaities* and those were the youngsters who did their own thing).

It was not only musicians and prominent members of the community who dressed well. In fact, recollections are that the gangsters or *tsotsis* took centre stage in the way they dressed. Due to their nefarious activities, they had money and were hence able to wear the latest fashion. They became fashion role models for younger members of the community, while other community members sought to draw attention to themselves by dressing like *tsotsis*.. Mbanjwa explains that the *tsotsis*:

*Otsotsi babenendlela ababegqoka ngayo mhlawumbe omunye ilabantu abahambisana ne-fashion. Okwesibili ilabantu abazithandayo, okwesithathi mhlawumbe ungumkhuthuzi noma umbambinkunzi. Otsotsi bakuqala babe-clean noma umuntu ezokugwaza wawuvele usukelwe i-gentleman. Abanye babethanda amantombazane othi noma eshela usebenzisa lama-language. Ulimi olwalulapha ngeke uze uluqede.*<sup>270</sup>

(... had a certain dress code and some loved fashion. Secondly, some were very clean, thirdly, some were pick pockets. *Tsotsis* back then were very clean and when he would stab you it was evident that he was a gentleman. Some loved women and would use the English language to ask them out. Language at that time was so rich and beautiful).

From the informants' views, it would seem that *tsotsis* were not seen as 'bad' people even though they committed crimes. They were viewed as elite members of the community who were praised and attracted women through their lifestyles.

It was at large gatherings that musicians showcased their talents. They wore the latest fashion and attracted much attention from women. Violinists were said not to have been 'liked' by some residents, especially by men because, as Mzimela and Mbanjwa related:

*Mzimela: Laba bama-violin base bebaqedile abafazi babantu.*

*Mphumeleli: Kanjani?*

*Mbanjwa: Babemthatha kudanswa khona la.*<sup>271</sup>

(Mzimela: The people that played violin stole other people's wives ...

Mphumeleli: How?

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<sup>270</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>271</sup> Baba Mbanjwa and Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.



Mbanjwa: They stole them at the events).

Jazz was very popular in Durban, and Mkhumbane was at the centre. A household name in South African jazz, Siphso Gumede, was born in Mkhumbane in 1957. When he died in July 2004, *BillboardBiz* published the following obituary:

One of South Africa's most respected bass players and songwriters, Siphso Gumede, died Monday (July 26) in a Durban hospital following his admission for internal bleeding. He was 47. Gumede is regarded as an icon of the domestic jazz scene. He is best remembered for his work with seminal early '80s Afro-jazz group Sakhile, which provided a musical touchstone for those engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle. He also played with Hugh Masekela and Caiphus Semenya and toured the United States, Canada, and the Bahamas with Harry Belafonte and Letta Mbulu'.<sup>272</sup>

Gumede developed his love for music from a very young age, playing a homemade guitar made from a five-gallon tin, wood, and fish gut in the dusty streets of Mkhumbane. He moved to Umlazi at the age of 16, where he furthered his music career. Gumede toured Africa, Europe, and the Americas during his decorated career and collaborated with local and world-renowned musicians.<sup>273</sup>

Mkhumbane was a hub of popular culture, especially on weekends when the population doubled as many people visited the area for music concerts and other social activities.<sup>274</sup> Whilst Erlmann holds that Mkhumbane was 'one of South Africa's worst slum areas outside Durban', it cannot be denied that it was a vibrant area full of popular cultural activities, including jazz.<sup>275</sup> Erlmann relates a story of one of Mkhumbane's violinists, Mareyiza, who was the first to introduce *marabi* to Durban and who had a huge following in Mkhumbane.<sup>276</sup> *Marabi* was 'spawned by the slum yards of Johannesburg' and spread to townships like Sophiatown, District Six, and Mkhumbane.<sup>277</sup> It was the outgrowth of the mixed-race nature of these areas. Iliffe describes *Marabi* as a...

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<sup>272</sup> His age has been disputed with sources writing that he either born in 1957 or 1952. Thus, as quoted in by *BillboardBiz*, he died at the age of 47 whilst others claim he 'died at the age of 53'. Diane Coetzer, 'South African Musician Siphso Gumede Dies', *BillboardBiz*, July 29, 2004. Accessed 17 January 2016, Available at <http://www.billboard.com/biz/articles/news/1432671/south-african-musician-siphso-gumede-dies>.

<sup>273</sup> For a short bibliography of Siphso Gumede and other Jazz legends see Max Mojapelo and Sello Galane (ed), *Beyond Memory. Recording the History, Moments and Memories of South African Music* (Somerset West: African Minds, 2008), 212.

<sup>274</sup> Sibongiseni Mkhize. Durban Local History Museum, 'Compiled for Nhlanhla Mtaka for use in the media Pack for Mkhumbane Cultural Festival.'

<sup>275</sup> Veit Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991), 80.

<sup>276</sup> His famous songs included "Silele kwaBhanki" (We are sleeping at Bank Road) and "Sohamba noMareyiza kuze kuse" (We will accompany Mareyiza until daybreak). August Schidhofer and Dietrich Schuller (eds). *For Gerhard Kubik: Festschrift on the Occasion of His 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (New York: P. Lang, 1994), 213.

<sup>277</sup> John Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 128.

... syncretic style of music, blending the Afrikaans and Coloured traditions of the Cape with local African rhythms and imported Black American modes.... The locus was a shebeen. The atmosphere was alcoholic, sometimes criminal.... *Marabi* also meant low class people who behaved this way, and by extension anything the respectable thought disreputable ... It meant youth and modernity. It meant the freedom of the town.<sup>278</sup>

According to Iliffe, Mareyiza's 'favourite haunts were the shebeens in the less built-up areas of Mkhumbane' where he was accompanied by 'enthusiastic shebeen patrons' with pebble-filled milk tins, and sticks rattled along corrugated iron sheets assisting with the percussion.<sup>279</sup> The former tune alludes to the nocturnal exploits of shantytown musicians, whose popularity could be gauged by the audiences which followed them as they moved from one *shebeen* or *stokvel* to the next. Bank Road was one of the newer sections of Mkhumbane, to which the tune '*Silele kwaBhanki*' ('We slept in Bank Road') refers. Mike Mvelase, a trumpeter who grew up in Mkhumbane, recounted that whilst there was 'music that came to be known as "mbaqanga" after the appearance of Mahlathini (Simon Nkabinde) ... in Mkhumbane we had called it "marabi".'<sup>280</sup>

The story of the popular culture of Mkhumbane has been told on various platforms, including theatre musicals and songs. Alan Paton's *Mkhumbane: a New Folk Musical*, which premiered in Durban on 29 March 1960<sup>281</sup> laid the foundation for others that followed. This was a difficult period in South Africa following the Sharpeville killings on 21 March 1960 and the banning of the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC).<sup>282</sup> Paton recalled that 'during this momentous week, we played full houses, people of all kinds were in Durban City Hall.'<sup>283</sup> Paton wrote the lyrics and directed the play whilst Todd

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<sup>278</sup> Iliffe, *The African Poor*, 128.

<sup>279</sup> Erlmann, *African Stars*, 80.

<sup>280</sup> Mike Mvelase, Interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, November 1997.

<sup>281</sup> Paton was an author, director and anti-apartheid activist who was born on 11 January 1903 in Pietermaritzburg and died on 12 April 1988. He received the 1960 Freedom Award in New York but on his return in December, the South African authorities withdrew his passport and he was denied one for the next ten years. His most notable work, that led to international recognition, was the novel *Cry, the Beloved Country* which was first published in 1948, the year the apartheid government came to power. Two cinema adaptations were made and staged in 1951 and 1995 as well as a musical in 1949 in America. The book was translated into 12 languages.

<sup>282</sup> On 21 March 1960 police shot and killed 69 people demonstrating against pass laws in Sharpeville and on 29 March the Nationalist government declared a State of Emergency and arrested 18 000 people. The United Nations Security Council condemned the Sharpeville massacre on 1 April and the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) were banned on 5 April.

<sup>283</sup> Edward Callan. *Alan Paton*, Twayne's World Authors Series, Volume 40 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 76.

Matshikiza,<sup>284</sup> a composer and singer, directed and composed the music. The play began with a poem which forms the epigram of this chapter.<sup>285</sup>

Other directors followed suit. *Happiness Through the Mist*, directed by Zeph Nzama, played to ‘sold-out audiences and standing ovations’ in Durban and Pietermaritzburg in 2008.<sup>286</sup> According to Nzama, the play ‘recounts elements of the history of Mkhumbane, portraying its music, dance and vibrant atmosphere that once existed until the forced removals’.<sup>287</sup>

The vibrant atmosphere created by songs and music was accompanied by a number of popular dance moves, as explained by Mbanjwa:

*Nemidanso yakho yayiminingi. Kwakukhona ogqebhu, twist, motela, cassanova. Amahhotela Queens avela apho kodwa kwakungama-Motela Queens. Abantu abaningi abasuka la baya ko-Alexander no-Sophiatown abanye babesuka la eMkhumbane njengoba kukhona amahostela manje. Ilapho ke abahlangana khona nezinye izizwe.*<sup>288</sup>

(There were also a lot of dance moves. There was *gqebhu*, *twist*, *motela* and *cassanova*. That is how Amahhotela Queens were discovered although they were known as Motela Queens back then. Most people from here relocated to Alexander and Sophiatown. As you would know there a lot of hostels that side. That is when they mixed with other nations).

The use of ‘nations’ is interesting, as the interviewee is seemingly referring to mixing with non-Zulus as mixing with ‘other nations’.

A play called *Uvukile Umkhumbane* (Umkhumbane Has Risen) directed by Alfred Duma Nokwe, a seasoned film actor was also staged. It was a rewriting of Paton's *Mkhumbane* to celebrate ‘the resilience

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<sup>284</sup> Todd Tozama Matshikiza, a journalist, jazz pianist and composer, was born in Queenstown, in the then Cape Colony (Eastern Cape), in 1921 and composed many songs and choral works including *Hamba Kahle* (Farewell) which was sung during the Queen Mother’s visit to Rhodesia by the Johannesburg Choir. Matshikiza was one of the first writers for *Drum* magazine in the 1950s where he wrote a jazz column. In 1958 he composed the score for the musical *King Kong* which celebrated the life of famous boxer Ezekiel “King Kong” Dlamini. His music gave the play a ‘special edge, a mood that no other composer could equal’ (See Todd Matshikiza and John Matshikiza, *With the Lid Off: South African Insights from Home and Abroad 1959-2000* (Milpark: M&G Books, 2008). The play ran in the West End of London in 1961 and is acclaimed for discovering the talent of Mirriam “Mama Afrika” Makeba who played the role of a shebeen queen.

<sup>285</sup> This prologue of Act one was ‘spoken against middle phrase of opening chorus’ in a play by Alan Paton and Todd Matshikiza called *Mkhumbane: A New Folk Musical*. Mkhumbane, File no. PC 127/1/1/1, The South African Institute of Race Relations (Natal Region). Alan Paton Centre and Struggle Archives.

<sup>286</sup> Arts Editor, ‘Umkhumbane: Touching Celebration of an Era’, 14 May 2009. Accessed 5 July 2014. Available at [http://www.witness.co.za/?showcontent&global\[\\_id\]=22652](http://www.witness.co.za/?showcontent&global[_id]=22652).

<sup>287</sup> Arts Editor, ‘Umkhumbane: Touching Celebration of an Era’, 14 May 2009. Accessed 5 July 2014. Available at [http://www.witness.co.za/?showcontent&global\[\\_id\]=22652](http://www.witness.co.za/?showcontent&global[_id]=22652).

<sup>288</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

and determination that he found in one of Durban's most famous and complex spaces'.<sup>289</sup> Paton's earlier play kicked off Nokwe's acting career as it was his first professional appearance after serving as a municipal clerk and secretary of the Beatrice Street YMCA in Durban, and later the district sales manager for South African Breweries (SAB). In *Mkhumbane*, Nokwe made a cameo appearance as one of the *tsotsis*.<sup>290</sup> The play showcased 'the cultural melting pot' that was Mkhumbane in the 1950s.<sup>291</sup>

Born in Port St Johns in then Ciskei, Nokwe arrived at Umkhumbane at the age of five with his mother and grew up there. He was a 'historical figure in the Durban entertainment scene' who was, according to South African theatrical director Jerry Poole, not only a performer but a 'manager, a tutor and a mentor' to many South Africans.<sup>292</sup> He died on 2 June 2008, aged 73, in KwaMashu, where his family had been relocated during the course of forced removals in the late 1950s. The 'vibrant spirit' of Mkhumbane came to infuse Nokwe's life and provide an important touchstone in his legendary career.<sup>293</sup> In 1959 Nokwe started his own group called The Rockets and managed a play called *Umabatha* (Zulu Macbeth), which successfully toured the United Kingdom and with Grammy Award winners Ladysmith Black Mambazo on their trip to Germany in 1981.<sup>294</sup> A talented singer and actor, Nokwe went on to feature in popular televised drama series, theatre productions, and films such as Paton's 1995 *Cry the Beloved Country*, *Shaka Zulu* in 1986, and *Ifa LakwaMthethwa*, among many others.

*Sarafina*, a late 1980s award-winning world-renowned film-musical production turned into a novel, has its origins in the cosmopolitan nature of Mkhumbane. The informants emphasised that *Sarafina* was kick-started in Mkhumbane but was taken by other people. Mbanjwa said angrily that he dislikes the tendency of the Zulu nation to start great things and 'not finish them off and other people come and take it like *Sarafina* and *Asinamali* originate here'.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Peter Machen, 'Durban's Patron Saint of the Performing Arts', accessed 17 January 2016, Available at: <http://www.heritageawards.co.za/images/stories/2009awardees/AlfredNokweforMercury.pdf>.

<sup>290</sup> The term *tsotsi* does not have a single definition but is loosely translated as "gangster". When the forced removals of the mid-twentieth century took place the new black townships faced with numerous problems such as poverty and unemployment; hence, people tried to earn a living in different ways. Ruthless criminals, the so-called *tsotsis*, engaged in criminal activities such as pick-pocketing, rape, robbery, murder, etc. The term *tsotsi* must have been derived from the 'Africanisation of the term zoo-suit' which was a way of dressing in American gangster films. The *tsotsi* gangster subculture of the 1940s and 1950s was male-dominated although women would be drawn in peripherally as girlfriends and being a gangster in the new black townships in the 1990s and 1970s was an 'expression of young urban masculinity'. See Uwe Mehlbaum, *The Novel Tsotsi and its Adaptation on Film* (Germany: Grin Verlag, 2010) and Clive Glaser, *Bo-tsotsi: The Youth Gangs of Soweto, 1935-1976* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 2000). In 2005 director Gavin Hood produced an acclaimed film *Tsotsi* based on Athol Fugard's novel of the same name.

<sup>291</sup> Mojapelo, *Beyond Memory*, 25.

<sup>292</sup> Sechaba Molefe, 'Nokwe - a True Mentor', *Sowetan*, June 13, 2008. Accessed 17 January 2016. Available at <http://www.sowetanlive.co.za/sowetan/archive/2008/06/13/nokwe---a-true-mentor>.

<sup>293</sup> Peter Machen, 'Durban's Patron Saint of the Performing Arts'. Accessed 17 January 2016. Available at: <http://www.heritageawards.co.za/images/stories/2009awardees/AlfredNokweforMercury.pdf>

<sup>294</sup> Mojapelo, *Beyond Memory*, 25, and Molefe, 'Nokwe - a True Mentor'.

<sup>295</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

Directed by Darrell Roodt and Mbongeni Ngema, *Sarafina* is probably the most celebrated and best known global production from South Africa, having toured many parts of the world. The following discussion took place on its origins in Mkhumbane::

*Ngidi: Kwenzakalani kuqala u-Sarafina?*

*Mzimela: Kwakunenhlese yepolitiki. Obaba bethi yini uma sithela intela ihambe iyothuthukisa idolobha kodwa esihleli kuyona ingathuthuki.*

*Ngidi: babeyithelela kanjani intela?*

*Mzimela: Ngezindlu nogesi into eyaxabanisa ukuthi kuzosebenza u-Pay As You Earn. Uma uwuthisha wawuhola u-5 Shillings, uyokhokha u-2,5 usale nomunye. USarafina waqhamuka ngeqembu lobaba lezepolitiki okwakuthiwa u-Asinamali.*

*Ngidi: Kwakuyiqembu lani lelo?*

*Mzimela: Kwakungelomshosha phansi kwezombusazwe.*

*Mbatha: Upogo!*

*Mzimela: Hhayi! Upogo ufike no-Robert Sobukwe.*

*Ngidi: Ngifuna ukwazi nge-Sarafina.*

*Mzimela: Yona phela iqhamuka lapho ku-Asinamali. Konke esasikwenza kwakwenzelwa emahlathini kucashwe.*

*Ngidi: Nanenzani? Nanidansa?*

*Mzimela: Kwakungamaculo nemidanso eyayikhuluma ngabantu abamnyama nesimo abakusona. Enye into eyabekwa i-Sarafina etafuleni ile ndaba ye- Bantu Education. Kwatholakala ukuthi u-Verwoerd wathi asinqatshelwe ukufunda nemali. Lento ke yayisihamba ikhuluma ngazo zonke izinto ezifana nalezi. Kwakunanomthetho othi wena ungumuntu omnyama awuvumelekile ukuyothenga e-Bottle Store yabelungu, awuvumelekile ukuthenga ugologo, u-Verwoerd wathi abantu abamnyama asibavumele sibabulale ngokuthi bathenge ugologo. Ilapho abantu abamnyama abaqala khona ukuyilahla bagxila khona etshwaleni. UJabu Khanyile uneculo ayelicula ngalento. Sasingacwasani amaBhunu asiqhatha saxwayana basihlakaza ngezindawo. AmaBhunu asihlukanisa ngokwezifundazwe.*

*Ngidi: Lichaze ukuthini igama elithi-Sarafina?*

*Mzimela: Igama lomuntu wesifazane. Kwakuqanjwana nje ngenxa yezinto ababezenza abanye bedayisa. Amagama ezinto ayefihlwa ehlonishiswa kwenzela ukuthi umuntu ongazo angatholi ukuthi kukhulunywa ngani.<sup>296</sup>*

(Ngidi: What prompted the start of *Sarafina*?)

Mzimela: It had a political influence. Our elders asked why they pay for rates and tax and that money is taken to develop the suburbs whereas the place we stayed in was in a bad condition.

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<sup>296</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela and Baba Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

Ngidi: How did they pay for tax?

Mzimela: Through bond and prepaid electricity and one thing that started the quarrel was the Pay As You Earn rule. Teachers got paid five shillings and then they would pay half of what they earned. *Sarafina* was initiated by a political group that was led by our fathers called *Asinamali*.

Ngidi: What was that group for?

Mzimela: It was a military force.

Mbatha: It was also called Upoqo!

Mzimela: No! Robert Sobukwe introduced Upoqo!

Ngidi: I would like to know more about *Sarafina*.

Mzimela: It arose from *Asinamali*. Everything was done in hiding in the bushes.

Ngidi: What were you doing? Were you dancing?

Mzimela: It was songs and dance that spoke about Black people and the situation they were in at that time. One thing that was initiated by *Sarafina* was the issue of Bantu Education. It was discovered that Verwoerd refused for us to study and refused us to have money. It grew and addressed all issues of that nature. There was a law that stated that as a Black person you are not allowed to go buy at a bottle store that belonged to Whites, you were not allowed to buy whiskey. Verwoerd said we should be allowed to buy that kind of alcohol so that we will lose focus. That is where Black people lost it and focused on alcohol. Jabu Khanyile had a song that spoke about that. We did not discriminate against one another but the Boers infused that in us and separated us. They even separated us according to provinces.

Ngidi: What does the word *Sarafina* mean?

Mzimela: It is a name that belonged to a woman. Names were given to people according to what they did and some were vendors. Names were hidden and protected so that outsiders would not know what is being discussed).

Motivated and plotted along the events of the 1976 Soweto Uprising, *Sarafina*, the lead female in the production, represents Black people's struggles against the shackles of apartheid.

Steve Dyer and Sipho Gumede produced popular jazz songs titled *Umkhumbane* and *eMkhumbane*, respectively that were 'inspired by forced removals'.<sup>297</sup> The former is a jazz musician born in Pietermaritzburg in 1960. Another Pietermaritzburg-born musician Jasper Cook, born in 1945, a trombone player, composer and arranger, tells the story of a show that was disturbed. After joining a University of Natal-based band called Swing Inc., Cook was invited to perform at a gig at Mkhumbane by a group called the Shange Brothers. The second gig 'was terminated by a riot around the venue'.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> Mojapelo, *Beyond Memory*, 25.

<sup>298</sup> Gwen Ansell, *Soweto Blues. Jazz, Popular Music, and Politics in South Africa* (New York: Continuum, 2005),

Cook, a White person, continued to play with the African Shange Brothers until, in 1961, the police took a 'dim view of what they were doing with a *wit seun* (White boy)'.<sup>299</sup> In an interview Cook recounted that 'the gig turned into a mess' as in the course of the riot 'everybody fled'. Left with his trumpet, he 'walked along the highway and hitched home'.<sup>300</sup> It is not clear during which riot this took place. The Shange Brothers, an Mkhumbane band which was defunct by 1961, comprised of Patric, Lionel and Cecil Shange.

Whilst music was the forerunner of entertainment in community gatherings, there were other forms of entertainment such as *Noxhongos*. Mzimela explains:

*Kwakumnandi eMkhumbane kwakukhona uNoxhongo. Ukuthi ngakhe izinti ezinde ngime phezu kwazo ngibe mude ngifake izingubo ezinde bese ngihamba ke. Ukuba kuya ngami ngabe ngiyakwakhela kwamanje.*<sup>301</sup>

(It was very fun in this place ... there was even *uNoxhongo* ... They were long sticks that were made and one would stand on top of them and make him taller and he would wear long clothes and walk with these sticks. I would even make it for you now if I could).

The variedness of Mkhumbane's atmosphere depends, it seems, on who articulates the story. Like any other community, this vast, multi-racial and multi-ethnic community consisted of a variety of people with different talents and professions. The different forms of entertainment were interlinked as workers spent their leisure time listening to or making music, attending events at different sites in the shantytown, or buying from local entrepreneurs. There is a need for further research to unpack some of the popular sites in Mkhumbane.

### ***Esinyameni* – A place of *stokvels* 'where men were wives'**

Of all the areas which demonstrated what was called the 'notoriety' of Mkhumbane, one stood out, *Esinyameni*, seen by some as Durban's popular site for homosexuals in the 1950s. Mrs Maggy Dube, who at the time of the interview resided at Mandawe, near Scottsburgh on the south coast, attests that 'there were so many gay people' in Mkhumbane.<sup>302</sup> *Esinyameni*, a Zulu name, literally translates to a 'place of darkness'.<sup>303</sup> The name is intriguing because 'darkness' could indicate people's attitudes towards homosexuality. While there is greater legal recognition for LGBT rights in post-apartheid South Africa, this was not the case in the past, and even now, although people have legal rights, social taboos remain.

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<sup>299</sup> Ansell, *Soweto Blues*, 306.

<sup>300</sup> Chatradari Devroop and Chris Walton, *Unsung: South African Jazz Musicians Under Apartheid* (Stellenbosch: Sun Press, 2007), 61.

<sup>301</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>302</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019. Dube: *Hawu zazigcwele! Zazigcwele impela* – there were so many gay people.

<sup>303</sup> Karen Ross, "Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa", *African Affairs* 382, no. 96 (1997), 117.

Although the Esinyameni gay culture is not a widely researched topic, its existence is not only sourced through oral accounts, but also publications.<sup>304</sup> Homosexuality remains an everyday topic in most parts of the community due to the fact that, as Bonthuys et al. write, in the South African context, African lesbians are ‘less publicly visible than gay men’.<sup>305</sup> Following the discovery of diamonds in the second half of the nineteenth century, men left the countryside to work on the mines, leaving their women behind. Underwood notes that stories of African same-sex interactions predate Mkhumbane:

South African gay history and society is indeed vibrant and varied and includes other examples of African dress. Some of the earliest accounts from same-sex mining compounds dating to the 1910s describe highly ritualized marriage ceremonies and relationships between senior men and younger boys (“wives”) in which “mine wives” were expected to look feminine.<sup>306</sup>

This feminine look coupled with homosexuality was evident in Mkhumbane. Louw cites the example of one Khumalo who ‘using the traditional dancing of Zulu dancing’, organised *isikheshana* ‘into dressing up as Zulu maidens so they could openly celebrate their sexuality’ since the ceremonies of homosexuals were organised after traditional weddings where couples wore traditional attire.<sup>307</sup> The site of these ceremonies was Esinyameni section in Mkhumbane. Louw writes, and, as shown below, my oral sources support this, that a gay community existed in Mkhumbane in the 1950s and 1960s. Mary Renault, quoted by Epprecht, recognises the city of Durban, for its ‘relative tolerance of gays and lesbians as early as the 1950s’.<sup>308</sup> Durban meant Mkhumbane. Spencer mentioned that gay life existed in Durban in the 1950s and quotes a *Golden City Post* article which reported that Cato Manor was the place ‘Where Men are Wives’.<sup>309</sup>

Epprecht found that in the 1950s, Mkhumbane came to be known for its ‘homoerotic dances and public male wedding ceremonies’; however, he argues that the area was ‘not a gay ghetto subject to derision or

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<sup>304</sup> For an extended analysis of this topic in the South African context see also Louw, Ronald. 1998. “Gay and Lesbian Sexualities in South Africa: From Outlawed to Constitutionally Protected,” in L. Moran et al. (eds). *Legal Queeries: Lesbian, Gay and Transgender Legal Studies* (London: Cassell), 139-54; Ronald Louw. 2001. “Institutionalizing Sexuality: Theorizing Queer in Post Apartheid South Africa,” in Delroy Constantine-Simms, ed., *The Greatest Taboo: Homosexuality in Black Communities* (Alyson Press), 163-84. Ronald Louw, “Mkhumbane and the New Traditions of (Un)African Same-Sex Weddings”, in Robert Morrell (ed), *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press; London: Zed Books, 2001), pp. 287-296.

<sup>305</sup> Elsje Bonthuys and Catherine Albertyn, *Gender, Law and Justice* (Cape Town: Juta, 2007), 123.

<sup>306</sup> Jennifer Spruill, “Ad/Dressing the Nation: Drag and Authenticity in Post-Apartheid South Africa”, in Steven P. Schacht and Lisa Underwood (eds), *The Drag Queen Anthology: The Absolutely Fabulous but Flawlessly Customary World of Female Impersonators* (New York: Haworth Press, 2004), pp 91-112, 105.

<sup>307</sup> Louw, “Mkhumbane and the New Traditions,” 289, 290.

<sup>308</sup> Epprecht, *Durban (Mkhumbane)*, 194.

<sup>309</sup> Dhianarai Chetty, “A Drag at Madame Costello’s: Cape Moffie Life and the Popular Press in the 1950s and 1960s”, in Edwin Cameron and Mark Gevisser (eds), *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 117.



hostility by the wider African community'.<sup>310</sup> This contrasts with what Kuefler termed the 'dominant images of African masculinity' as in Mkhumbane, there emerged 'a thriving and celebrated identity of same-sex relationships'.<sup>311</sup> The area 'became renowned' for its 'celebration of male-male marriages among blacks'.<sup>312</sup>

The destruction of the area meant the destruction of the gay culture and events associated with gay life. This study did not examine whether this culture continued in the relocation sites of KwaMashu and Umlazi but recognises that it likely did, and this is an issue that I will probably pursue. Hunter writes that forced removals disturbed and 'undermined a vibrant and well-documented culture of same-sex intimacy' of Mkhumbane, especially the settlement's Esinyameni section where men held 'ceremonies known as *imigidi wezitabane*' and same-sex ceremonies.<sup>313</sup> Although same-sex marriages were not approved of by 'all South Africans' they did exist and they 'ran starkly counter to the state's post-1950s family housing projects'.<sup>314</sup>

Esinyameni was located in the larger Mjafethe section of Mkhumbane. Its location was known to several of the interviewees, and it brings us back to the debate on the close proximity of Chesterville and Mkhumbane, and residents not differentiating between the two areas. It is in this regard that Lauretta Ngcobo stated that Mkhumbane 'encroaches on Chesterville Location on one side, trampling Ecabazini and flaring up beyond Esinyameni on the other side'.<sup>315</sup> Located on a steep slope, Esinyameni is bordered at the back by an area called Ezinjeni - a place with many dogs - which is right above the former. It is in the area of Ezinjeni that a primary school called Good Hope was located. Ezinjeni was known for the making of ginger, and the person who was famous for its production went by the name of Mbheki.<sup>316</sup> The area was also known as Mjafethe to local residents. Mbanjwa told the interviewer that:

*Wena njengoba ulapha nje useseNyameni bese emuva kwakhon kukhona i-Good Hope nayo eyaqanjwa abantu kuyingxenywe yakwaMjafethe.*<sup>317</sup>

(As you are here right now this place is known as Esinyameni and right behind it is Good Hope which was also named by black people and it was a part of a place called kwaMjafethe).

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<sup>310</sup> Marc Epprecht, Hungochani, *The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*. Second Edition (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 164.

<sup>311</sup> Mathew Kuefler, *The History of Sexuality Sourcebook* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2007), 415.

<sup>312</sup> Marc Epprecht, "Durban (Mkhumbane)," in David A. Gerstner, ed., *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Queer Culture* (Oxon: Routledge: 2001 and 2006), 194 -95, 195.

<sup>313</sup> Mark Hunter, *Love in the Time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 69. Hunter writes that *Imigidi wezitabane* can be translated to 'cultural performances of men who have boyfriends'.

<sup>314</sup> Hunter, *Love in the Time of AIDS*, 69.

<sup>315</sup> Lauretta Ngcobo, *And They Didn't Die* (New York: Feminist Press, 1999), 31.

<sup>316</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June, 2015.

<sup>317</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

The place was also known as *Ezitabaneni*, a place of gay men. In Zulu, *isitabani*, singular, and *izitabani* in plural form, means a gay person. The other common name that people used to refer to non-gender-conforming persons was *ngqingili*. Mbanjwa confirmed that the gay people living in Mkhumbane were referred to as *ngqingili*, and they married each other (*Kwakuthiwa oNgqingili, babeshadana bebodwa*).<sup>318</sup> These terms are frequently used in South African townships. Not much has been documented, but Esinyameni seems to be the leading site where the gay sub-culture emerged. It is not clear which ethnic group dominated this sub-culture, but given that the Zulus were the dominant group in Mkhumbane, the majority of residents of Esinyameni were likely Zulu.

Nomadiphu spoke of the emergence of Chesterville. One day, a White official from the Durban Corporation came and told people that, 'I am going to build you beautiful houses because these houses (where you are living) resembles those of mice'.<sup>319</sup> This man was T.J. Chester, a manager at the Native Administration Department (NAD). The houses, similar to those of Msizini (Somtseu), were built, and the area was then known as Chesterville. Before it was named Chesterville, Nomadiphu said, it was known as Blackhurst.<sup>320</sup> The residents claim that after the area was renamed Chesterville by the Durban Corporation, the troubles began. Nomadiphu stated:

*Kwaqala-ke ukuhlupheka. Kwakuthi uma ufuna indlu ubuzwe incwadi yomshado. Kwasho ukuthi uma ufuna indlu, ncika ngendoda. Baqala abantu ukushada noma bengahlosile benzela ukuthola amalungelo. Uma ungashadile wawubukelwa phansi ngabomthetho, kungaziwa nokuthi ungubani.*<sup>321</sup>

(Troubles began at this time. When one sought for a house, she or he would be asked for a marriage certificate. This meant that if you want a house, you should have a man, and that is where people started to marry unintentionally (convenience) to be granted houses. An unmarried person was not recognised).

Baba Mbanjwa, whose father was originally from Bulwer, was born and grew up in Chesterville. His father settled in an area now known as Overport and relocated to Chesterville. He studied at the community schools known as Velabahleke and Good Hope. Mkhumbane and Chesterville's close proximity caused residents to describe it as one area. Mbanjwa says that he would just cross the road and he was already in Mkhumbane.<sup>322</sup> Mrs Dube remembers that Chesterville was 'very close; you could walk there' to the

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<sup>318</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>319</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 23. Mjafethe also had a subsection known as Ridgeview Road. Coloureds settled in the area and some are still living there. Mrs Maphumulo said that there were a few Coloureds in Mkhumbane and some were 'given birth to by Africans'.

<sup>320</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 23.

<sup>321</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 23.

<sup>322</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

extent that some of her 'brothers would cross over to Chesterville to watch football since there were soccer fields'.<sup>323</sup>

To residents, the whole area was known as Mkhumbane, with the different sections named above. More confusing is that when I visited Mr Babo Mbatha, a neighbour to Baba Mbanjwa who was also interviewed, for an interview, the area where his four-room house is located was known as the infamous Esinyameni; the site of homosexuals. Geographically, Mbanjwa's house is in Chesterville, and the area of Esinyameni has long been attached to Mkhumbane. For Mzimela, Chesterville came into existence at 'the same time as Mkhumbane'.<sup>324</sup> Suffice to say that most of the area's residents could not draw the line between Mkhumbane and Chesterville. For Mrs Maphumulo:

*I-Chesterville phela kwakuyilokishi ngale. Babesemthethweni abangale kodwa thina la emjondolweni. I-Chesterville yayakhe kahle yona, kwakuthiwa ise-Black ass. Ehhe abahlala e-Black ass abakhulu, thina esibancane sasizihlalela emagogogweni.*<sup>325</sup>

(Chesterville was a township on the other side. It had nice built houses and it was affectionately known as Blackhurst. The people who stayed there were regarded as serious people and the needy stayed where we stayed in the shacks).

The distinction only came into existence when Mkhumbane was destroyed, and Chesterville's residents were not part of the relocations.

Mbanjwa, who resided in Chesterville at the time of the interview, stated that the location of Esinyameni was right where his family lived. The interviews with Mzimela and Ngcobo were conducted in his house. Ngcobo, on the other hand, recalled that Esinyameni was located where there is now an off-ramp leading to Westville Correctional Centre. It is a few minutes' walk from Mbanjwa's house; hence, it might be that the Esinyameni territory extended to the road identified by Ngcobo. Mbanjwa's three-bedroom house is located in Chesterville Road 2 on a steep site, allowing him to view all the areas located on the downhill, Mkhumbane. The steep slope of the area caused residents to call it Ezintabeni – in the hills – which is another name that Mkhumbane was referred to. Mbanjwa stated, as we were seated in his house, that 'as you are here right now, this place is known as Esinyameni and right behind it is Good Hope which was also named by Black people and it was a part of a place called Mjafethe'.<sup>326</sup>

Esinyameni was a site of festivities. Not much has been written about the area, and most of what we know resides in people's memories. It is in this regard that Rudwick writes that it is impossible to reconstruct

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<sup>323</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019.

<sup>324</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>325</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>326</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

the exact period ‘when, where and how the first black or Zulu gay sub-culture emerged in southern Africa’.<sup>327</sup> The area was not the first place to be named Esinyameni. Spencer writes that during the reign of King Dingane, the Zulu king who ruled after Shaka in KwaZulu in the nineteenth century, the area now known as the Durban Botanical Gardens was called eSinyameni. Spencer notes that other sources state that ‘eSinyameni was on the south side of the Berea’ while another homestead called Esinyameni was located between the Umzinto and Ifafa rivers on the south coast.<sup>328</sup> It is not clear why such areas were named Esinyameni. Mark Hunter, whose 2010 study explored gay Zulu men’s sub-culture, wrote that an:

... area called Esinyameni in Mkhumbane, today known as Cato Manor Township, has been known to be the home of much homosexual activity. One of our informants, a 76 year old Zulu female who still resides in the same township, said that when she was a child in the 1950s, she and her friend often went over to the ‘men who were known to be different’ and watched their extravagant and lavish marriage ceremonies.<sup>329</sup>

Oral evidence points to the residents of Mkhumbane and Durban knowing about the activities in Esinyameni. The area is said to have been a gradual construction which expanded over a short period. For Mzimela, the population of Esinyameni started:

*Zaqala zambalwa zanda, kudanswa kwenziwa imicimbi. Ezinye zazivakasha khona la. Ekugcineni kwakungamadoda. Babeshaya uma bengasafunani!*<sup>330</sup>

(... very low and ended up growing in numbers; there were dances and a lot of events. Some used to come and visit here. At the end of the day they were men. They would beat each other when they did not want one another).

Elizabeth Maphumulo, who grew up in Mkhumbane until the forced removals, confirmed this:

*Kuyashadwa, siyobuka icece ngama-weekend. Hhayi ziyasina baba, zibhincile. Siyahleba-ke thina nabanye sithi yabona lesi sitabani ngeke usho ukuthi nje umuntu oyindoda, engathi yintombazane uyabona. Iswenkile intombazane yabantu igaxe ama-hand bag. Kanti sisihleba nje sihleba naso esinye, esinye lesi esihlebayo naso asisiboni. Sithi-ke sona “hhayi anothula nje ningasho lutho ukuthi nasi isitabane niyasibona”, saqala sase sibhekisisa. Habe sihleba ngomunye wabo! Hha ziyagqoka zigqoka izingubo zemali, zishaya ama-high hill impela. Hhay into sasiyibuka eSinyameni. Uma*

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<sup>327</sup> Stephanie Rudwick, “Defying a Myth: A Gay Sub-Culture in Contemporary South Africa”, *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 20, 2011: 96.

<sup>328</sup> Shelagh O. Spencer, *British Settlers in Natal, 1824-1857: Cadle - Coventry* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1987), 34.

<sup>329</sup> Mark Hunter, *Love in the Time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 19.

<sup>330</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

*kungesamabhinca, sobona abangani ababhincile. Amajongosi abafana abancane, izibutubutwana ezinhle ngathi amantombazane. Abahle abafanyana laba abayizintombi nje.*<sup>331</sup>

(They got married, and we would attend their ceremonies (*icece*) on weekends. They would dance and wear traditional clothes, and we would gossip about them and the way they looked. When we gossiped about one, they looked like girls who would wear smart clothes and carry handbags. We did not realise that the person we were gossiping with was a homosexual himself. The person advised that we “should keep quiet when we see a homosexual person”. That is when we realised that he was one of them. Some of them were very stylish and carried handbags and wore heels. A lot was happening at Esinyameni. We would see beautiful small boys who were women).

Esinyameni’s festivities attracted the residents of Mkhumbane who would go to the area to watch and examples of homosexuality formed popular stories in the area, as Mrs Dube recounted:

*Sasiye sizibukele. Kukhona esasisibukela sibanjwe enkandla eGavini kade sipheka ugavini. Sesiboshiwe amaphoyisa sithwele idramu lakhona sihanjiswa ngendlela nje siqhutshwa sibukwa yiwona wonke umuntu, sifake isikhethi nesikibha.*<sup>332</sup>

(We sometimes went there to go watch them. One was once caught by the police for making alcohol in the bushes. The guy was wearing a skirt and a t-shirt).

The interviews revealed that the place was a clandestine, or perhaps not so clandestine, space for homosexual individuals who tended not to portray their sexual orientation in public for the obvious reason that it was not the done thing “to come out.” Some have argued that even though lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people are now accepted in many parts of the world and have the same rights as everyone else, many Zulus do not accept them. As Rudwick writes, ‘the myth that homosexuality is un-African’ persists, with the result that many gay people are compelled to hide their sexuality from their communities to the extent that they ‘negotiate their own re-defined Zulu ethnicity and culture’ and form their own communities.<sup>333</sup>

Esinyameni had cottages and houses, which were owned by African individuals. These *izitabani* would hold marriage ceremonies in their backyards, and some would travel from Musgrave and Florida, a few kilometres from the upmarket Berea, to attend such festivities.<sup>334</sup> The number of houses increased, and

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<sup>331</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019. *Icece* is a Zulu word for an event, usually for a particular family.

<sup>332</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019.

<sup>333</sup> Rudwick, “Defying a Myth”, 96.

<sup>334</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

local residents believed that any person who dwelt in Esinyameni was gay. Other gay people would also come to Esinyameni for entertainment and its residents formed *stokvels*.<sup>335</sup> Mbanjwa recalled that:

*Kwakukhona izitokofela eziningi laphaya. Uma ufuna ukungena kwakumele ukhokhe u 2 senti no hhafu. Kwakunenqwaba yezitabani futhi ihholo labo lali la phezulu. Abantu babebuphuza kakhulu utshwala khona.*<sup>336</sup>

(There were a lot of *stokvels* and for you to enter there you had to pay two and a half cents. There were a lot of gay people and their hall is right at the top. People drank too much alcohol).

It was in these *stokvels* that women sold beer. Mbanjwa said that there were benches where people sat, drank and played guitars.<sup>337</sup> It is unknown who owned the hall, but *stokvel* gatherings and parties were held. It is clear that Mkhumbane residents knew of the existence of Esinyameni and, notwithstanding homophobic attitudes, there was no direct evidence of antagonism towards the people living there. Mrs Maphumulo reiterated that:

... the gay people stayed in their own space. The gays would get married and we would go there and eat [free food] ... The gay people stayed alone and never stole for anyone. They dated one another ... that was all.<sup>338</sup>

Mrs Dube, who stayed with her family at KwaMjafethe, echoed Mrs Maphumulo's statement that no hatred was directed against homosexual men:

*Ayi, zazingahlukunyezwa. Zazike zivakashe ngisho ngapha eduze kwasekhaya. Zazithi ziphuma eBrighton Bridge, zivakashele komunye umuzi owu-next door ngemuva okuthiwa ikwaBhengu kwa-Z. Zazike zifike khona, sihambe siyozibuka. Kodwa kuthiwe singaphakamisi amazwi sithi izitabane zizonishaya, zizonigwaza. Siphume sibukele zidansa, zicula, ziphuza.*<sup>339</sup>

(No, they were not harassed. They would sometimes visit next to where we stayed. They usually said that they originate from Brighton Bridge (near Bluff), and they visited our neighbourhood known as Bhengu's place. The elders told us that we should refrain from labelling them as *izitabane* as they would beat us up. We used to watch them singing and dancing).

Mrs Maphumulo claimed that these men's lifestyle was generally tolerated, if not accepted by the rest of the community. The homosexuals boarded the same buses as the other people of Mkhumbane. Mrs Maphumulo reminded us that there were no taxis at that time. She said that the bus used to drop them and

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<sup>335</sup> *Stokvel* is a South African term for a savings or investment society to which members contribute an agreed amount and from which they receive a lump sum payment

<sup>336</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>337</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>338</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>339</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 06 January, 2019.

'we would go up and pass by Esinyameni where the gay people resided'.<sup>340</sup> Of course, the term gay would not have been in vogue at the time.

Rudwick observes that:

These men's lifestyle was reasonably tolerated, if not even accepted by the rest of the Township community. According to this informant many women, were particularly fond of the 'strange men', because they were always helpful (carrying things, for example), very artistically talented, and never caused any harm to anyone (as was the case with some 'normal' [heterosexual] men, she claimed).<sup>341</sup>

Antagonism, if there was any, did not amount to discrimination against Esinyameni residents. The response was that homosexuality was their 'secret,' which came into the open when they got married because 'there was no court which approved that kind of behaviour.'<sup>342</sup> Mrs Maphumulo explained that since homosexuals had:

*Zazinendawo yazo. Uzobe ufunani endaweni yabo, uzoxaka abantu bezakhele nabo. Ngoba Esinyameni kwakuyindawo nayo enkulu yakhe zona izitabane nje, nani nizakhele. Niyofunani ezitabaneni ngoba phela amadoda lawa azokushaya?*<sup>343</sup>

(... their own place, then why would another person meddle in the affairs of other residents? Esinyameni comprised of a large area of homosexual men, and heterosexual residents had their places. What would one seek in their area because those were men who could beat one up?).

Stories of potentially being beaten up by homosexuals if one wronged them were common, although no evidence was provided to corroborate this. The interviewees did not recount any stories of people being on the receiving end of hidings by homosexuals; however, it is clear that the community respected (or perhaps tolerated) them. There was always the fear that, because the homosexuals were men, the heterosexual person would not come off better if one stepped on their toes. As noted by other interviewees, Mrs Dube said there was the possibility of being stabbed if one identified and addressed them as homosexual:

*Zazikugwaza uma uzibiza ngezitabane? Habe! Lwalungafakwa. Zigqoke izikhethi okuthiwa ama-Rock and Roll nezikibha zakhona, zizimisele zimeshile nje kahle.*

(Yes! They were so aggressive when it comes to that. They used to wear skirts called Rock and Roll as well as matching t-shirts).

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<sup>340</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>341</sup> Rudwick, "Defying a Myth", 96.

<sup>342</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>343</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

Like many other sections of Mkhumbane and the area as a whole, forced removals disturbed and ‘undermined a vibrant and well-documented culture of same-sex intimacy’, especially in the settlement’s Esinyameni section where men held ‘ceremonies known as *imigidi wezitabane*’ - same-sex ceremonies.

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### **KwaMgenge – (Mgenge’s Place)**

At the beginning of this chapter, mention was made of the sections which made up Mkhumbane. One of the popular sections was KwaMgenge – Mgenge’s Place. Mgenge’s Place was a popular meeting spot in Fairbreeze Road. It was named after a person named Mgenge who owned the place. This is a widespread practice in townships to this day. Rumour had it that Mgenge had killed his wife at his previous residence in Riverside, and police did not arrest him out of fear.<sup>345</sup>

Indians occupied the area before the 1949 racial riots, while Africans took occupation in the aftermath of the upheavals as Indians began moving to live, according to Mrs Maphumulo, at *ezibhananeni* – a place with banana plantations. Though very young during the 1949 riots, she remembers that the Indians ‘had built their own houses, but we did not stay together’ and they ‘had planted bananas and stayed in between them and we were situated on the outside part’.<sup>346</sup> Mrs Dube echoed this:

*AmaNdiya sasikude kakhulu nawo. Aye ngale koKito kude kakhulu. Kodwa sasithi uma sihamba ngebhasi yaseMkhumbane ubone umngcwabo wakhona lapha ezansi. Ubone kubaswe izinkuni eziningi, kuzoshiswake indiya lapho, kuthiwa kuyangcwatshwa.*<sup>347</sup>

(We [Africans] were very far from the Indians. They stayed by Cato Manor mostly. We used to see them when we used the bus from Mkhumbane. We would see them preparing their funerals with huge fires sometimes used for cremation).

KwaMgenge was a meeting spot where people would quench their thirst, dance, play music, and engage in other entertainment. Dance was the most popular genre in the area. Mgenge’s place had a sound system that was audible all over Mkhumbane to the extent that some people claimed that the sound should not be listened to because it had magical powers of luring one to Mgenge’s place.<sup>348</sup> Its popularity inspired residents of Mkhumbane to compose songs about the place such as, recalls Nomadiphu, *The unemployed*

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<sup>344</sup> Hunter, *Love in the Time of AIDS*, 69. Hunter writes that *Imigidi wezitabane* can be translated to ‘cultural performances of men who have boyfriends’.

<sup>345</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 18.

<sup>346</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>347</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019. According to Hindu belief, the dead should be cremated to bring swifter and more complete release of the soul from the body. A burial, in contrast, is seen to preserve the soul’s psychic connection to its earthly life. The burning of the body signifies spiritual release, notifying the soul that death has, in fact, come.

<sup>348</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 20.



*gangster is sleeping at Mgenge's place (isigebengu silele kwaMgenge asisebenzi).*<sup>349</sup> People would spend their free time there engaged in different activities. As Nomadiphu recounted:

*UMgenge wayakhe izindlu ezifana namabhalekisi. Kuzona wayebeke abantu besifazane, ebabekele ukuthi bagaye isishimeyane esasithi yena. Sasidayiswa ... futhi kudayiswa nokudla, kudayiselwa abantu ababeze emdansweni ... kwakudayiswa imini nobusuku. Izizintombi zazifika nezinsizwa kube sengathi zibona umbuso omusha.*<sup>350</sup>

(Mgenge built barrack-look-a-like houses where there were women who brew *sishimeyane* and cook food for his customers. The customers were coming for the dance. The area was open day and night. Girls and boys would come to the area as if they were experiencing a new world).

KwaMgenge was also famous for its mischievous activities and crime. Nomadiphu states that people would be stabbed and their corpses were thrown away at night. However, she reveals that people did not stop going there because they were lured by the entertainment, although they knew that going to the area put one's life at risk.<sup>351</sup>

Mgenge was feared by community members and, as Nomadiphu's story shows, he loved women:

*Kwakuthi-ke uma intombi eyithandile uMgenge iphathiswe okweqanda, noma njengendodakazi yenkosi. Yayiba nomuntu oyigezayo, ezophua nayo noma iyaphi, ngisho noma seyiya endlini encane imbala. Yayiwashelwa izingubo, ithengelwa nezimonyo. Ithi uma iqhamuka kuthiwe, "UmkaMgenge lo, akathintwa.*<sup>352</sup>

(When Mgenge chooses a female 'companion', she would be taken care of and be treated like a king's daughter. There would be a person who bathes that woman; she would have a personal guard everywhere, even when going to the toilet. Mgenge ensured that there would be a person who washes her clothes and he would buy her perfumes. When the woman appears, you hear people saying that she is Mgenge's princess; nobody dares touch her).

Furthermore, interfering with Mgenge's women had grave consequences. Nomadiphu added that his sidekicks would stab anyone that gazed at Mgenge's woman.<sup>353</sup> Nomadiphu stated that she knew these stories because she used to sell meat in a basket at Mgenge's place. The meat was bought and prepared by her husband and other men at KwaBhanki, who bought and slaughtered cattle.<sup>354</sup> Mbanjwa identified another place where women and business people fetched meat that they sold:

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<sup>349</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 20.

<sup>350</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 21.

<sup>351</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 18.

<sup>352</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 19.

<sup>353</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 19.

<sup>354</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 20.

Women sold intestines, which they fetched at eMadeleni as Whites threw them away, and you would never find them sold in butcheries ... There was a Corporation area where meat was cut on Victoria Street. People had small butcheries and fetched the meat there.<sup>355</sup>

Nomadiphu mentioned that Mgenge was a famous fan of her meat, to the extent that only on rare occasions would she return home with any unsold.

Africans in Mkhumbane usually attended the Zion church while Indians had mosques and temples.<sup>356</sup> T. Ngcobo confirmed Msiya's observation that most Africans went to the Zion church and used their yards to worship. Others, Ngcobo explained, attended the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>357</sup> Mrs Maphumulo stated that although 'most people attended Zion church', which came in later years, many:

*Amasonto yinto eyayinganakwa kangako. EMkhumbane angazi nje kuyiwa esontweni. Kwathiwa nazi iZayoni, nakhona yinto eqhamuke kamuva kwathiwa kukhona iZayoni. Kwathiwa kuyasontwa ngeSonto, yayingekho leyonto ... EMkhumbane sasingasonti ngempela. Sasizihlalela uma kungamasonto, siyazigezela sibe-clean. Mhlambe kukhona isitokofela laphana, siyobuka abadansayo. Uma senikhulile nani niyangena ezitokofeleni, kuzodlalwa imali nje. Kungenwa ngemali, nifike nithenge ukudla laphana okuphekiwe. Ayikho nje enye into.*<sup>358</sup>

(... did not take note of churches that much. People of Mkhumbane never went to church that much. We would be told, 'here are the Zion people passing by', and the Zion were new to people. This thing of attending church on Sundays was never there ... People from uMkhumbane never went to church. We used to relax on Sundays, bathe, and be clean. We used to watch people dancing when there were any *stokvel* gatherings. We would buy ready-cooked meals and pay entrance fees.)

Mrs Dube remembers, however, that 'there were so many Zion churches around' but that only 'some people went to church'.<sup>359</sup> As an area with different people with varied backgrounds, people likely had their preferences during weekends. Some chose church while others chose *stokvel* gatherings, and so forth.)

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<sup>355</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>356</sup> Mrs Thuleleni Msiya (presentation, Library, Archives, Museum and Language Services Conference, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture, International Convention Centre, Durban, November 26-28, 2013).

<sup>357</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

<sup>358</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>359</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019.

It is not clear which section the church was located in. However, Nomadiphu Khumalo said that the buses used to reach it would use Booth Road and go across to the Roman Catholic Church and eZinkawini at Wiggins Road.<sup>360</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

In 1964, *The Natal Mercury* wrote that Mkhumbane was the ‘home of crime, where murder, rape, prostitution, and violence of every description thrived and flourished like flies on a compost heap’.<sup>361</sup> To the White-oriented newspapers, both English and Afrikaans, Mkhumbane was a notorious shantytown while most Indians and Africans shared contrasting versions of their ‘home’. The testimony of interviewees, who were former residents, points in the opposite direction. Perhaps we need a balance. The statistics and contemporary reports point to the difficult lives of the residents of Mkhumbane. However, like Jacob Dlamini’s *Native Nostalgia*, these interviewees challenge the stereotype that people who lived in apartheid townships only have unhappy memories of the past. While apartheid was atrocious and horrifying, and most African people were subjected to terrible poverty, these interviewees shatter some of these stereotypes in discussing their complicated lives, which were rich and exciting and included music and art, literature, and fun evenings with friends.

However, frustration sometimes led to violence, and the following chapter focuses on some of these explosions, beginning with the racial riots of 1949.

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<sup>360</sup> Nozizwe Madlala and Sizakele Mkhize (eds), *EMkhumbane. uNomadiphu Khumalo* (Pinetown: Pinetown Printers, 1992), 6.

<sup>361</sup> ‘Cato Manor – Grass now Covers its Scars’, *The Natal Mercury*, 31 January 1964.

### Chapter Three

#### 1949: Mkhumbane, a site of 'peaceful' Afro-Indian relations?

Though now disputed by most former residents of Mkhumbane, who nostalgically remember their area as a quiet and peaceful one and a beacon of hope for harmonious inter-racial relations, written and oral evidence suggests that Mkhumbane was a highly volatile and combustible area. This was probably unavoidable as it was overcrowded with thousands of residents from varied backgrounds crammed into a small area under difficult socio-economic conditions.

The mid-twentieth century was a pivotal period in South African history with the coming to power of the Afrikaner NP in 1948 and the imposition of its policy of apartheid. Enforced, rigid racial separation led to the further marginalisation and oppression of Black South Africans, and ushered in anti-apartheid resistance campaigns and politics. The NP enacted racially driven decrees to impose a colour bar, which marked a further turning point in the lives of Black (or "non-White," as defined by the government) South Africans. The imposition of apartheid was the start of decades of instability, armed resistance, bigotry, states of emergency, and political and social turmoil until the first democratic elections on April 27, 1994.<sup>362</sup>

Apartheid prompted resistance and fuelled the formation, reformation, and tactics of already existing organisations and anti-apartheid groups to defy the White minority government. Like other major South African cities, Durban was not exempt from the mid-twentieth century's political and social 'busyness.' Mkhumbane, on the western periphery of the city, which had a majority of African residents, was a nest of politics, controversy, and mobilisation. The major Indian and African political organisations, the NIC and ANC, respectively, gained more support and patronage in Mkhumbane than elsewhere in the city as the 1950s wore on; this is discussed in later chapters.

Sadly, while the White government imposed racist policies on Black South Africans, the underclasses turned on each other. Mkhumbane is well known for three major riots or disturbances in the mid-twentieth century. These are the widely reported Afro-Indian racial riots of 1949, the women-led beer boycott of 1959, and the killing of police by community members in 1960. The first of these incidents is discussed in this chapter, with the second and third covered in Chapters four and five, respectively. They shocked the authorities, and accounts of burning homes and shops, violence against fellow residents, and police murders dominated international headlines. What was at the root of these incidents of violence? Was it

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<sup>362</sup> One of the best overviews of apartheid is Saul Dubow, *Apartheid 1948-1994* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

merely opportunism by criminal elements, as some of the authorities alleged? Did daily police harassment and searches trigger the violence? Was it a way to lay claim to urban territory?

### **Afro-Indian relations**

Cato Manor belongs to every person who lives in Cato Manor. If the Coloured person is evicted under the Group Areas, it would be an injustice; if the European is evicted, he will suffer injustice. If the African or Indian is evicted, injustice will be suffered.

- Cato Manor Ratepayers Association (CMRA)

The above extract was written by the CMRA as part of its bid to resist relocations. It should be noted that the association comprises mainly Indian members. The extract paints a picture of inter-racial tolerance in Mkhumbane. Apart from social tensions, it was 'uppermost in people's minds' that there was a need for unity in the community.<sup>363</sup>

In 1958, the African community from Mjafethe and Two Stick sections circled and stoned the afternoon buses for failing to serve them. What angered these residents was that the African owners of the two buses had chased away Indian-owned buses that served the approximately 10 000 residents of the two areas,<sup>364</sup> but they could not offer a similar service. Thus, the attack was not related to race, but was the action of a community aggrieved by poor service. It seems ironic that Africans would demand Indian-owned buses years after the 1949 riots during which Indians were dispossessed of much of their property.

Former resident, Nomadiphu Khumalo said that people at Mkhumbane bought at the numerous Indian-owned shops on Booth Road. Other shops were located at KwaMafutha and in Dunbar Road. Mbanjwa confirmed that Indians and Africans lived and interacted with one another. Africans also rented accommodation from Indians and caught Indian-owned buses to and from work. According to the interviewees, there were also interracial relationships, with African women and Indian men having children together.<sup>365</sup> Indians and Africans interacted and 'dated as they stayed in one area'. The relationship was described as 'good, very normal, and peaceful'.<sup>366</sup> Given the riots of 1949 and some of the testimony to the commission that was set up following it, it would seem that these views could be partly attributed to nostalgia.

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<sup>363</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 194.

<sup>364</sup> 'Abantu Bawakhande Ngamatshe Amabhasi', *UmAfrika*, 7 June 1958, 1.

<sup>365</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>366</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

Mbanjwa and Mzimela told the author of the 'peace and unity' prevailing at Mkhumbane, especially between Africans and Indians:

*Mzimela: Ekhaya lapho esasakhe khona kwakunethempeli lamaNdiya eceleni. Sasihlalisene kahle.*

*Mbanjwa: Kwakukuhle lapha. AmaNdiya ayenamakotishi okuqashisa abantu.*

*Mzimela: Yayingekho imijondolo kwakukhona amakotishi siwabiza ngamabharekisi.*

*Mbanjwa: Sasiphila nawo (AmaNdiya) sigibela amabhasi awo.*

*Mphumeleli: Iliphi iNdiya elalidumile linamabhasi?*

*Mbanjwa: Kwakukhona uMangaroo behlala la ku-Belair Road uma udlula e-police station ngakwa-Kito. Babene garage lapho. Kwaze kwafika uMayville buses emva kwawo*

*Mphumeleli: Abekhona amakhaladi nabamhlophe?*

*Mzimela: Amakhaladi ayekhona kodwa hhayi abantu abamhlophe.<sup>367</sup>*

(Mzimela: There was an Indian temple next to my home. Everything was fine.

Mbanjwa: Everything was beautiful. Indians had cottages which they rented to Blacks.

Mzimela: There were no shacks but we had cottages which we referred to as barracks.

Mbanjwa: We lived with them (Indians) and even took buses together.

Interviewer: Which Indian was famous and had buses?

Mbanjwa: There was one called Mangaroo who stayed on Bellair Road when you pass the police station by Kito (Cato Manor Police Station). They had a garage there. The buses that are now called Mayville Buses arrived after them.

Mphumeleli: Were there any Whites and Coloured people?

Mzimela: Coloureds there were, but not Whites).

The residents of Mkhumbane shared space and the limited resources. Mrs Maphumulo related that there was no segregation in Mkhumbane - *khona eMkhumbane nje uqhekeko lwalungekho.*<sup>368</sup> Mzimela recounted that people stayed in the barracks, but using the lavatory was problematic:

*Kuyikhona nje ukuthi uma uya ethoyilethi inkinga kodwa kwakunganakekile ke. Kwakumbiwa umgodi kuzungezwe ngamapulangwe kube khona isicabha bese isihlalo sokuhlala sakiwe ngamapulangwe.<sup>369</sup>*

(It was not a problem as everyone understood that situation. A hole was dug and covered with planks for shelter and there would be a door and a toilet seat made of planks ... the toilet could be closed ... Anyone was allowed to use it, Blacks and Indians ... People stayed peacefully at uMkhumbane).

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<sup>367</sup> Baba Mbanjwa and Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015. Mzimela said that he played for Chesterville Brothers which, together with other local teams, used a sports ground which was located where the Mkhumbane police station now stands.

<sup>368</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>369</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015

'Peace' was said to have existed post the 1949 race riots. Mrs Maphumulo stated that most Indians disappeared after the riots, but slowly a few came back and built shops and got along with Africans. She pronounced that the 'hatchet was buried, and there was no fight after that' and Africans continued to buy from the few Indian-owned shops which had re-opened.<sup>370</sup> On the other hand, Mrs Dube observed that after the 1949 riots, 'there were no Indians at Mkhumbane' as their shops had been forcefully taken, and they 'were nowhere to be found'.<sup>371</sup> A few shops re-opened, and there was no reported fracas after that until the destruction of the area.

The non-racial atmosphere allowed residents to buy goods at local stores, most of which were Indian-owned. The most famous of the shops, he recalled, was once 'owned by an Indian, whom local Africans in Mkhumbane named Pelwane'. Mrs Maphumulo also indicated that KwaPelwane (at Pelwane's Place) was a shop where residents 'used to buy stuff'.<sup>372</sup> Both Kunene and Njabha spoke of the urban legends that developed around the figure of Pelwane. According to Kunene, it was believed that Pelwane would not give people their change. In contrast, others spoke of his customers being found dead at Thusini, where UKZN's Howard College campus is now located.<sup>373</sup> According to Njapha, Pelwane asked locals if they wanted work but many refused because they heard rumours that the proposed 'job was to kill people'.<sup>374</sup>

Alfred Duma Nokwe, a seasoned film and stage director, musician, and actor who was born in Mkhumbane, stated that tales of Pelwane 'beating up people who wanted their change from his shops' were rampant across Mkhumbane.<sup>375</sup> Iain Edwards quotes an interviewee, Thembinkosi Phewa, who recounted that during the 1949 riots in Mkhumbane, a crowd of Africans 'ran up to Pelwane's place at the top'. He was at the shop at the time and upon seeing the crowd, he told them to take whatever they wanted. Phewa alleged that the crowd told him that they were not interested in Pelwane's items but wanted 'his women'.<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019..

<sup>371</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2019.

<sup>372</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>373</sup> According to Mzimela, referring to Thusini section of Mkhumbane, 'Black people stayed there and that place was like a border. Some people went to stay in the areas you refer as Glenwood and Glenmore today and all of that happened around the 1950s'.

<sup>374</sup> Mr Njapha (presentation, Library, Archives, Museum and Language Services Conference, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture, International Convention Centre, Durban, November 26-28, 2013).

<sup>375</sup> "The History of Cato Manor", *Cato Manor Development Association*, Vol. 2: April 2001, 2. Available at [https://www.cmda.org.za/IZWI/Izwi\\_Apr01\\_pg2.htm](https://www.cmda.org.za/IZWI/Izwi_Apr01_pg2.htm). Accessed 02 October 2017.

<sup>376</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 51.

Edwards adds that Pelwane was later killed in the same riots.<sup>377</sup> Mrs Maphumulo had heard these stories but ‘does not know much about that’ because she was still young.<sup>378</sup> It is one of the tales among many which are believed to have influenced Afro-Indian tensions, which escalated into the 1949 riots. The mention of women is interesting because one of the issues that emerged in testimony to the Riots Commission was that Indian males were having sexual relationships with African women. True or not, this irked African men, and perhaps the riots presented an opportunity for sexual revenge.

Although many interviewees claimed that there was peaceful racial interaction in Mkhumbane, much of the evidence indicates otherwise. This has been an issue for debate for many years. Although refuted by many interviewees, racial stereotypes existed in Mkhumbane. Such differences grew to extremes during the often talked-about January 1949 riots.

Ndlovu, a former resident, was adamant that the different races lived in a peaceful atmosphere (... *behlezi ngokuthula*).<sup>379</sup> Having arrived in Mkhumbane in 1950, Mr Njapha, who was residing in Mbumbulu at the time of the 2013 KZN Department of Arts conference, attests that there was ‘peace and love in Mkhumbane’ as Indians and Africans shared space and lived side by side.<sup>380</sup> One of his neighbours, Njapha said, was the anti-apartheid stalwart, Florence Mkhize, after whom one of eThekweni Municipality's buildings has been renamed. Mzimela echoed Njapha's sentiments and claimed that sharing the space with the Indians was not a problem as Africans and Indians jelled 'together very well, and there was no problem at all. As you see, the Pavilion (Shopping Centre) now, it was owned by an Indian called Lamiya'; hence, the area was known as KwaLamiya (Lamiya's place).<sup>381</sup>

What stands out in Mrs Thuleleni Msiya's mind is the “togetherness” shared by different racial and ethnic groups in the area. She stressed that Zulus, Xhosas, and Sothos lived together and shared space. Mrs Maphumulo agreed that there were also Sotho residents, though ‘very few’, whom they, along with Xhosas, interacted with ‘very peacefully’.<sup>382</sup> Most Sothos sold cigarettes, says Mrs Maphumulo, though it is not clear why this was the case.

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<sup>377</sup> Edwards, “Mkhumbane our Home”, 51, footnote 11. Mrs Maphumulo agrees with Edwards that Pelwane's place was burnt down and he was beaten to death: ‘We heard that the people were burning it down, Pelwane's store was burnt, was in flames, it was burning, the people were beating him’ (... *wezwa kuthiwa sekuthungelwa umlilo “hhaybo isitolo sakwaPelwane sesishile, hhayi kuyavutha, uyashawa”*)

<sup>378</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>379</sup> Ndlovu, *Bakhona Abafazi*, 2.

<sup>380</sup> Mr Njapha (presentation, Library, Archives, Museum and Language Services Conference, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture, International Convention Centre, Durban, November 26-28, 2013).

<sup>381</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>382</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.



## The Riots

The 1949 Afro-Indian riots in Durban were one of the reasons cited by the apartheid government to justify its curbing of inter-racial interaction. Referred to as the racial riots, or the Cato Manor/Mkhumbane riots by some interviewees even though the ramifications impacted all parts of Durban, the riots remain a topic of scholarly, media, and oral discussion to this day. Indeed, the populist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party under the leadership of Julius Malema has regularly targeted Indians as exploiters and warned of a repeat of 1949.

The riots lasted three days, from Thursday to Saturday, 13 to 15 January, 1949. The government-appointed Commission of Enquiry into the riots found that 541 Africans, 503 Indians, 32 Whites, and 11 Coloureds were injured, while the death toll was 87 Africans, 50 Indians, one White and four unclassified people.<sup>383</sup> Dwellings, shops, a factory and other buildings were damaged.<sup>384</sup> The Commission concluded that the causes of the riots had been ‘race’, and that the ‘riots arose from primordial antagonism between Africans and Indians’.<sup>385</sup>

The riots are often attributed to the two racial groups living in close proximity. It is no coincidence that the 1949 riots spread to Mkhumbane from the city centre. It was ‘the core area within a distance of the

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<sup>383</sup> See Union of South Africa, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Riots in Durban UG 36-49 (Cape Town: Cape Times, 1949). The Report stated:

The casualties during the riots were: Deaths: 142 (1 European, 50 Indians, 87 Natives and 4 individuals whose race could not be determined). Injured: 1,087 (32 Europeans, 11 Coloureds, 541 Natives and 503 Indians; of the injured 58 died). The 23-page report is available at the Ghandi-Luthuli Documentation Centre on UKZN’s Westville campus. Interested persons and organisations were invited to give evidence before the Commission and there were 24 meetings and 22 public sittings, with 146 witnesses. Desai writes that angry Africans ‘turned on Indians indiscriminately’, leaving 1 087 people injured and 141 dead with 87 Africans and 50 Indians losing their lives while the number of injured was reported to be half per group. Property was also destroyed, with some 710 stores and 1 532 dwellings damaged and others totally destroyed and the ‘overwhelming majority of these were owned by Indians; the attackers being African’ (Ashwin Desai, ‘Cato Manor 1949: Spectre or Lesson?’, *Sunday Tribune*, 17 January, 1999).

<sup>384</sup> The report stated that damage to property was: Buildings destroyed: 1 factory, 58 stores, 247 dwellings. Buildings damaged: 2 factories, 652 stores, 1,285 dwellings. The timeline of the riots is available at <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/post-south-africa/20121219/page/8/textview>. For a detailed discussion on the riots see: Iain Edwards, “Mkhumbane our Home. African Shantytown Society in Cato Manor Farm, 1946 – 1960,” PhD thesis, Department of History, University of Natal, Durban, 1989; L.K. Ladlau “Cato Manor Riots, 1959-60” MA thesis, University of Natal, 1976; S.L Kirk, “The Durban Riots - The Community in Conflict”, MA thesis, University of Natal, 1983.

<sup>385</sup> Edwards, I. and Nuttall, T. "Seizing the Moment: the January 1949 Riots, Proletarian Populism and the Structures of African urban life in Durban during the late 1940s". Paper presented at History Workshop on “Structure and Experience in the Making of Apartheid”, University of Witwatersrand, 6-10 February, 1990, 1. For a definition of an ethnic or racial riot see Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (California: University of California Press, 2001), 1. Horowitz writes that a ‘deadly ethnic riot is an intense, sudden, though not necessarily wholly unplanned, lethal attack by civilian members of one ethnic group on civilian members of another ethnic group, the victims chosen because of their group membership. So conceived, ethnic riots are synonymous with what are variously called “communal”, “racial”, “religious”, “linguistic”, or “tribal” disturbances’. The Indo-African fracas in Mkhumbane fits well with this description.

city centre'.<sup>386</sup> Ironically, decades later, most informants described Afro-Indian relations as 'good' (See Chapter two). So what disturbed the 'good' relations between Indians and Africans in Mkhumbane?

The immediate cause of the riots was attributed to the assault of a 14-year old 'street urchin' George Madondo who 'found himself at the centre of the Indian Quarter' in the CBD of the 'crowded tangle at the end of Victoria Street', where a larger number of people intermingled in an 'area with no facilities and no planning'.<sup>387</sup> On Thursday, 13 January, 1949, at around 5:00 p.m., the street was at its busiest. The Commission's Report stated that an Indian adult assaulted this 'Native youth'. As people reached home, the story was relayed with rumours, fallacies, and exaggeration fuelling anti-Indian sentiment. According to the Report:

In the peri-urban areas, the story went that the Native youth had been brutally done to death by the Indians, that he had been decapitated, and that the Indians had placed his head in the Mosque, whence they refused to yield it up for burial. In reprisal, Natives began to stone Indian-owned buses at Cato Manor and Clairwood.<sup>388</sup>

In an article commemorating the 50th anniversary of the riots, Sociologist and public commentator Ashwin Desai described the setting of the area where the riots originated in Victoria Street as 'overcrowded':

On top of the shops, Indian flat dwellers squeezed one more family member on to veranda among the washing lines. Just beneath them was the most conspicuous place of gathering for Africans, the beer hall, a dark structure with an asbestos roof and stakes driven into the ground as walls on two sides. Opposite were colourful market stalls and the bus terminus.<sup>389</sup>

Asked his opinion on what may have sparked the riots, even though he had claimed that Afro-Indian relations were 'good, very normal and peaceful', Babo Mbatha responded:

In 1949 there was a war. What happened was that a group of Indians kicked the Madondo son. I do not remember where it happened exactly, but that is how it began. The war was called *Shaya ubhebhe* (literal interpretation: strike an Indian and have sex with his wife) because if Africans were to see an Indian, the war would begin.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>386</sup> Robert Morrell and Georgina Hamilton (eds). *Political Economy and Identities in KwaZulu-Natal: Historical and Social Perspectives* (Durban: Indicator Press, 1996), 123.

<sup>387</sup> Ashwin Desai, 'Cato Manor 1949: Spectre or Lesson?', *Sunday Tribune*, 17 January 1999. CBD is an abbreviation of Central Business District.

<sup>388</sup> Union of South Africa, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Riots in Durban UG 36-49, 4.

<sup>389</sup> Ashwin Desai, 'Cato Manor 1949: Spectre or Lesson?', *Sunday Tribune*, 17 January 1999.

<sup>390</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

Hansen observed this *Shaya ubhebhe* when he noted the existence of 'sexual violence against Indian women during the riots'.<sup>391</sup> In plotting the timeline of the three-day riots, Vivek Narayanan, a scholar at Stanford University notes that while Indian men were killed in Mkhumbane, 'Indian women were raped'.<sup>392</sup> Themba Ngcobo, who was born in Mkhumbane, also attributed the spark to Madondo but claimed that an Indian bus driver slapped him:

*Ngcobo: Kwaba khona umfana owahilizisana nomshayeli webhasi oyiNdiya esikhumulweni samaBhasi eThekwini. Umshayeli washaya lomfana base beyayingena bethi umfana ngeke ashaywe iNdiya. Lo mfana wayengowakwaMadondo.*

*Interviewer: Isiza kanjani indaba lapha eMkhumbane ngoba phela yenzeka eThekwini?*

*Ngcobo: Sasakhelene nawo, amanye ephakathi kwethu.*

*Interviewer: Nawashaya lawa enanakhelene nawo?*

*Ngcobo: Abanye bawasiza bawavikela. Abashawa kakhulu ilaba ababenezitolo.*

*Interviewer: Kukhona abathatha izitolo?*

*Ngcobo: Babethatha izinto bazivulela izitolo zabo.*

*Interviewer: Ngizwa kuthiwa nabanye abantu abamnyama bashawa?*

*Ngcobo: Yebo kwenzeka.*<sup>393</sup>

(Ngcobo: There was a boy who had a misunderstanding with an Indian bus driver at a bus rank in Durban. The driver hit this boy and the Blacks took part. The boy's surname was Madondo.

Interviewer: And how did the fight end up in Mkhumbane because it happened in Durban?

Ngcobo: We stayed with Indians.

Interviewer: Did Blacks hit those Indians that stayed with them?

Ngcobo: Some people protected them. The ones that were punished are those that had stores.

Interviewer: Were there any Blacks that took over the stores?

Ngcobo: They took things and opened their own stores).

It is of interest that some Indians were protected by Africans, raising the question of whether the riot was motivated by race, especially considering the 'peaceful' co-existence of the two groups. Shop owners, Ngcobo indicates, were particular targets accompanied by looting, which indicates deep-rooted envy of Indian businesses, as some interviewees wanted to state 'off the record.'

Another issue for debate is the trigger of the riots. Was it because an Indian hit an African? Mr Ngcobo stated that Madondo was hit by a bus driver whilst other versions indicate that a shop assistant or owner

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<sup>391</sup> Thomas Blom Hansen, *Melancholia of Freedom: Social Life in an Indian Township in South Africa* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 108.

<sup>392</sup> Vivek Narayanan, 'In Search of 1949', Available at [http://abahlali.org/files/Narayanan\\_1949.pdf](http://abahlali.org/files/Narayanan_1949.pdf). Accessed 28 January 2020.

<sup>393</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

hit him. Narayanan writes that a 40-year-old shop owner Harilal Basanth smashed '14 year old George Madondo's head into a shop window'.<sup>394</sup> The interviewees would often call him 'the boy of Madondo's surname'. Perhaps information from a person who knew Madondo may be more reliable. Alfred Nokwe, the musician described the scene which sparked the riots:

George Madondo was only the matchstick. Contrary to what some people say, George, who was well known to me, was pushed against a windowpane in Victoria Street resulting in a deep gash across his face with blood spilling all over his shirt. This scene angered the Rickshaws who were waiting to pick up fares from across the beer hall after lunch. The rest is history, as they say in the classics. Once started, there was no stopping the assault. It spread like wildfire. Tense feelings burst the bubble.<sup>395</sup>

The above quotation does not suggest that Nokwe witnessed the incident. It also raises questions about time since Nokwe refers to 'lunch,' which suggests early afternoon, while most people related that the assault occurred around 5:00 pm. Mr Mbatha reiterated that what he knew was that a young boy, Madondo, whose family lived in Mkhumbane, was beaten by an Indian shop owner, and that is what sparked the riots.<sup>396</sup> Another interviewee, Mzimela, stated that he was born after the disturbances and was told of his grandmother's riots. He said that they were sparked by a 'trivial' incident involving a certain boy from the Madondo family who sold papers at the bus ranks. He was pushed by an Indian, fell, and 'had blood come out'. This angered the Africans in the vicinity as they interpreted it as racially motivated and attacked Indians, with Indians fighting back.<sup>397</sup>

Most of this is hearsay evidence. What is clear, however, is that Madondo was assaulted, most likely by an Indian, and that he suffered head wounds that left him bloodied. This incensed African bystanders who reportedly 'started grappling with Indian people around them'.<sup>398</sup> The Commission concluded:

The spark which caused this tragedy was almost ludicrous in its insignificance. If one sifts the perjured evidence, the probable facts appear to be these. A Native boy, 14 years of age, had words with an Indian shop assistant, 16 years of age, and slapped the latter's face. The Indian youth complained with his employer, an Indian, who came out of the Indian Market into Victoria Street and assaulted the Native boy. In the tussle, the Native's head accidentally crashed through the glass of a shop window, and in withdrawing it, the boy received cuts behind the ears, which caused the blood to flow. Unfortunately, this happened at a time when ... a mass of Natives and Indians had congregated in

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<sup>394</sup> Vivek Narayanan, 'In Search of 1949', Available at [http://abahlali.org/files/Narayanan\\_1949.pdf](http://abahlali.org/files/Narayanan_1949.pdf). Accessed 28 January 2020.

<sup>395</sup> "The History of Cato Manor", *Cato Manor Development Association*, Vol. 2: April 2001, 2. Available at [https://www.cmda.org.za/IZWI/Izwi\\_Apr01\\_pg2.htm](https://www.cmda.org.za/IZWI/Izwi_Apr01_pg2.htm). Accessed 02 October 2017.

<sup>396</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June, 2015.

<sup>397</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>398</sup> Ashwin Desai, 'Cato Manor 1949: Spectre or Lesson?', *Sunday Tribune*, 17 January 1999.

quest of conveyance to their homes. The Natives saw an adult Indian assaulting a Native child, and they saw blood. That was enough. They went berserk and attacked every Indian within sight.<sup>399</sup>

While this seemingly minor incident was a trigger for the riots, the Commission argued that deep-rooted tensions between Indians and Africans were brewing years before the fracas. The Report concluded that the following factors were responsible for the strained relations:

- (i) The Native has always regarded the Indian as a stranger; the mere fact that he was further aroused hostility.
- (ii) With the expansion of industries during and since the war there has been a large influx of Natives into the urban and peri-urban areas of Durban. It was impossible to provide accommodation for all these Natives in separate Native locations. The result was that the Natives settled upon Indian-owned land. Slum areas developed, of which Indians were landlords, and the dwellings of these two races became confused and intermingled. Actually, the Native was the newcomer, but he regarded himself as the son of the soil and the Indian as the interloper.
- (iii) Events in India had repercussions here. A certain type of South African Indian began to ride the high horse. The native thinks on colour lines, and could not understand why a man of colour should exact himself above his fellowman. This was actually the line of reasoning: "The Indian was introduced into this country as a labourer. Now we find we have to serve two masters. Our ancestors fought the Europeans and lost. We accepted the European as our master - we will not tolerate this other black master".
- (iv) The rather strident propaganda conducted by a section of the Indian community irritated the Native. He said: "The Indians claim this country as theirs".
- (v) Rack renting: It was suggested that Indian landowner had taken advantage of the influx of Natives into Durban and the resulting shortage of houses to charge extortionate rentals.
- (vi) Population trends: the Native is seriously perturbed by the explosive fecundity of the Indian in Natal.
- (vii) Miscegenation: The Zulu is race-proud and when Indian males interfere with Native women it arouses keen resentment in the Native. The Native argues in this way: the Indians have motor cars and money; we, on the other hand, are poor.
- (viii) Treatment of Native passengers on Indian-owned buses: There is a wide-spread feeling among Natives that they are badly treated in the Indian-owned buses; that Indian passengers are given preference in regard to seats; that Native passengers are robbed by conductors who withhold change; that Natives are bundled or thrown out of moving buses when they dare complain, Indian officials frequently assault the Natives on the buses.

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<sup>399</sup> Union of South Africa, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Riots in Durban UG 36-49, 5.

- (ix) The exploitation of Natives by Indian shopkeepers: A fixed idea is, prevalent among the Natives in Natal that for years they have been ruthlessly exploited by Indian merchants, and whether based on fact or misconception, this idea has roused an intense feeling of resentment against the Indian.
- (x) Economic competition between Natives and Indians: During the last decade, an industrial revolution hail occurred in Durban and elsewhere in the Union, and this brought serious consequences in its train, social as well as economical.
- (xi) Discriminating Legislation - Native witnesses who gave evidence before us frequently compared the Government to a father and the Indians and Natives to children. Save for the occasional intellectual or the revolutionary, Natives in the mass are quite reconciled to discrimination as between themselves and the Europeans. They accept that many apparent anomalies were conceived in their protection. On the other hand, any discrimination between themselves and the Indians favours the latter fills them with violent resentment.<sup>400</sup>

In some cases, it was a matter of “stomach” politics, and in some instances, this resulted in stereotypes and fallacies of Indians. Alfred Nokwe recalls:

Friction was brewing between the Asiatics, who were extremely rich, and the Africans ... got poorer and poorer. Tales of Pelwane beating up people who wanted their change from his shops were rampant. Poverty, oppression by the authorities and the Asiatic neighbours, disease, the political dispensation, and joblessness ignited the riots!<sup>401</sup>

Explanations for the riots are subjective and depend on which racial group one belongs to. The riots have been thoroughly discussed in the literature and other media; hence, this discussion highlights them in passing, focusing on oral history corroborated by secondary sources.

The *Daily News* reported that, on the second day of the riots, more than 2 000 ‘Natives’ swarmed down to the Indian market attacking and damaging Indians’ property with sticks and singing ‘war songs’.<sup>402</sup> The Commission's Report claimed that, on the second day, Africans were ‘generally the aggressors’ who attacked with ‘increased ferocity’ with the aim of getting ‘rid of the Indian once and for all’.<sup>403</sup> Testifying at the Commission, Major Bestford, the District Commandant of the Durban area, recounted that the Zulus chanted war-cries as they waged war against Indians:

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<sup>400</sup> Union of South Africa, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Riots in Durban UG 36-49, 19- 21.

<sup>401</sup> “The History of Cato Manor”, *Cato Manor Development Association*, Vol. 2: April 2001, 2. Available at [https://www.cmda.org.za/IZWI/Izwi\\_Apr01\\_pg2.htm](https://www.cmda.org.za/IZWI/Izwi_Apr01_pg2.htm). Accessed 02 October 2017.

<sup>402</sup> ‘Native Mobs Swoop on Indians’, *Daily News*, 14 January 1949.

<sup>403</sup> Union of South Africa, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Riots in Durban UG 36-49, 4.

Houses were burnt in the vicinity of Booth Road. Many Indians not evacuated from this area were either killed or injured. Males were clubbed to death while many Indian women and girls were raped. This continued until military and naval reinforcements arrived and had to resort to the use of force to restore calm.<sup>404</sup>

I put it to some of the interviewees that if race relations were ‘peaceful’, what changed in 1949? Mrs Maphumulo shared her impressions:

Interviewer: *Pho manje niwashayelani ngo 1949?*

Maphumulo: *Hhayi-ke nami lapho ngangisemncane, kodwa ngayibona leyompi.*

Interviewer: *Wayibona impi?*

Maphumulo: *Ehhe. Ngayibona leyompi impela. Ngabona sekuthiwa kushawa amaKula, hhayi-ke angazike kwakuthiwa kubangwani namaKula.*

Interviewer: *Ashawa obani?*

Maphumulo: *Abantu!*

Interviewer: *Bakhona eMkhumbane?*

Maphumulo: *Yibona abaseMkhumbane ngoba lamaKula esasiwajwayele sihlala nawo ashawa, thina saqhamuka sesizocosha izitsha nje laphana siyodlala ngazo omasgcozi. Awazi ukuthi kwasukaphi.*

Interviewer: *Izitolo zawo...*

Maphumulo: *Bashisa kwanje, badla, banotha.*

Interviewer: *Oh, bathatha umnotho wamaNdiya?*

Maphumulo: *Ehhe. Kushuthi babefuna umnotho wamandiya. Bantshontsha bazidlela nje abantu, bedlala ngamaNdiya bewahlukumeza nje.*

Interviewer: *Hhayi kodwa ukuthi nanihlelisene kabi namaNdiya?*

Maphumulo: *Hhayi, yayingekho inhlalo embi namaNdiya, sasizihlalela thina namaNdiya. Kwasuka nje kubantu ukuthi amaNdiya awasafuneki phakathi kwabantu, amandiya awabuyele endaweni yawo sihleli kabi avimbe nezindawo amandiya, afunani la kubantu, siyawashaya. Kwaba njalo kwathiwa elethu. Into enjalo nje, wezwa kuthiwa sekuthungelwa umlilo “hhaybo isitolo sakwaPelwane sesishile, hhayi kuyavutha, uyashawa”, ehhe.<sup>405</sup>*

(Interviewer: Why did you beat them (Indians) up in 1949?

Maphumulo: I was still very young at that time but I witnessed that fight.

Interviewer: You witnessed the fight?

Maphumulo: Yes, I saw it and I realised everything when people were talking about the beating up of Indians but I did not know the sole reason behind it.

Interviewer: Who beat them up?

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<sup>404</sup> Union of South Africa, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Riots in Durban UG 36-49, 4.

<sup>405</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

Maphumulo: The people.

Interviewer: People from Mkhumbane?

Maphumulo: Yes, it is the people of Mkhumbane because we stayed with the Indians. We only arrived to pick up dishes that were left behind to go play with them and that was it.

Interviewer: What about their shops?

Maphumulo: Some were burnt, the food inside was eaten and all that.

Interviewer: Did people take the Indians' money?

Maphumulo: Yes, they wanted the Indian people's money. The people stole stuff and ate. They were harassing Indians for no reason.

Interviewer: What was your relationship with the Indians?

Maphumulo: It was very nice and enjoyable to stay with the Indians. It was the Black people that decided they did not want Indians in their midst and they ordered them to go to their rightful places and started beating them up. Even Pelwane's shop was burnt down).

Mrs Maphumulo's testimony is contradictory in that it suggests good race relations while also arguing that Africans wanted Indians out. There is a hint that economic factors may have been behind the attacks on Indians because she suggested that people wanted their money and food. In virtually all the testimonies, the figure of Pelwane looms large. Whether this was one individual or shop or whether it was used to describe Indian shops in general, is unclear.

This is not surprising given that he was born in 1945; hence, narratives in relation to the riots were passed down to him by the elders. As he grew up, they were the 'talk of the street'; showing that local residents still held these stories in their memories. The riots marked a victory of sorts; for Indians, it was a constant reminder of what could happen if the majority rose against them. Babo elaborated that there were racial fights and altercations in the city centre as Indians used to 'kick Black people' and do 'bad things,' but not the Indians who were staying in Mkhumbane. One of the subsequent allegations was that the attackers were 'outsiders' brought in by Whites to 'put Indians in their place,' and this testimony ties in with this narrative.

Ambrose Afrika of KwaMashu K 1255 was born in Bluebank at Mnambithi (Ladysmith) and lived in the Mnyasana section of Mkhumbane where she and her mother owned a few cottages. It is not clear when Ambrose moved to Mkhumbane. During and after the 1949 riots, she was a member of the Zulu Hlanganani organisation, which encouraged others, as she did, to open small shops and engage in entrepreneurship. This enabled local residents to buy at nearby shops as many houses had small shops. The chairperson of Zulu Hlanganani Mr S.M. Mabaso commented at a commemoration event in 1961 at KwaMashu, that the:



*Yabizwa ngokuthi Zulu Hlanganani lenhlangano ngoba iqonde ukuba wonke umuntu ithuba alinikwayo lokuzithukisa alisebenzise ngokubambisana ashuqungane abemunye, kungabikhona onomona komunye, ngoba uma kunjalo kasisoze sayibamba inqubekela-phambili, siyohlala sisemuva njalo kwezinye izizwe zona ezibambeneyo.*<sup>406</sup>

(The organisation was named Zulu Hlanganani with an objective that when one is afforded a business opportunity, s/he should unselfishly work with others because there would be no progress; Africans would always be behind other racial groups).

One of the people who gained ownership of a shop immediately after Indians fled Mkhumbane was Mr Mdingi Ngcobo, a member of the Nazareth Baptist Church. *Ilanga LaseNatal* reported that Mr Ngcobo, described as *ikhehla* (grandfather) by the newspaper, also took the platform during the 1961 commemorative event in KwaMashu. He commented that, Africans started to own shops from 14 January 1949.<sup>407</sup> As Ambrose put it, having dispossessed Indians of their shops, the 'new business owners of African descent did not have the logistics of ordering stock, and the pricing of goods; hence, they followed what the white-owned businesses did; copied prices from whites and the goods became more expensive for locals' (*Nalowo wavula esakhe la ezodayisa khona ... Kodwa sasingakwazi ukuthenga singakwazi nokudayisa kahle. Sasibuka emaNgisini ayekhona*).<sup>408</sup>

Ambrose, who in 1955 finally had a licenced store, said that community members had asked Superintendent C.N. Shum and Sighart Bourquin, Director of Bantu Administration in Durban, for trading licenses on numerous occasions but to no avail and there were numerous 'illegal' shops in Mkhumbane until the time they were relocated to KwaMashu.<sup>409</sup> She said that many shops were owned by people from Mnambithi and surrounding areas, especially those with the surname Mabaso. A discussion with one leader, Mr S.M. Mabaso, follows below. Superintendent Shum mentioned other shop owners in an interview, including Roy Mnguni and Elephant Ndlovu.<sup>410</sup> As Edwards put it, for Africans, the period after 1949 marked a 'new vision which was to be both an ongoing celebration of African victories and an image of future freedom'.<sup>411</sup> To Africans, Mkhumbane was then a liberated space which they had won and thus was theirs 'through right of conquest'.<sup>412</sup>

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<sup>406</sup> 'UZulu Hlanganani Ubegubha Usuku Lokuthola Kwab' Amalungelo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 21 January 1961, 2.

<sup>407</sup> 'UZulu Hlanganani Ubegubha Usuku Lokuthola Kwab' Amalungelo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 21 January 1961, 2.

<sup>408</sup> A. Afrika, KCAV 300, C. Shum, KwaMashu, 25 September 1980.

<sup>409</sup> A. Afrika, KCAV 300, C. Shum, KwaMashu, 25 September 1980.

<sup>410</sup> A. Afrika, KCAV 300, C. Shum, KwaMashu, 25 September 1980.

<sup>411</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 30.

<sup>412</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 50. In Chapter 3 footnote 3, Edwards writes that: 'of the 59 Indian families living on their own land in the Mkhumbane area before the riots only nine families still remained in occupation of their land by the end of 1950. H2/CM. Vol I, City Valuator and Estates Manager, undated. Forty-three percent of the Indian owned residences attacked during the riots were located in Cato Manor Farm. U.G. 361949, Exhibit 44'. An extensive discussion of the post-1949 riots retrieved from oral histories and archives is found in this chapter.

After the riots Indians were displaced, vacated the area and relocated to its periphery.<sup>413</sup> Mrs Dube, who arrived in Mkhumbane after the riots, attests to this:

*Interviewer: AmaNdiya wona-ke nanihleli kahle nawo?*

*Dube: AmaNdiya sasikude kakhulu nawo. Aye ngale koKito kude kakhulu. Kodwa sasithi uma sihamba ngebhasi yaseMkhumbane ubone umngcwabo wakhona lapha ezansi. Ubone kubaswe izinkuni eziningi, kuzoshiswake indiya lapho, kuthiwa kuyangcwatshwa.*

*Interviewer: Hhayi ukuthi kwakuwumuzi la, nali nalo ngala nakhelene?*

*Dube: Hhayi sasingakhelene. Lalingekho iNdiya eMkhumbane ngoba phela kwakusemva ko1949 eseshayiwe amaNdiya akhishwa, kwangena abantu.*

*Interviewer: Bazithatha ngodli izitolo zabo?*

*Dube: Ehhe.*

*Interviewer: Ayesehelile nje nya?*

*Dube: Hhayi amaNdiya ayengekho impela).<sup>414</sup>*

(Dube: We come very far with the Indians. They stayed by Mkhumbane (near the police station) mostly. We used to see them when we used the bus from Mkhumbane.

Interviewer: You were not close neighbours?

Dube: No. there were no Indians at Mkhumbane. It was after 1949 where they were beaten up and chased away and Black people took over.

Interviewer: Were their shops forcefully taken?

Dube: Yes. Then they were nowhere to be found).

For Ambrose, the business opportunities opened up after the 1949 riots had long-term benefits for Africans. Many started businesses of their own to fill the gap left by departing Indian traders. At the time of the interview, she mentioned that many of the traders at KwaMashu and Umlazi were products of the aftermath of 1949. Ambrose sold vegetables at a supermarket she owned in KwaMashu.

Zulu Hlanganani, for which the full name was Zulu Hlanganani Co-operative and Buying Club, was established by leading African traders of the time. Brah et al., quoting Kuper, write that it was ‘overtly

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<sup>413</sup> In Chapter 3 footnote 3, Edwards writes that: ‘Of the 59 Indian families living on their own land in the Mkhumbane area before the riots only nine families still remained in occupation of their land by the end of 1950. H2/CM. VoI I, City Valuator and Estates Manager, undated. Forty-three percent of the Indian owned residences attacked during the riots were located in Cato Manor Farm. U.G. 361949, Exhibit 44’. An extensive discussion of the post-1949 riots retrieved from oral histories and archives is found in this chapter.

<sup>414</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2020. Mrs Dube arrived in Mkhumbane with her family whilst she was young (she does not remember at what age), and they stayed in an area ‘called kwaMjafethe but we were at the portion that was referred to as KB which stood for KwaBhengu. Right across us was a place called New Look’.

anti-Indian and pro-Apartheid' and aimed to 'ensure a monopoly over African trade for their members'.<sup>415</sup> Bonner concurs that the organisation was an anti-Indian body which was formed after the 1949 riots and 'gradually compelled all other co-operatives to integrate or close down'.<sup>416</sup>

Zulu Hlanganani literally means 'unison of the Zulus' and it came to signify Zulus' unity against Indians. Mr S.M. Mabaso, J. Manyoni, Zeph Msibi, W.W. Sibisi, C. Blose, A. Mthombeni, A.P. Ngcobo, and others were mentioned at the 1961 commemorative event in KwaMashu as founders. Each year on 14 January, the people of Mkhumbane would organise a function, Zulu Hlanganani Day where cattle were slaughtered for meat, and there would be plenty of food and traditional beverages. This continued at the relocation site of KwaMashu, but died out over time as the organisation's founders ventured into business opportunities in the township.

The event was commemorated for the first time in KwaMashu on Saturday, 14 January, 1961. When residents relocated to KwaMashu, the name changed to KwaMashu Zulu Hlanganani Buying Club, with Mr S.M. Mabaso remaining the chairperson.<sup>417</sup> Overseen by the municipal and government police, the commemoration at KwaMashu in 1961 was well attended by people from various walks of life, and there was plenty of food. *Ilanga LaseNatal* reported:

*Ubulungiselwe ngempela lomcimbi ngoba ukudla bekuyiziphili, wena nemenayidi, okubandayo, izinkwa namakhekhi amakhulu namancane, kuhlatshwe izinkomo ezimbili nezimbuzi, utshwala kungamagogogo abalelwa kumashumi amabili obekuyiziphiko buphuma kumuzi nomuzi wamalunga enhlangano nezihlobo zawo.*<sup>418</sup>

(The event was well organised as there was plenty of food which included cold and soft drinks, bread, and big and small baked cakes. Two cattle and goats were slaughtered and there were approximately 20 gallons of liquor which had been contributed by the members, families, and relatives of the Zulu Hlanganani).

According to Ambrose, the purpose of Zulu Hlanganani Day was , to 'thank God', as whatever God's motive was for the disturbances in 1949, they brought about positive changes for Africans. It was a 'victory' for Africans who 'started businesses and improved their lives' (*abanye basebenza baqala ukudayisa amazambane abanye badayisa ukudla bashintsha isimo sabo*).<sup>419</sup> *Ilanga LaseNatal* echoed this

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<sup>415</sup> Avtar Brah, Mary J. Hickman and Mairtin Mac an Ghaill, *Thinking Identities: Ethnicity, Racism and Culture*, (New York: Macmillan Press, 1999), 175. Brah also notes that the organisation presented a petition to the Union Government in 1955 'expressing concern at Indian domination in trade, provocatively evoking 1949'.

<sup>416</sup> P.L. Bonner, *Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1989), 95.

<sup>417</sup> 'UZulu Hlanganani Ubegubha Usuku Lokuthola Kwab'Amalungelo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 21 January 1961, 2.

<sup>418</sup> 'UZulu Hlanganani Ubegubha Usuku Lokuthola Kwab'Amalungelo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 21 January 1961, 2.

<sup>419</sup> A. Afrika, KCAV 300, C. Shum, KwaMashu, 25 September 1980.

sentiment when it reported on the 1961 commemoration on 14 May in KwaMashu, noting that it commemorated the victory of the people of Mkhumbane in obtaining the right to own shops and buses after 1949 (*Bekusindwe ngobethole KwaMashu Township ngoMgqibelo, January 14, kugujwa umkhosi wokukhumbula usuku lokuphumelela kwaBantu baseMkhumbane ukuthola ithuba lezitolo namabhasi kusukela ngonyaka 1949*).<sup>420</sup> Commenting on the importance of commemorating the day, Mr S.M. Biyela stressed that:

*Wathi umkhosi lona kawusoze wakhohlakala nangaliphi ilanga langalolusuku ngoba ngowokubonga ithuba elaqhamuka ngendlela eyayingabhekekile kodwa eyaziwa nguNkulunkulu kuphela. Wathi wayengekho umuntu owayenelungelo lesitolo nokuhambisa ibhasi eMkhumbane kodwa ngaleyomini yavuleka leyombobo.*<sup>421</sup>

(... the commemoration would not vanish into thin air because of the importance of January 14 as it marked an unexpected victory which was only known to God. He said Africans had no right to own a shop or a bus in Mkhumbane, but on that day it happened).

This interpretation reminds one of 16 December, commemorated as Dingaan's Day by Afrikaans South Africans, when the Voortrekkers defeated the Zulu Kingdom and thanked God for their victory. It is now known as Reconciliation Day.

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<sup>420</sup> 'UZulu Hlanganani Ubegubha Usuku Lokuthola Kwab'Amalungelo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 21 January 1961, 2.

<sup>421</sup> 'UZulu Hlanganani Ubegubha Usuku Lokuthola Kwab'Amalungelo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 21 January 1961, 2.



UMnuz. S. M. Mabaso we-Kwa Mashu Bantu Buying Club (uSihlalo) ekhuluma emkhosini wokukhumbula usuku lomhlaka January 14, 1949 ngokuvuleka kwamathuba ezitolo namabhasi ku-Bantu baseMkhumbane ohlale ugujwa minyaka yonke nguZulu Hlanganani beku ngokokuqala ugujelwa Kwa Mashu nonyaka.

*Ilanga LaseNatal*, 21 January, 1961, 2

The caption reads: ‘Mr S.M. Mabaso of the KwaMashu Bantu Buying Club (Chairperson) talked at the annual commemorative event of January 14 1949, in remembrance of opportunities that allowed Africans to own shops and buses in Mkhumbane. This was the first time the Zulu Hlanganani event was held in KwaMashu.

Brij Maharaj writes that interaction between African workers and the Indian petty-bourgeois of Mkhumbane was seen as ‘primarily exploitive’ although the businesses in the area provided for both groups.<sup>422</sup> As Ambrose Afrika explained and other studies show, Indians were seen by the African middle class as ‘barriers to upward mobility’ whilst squabbles over housing, transport and job opportunities existed to such an extent that an ideology of “New Africa” was ignited, based on the notion that ‘this is

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<sup>422</sup> Maharaj, “The Residential Segregation”, 4.

our indigenous land, hence we belong here' and you are 'the other'.<sup>423</sup> This came into the open in the aftermath of 1949.

The racial tension obscured by the exploitation that Maharaj points to seems to have been deep-rooted, and some glorified the African 'victory'. When Webster interviewed A.W.G. Champion, the Natal President of the ANC at the time of the riots, he confirmed these deep-rooted causes:

Champion: In 1949 the Indians deserved to be assaulted. They had become too big for their shoes. They were too proud. They looked upon us as nothing except as labourer and *kaffir*.

Webster: Why do you think they deserved to be attacked?

Champion: They had become too big for their boots. They were too proud. They were controlling all business. Don't you know that it was at this time that we were trying to get certificates for buses and licences to trade? <sup>424</sup>

Champion's statements corroborate Edwards' assertion that apart from Champion's political ambitions, he also had 'material interests' in Mkhumbane as a shacklord in the area and was thus able to expand his entrepreneurial ventures.<sup>425</sup> Indians were his competitors and post-1949 he was to expand his business interests. He thus seems to have been driven by personal business ambitions rather than race. However, there was some overlap, as there is evidence of him working with Indians after 1949 to further such interests. Edwards points out that Champion would meet 'frequently with and invested in the Zulu Hlanganani'. However, one interviewee noted that, 'behind our backs' he would meet with evicted Indian traders and, 'in partnership with them, established at least one wholesale agency' in Mkhumbane.<sup>426</sup>

Mrs Maphumulo corroborated that after the riots some Indians returned to Mkhumbane and continued with their businesses:

*Maphumulo: Ayi, thina asikhulumi inindaba yenzwabethi. Sikhuluma into esasiyibuka yenzeka. Bawashaya amaNdiya ngoba nala okwakhiwa khona leskomplazi esasikhona kwaTwo stina, kwakusezimangweni zamaKula, ezibhananeni. Sebewashayile amaKula bavula indawo bathola ukwakha imijondolo.*

*Interviewer: Ohh, emvakwa 49?*

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<sup>423</sup> Ashwin Desai, 'Cato Manor 1949: Spectre or Lesson?', *Sunday Tribune*, 17 January 1999. For a discussion on "New Africa" and its ideologies see Edwards, I., "Swing the Assegai Peacefully? 'New Africa', Mkhumbane, the Co-operative Movement and Attempts to Transform Durban Society in the Late 1940s," History Workshop, University of Witwatersrand, 1987.

<sup>424</sup> Webster, E. "The 1946 Durban 'Riots' - A Case-Study in Race and Class", in Bonner, P. (ed. ), Working Papers in Southern African Studies" : Papers presented at the A.S.I. African Studies Seminar, (Johannesburg, African Studies Institute Publications, 1977).

<sup>425</sup> Edwards. "Mkhumbane our Home", 214.

<sup>426</sup> Edwards. "Mkhumbane our Home", 215 and Mr J. Hlophe, interviewed by Iain Edwards, 29 July 1985.

*Maphumulo: Bakha imizi yabo, kwavuka isishadala semijondolo into ongakaze uyibone. KwaThulisa abakhalayo.*

*Interviewer: Emvakwalokho aphela nya amaNdiya eMkhumbane?*

*Maphumulo: Aphela impela. Angcina esetotoba kancane, ase ebuya-ke sekuba yizitolwana ezithe gqwa gqwa, hhayi ukuthi wona akhe ahlale nathi. Akha izitolo, kwaba yisitolo kanjalo, yisitolo, yisitolo ngale kwaLangwane owayebhekene noMjafethe wehle njalo uze koPelwane, kwaShayizandla laphaya ekhoneni. Ayenosizo lapho ngoba abakwazi ukwenza izitolo.*

*Interviewer: Baqhubeka bazwana, bathenga abantu?*

*Maphumulo: Ehhe. Hhayi kwase kukhuzekile phela impi, kwangabe kusaphinda kwakhona umsindo.*<sup>427</sup>

(Maphumulo: We know our story. We speak of something that we saw. They beat up Indians because the informal settlement that was built at Two Sticks also had Indians. They (Africans) got that place which was called *Ezibhananeni* after beating up Indians.

Interviewer: Was that after 1949?

Maphumulo: Yes. They built so many shacks. They were called *KwaThulisa abakhalayo* ('The place to soothe the crying ones').

Interviewer: Was that the end of it for Indians at uMkhumbane?

Maphumulo: They completely vanished. But some gradually returned and had a few shops here and there. Their shops grew from kwaLangwane, which was opposite kwaMjafethe, going down to Pelwane and Gezizandla by the corner. To be honest they were very helpful as those people could not build shops.

Interviewer: Did Blacks continue to buy from them?

Maphumulo: Yes, the hatchet was buried and there was no fight after that).

Desai points out that some suspect that there might have been a 'white mind' behind the riots as, according to one popular explanation, Whites had a 'vendetta against Indians who manipulated African frustrations'.<sup>428</sup> However, it is ironic that when, in 1963, an Indian deputation representing those who refused to be removed from Mkhumbane addressed Minister of Community Development, P.W. Botha, they stated that they, the Indians, were 'law-abiding and had the backing of Durban's white people in their struggle to remain' in Mkhumbane.<sup>429</sup> Others subsequently argued that the riots were 'politically motivated to drive a wedge between the races'.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>427</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>428</sup> Ashwin Desai, 'Cato Manor 1949: Spectre or Lesson?', *Sunday Tribune*, 17 January 1999.

<sup>429</sup> 'Indians of Cato Manor See Botha on Group Areas', *The Natal Mercury*, 22 November 1963.

<sup>430</sup> Praveen Naidoo, 'Curse of Cato Manor', *Daily News*, 12 September 1994.

One of the issues that came up during the riots and in their aftermath, as well as in my interviews was alleged sexual relations between African women and Indian men. According to Hansen, African women were perennial 'suspects' to African men. The vibrant nature of Mkhumbane impacted social norms, including morality, especially in terms of the area's 'dislocating effects on gender hierarchies and cultural mores.' Some African women formed liaisons with 'wealthy Indian men'; hence accusations of 'widespread miscegenation' became one of the symptoms of the state of immorality, leading to notions of Indians staining the honour of Zulu culture.<sup>431</sup> African men were said to be angry about such flirtatious relationships.

When Mrs Maphumulo was asked about the existence of flirtatious relationships she responded in the affirmative and went further, claiming that children were born out of these inter-racial affairs:

*Interviewer: AmaKhaladi ayekhona?*

*Maphumulo: Kwakuyilokho nje okuzalwa abantu, kube yiKhaladi elilodwa kwakho. Ngoba babewazala amaNdiya, kubekhona iNdiya kwakho.*

*Interviewer: Khona abantu ababezala amaNdiya?*

*Maphumulo: Habe! Ehhe. Ngeke kuyekwe ukuqonyanwa izinto zihleli ndawonye. Into enjalo nje. Wawungekho nje umuzi wamaKhaladi, uzwe kuthiwa isemaKhalathini lapha.*<sup>432</sup>

(Maphumulo: There were a few ones that were given birth to by Blacks. Some Black people gave birth to Indian children.

Interviewer: Were there Black people that gave birth to Indians?

Maphumulo: Yes! People dated as they stayed in one area. There was no homestead that had Coloured only).

Mrs Maphumulo meant that there were no Coloured homes in the area where she lived; rather, there were children born of interracial liaisons. The official report on the riots listed miscegenation between Indians and Africans as one reason for increased racial tension. It concluded that Africans' allegations against Indians were 'in substance true', but that African witnesses 'have exaggerated the incidence of the evil'.<sup>433</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> Thomas Blom Hansen, *Melancholia of Freedom: Social Life in an Indian Township in South Africa* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), 108.

<sup>432</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>433</sup> Union of South Africa, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Riots in Durban UG 36-49, 14. The full report read:

'Miscegenation: The Zulu is race-proud and when Indian males interfere with Native women it rouses keen resentment in the Native. The Native argues in this way: the Indians have motor-cars and money; we, on the other hand, are poor. With his blandishments, motor rides and offers of finery and money, the Indian seduces our women, who give birth to Indian children. The seducer usually denies paternity and the duty of maintaining the duped girl as well as the bastard falls upon her family. Responsible Indian witnesses conceded that miscegenation was taking place between Indians and Natives, but contended that this was to a certain extent going on between all racial groups. Other Indians sought to refute the charge by adopting a number of different attitudes; that the allegation was entirely untrue; that it is an afterthought invented by the Natives to justify their conduct in the riots; that the allegation was a malicious reflection on the chastity of Bantu women; that bastards of European parentage are passed off as Indians.



## Conclusion

The 1949 riots haunted Afro-Indian relations for the remainder of the apartheid era and into the post-apartheid period as stereotypes, racial connotations and identity consciousness remain a constant theme. As Desai points out, the '1940s were a time in Durban full of excitement, tension, violence and contradictory political impulses as the city overflowed its banks trying to accommodate the thousands who streamed in to escape drought-ravaged rural areas or arrived attracted by stories of opportunities' offered by the war economy.<sup>434</sup>

The root causes of the riots were deep-seated. One can argue that there had been a "cold war" since the arrival of Indians in 1860. Although Europeans colonised Natal, the arrival of Indians from 1860 changed the racial dynamics. Indians entered the city of Durban before Africans, due in part to the many restrictions on African movement. The gradual urbanisation of Africans discussed in Chapter one resulted in a ticking "time-bomb" due to economic competition and social separation. Desai writes that African traders envied 'established Indian businesses as Indian traders sought to gain access to markets in African areas, especially the mushrooming Mkhumbane'.<sup>435</sup>

During the riots, people who had been friends or acquaintances for years turned against each other, and regardless of the causes, the bottom line is that people, not broad racial groups, lost their lives. These were people who were valued by their families, whilst some were breadwinners. To the African dwellers of Mkhumbane, the destruction of Indian-owned homes and businesses and the chasing away of Indians meant that they had 'won the battle' and their area was 'liberated'.<sup>436</sup>

Ten years later, another riot broke out in Mkhumbane against the White government in the form of the 1959 beer hall riots, which is the focus of the following chapter.

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The allegation is no afterthought. Senator Brookes stated that before the riots this complaint came second in the order of frequency with which it was put before him. Complaints were continually being made to Native Commissioners, and resolutions by Native bodies recording this grievance were passed long before the riots. Individual Natives appeared before us; one deposed to his sister-in-law having been seduced by an Indian. Another related the fall of another member of his family.

We are satisfied that the allegation, is in substance true, but that Native witnesses have exaggerated the incidence of the evil. The exaggeration was not due to malicious intent but is indicative of the gravity of the sense of shock experienced by the Natives.

We have found this grievance to be one of the most powerful motives of anti-Indian feeling on the part of the Natives. If the provisions of the Immorality Act could be extended to illicit carnal intercourse between Natives and Indians it would in some measure repress this evil'.

<sup>434</sup> Ashwin Desai, 'Cato Manor 1949: Spectre or Lesson?', *Sunday Tribune*, 17 January 1999.

<sup>435</sup> Ashwin Desai, 'Cato Manor 1949: Spectre or Lesson?', *Sunday Tribune*, 17 January 1999.

<sup>436</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 50.

**Chapter Four**  
**"Meleko! Meleko! Meleko!":**  
**'Illicit' Liquor, Police Raids and Resistance**

*Nank'amaphoyisa azongen'endlini mama, khawuleza! ... fihlani amagogogo emiqombothi fihlani ugavini.*

(Here come the police to raid the house, mama, hurry... Hide the gallons of traditional beer ... hide gavini).

- Lyrics from *Khawuleza*, a song by Hugh Masekela, the late legendary South African musician

Ten years after the 1949 riots, another riot broke out in Mkhumbane, this time sparked by persistent police liquor raids which aimed 'to stop people brewing their own beer, forcing them to buy a brew manufactured by the Durban municipality.'<sup>437</sup> The upheaval, which broke out in mid-1959, started slowly in the first half of the 1950s and gathered momentum as the decade wore on. However, municipal officials probably regarded the altercations as a trivial matter until the explosion. Women proved that they were not only 'chefs' at home, but the brewers of traditional liquor, and a vibrant part of the political community whose actions would be felt widely. Boosted by an estimated 80 000 people with a potential to rise to between 90 000 and 100 000 on weekends, Mkhumbane drew massive crowds.<sup>438</sup> In the winter of 1959, the women of Mkhumbane instigated what come to be known as the Beer Riots, which were sparked by multiple complaints.

The 1998 song in the epigraph by Hugh Masekela that was originally composed by Miriam Makeba recalled the police raids in Sophiatown. However, the lyrics could apply to most parts of South Africa subjected to such raids. The story of Mkhumbane would be incomplete without understanding the variety of liquor concoctions that were brewed and produced in the area and the importance of this income for women in particular. Described as 'South Africa's notorious slum'<sup>439</sup> by the White media for its 'illegal' liquor brewing and shebeens, Mkhumbane was subjected to frequent police raids, fuelling encounters between police and residents. Homebrewed liquor formed a vital component of Mkhumbane residents' livelihoods to the extent that the June 1959 Beer Hall boycotts and the January 1960 police killings were causally linked to the municipality selling liquor and liquor raids, respectively.

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<sup>437</sup> Praveen Naidoo, 'Curse of Cato Manor', *Daily News*, 12 September 1994.

<sup>438</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane Our Home", 222. Dr English, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, estimated these figures and they were quoted by Edwards from MNAD: Personal File, Manager, MNAD; notes on the meeting by a Durban City Council Deputation with the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Pretoria, 3 August 1959. The official estimate is 1960 was that the 'African male-female ratio was 1.5 men for every' woman.

<sup>439</sup> I.A. Khan, 'Petition to Parliament? Cato to Fight Removal', *Post*, 8 April 1962.

As background and context, it should be noted that women were experiencing increasingly difficult economic conditions in rural areas, including forced cattle dipping,<sup>440</sup> and many were moving to urban areas to seek a living. Mkhumbane was a magnet that attracted the majority of these women. Here, many were able to earn a living by selling illicitly brewed beer. Women formed an important component of the population in Cato Manor after leaving the impoverished rural areas. However, few had legal employment or official permission to be in the urban areas.<sup>441</sup> Women therefore felt especially threatened by the NP's apartheid policy and its attempts to restructure the urban life of Africans, including the removal of large numbers of Africans from areas surrounding the city.<sup>442</sup>

Amongst measures that directly affected women were the issuing of pass books by the Durban municipality in early 1959, linking passes to access to housing, demolition of shacks, and influx control raids.<sup>443</sup> Women resisted these measures which disempowered them economically and socially. Cato Manor was famous for its shebeens and shebeen queens and the women of the area understood that abandoning this trade meant economic ruin. Their very survival, their livelihoods, depended on their being in the city; hence their defiant resistance to laws banning beer-brewing and affecting their mobility. These included laws around influx control and passes (the 1956 Women's march is discussed later in this chapter) that sought to control the movement of African women.

The reference book that women were made to carry, known as the 'dompas' in local parlance, was particularly detested as it contained their name, date of birth, place of birth, ethnic group, and, importantly, residential rights in the city. All the respondents commented that this document enabled the regime to control their movement and to try to deny them access to urban areas. Yet, without a 'dompas' women did not have an identity and would find it impossible to find any form of formal employment. Hence, women's anger and abhorrence of the 'dompas'.

The news of forced removals posed a threat to Mkhumbane residents' livelihoods, especially to the women liquor brewers. Bickford-Smith writes:

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<sup>440</sup> L.K. Ladlau, "Cato Manor Riots, 1959-60", MA thesis, University of Natal, 1975, 38-40. Also see S. Bazilli, *Putting Women on the Agenda* (Braamfontein: Ravan Press, 1991); Iain Edwards, "Cato Manor: Cruel Past, Pivotal Future," *Review of African Political Economy*, 21.61, 1994: 415-427; and Joanne Yawitch, "Natal 1959: The Women's Protests", Paper Presented at the Conference on the History of Opposition in South Africa, University of Witwatersrand, 1978.

<sup>441</sup> Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, 231.

<sup>442</sup> See Alan Mabin, 'Comprehensive Segregation: The Origins of the Group Areas Act and its Planning Apparatuses,' *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 18.2, 1992: 405-429.

<sup>443</sup> See Julia Wells, *We now Demand! The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993).

This removal to a monitored township threatened African women's livelihoods involved in illegal liquor brewing, who attacked the local municipal beer hall [Gezizandla] in June 1959 shouting 'We are the Zulu warriors' and '*Yinj'umlungu! Yinj'umlungu!*' (Whites are dogs).<sup>444</sup>

The beer halls' transparent beer was seen as the White people's tool to rob liquor brewers of their livelihoods. It was in this regard that Whites were referred to in derogatory terms such as above. *Inja* and *umlungu* are Zulu words for a dog and a White person, respectively. The encounters fuelled by the raids that the municipality treated as 'minor' would lead to one of the most talked-about disturbances in South Africa, women's resistance to liquor raids and beer halls in mid-1959.

To contextualise this protest on the part of women, we need to take a step back and understand the history of beer brewing in Natal. Government interests conflicted with those of the local community of Mkhumbane. Following the passing of the 1908 Native Beer Act, laws were enacted to eliminate informal beer-brewing and the selling of 'illicit' homebrewed liquor and were enforced by police raids. Locals did not take kindly to the government's action.<sup>445</sup>

Brig. Heymans, son of a former policeman who witnessed both the 1949 and 1959 riots, described the situation thus:

A conflict of interest arose between the Durban City Council who had its own beer halls where they sold traditional beer and used the profit to uplift the Africans. On the other side, we found 'free enterprise' - the traditional Zulu brewers. Their job, which they had practiced since time immemorial, was 'criminalised'. It was a conflict between 'new' legislation and indigenous law. It is just here where a problem arose between the police – enforcers of an unsympathetic law and the brewers who ran their own shebeens and sold liquor to survive. In this regard, many a sympathetic policeman experienced this problematic situation of inner conflict between his duty and his conscience. To survive, many brewers became police or detective's informers of murder, robbery, stolen property, and drugs, etc.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> Vivian Bickford-Smith. *The Emergence of the South African Metropolis: Cities and Identities in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 256. The expression *yinj'umlungu* ('a White is a dog') is used to this day in work environments and strike action. Melidonis writes that the children of the 1976 Soweto Uprising chanted, '*Bulala umlunguinja!*' (kill the White dogs), '*Bulala umlungu! Amandla*' during the uprising. See Christos Melidonis. *In Pursuit of Freedom: The Prince of Apartheid* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2011), 276.

<sup>445</sup> For a discussion on the Liquor Acts and the history of the beer hall boycotts, see Cheryl Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cape Town: David Phillip Publishers, 1991); Namitata Diabate, *Naked Agency: Genital Cursing and Biopolitics in Africa* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020); Stephanie Urdang and Richard Lapchick, *Oppression and Resistance: The Struggle of Women in Southern Africa* (Michigan: Greenwood Press, 1982).

<sup>446</sup> Brig. Hennie Heymans, "1960-01-24: Massacre of Police at Cato Manor: a Subjective View", Available at <https://www.radiofreesouthafrica.com/1960-01-24-massacre-police-cato-manor-subjective-view/>. Accessed 26 June 2017. His father, Sgt. Heymans, an Afrikaner fluent in Zulu and Hindi, was a policeman and raconteur who was present at the 1949 and 1959 riots.

Brig. Heymans set out the protagonists very cogently, although one can take issue with the assertion that the municipality's profits were used to 'uplift' Africans. While they were undoubtedly used towards governing Africans, they were certainly not uplifted as their socio-economic conditions show. Brig. Heymans also shows clearly that White oppression and governance of Africans relied heavily on Africans, be they policemen or spies.

### **Home-brewed distils: *Isishimeyane*, and other concoctions**

The business of brewing and selling traditional beer in Mkhumbane was a complex one that involved a wide range of alcoholic concoctions. Although consumers and residents differentiated between various types, this was no easy task for a person who was not accustomed to the area's environment. Different oral and written sources identified a variety of concoctions. According to Bourquin, '[*isi*]Shimeyane is [was] the most common one (Mkhumbane brew); but there are [were] some 20 or more recipes for "moonshine"'. Most of their names are far removed from the romantic vision of a gentle moon: *Skokiaan*<sup>447</sup> (*isikokiyana* in IsiZulu), kill-me-quick – and *Qediwiki* ('a tot will finish you for the rest of the week').<sup>448</sup> Mike Mvelase, a dance band trumpeter who grew up in Mkhumbane, recalled that in gatherings at shebeens, traditional beer formed part of the rewards: 'the stokvel and shebeen musicians played mandolins and guitars in return for cigarettes and *isiqatha* or *isikokiyana*'.<sup>449</sup>

Knowledge of beer brewing was usually passed from one generation to the next, inherited by a mother's daughter. Mzimela confirmed that sorghum beer was brewed and sold by women. He stated that 'women used to sell *gavini* which they made in the bushes as it was illegal ... all kinds of alcohol was brewed there'.<sup>450</sup> Women brewed liquor while children were involved in collecting wood. According to Mzimela, the women were of the Zulu, Xhosa, and Mpondo ethnic groups. Interestingly, the respondent specified the women's ethnicity even though I did not ask, suggesting the ethnic consciousness of residents. However, residents also appeared to have overcome this and lived side by side, contrary to the ideas of the apartheid state that sought to separate Africans according to ethnicity in "homelands".<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>447</sup> See Roy Alexander Farran. *Jungle Chase* (London: Collins, 1951). Farran discusses *skokiaan* (he calls it *kaffir* beer), its dangers (he writes that it is strong spirit), and the apartheid government's need to introduce beer. Tailor refers to *skokiaan* as an 'illegal South African homebrew of indeterminate ingredients and variable potency'. See Stephen Tailor. *Livingstone's Tribe: A Journey from Zanzibar to the Cape* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 246. The terms *isiqatha* and *isikokiyana* (*skokiaan*) refer to the illegal alcoholic beverages brewed by Mkhumbane women to supplement their incomes, alongside other economic practices such as the stokvel. *Skokiaan* was made from sugar, yeast, and water.

<sup>448</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 4.

<sup>449</sup> Mike Mvelase, interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, November 1997.

<sup>450</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>451</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

Mrs Dube provided in-depth information on who brewed liquor, where it was brewed, and whether males participated:

*Interviewer: Wawuphekwa ngubani ugavini, amakhosikazi?*

*Mrs Dube: Amakhosikazi, ehhe. eMkhumbane wawuphekwa ugavini, obala emini kwabha. Hhayi ukuthi ehlathini. Bapheka nje la, babeke indlela yokuthi uzozwa kuthiwa "meleko" bashiye phansi babaleke.*

*Interviewer: Awekho amadoda ayepheka utshwala?*

*Mrs Dube: Hhayi. Uyabona nje la enkandla njengoba lonke leliyadi lala ekhaya linemigodi enamadramu ngaphasi, kwakuvutshelwa khona. Bavubele kahle kulunge, kuvuthwe, bayakuhluzake-bese beyapheka-ke. Kumbozwe kahle, kuba amadramu ngaphansi kubekwe othayela la phezulu abancanyana. Akuyi muntu ngoba uyazi ukuthi ngeke uhambe indawo ende ungaphonsekanga. Kubekwe imiphongolo le, kubekwe umhlabathi kahle phezu kukathayela kube yi-ground. Ngelinye ilanga omunye umfana wabaleka ejahwa ngamaphoyisa. Lamjaha iBhunu, yena uyazi-ke ngoba usebenza khona enkandla. Uyena osebenza kulamakhosikazi. Wabalekela ngakhona, wajomba, wakhetha amabala. Lafika iBhunu laphonseka edramini, wahamba umfana.*

*Interviewer: Alishanga?*

*Mrs Dube: Hhayi, phela idramu kusuke kusavutshelwa. Akukaphekwa kusabiliswa phela. Kuqale kuhlenganiswe imithombo bese kuyavuthwake uma imithombo isibilile kahle, isiyakhanywa kahle bese kuthelwa emiphongolweni eminye sekuyobaswa ngaphandle.*

*Interviewer: Wawuphekwa ngani ugavini?*

*Mrs Dube: Ushukela o-brown, umthombo. Angisazi noma umthombo wombila noma owamabele yini no-yeast. Ukuxove kuvalwe ngamasaka, kufakwe phakathi emgodini ukumbele. Kuyodlula lezo nsukwana, kuyaphuma.*

*Interviewer: Abantu ababethenga abantu bala eMkhumbane kuphela noma nabanye.*

*Mrs Dube: Nabasemajalidini babewufaka (could not hear clearly).*

*Interviewer: Utshwala besiZulu babungekho?*

*Mrs Dube: Ayikho into eyayingadayiswa. Utshwala besiZulu, isiqatha... Bonke nje babudayiswa.*

*Interviewer: Ohh isishimeyana yisiqatha, utshwala besiZulu. Bakhiwa ngani isishimeyana?*

*Mrs Dube: Umthombo, nesinkwa esi-brown, noshukela bese befaka i-yeast. Yisiqatha-ke lesa. Kuze imfulamfula efakwa uphayinaphu, ne-yeast, ne-jungle oats kuvutshelwe. Kuphuma into enhle engamagwebu aphuphuzelayo amhlophe.<sup>452</sup>*

(Interviewer: Who made or prepared the alcohol?)

Mrs Dube: It was the women. Much alcohol was made at Mkhumbane in broad daylight. They only waited for an indication of the police van when people shouted "meleko" then they would run away and leave everything behind.

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<sup>452</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2020.

Interviewer: Were there any men who brewed alcohol?

Mrs Dube: No, they used to have drums buried in the soil and they brewed alcohol there. They closed the drums with iron sheets. No one went there because you knew that you might fall into a large hole without seeing it. One boy was chased by police and went straight to that place as he understood it since he worked there. The police fell into a hole and the boy ran away.

Interviewer: Did the police get burnt?

Mrs Dube: No. When the drum was used for brewing, there was nothing hot. They mixed sorghum and allowed it time to gel, and afterward it can be simmered and poured into a big pot and taken outside for boiling

Interviewer: What was used to brew this alcohol?

Mrs Dube: Brown sugar and sorghum. I don't remember the exact type of sorghum ... it was mealies or yeast. All of that was mixed in big sacks inside the hole and taken out after a few days.

Interviewer: Was it only the people from Mkhumbane that bought the alcohol?

Mrs Dube: People came from other places.

Interviewer: There was no Zulu traditional beer?

Mrs Dube: Everything was there.

Interviewer: How was *isishimeyane* made?

Mrs Dube: Sorghum, brown bread, sugar and yeast. Then *imfulamfula*<sup>453</sup> was made out of pineapple, yeast and jungle oats. The results looked very good.

Interviewer: You had a very good time.

Mrs Dube: Yes).

The people of Mkhumbane brewed both "proper" Zulu sorghum beer (*utshwala besiZulu*) as well as *isishimeyane*. The former is also called *Umqombothi* and its ingredients included maize (corn), maize malt, sorghum malt, yeast, and water. *Utshwala besiZulu* or *Umqombothi* is the recognised Zulu traditional beer to this day. It is very common in my hometown of Umzinto on the KZN south coast, for example. My grandmother, MaGudla Shezi, makes a homemade brew whenever there is a family ceremony, especially one involving the extended family. Nomadiphu recounted that by the 1950s, alcohol 'brands' had multiplied rapidly:

*Kwakhukhona utshwala obabubizwa ngokuthi umaconsana noma ugavini. Kwakuthiwa umaconsana ngoba kwakuthi uma sebulila buconsele esitsheni ... Umaconsana wawuphekwa ngamadilamu,*

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<sup>453</sup> My grandmother MaShezi Ngidi told me that '*imfulamfula kuvutshelwa izinkwa noshukela uthele amavoti (amanzi). Kuvutshelwa njengotshwala emsamu ngezinkwa ezibrown*' (To brew *imfulamfula* involves a mixture of bread [brown] and water. It is brewed by the IsiZulu using brown bread). MaShezi Ngidi, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 28 March 2020. See the section on *isishimeyane* below.

*kuboshwe ngamasaka ukuze ungaphumi umoya. Bese kuthi ngaphezulu kubekwe indishi enamanzi abandayo, okupholisa.*<sup>454</sup>

(There was the kind of brewery which was called 'the dropping' or *gavini*. It was called 'the dropping' because there would be drops to a separate bowl once it was boiling. 'The dropping' was brewed in drums, and a sack would be tied around it to avoid air from getting in. A dish with cold water would be placed on top of the drum to serve as a coolant).

However, the most famous brew was *isishimeyane*. There is some dispute as to the exact ingredients. *Isishimeyane* had various other names such as *gavini*, *isiqatha*, *umaconsana*, *imbamba*, and 'underground', to name but a few.<sup>455</sup> These names are known to this day and are used interchangeably. It is not clear from the interviews how they differed or where the names and meanings originated. This dissertation adheres to *isishimeyane* as it was the most popular terms. The researcher accepts that the 'infamous yeast concoction' known as *isishimeyane* 'went by many names'. When asked what *isishimeyane* was, Mrs Dube responded, '*isiqatha*' (*yisona isiqatha*).<sup>456</sup> *Isishimeyane* / *isiqatha* referred to the same brew, which is prevalent today though not extensively as industrial breweries have captured a large segment of the market.

Sabelo describes *isishimeyane* as 'fermented treacle and water, but other ingredients are often added to give it a "kick", sometimes poisonous substances like methylated spirits and wood alcohol'.<sup>457</sup> These poisonous substances led Hunter to state that *isishimeyane* is a 'notoriously potent spirit'.<sup>458</sup> Mgqwetho stated that *isishimeyane* had ingredients like 'sugar-cane, yeast, cooked potatoes and brandy',<sup>459</sup> while Callinicos recorded that the 'brewer might add extra, secret ingredients such as pineapple skin'.<sup>460</sup> According to Gumede:

'*Isishimeyane* is made of *amashiqa*, *amakhovothi* or the dregs that remain after squeezing out traditional Zulu beer. The dregs are re-fertilised with more malt, sugar, and yeast blocks. The

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<sup>454</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *eMkhumbane*, 7-8. It is interesting to note that some of the informants did not count areas such as Mayville as part of Mkhumbane, while others mentioned that areas such as Mkhumbane formed the jurisdiction of Mkhumbane. The sections of Mkhumbane are discussed in Chapter two.

<sup>455</sup> See William N. Zulu. *Spring Will Come* (Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2005), 203. Zulu writes that this 'underground' tends to have a way of 'sending its customers on a speedy journey to their graves.'

<sup>456</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2020.

<sup>457</sup> George Sabelo. *Scar of the Tigers* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1983), 46.

<sup>458</sup> Mark Hunter. *Love in the Time of AIDS: Inequality, Gender, and Rights in South Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 184.

<sup>459</sup> Nontsizi Mqwetho. *The Nation's Bounty: The Xhosa Poetry of Nontsizi Mgqwetho* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2007), 459.

<sup>460</sup> Luli Callinicos. *Working Life 1886-1940: Factories, Townships, and Popular Culture on the Rand: People's History of South Africa vol 3* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987).



concoction is nice and sweet and goes down the throat nicely, but does much harm to both liver and brain'.<sup>461</sup>

The ingredients of *isishimeyane* clearly varied, and oral histories corroborated this. Mrs Maphumulo revealed the following about the ingredients, brewing, and consumers of *isishimeyane*:

*Interviewer: Kwakuhlobo luni lotshwala lobu?*

*Maphumulo: Kwakuyisiqatha, isishimeyana.*

*Interviewer: Sasenziwa ngani?*

*Maphumulo: Kwakufakwa amanzi, kufakwe izinkwa ezi-brown, kufakwe umthombo, kufakwe i-yeast nomthombo kanjalo bese kuyambelwa. Yisipesheli uma kwenziwe namhlanje, ksasa ekseni kuyaphihla. Uma sekushisa, sekubilile, ufaka isandla phakathi uzwe kuyashisa. Sekufuna ukukhiphe.*

*Interviewer: Kubila kanjani kungabaselwe?*

*Maphumulo: Hhayi, kuvuthwa kanjalo nje. Wena uxova leyonto nje kanjalo ulala ukubeke lapha ukumboze. Ekuseni uyavuka isinkwa sekuyifu. Uma ufaka ingalo kuyashisa sekufuna ukukhishwa. Akusababi lapho, sekumqumba phansi umuntu. Usuyabuvova manje, uthathe isisefo, umuntu angathi uma ephuza ahlngane namakhoba. Usefe kahle into yakho ibe-clean. Nanka amakopi kajamu. Usheleni ikopi likajamu.*

*Interviewer: Babuphuzwa abantu abamnyama kuphela noma... Awekho amaNdiya ayebuphuza lobo tshwala?*

*Maphumulo: Phela asondelene nabantu eduze ayephuza. INdiya kwakungumuntu nje, kufana nje.*

*Interviewer: Nalaba abangezinye izizwe. Kwakukhonani, abeSuthu babekhona?*

*Maphumulo: Ehhe abeSuthu babekhona. Babengandile, kodwa babekhona.*<sup>462</sup>

(Interviewer: What type of alcohol was this?)

Maphumulo: It was *isiqatha* or *isishimeyane*.

Interviewer: How was it made?

Maphumulo: It was made using water, brown bread, sorghum malt, and yeast, and then placed underneath the earth's surface. It would brew so quickly. If it was prepared today, it would be ready the following day. It would boil the next day, which would indicate that it was ready for use.

Interviewer: How would it boil without being cooked?

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<sup>461</sup> M.V. Gumede. *Alcohol Use & Abuse in South Africa: a socio-medical problem* (Pietermaritzburg: Reach Out Publishers, 1995), 42. The author explains that *amashiqa* or *amakhovothi* are dry remains inclusive of maize and wheat malt after liquid beverage has been squeezed from it. There is a strong possibility that when one eats these, one would become intoxicated. Sometimes they are cooked for another semi-liquid meal known as *umshiqo*. Zulu traditional beer is brewed for traditional and other ceremonies. My grandmother and my father's wives still brew it back home in Mgangeni, Umzinto, on the south coast of KwaZulu-Natal.

<sup>462</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

Maphumulo: It would boil in that process. They would cover it and check it in the morning. It would be hot by then. That mixture is used to make people get drunk. It was cleansed so that drinkers would not find anything unusual. A jam tin was 10 cents.

Interviewer: Was this drunk only by Blacks or even by Indians?

Maphumulo: Indians were close to Blacks; hence they drank it).

It is interesting that Mrs Maphumulo mentioned that Indians also drank this traditional beer. The Pinetown Magistrates' Court heard a case of an Indian woman, Ganas Moodley, who was found with *gavini* in June 1960. A policeman, Yago Luthuli, told the court that when he was at Mariannhill, Pinetown, he found six bottles with *gavini*. The woman agreed that she intended to sell *gavini* and was sentenced by C.D. Kirkman to either two months in prison or a fine of 30 pounds.<sup>463</sup> This is not documented elsewhere and perhaps throws new light on race relations but requires further research.

I interviewed my paternal *khulu* (grandmother), Mrs Ngidi (née Shezi) to investigate the indigenous knowledge system. When *mkhulu* (my grandfather), Velindaba Ngidi, died in 1968, my grandmother became the breadwinner for her three children (my father and two aunts) and *khokho* (great grandfather). *Mkhulu* had worked as a chef in a hotel in Johannesburg. Mrs Ngidi had no education and in order to feed her children, the best available option was to brew and sell *gavini* to the people of her village of Mgangeni in Umzinto, on the south coast of KZN. She recounted that the community referred to the brew as *gavini*. Seated around the firewood at our home's rondavel, our conversation unfolded thus:

*MaShezi Ngidi: Ugavini ugaywa ngoshukela, ufake imithombo kubile uthathe umgqomo ufake la eziko uthathe isikhavo usifake la eziko. Uthathe indishi uyifake la esikhambeni umboze ngezidwedwe.*

*Interviewer: Bese kubila kanjani ke.*

*MaShezi Ngidi: Kubile la eziko la ngaphansi ngiphekile. Umjuluko, kujuluka isidikiselo.*

*Interviewer: Bese kuphuzwa nini?*

*MaShezi Ngidi: Kuvuthwe ngaleso sikhathi kuphuzwe.<sup>464</sup>*

(MaShezi Ngidi: To brew *gavini*, one should use sugar, put sorghum malt and then when it boils you take a pot, cover it and cook (using firewood). Then take an enamel dish and cover the pot with it. A rag covers the dish.

Interviewer: How does it brew then?

MaShezi Ngidi: It perspires in *eziko* (the fireplace) and there is firewood underneath.

Interviewer: The enamel dish perspires to the pot.

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<sup>463</sup> 'Indiya Eliboshwe Liyothengisa Ugavini', *UmAfrika*, 11 June 1960, 3.

<sup>464</sup> MaShezi Ngidi, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 28 March 2020. My grandmother also said that in her area of Mgangeni (not the section in Mkhumbane) homebrewed liquor (*isiqatha*) was brewed in the 'forest to hide it from police ... then one would wait for a certain period especially at night to go check when they know that there was no police presence' (*Sasivubela emhosheni ngoba sibalekela amaphoyisa ... ukale isikhathi ke sokuthi upheke ukuthi amaphoyisa akasahambi ke ngalesikhathi kuhlwile ukube liyabhadla ibhodwe la eziko ngiligadile*).

Interviewer: When is it consumed?

MaShezi Ngidi: It brewed instantly and people would drink it).

Although none of the interviewees mentioned or agreed with this sentiment, the authorities claimed that *isishimeyane* had unhygienic elements. For Bourquin, *isishimeyane* was an ‘evil-smelling concoction’.<sup>465</sup> He said that it included “unpalatable” ingredients: the droppings of domestic animals; insects, rats and other reptiles which fall into them presumably add a special flavour to the brew, which in any case is fortified by whole motorcar batteries with their acid, and sometimes even the addition of carbide. Shisa-twice!<sup>466</sup> While interviewees denied this, *isishimeyane* did include various ingredients depending on availability and was brewed in the bushes. The brewer would leave the brewery, continue with their daily activities, and send children to check on production.

*Isishimeyane* was a major source of income for women living in Mkhumbane. An impoverished boy told Dlamini that beer brewing was how his mother brought him up in the 1950s:

*Evovela abanini bamashibhi isishimeyane, abadayisele ukuze ahole isitsha sami sokudla nendawo yokuthukusa ikhanda, ephunga amaphoyisa imihla namalanga ayebopha ebathengisa uphuzo olungavunyelwe ... ayenza umsebenzi wawo, angiwasoli; wayeziphilisa umama kanye nami.*<sup>467</sup>

(My mother used to brew *isishimeyane* for shebeen queens, selling it so that they would pay her with a parcel of food for me and a place to sleep. She used to evade police daily as the police would arrest those who sold illicit liquor ... my mother earned a living for herself and me).

Little is known about men brewing beer in Mkhumbane. There were, however, reports of gay men brewing traditional beer, as some regarded themselves as “women”. Mrs Dube recalls a homosexual beer brewer:

*Kukhona esasisibukela sibanjwe enkandla eGavini kade sipheka ugavini. Sesiboshiwe amaphoyisa sithwele idramu lakhona sihanjiswa ngendlela nje siqhutshwa sibukwa yiwona wonke umuntu, sifake isikhethi nesikibha.*

(We sometimes went there to watch them. The police once caught one at a brewing site in the bushes brewing *gavini*. (S)he was arrested with the gallon, and we all saw him (her) being accompanied by the police along the pathway. The gay man was wearing a skirt and a t-shirt).

As discussed in Chapter Two, gays were considered part of the community.

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<sup>465</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots. 5.

<sup>466</sup> Bourquin, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Cato Manor Riots, 4.

<sup>467</sup> Bhekinkosi Dlamini. *Isidleke Samanje* (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik Publishers, 1996), 41.

It is said that *Isishimeyane* made men (who were its main consumers) so drunk that they were sometimes abusive to their families. Player and Steele describe *isishimeyane* as the 'worst drink' that caused problems for many families. They write that when a man 'drank this liquor, he forgot about his children. He did not even know his wife. If they quarrelled, he would take a bush knife and hack her'.<sup>468</sup> Writing in the Ndebele language, Hadebe reiterated this danger as he wrote that '*isiqatha butshwala obuphekwa ngetshukela eningi kakhulu njalo budaka okwedlulisileyo*' (*isiqatha* is brewed using too much sugar which makes the person consuming it to be too intoxicated).<sup>469</sup> A cup of *isiqatha* or *isishimeyane* was enough to make someone drunk.<sup>470</sup> Durban composer Willie Mdhlozi's song *Ikhiwane Elihle* 'blames alcoholism among urban slum dwellers for breaking family ties'.

*Zintombi zinsizwa niyakhalelwa emakhaya.*

*Linigwinyile iTheku.*

*Abanye bashiya omakotshana nabazali bekhala emakhaya.*

*Kwathi enye insizwa ibungukile.*

*Yafika ekhaya sokwalala izindonga zodwa.*

*Yaswela ukuthi izolalaphi-na, yasukuma yayakocela indawo komakhelwana.*

*Yathi: "Yeka ithemba ngokuba alibula".*

*Yathi: "Yeka ikhiwane elihle linomkhuba".*

*Yeka ukukhonza isishimeyane.*<sup>471</sup>

(Girls and young men, you are needed at your homes.

Durban swallows you up.

Some of you left your wives and parents crying at home.

He returned and found it in ruins.

He needed somewhere to sleep,

So he bestirred himself and went to his neighbours.

He said: "But hope does not kill".

He said: "But a good-looking fig is bad inside".

O, the vanity of worshiping (*isishimeyane*) liquor ...)

Mdhlozi's song goes beyond the impact of beer, and is a general plea to young people, males in particular, who were attracted to the city by the lure of its fast life, and left behind families and households in distress in rural areas.

<sup>468</sup> Ian Player and Nola Steele. *Zululand Wilderness: Shadow and soul* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1997), 141. See also D.N. Bang, "The History and Policy of Kaffir Beer in South Africa" (Paper presented to the Fifth Annual Conference of the Institute of Administrators of Non-European Affairs, 1956).

<sup>469</sup> Samukele Hadebe. *Isichazamazwi sesiNdebele* (Harare: College Press, 2001), 249.

<sup>470</sup> Player and Steele, *Zululand Wilderness*, 141.

<sup>471</sup> Veit Erlmann, *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), 81.

Apart from being a causal factor in episodes of violence in 1959 and 1960, liquor and liquor raids form a core part of the story of Mkhumbane, which is incomplete without narratives around liquor raids, known to locals as *meleko*.

### **“Meleko! Meleko! Meleko!”: Mkhumbane’s anthem**

The Mkhumbane community was cognisant that the alcoholic beverages they brewed were regarded as illicit by the government and that this activity courted arrest. The police would raid Mkhumbane at any time, day or night, to uncover illicit activities. Police raids increased through the second half of the 1950s as the population increased, as did national political protests. The two may have been related. The forays by the municipality and the police were highly unpopular and disliked by the community. They were seen as a disturbance to their “freedom”, and strategies of resistance were developed. Residents adopted particular terminologies to evade police. Different names were used for sorghum beer, while signals were sent out when police vans approached.

Interviewees related that the call *meleko* was adopted by Mkhumbane residents as an alarm to warn the community of police raids. The story of *meleko* remains popular among many former residents who related stories about it. Little appears in secondary sources on the term *meleko*.<sup>472</sup> *Meleko* is a Zulu word that referred to milk but it was used interchangeably with the more common term for milk, *ubisi*. How do milk and police raids connect? Ngcobo explained that, ‘*Meleko* referred to a police van, and that is how people called it’.<sup>473</sup> He could not explain why, and it was left to Mrs Maphumulo to clarify this:

*Interviewer: Imoto le kuthiwa umeleko ngobani?*

*Maphumulo: Angithi kwakuqala ukuthi kubekhona izimoto ezimi kanje, amaveni. Kuqala kwakungamaveni amancane. Kwahamba kwahamba kwaqhamuka le moto okungathi yimoto yobisi. Yingakho yabizwa kwathiwa yimoto kameleko. Le moto eyayimi kanje, yimoto eyayithwala ubisi. Kwase kuthiwa hhawu sekufike umeleko.*

*Interviewer: Ngize ngiyithole-ke!*

*Maphumulo: Ehhe. Kwakuqala ukuthi kufike imoto enje. Umsebenzi mukhulu, amaveni amaphoyisa mancane, kufuneka umeleko lo ozogcwala. Yaqanjwa-ke le moto kwasekuthiwa umeleko. Yimoto kameleko.*

*Interviewer: Hhayi ngoba kakuyimoto yobisi, yayimise njengayo?*

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<sup>472</sup> Edwards, “Mkhumbane our Home”, regarded as the primary writer of the story of Mkhumbane, at 240-41, only writes that the children would shout the call ‘whenever police vans moved into the shack sprawl’ to warn the residents ‘to hide any illicit commodities’.

<sup>473</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

*Maphumulo: Hhayi. Imoto emi kanje kwakuyimoto yobisi sikhula thina.*<sup>474</sup>

(Interviewer: Why was the police car referred to as *meleko*?)

Maphumulo: It was the first time that we saw a car that had that shape. It looked similar to the one that carried milk. Hence it was referred to as that.

Interviewer: It is the first time I have been able to understand this.

Maphumulo: It was the first time we saw such a car. We knew that police vans were so small.

Interviewer: It was not the car that delivered milk but they had the same shape?

Maphumulo: No. The only car with that shape was the one that delivered milk).

The vehicle that delivered milk was essential to locals, and everyone recognised it as residents would wake up very early to collect milk. Mrs Dube recounted:

*Interviewer: Lwalumphumaphi ubisi?*

*Dube: Angazi noma lwalumphuma kuhulumeni yini. Ngoba sasivuka kusa impela kusemnyama ngo5. Siyovuka sithuthuzele simbethe izingubo ezincanyana obhlankeshana bethu. Sigijime sifike mhlambe ulayini mude, kufuneka usheshe uvuke. Uyaluthola ubisi ubuye nalo. Uma ulubeka lolubisi luzoba amasi, sidla amasi alo-ke. Simukela lona kuphela kuhulumeni.*<sup>475</sup>

(Interviewer: Where did the milk come from?)

Dube: I am not sure if it came from the government but we would normally wake up very early, around 5 am, to collect it. We would wake up wandering, covered in blankets and dressed in our small dresses (as they were young). We would run and sometimes would find the queue very long. We would store the milk till it turned to *maas* (sour milk) and would eat it. It was the only thing we received from the government).

Most narratives of *meleko* relate that children were the main role players who would ring the alarm with their screams whenever they saw the police or municipal authorities approaching Mkhumbane. The hilly terrain of the area allowed locals to warn illegal brewers. The children or anyone who saw the authorities approaching would shout *Meleko! Meleko!* to alert the residents that '*nayi imoto yamaphoyisa*' ('here is the police vehicle'). Mbatha stated that elders would also pass the message by 'shouting "*meleko! meleko!*" because if the police discovered liquor they would spill it' (*Kwakumenyezwa kuthiwe "meleko! meleko!"*). *Uma amaphoyisa ebufica ayebhoboza amagogogo lawo ebuchithe*).<sup>476</sup> Jackson related that, as a young boy, when the family's domestic assistant Janet Ngcobo was trying to feed him cereal and milk, she would yell '*meleko!, meleko!, imoto yamaphoyisa*' (*meleko! meleko!*, here comes the police vehicle) as a way to distract him, then she would put a spoon full of food into his mouth.<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>475</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2020.

<sup>476</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>477</sup> Jackson, 'Cato Manor Revisited', 26.

Ngcobo confirmed that when a police van emerged from the nearby *Kito* (Cato Manor Police Station), they would scream, ‘*meleko! meleko!*’ to warn people.<sup>478</sup> Likewise, Mzimela stated:

*Sasisengabafana abancane sidlala ibhola emgwaqweni. Amaphoyisa ayefika afike abophe abantu. Kwakukhona amaphoyisa okwakuthiwa ikwaKito. Uma kuqhamuka iveni lamaphoyisa ekhoneni abantu babememeza bathi ‘Meleko’.*<sup>479</sup>

(We were very young boys playing soccer in the streets, and police used to come and arrest people. There was a police force called *Kito* ... when the police van appeared by the corner people would shout ‘*Meleko*’).

Mrs Dube said that the police did not only search for illicit liquor, but more widely.

*Interviewer: Nanibona kanjani ukuthi imoto iyeza, le enaniyibiza ngomeleko?*

*Dube: Umeleko wawuthi uma uhleli la, angithi nje mhlambe ngisekhaya la. Lapha phesheya iseNsimbini. Ozoyibona le kude uzomemeza athi "meleko". Wathi meleko, kulolu khalo olungapha kuyazwakala bafihle. Kuthi lapha phambili athi ayafika amaBhunu afike akusekho lutho. Mhlambe asezojaha labantu ababethelela amakhanda, okhanda pondo. Hhayi babejahwa-ke labo.*

*Interviewer: Abanjani labo?*

*Dube: Abangatheleli ikhanda.*

*Interviewer: Yikhanda lokuthi wakhile?*

*Dube: Indoda nje yayifanele ithelele ikhanda upondo. Ipasi lendoda, ngizosho njalo.*

*Interviewer: Afike-ke amaphoyisa.*

*Dube: Afike amaphoyisa ayegqoke izinto ezi-brown, afike ababophe-ke. Baboshwe kanjalo bahambe.*<sup>480</sup>

(Interviewer: How did you identify the police car when it was approaching, the one you referred to as *meleko*?)

Dube: It was easy to spot the car when I was at home as it came from the other side. Once you saw it, first you had to shout ‘*meleko*’. That assisted people to hide whatever illegal stuff they sold. The police would arrive to a clean area and would only run after those who did not pay tax.

Interviewer: Who were those people?

Dube: Those who did not pay rent.

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<sup>478</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015. *Kito* referred to the Cato Manor Police Station or force. The residents called it *Kito*, which was literally derived from Cato. See for an example, a conversation with Mrs. Maphumulo:

*Interviewer: Amaphoyisa ayesuka lapha eCato Manor?*

*Maphumulo: Ehhe, kwaKito la phansi. Ayesuka lapho.*

(Interviewer: Did the police come from Cato Manor?)

*Maphumulo: Yes. It was called Kito).*

<sup>479</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>480</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2020.

Interviewer: You paid for erecting a house?

Dube: Every man had to pay R2.

Interviewer: Then the police would arrive ...

Dube: Yes, police in brown regalia would arrest them).

Other interviewees could not verify the story of tax-paying (perhaps rent), but it appears that reference was being made to having the appropriate documentation to be in the city.

A young Mrs Maphumulo was also tasked with ringing the call to alert brewers of illicit beer:

*Interviewer: Imoto le okwakuthiwa umeleko?*

*Maphumulo: Ehhe. Sasiwumemeza impela. Sasiwumemeza impela, imoto yamaphoyisa. Senzela ukuthayimisa abangakaboni bafihle phela. Umeleko uma usaqhamuka ezansi siphezulu, kuthiwa "umeleko", ongale phambili naye useyayaluza uyamboza, uyaphuma nasekhaya uyahamba ngoba phela bazoze bangifice nenkandla yami la. Nami ngiyaphuma ngigcwale umgwaqo ngibe obukelayo kanti ngibalekile ekhaya. Usuyobabuke nje bechitha utshwala bakho uthi 'awu babuthola, awu babuchitha'.<sup>481</sup>*

(Interviewer: Do you know anything about *meleko*?)

Maphumulo: Yes. We used to scream when it appeared. That was a police car. We shouted the name to alert all those that sold homebrewed liquor, to hide it. When *meleko* approached at the downhill and us being at the upper slope, people would hurriedly hide their gallons. Others would leave their homes so that the police would not catch them on their brewing sites. People would then look as if they are bystanders, like everyone else, when they ran away from their homes. If caught, when seeing the police spilling their alcohol, a person would grieve: 'they uncovered it! Oh! They are spilling it').

Sometimes the beer brewers vented their anger on the police and their informers:

Residents would also attack the hated police informers who would guide police raids into a particular area. After police raids into the shantytowns, police guarding the 'crocodiles' of suspects or arrested persons who walked under guard back to the Cato Manor police station would be subjected to stoning and verbal abuse. In some cases, residents would attempt to 'charge' police escorting the lines of 'prisoners' walking through the shantytown back to the police station.<sup>482</sup>

As Edwards explained, one of the motives prompting residents' attacks on police officials escorting the 'crocodile of suspects or arrested persons' was to 'release their friends and go back to the shebeen.'<sup>483</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>482</sup> Edwards, "Mkhumbane our Home", 241.

<sup>483</sup> M.O.D. Kunene, interviewed by Iain Edwards, 12 May 1985.



Sometimes the police would arrest the family head and return for the man's wife. This fuelled residents' anger and resulted in some of them hurling missiles at police.<sup>484</sup>

Residents felt harassed. There were reports of police brutality when they were conducting raids. Such brutality was not gender-selective as everyone was in danger of the police's wrath. Mrs Dube recounted one particular incident:

Interviewer: *Amaphoyisa kwakungabantu abamnyama nabeLungu noma namaNdiya?*

Dube: *KwakungamaBhunu kakhulu. Ayesihlukumeza kakhulu. Khona elake langikhahlela la. Ngangilele kwa-next door kwenye ingane yakwaDladla engumngani wami. Nayo ike ize izolala la kimina. Sasilala ekhishini-ke khona. Lafika iBhunu lingqongqoze lingqongqoze, ligudluze isicabha lijahe ukungena. Uma belunguza bezama ukududula isicabha bayabona lapha ukuthi kukhona imiphongolo emile lapha emboziwe, babona ukuthi utshwala. Awu liphonseke phakathi. Manje ngilele la ngasemnyango. Lifuna ukungena, lakhahlela ngonyawo. Savuswa yilona impela. Laphonseka lapha emsamo lafike lavula lathola ukuthi amahewu akubona utshwala. Lowo mama wayedayisa amahewu. Kwayikhathi behambake bedlulela kwabanye.*<sup>485</sup>

(Interviewer: What race were the police?)

Mrs Dube: Mostly it was Afrikaners. They were so aggressive. Once one kicked me badly. I was sleeping at a friend's place (Dladla homestead). The friend would also sleep at my home too. We used to sleep in the kitchen when I visited. This Boer policeman would knock forcibly and immediately forcefully kick the door to gain entry. When the police tried to open the door they would be peeping through and see drums assuming it was liquor. They entered whilst I was sleeping by the door. In trying to gain entry they kicked the door, entered and headed to where drums were located only to find out it was *amahewu*. The mother of my friend used to sell *amahewu*).

It is interesting that the interviewee explicitly refers to the policemen as Afrikaners and the pejorative Boers rather than Whites or Europeans. It is not clear whether the majority of policemen in Durban were Afrikaners or whether the reason for this was that Africans associated oppression with the ruling Afrikaner Party (NP) and therefore described the police as such.

Beer was often hidden by women in the reservoirs in the surrounding bushes. Women brewed *isishimeyane* both in their backyard and in the nearby bushes to hide it from police raids. This made it

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<sup>484</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 10.

<sup>485</sup> *Amahewu* is a sour maize-based fermented gruel or beverage consumed mainly by the indigenous people. It is made from fermented mealie pap. It is a 'non-alcoholic fermented maize drink' and is very popular in Southern Africa with *amasi* (sour milk), which is 'mainly produced by spontaneous fermentation' of milk. See Brycen Soto. *Fermentation Processes* (Essex: ED-Tech Press, 2019), 57. See also Asif M. Iqbal Qureshi, Zahoor Ahmad Dar and Shabir Hussain Wan. *Quality Breeding in Field Crops* (Gewerbstrasse: Springer, 2019).

difficult for police to identify and arrest brewers since they did not know whom it belonged to. Mrs Dube recalled:

*Abantu babebufihla utshwala ngayo yonke indlela kodwa amaphoyisa ayebheka yonke indawo aze abheke ngisho ezindlini zabantu la ababebufihla khona. Kodwa kwesinye isikhathi amaphoyisa ayebubheka engabutholi uma nje eqeda ukuhamba Abantu baqhubeke nokuphuza.*<sup>486</sup>

(People would hide the alcohol by various means, but the police would search for it even inside people's houses where they hid it. However, they would sometimes not find it, and after they left, people would continue drinking).

Nomadiphu recounts that the police tended to make unauthorised raids, and arrest people who had not committed any crime, and that at times one's "enemy" would send police to disturb a particular family.<sup>487</sup> Police would even dispossess residents of their items. For example, they might take an axe for cutting firewood and not return it to its owner.<sup>488</sup> These seemingly small acts were designed to make life unpleasant for residents of the area. Most residents were able to evade arrest as it was difficult to identify who the concoctions brewed in the forests belonged to, except if they were caught red-handed. According to Ngcobo, others that were arrested were 'those that loved drinking so much' and were caught drunk and locked up.<sup>489</sup>

Overall, the recollections suggest that the interviewees' found the apartheid system oppressive as it sought to control every aspect of people's lives. Njapha, for one, emphasised the constant presence and fear of the police, pointing out that the area's residents would sometimes not sleep at night.<sup>490</sup>

### **Threats to women's livelihoods**

From 1958, the City Council began its 'slum clearance' campaign, which met with heightened resistance. The campaign was also directed at the shebeens and brewers of illegal concoctions. The law on the brewing of liquor was strictly enforced. Women had to go to the Native Administration offices in Durban, and each family was granted permission to brew four gallons of beer. If there was going to be a family event, family members had to apply for permission to brew more.<sup>491</sup> The main beer hall was in Victoria Street in the Durban CBD and the one in in Mkhumbane was Gezizandla.

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<sup>486</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2020.

<sup>487</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 9 and 10.

<sup>488</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *eMkhumbane*, 10.

<sup>489</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

<sup>490</sup> Mr Njapha (presentation, Library, Archives, Museum and Language Services Conference, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Arts and Culture, International Convention Centre, Durban, November 26–28, 2013).

<sup>491</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 16.

Discontent among women and some community members about the beer halls led to a meeting called by the Bantu United Zakhe (BUZ) in late 1958. The BUZ was an organisation comprised of male community members from Chesterville. There is not much information about its formation or work. However, one of the BUZ's members was A.W.G. Champion, former trade unionist and member of the ANC, who was also an aspiring businessman who was prominent during the 1949 riots. According to Nomadiphu, the organisation aimed to encourage "community" relations among Chesterville's men and be a voice of the people when they raised their concerns with NAD officials in Durban.<sup>492</sup> 'We were concerned about the community issues and liquor brewing. BUZ called a meeting, saying, "what are we going to do? Are we not allowed to brew beer in our homes? Have we become prisoners in our backyard? What should we do?"'<sup>493</sup> This was seen as an attack on women's livelihoods.

While Champion and BUZ raised these issues, it was women who drove resistance to the state crackdown on beer brewing. Despite being prohibited from selling homebrewed sorghum, women were also frustrated by the control imposed on them. The situation directly involved women because they were the ones who sold liquor. As Mzimela puts it:

*Abantu besifazane babedayisa ugavini ababewenzela emahlathini njengoba ukudayiswa kwawo kwakungavumelekile. Kwabubuningi utshwala obabutholakala laphaya. Kwakungabantu besifazane ababehamba phambili ekuvutshweni kotshwala. Kodwa-ke babexubile njengoba kwakukhona namaMpondo namaXhosa.*<sup>494</sup>

(Zulu women used to sell *gavini* (Zulu whiskey), which they made in the bushes as it was illegal. There were all kinds of alcohol in that place. They were the ones who led on that but there was a mix as there were also Xhosa and Mpondo people).

The women said, 'we want to be allowed to brew beer for our men. We would brew beer enough for our men to drink and stay at home. We are concerned that our men are being swallowed by the beer halls, buying liquor'.<sup>495</sup> One of the triggers of the riots was the 'quarrel' between traditional homebrewed sorghum beer and municipal bottled clear and filtered beer. It was reported that men were shifting to the more 'civilised' clear beer, which was sold at the beer halls, thus abandoning their families and spending time and money at beer halls. The beer halls were a popular site of self-identification and differentiation for the community of Mkhumbane. Alcohol consumption in beer halls became a platform where people could show off their status. Locals created competition between traditional beer such as sorghum beer and clear beer.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 15.

<sup>493</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 15.

<sup>494</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>495</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 16.

<sup>496</sup> Clear beer referred to 'legal' beer sold in beer halls as opposed to the 'illicit' traditional one produced by women. It was usually bottled, and one was seen as more sophisticated if one drank it rather than consuming traditional beer.

The Durban Corporation also introduced beer in “takeaway” cartons to enable customers to ‘buy and have it at home under a more congenial’ atmosphere than the beer halls.<sup>497</sup> This became a significant threat to the Mkhumbane women’s homebrewed beer. Packaged beer, according to Bourquin, ‘utterly knocked the bottom out of the homebrew process because people found it far more convenient and economical to buy a carton of beer and take it home. So the illicit brewing of excessive quantities fell away’.<sup>498</sup>

Bourquin added that drinking clear beer became a status symbol as people who went to beer drinking sites would ‘think it infra-dig’ (informal term for lowering one’s dignity) to buy sorghum beer.<sup>499</sup> Clear beer was viewed as modern, while traditional beer, even when packaged in the bottle stores, was viewed as being for lower classes. Bourquin explained:

The status aspect played quite a part in the consumption of beer. Even in the old beer hall days, labourers and members of, let us call them “middle classes,” officials, teachers, and self-employed people let us call them ‘White-collar workers’ differed from labourers. They would not sit together. They would keep apart, and the same applied in the bars attached to the bottle stores that labourers would buy from the bottle stores a carton of beer and drink it elsewhere. They would not drink it in the bar. The bar was an upgraded drinking place for people who could afford to buy clear beer.... There was a distinct class distinction evident in the consumption of spirituous or alcoholic liquor.<sup>500</sup>

Not only brewers, but other women’s livelihoods were at stake. Women accused men of not taking care of their families as they did not go home after work, but stayed in the beer halls, drinking alcohol, playing the guitar and music, and dancing until the late hours. Women began to convene meetings to find solutions to their problems, which involved both their menfolk and the state crackdown.

Early signs of the unrest emerged in February 1959 when women who faced removal to rural areas were in a ‘combustible mood’ and were at the forefront of a march to the Durban city centre. They went to the Native Administration Offices at *KwaMuhle*, Ordinance Road, and surrounded it for two days, demanding to meet the Mayor of Durban. Led by the ANC Women’s League (ANCWL), Mkhumbane residents insisted that their demands be met. In the course of the scuffle that broke out, Bourquin’s shirt was torn

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Hoffman writes that ‘whatever the colour, beer may be crystal clear or have various degrees of opalescence ... a beer that’s perfectly clear will have been filtered to make it so – you may wonder if anything else was taken out in the process. A little fog in your glass may suggest that the beer has a distinct body or thickness.’ See Lynn Hoffman. *Short Course in Beer: An Introduction to Tasting and Talking about the World Most Civilised Beverage* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2009)

<sup>497</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 34.

<sup>498</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 34.

<sup>499</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 40. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines ‘infra-dig’ as being beneath one’s dignity, that is, being undignified.

<sup>500</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 40.

as the crowd 'moved to his office and refused to leave until they had spoken to the mayor'.<sup>501</sup> After securing a meeting with the mayor, the women succeeded in getting the removals and demolitions suspended. Calm was partially restored, but it did not last long. As Magubane *et al.* point out:

... an outbreak of typhoid provided the authorities with an excuse to intervene once again in Cato Manor. In late May, they moved in and began to overturn and puncture liquor containers, citing hygiene as their pretext. African policemen directed by white colleagues spilled beer in broad daylight against the protests of women brewers.<sup>502</sup>

Enraged by the ban on selling their home-brewed beer, the women of Mkhumbane staged a violent protest at the Mkhumbane Beer Hall on 17 June 1959. The boycott gained momentum and resulted in the Durban Beer Hall's total closure for ten days, resulting in a loss of municipal income. Initially, between 50 and 100 protesters were seen, increasing to 300 by the evening, a thousand by the next morning, and 2 000 by Thursday evening when they targeted municipal beer halls in the city.<sup>503</sup> According to the *Pretoria Times*, two issues fuelled the women's anger of women (allowing for the racist phrase 'Chaka's terrible impi's'):

First, the Durban authorities have tried to establish a municipal monopoly of *kaffir* beer, sold at a reasonably high price, to the double disadvantage of the African women both as a traditional home brewery and as dispensers of the family budget. Secondly, *kaffir* beer is not a beverage that does much to warm the blood in the long June nights, and a clandestine distilling industry has sprung up in the Durban slums to supply something better calculated to maintain the spirits of the descendants of Chaka's terrible impis.<sup>504</sup>

The article summed up the importance of beer brewing for Africans' domestic economy and why the local state's attempts to cut into this trade were resisted so fiercely. The constant raids disrupted women brewers' income. Ngcobo recounted that the police were a disturbance to the economy and the social lifestyle of the community. He noted that the people of Mkhumbane found ways to survive economically:

*Abantu babedayisa benemali, kufana ngisho namahewu lawa asedayiswa u-Clover aqalwa umuntu omnyama. Kodwa uma wawutholakala uwadayisa wawuboshwa ... Ayehamba ethungatha.*<sup>505</sup>

(People used to sell things, and they had money, Blacks initiated even *Amahewu* that is sold by the Clover Company today. But, you were arrested if you were found selling it. The police went around searching the houses).

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<sup>501</sup> Magubane *et al.*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 104.

<sup>502</sup> Magubane *et al.*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 104-5.

<sup>503</sup> Magubane *et al.*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 105.

<sup>504</sup> 'Fear Durban Will Have More Violence', *Pretoria News*, 1 July 1957.

<sup>505</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

Saul Dubow writes that the 'women stormed the local beer hall in protest at a municipal monopoly'<sup>506</sup> Women 'formed a large percentage of the population' in the area, and only a few had 'legal employment or official permission' to reside in Durban.<sup>507</sup> Threatened by forced removals that would have sent them back to their villages and rural areas, women organised as their survival, and their families were at stake. As Jackson explained, the rioting broke out at Mkhumbane in protest against the city's 'beer halls and the looming prospect of mass forced removals in which residents would be uprooted from their homes in terms of the notorious Group Areas Act and resettled in townships'.<sup>508</sup>

There was thus a direct economic consequence of not being able to brew beer. According to one of the informants, Mbatha:

All this began when women started making a loss from selling alcohol. Whites had taken over the alcohol business, and the women got mad. That is where they decided to go and attack their husbands. Gezizandla was a place where white people sold their alcohol, and women no longer bought it from Gezizandla after introducing the tax. Gezizandla was also known as Ematsheni.<sup>509</sup>

Gezizandla, affectionately known as Ematsheni to local residents, referred to the local state's series of beer halls to sell beer to Africans and to use the profit to help govern and house the local African population.<sup>510</sup> The local residents whom I interviewed called this beer hall Gezizandla, which literally means to cleanse one's hands. Asked why that name was given to the area, Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, who spent his early years in the Nsimbini section in Mkhumbane, said it was because people would drink and would wash their hands on their way out.<sup>511</sup>

The authorities saw this as a positive development. The beer halls sold both the so-called 'modern' beer as well as traditional sorghum beer. For Bourquin, sorghum beer's sale made a 'great difference to township life' as Africans would meet and drink in the beer halls, unlike in pre-prohibition days where it was customary to say 'better have the brandy in you than on you'.<sup>512</sup> One would be charged with an offence if found with a bottle of liquor or any intoxicating drink in the latter case.

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<sup>506</sup> Dubow, *Apartheid: 1948–1994*, 79.

<sup>507</sup> Walker, *Women and Resistance*, 231.

<sup>508</sup> Jackson, 'Cato Manor Revisited,' 24.

<sup>509</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>510</sup> T. Roche recalls that the locals 'used to drink, and they used to call the beerhalls "Imajeni". Now you might ask why "Imajeni"? Virtually all over the Republic the beerhalls are known as "Imajeni". Now, Imajeni means the place of the stones'. Considering that the interviewee was non-Zulu, Mr Roche could not properly pronounce "ematsheni", hence "Imajeni". Interview, Mr T. Roche, 99/4202, Old Court Museum, 24-27.

<sup>511</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015. At the time of the interview, Mr Mzimela resided in Chesterville section 1. He also recollects many of the stories told by his grandmother who spent many years as a resident of Mkhumbane.

<sup>512</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 37.

The women of Mkhumbane opposed the beer halls. Nomadiphu Mkhize, a former resident of Mkhumbane, said that women were 'fed up with men exhausting their salaries at eMatsheni while their children remained destitute'.<sup>513</sup> Men would come from work and go to the beer hall, while some failed to support their families as all their money went into buying liquor. Mrs Maphumulo concurs and asserts that the reason for the attacks was:

*Engani yinto eyaqhamuka kusha leyo sekuvalwa oGezizandla laphana. Yaqala impilo enye. Yikho amakhosikazi ayeseshaya kwasekuqale enye impilo, kutholakala indoda isithole indawo eyijoyinti ayisezi ekhaya. Isibuya nemali ehle lapha phansi koGezizandla ithi iyodla utshwala. Iyafika ekhaya sebekuthathile abafana ngalena, akusaphethe mali sekungumadakeni nje. Silambile silinde ukuthi ubaba uyeza nemali. Yila sekuqala khona ukonakala kwalamajoyinti avelayo. Kwakungekho majoyinti nje, utshwala kwakuba yileyomigodi le ekhishwa ngamaphoyisa. Abantu bazophuza la, abathengi kubantu abanye, udakwe ukhona ekhaya. Hhayi uhambe uyodakwa ngale la esingazi khona.*<sup>514</sup>

(It was because the lifestyle was changing and men were discovered to have found homes in beer halls and not come back home. Men came back with good money at kwaGezizandla, but they did not come back home. They would arrive home with empty pockets because young boys would rob them along the way. People from around our area sold alcohol, and it was conducive for men to sit and drink close by so that it would be easy for them to go home).

Mr Mbatha also held that men were wrong, and women were trying to correct their wrongs:

*Mbatha: Ayi! Angazi kahle ke lapho. Anginalo ulwazi. Ngoba mina into engiyikhumbulayo futhi kwakungeyona impi, indaba yotshwala yalapha kwaGezizandla ngo-1959. Yabona ke lapho amadoda ayengasayi ekhaya ephuza khona lapho ubhokweni kanti abafazi bayaplana baplanela lamadoda lawa. Amadoda ayehlala ephuze kudlalwa iziginci kudanswa bafika abafazi kwakhala iziqwayi.*

Interviewer: *Ubani owayeshaya omunye?*

*Mbatha: Umfazi eshaya indoda.*

Interviewer: *Bashaya amadoda ukuthi ahlala la?*

*Mbatha: Babashayela ukuthi bayaphuza imali iphelela khona la amadoda abuya edakiwe.*<sup>515</sup>

(Interviewer: What really happened in 1959? Were the Indians who stayed at Mkhumbane also attacked?)

Mbatha: No! All I remember is that it was not a fight, all I remember is the issue in 1959 pertained to alcohol. At that time men did not go back to their homes, they used to stay there and drink alcohol, play guitars and dance. On the other side their wives were planning something for them.

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<sup>513</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 25.

<sup>514</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December 2019.

<sup>515</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

Interviewer: Who beat who?

Mbatha: Women beat up men.

Interviewer: Why?

Mbatha: They had to beat them up because they stayed there and drank alcohol and came back home drunk with no money).

Throughout his tenure as the head of the NAD, Bourquin was the target of criticism by African women. As the “Shebeen Queens” suffered, the blame was laid at the door of Bourquin, who said that to the Zulu mind, ‘there is always a person responsible for something’ and ‘anything connected to the corporation eventually boomeranged’ to him personally.<sup>516</sup> As the authorities’ representative, Bourquin was seen by local Africans as the cause and recipient of profits. He would be attacked at public meetings as people assumed that the profits enabled him ‘to ride around in a shining motor car and to smoke expensive cigarettes’.<sup>517</sup> Bourquin recounted being blamed by Mkhumbane residents during the beer boycotts:

Boycott Bantu beer or home beer because it is Bourquin's beer and Bourquin is the head of the Department of Bantu Administration, and they just use profits of Sorghum beer to build police stations and for the policemen to raid us in our homes. By boycotting the beer, you are boycotting the Department and boycotting the police, and you are securing peace in your own homes.<sup>518</sup>

At a meeting in Mkhumbane before the outbreak of the 1959 riots, women presented a memorandum to Bourquin stating that they wanted the beer halls closed and 'all restrictions on homebrew lifted', and to be 'permitted to sell to all in sundry and to be freed' from restrictions.<sup>519</sup> Bourquin stated that the women wanted their demands met with immediate effect, saying, “no, we will brook no delay, you decide now, and you assure us that this will happen. Now, now, now!”<sup>520</sup>

The introduction of beer halls posed a dual problem to women; on the one hand of men not returning home with money for household necessities and, on the other, buying at the beer hall instead of buying from the women for whom liquor brewing was their only form of income. As Bourquin pointed out, the introduction of municipal beer was objectionable to Zulu women ‘because it 'kept the men away’ from their homes, men spent more money on beer halls than their households, and women were ‘deprived of possible revenue’ as beer hall profits went to the municipality.<sup>521</sup> Florence Mkhize, an ANCWL activist in Natal at the time, told historian Julia Wells that in:

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<sup>516</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 41.

<sup>517</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 42.

<sup>518</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 34.

<sup>519</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 42.

<sup>520</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 42.

<sup>521</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 41.



KwaMuhle were hundreds of women, pouring from every part of the Cato Manor, from Chesterville ... They went down to the beer hall to boycott the beer hall. They were trying to tell their husbands not to patronise them because of starvation and influx control ... The husbands used to earn very little money ... they would spend the last money they had in the beer halls, so the women decided not to patronise them, to protect their homes.<sup>522</sup>

Babo stated, 'I was still very young then but what I remember was the war in Gezizandla in 1959. Men would drink and not go back to their houses or homes. Meanwhile, women orchestrated a plan to go and attack them at Gezizandla'.<sup>523</sup> This narrative that was repeated over and over again by informants, and in many cases, was passed down by older women in their families who spoke in awe of the courage shown by their forebears in standing up, in the first instance, to their own menfolk, but also against the authorities, at a time when this was exceedingly dangerous. A secondary issue for some older women was that men were failing to fulfil their domestic duties as they spent most of their time in the beer hall.

Beer-brewing battles between African men and women, and the City Council were unfinished business that continued until the forced relocation of the Mkhumbane community in the 1960s. The situation was were a ticking time bomb since the authorities' stance against the selling of homebrewed beer via police raids was bitterly opposed in Mkhumbane. The raids were an "interruption" to women entrepreneurs as beer-brewing 'supplemented their income' and was crucial to their families' very survival.<sup>524</sup>

### **Protests of June 1959**

The women's protests must also be seen in the broader political context. The 1950s were witness to both state repression and heightened resistance from anti-apartheid groups led by the ANC and its Congress Alliance. The Defiance Campaign of 1952, Congress of the People's (COP) mass campaign which led to the adoption of the Freedom Charter in 1955, and the arrest of 156 members of the Congress Alliance and the iconic Treason Trial that lasted from 1956 to 1961, all heightened political consciousness. Leaders like Nelson Mandela and Albert Luthuli were now in the public eye. African countries were agitating for and achieving independence across the continent, beginning of course with Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana. The list of decolonisation heroes usually excludes women. Sadly, women's role in the nationalist struggle has been buried in popular and scholarly writing until recent times.<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Cheryl Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa*, 231.

<sup>523</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>524</sup> Bottaro and Tanley, *History for the I.B.*, 156.

<sup>525</sup> See Thozoma April, "Theorising women: the intellectual contributions of Charlotte Maxeke to the struggle for liberation in South Africa", PhD thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2012; Zungu, Mthunzi *et al.* 'HERstory: writing women into South African history' *Agenda* 28(1) 2014: 7-17; and Nombulelo Shange, "Mappings of feminist/womanist resistance within student movements across the African continent", *Agenda* 31.3-4 (2017): 6-67.

One significant event that illustrated women's power was the iconic 9 August 1956 march by South African women of all races against pass laws aimed at abolishing influx control.<sup>526</sup> This was a protest against the apartheid government's plan to extend the infamous *dompas* to women, restricting their freedom of movement, especially in urban areas. Mzimela, one of my interviewees, explained:

You were only eligible to carry a *dompas* when you were 18 years old and above. We would carry a specific pass, which was signed by a school principal as we were underage. After that phase, you were allowed to carry an ID then. I was once arrested from Friday to Monday as I failed to produce a *dompas*.<sup>527</sup>

On that historic day in August 1956, 20 000 women marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria to deliver petitions against the pass laws being extended to women and more generally, to acknowledge women's role in the anti-apartheid struggle. According to Mzimela, the 1956 march 'sparked women to see their role as "freedom fighters" against social problems'. During the late 1950s, there was heightened protest across the country, from the uprising in the Transkei to the boycott of potatoes due to the treatment of farmworkers in Bethal. All of these heightened anger and consciousness.

The police search for illicit liquor broadened in 1959, with raids being carried out virtually daily. On 17 June 1959, protests started at Mkhumbane Beer Hall and soon spread to other beer halls. Protesting women gathered outside the Mkhumbane Beer Hall in Booth Road and threatened men who were drinking there with sticks. In narrating these riots, Jackson writes that:

... women gathered outside the Cato Manor beerhall forced their way inside, beating the men there and wrecking the place. Rioting continued the next day, and beer halls in other parts of town were attacked. One group, led by Florence Mkhize and Dorothy Nyembe, attacked a beer hall, where Florence dunked her underwear in a vat of beer, while Dorothy urinated in another.<sup>528</sup>

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<sup>526</sup> The government had attempted to force African women to carry passes in 1913 but failed in the face of mass African protest. New laws were passed in 1952, and permits were issued from 1954, and reference books from 1956. In terms of the Native Laws Amendment Act, women who did not have such documentation could be arrested and deported to Native Reserves. See Helen Joseph, *Tomorrow's Sun, A Smuggled Journal from South Africa* (New York: The John Day Co., 1966); Elizabeth S. Schmidt, *"Now you have touched the women!": African women's resistance to the pass laws in South Africa 1950-1960* (New York: United Nations Organisation, 1982); D. Hindson, *Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987); Joanne Yawitch, "Natal 1959: The Women's Protests", Paper Presented at the Conference on the History of Opposition in South Africa, University of Witwatersrand, 1978; Cherryl Walker, *Women and Resistance in South Africa* (London: Onyx, 1982); and Julia C. Wells, *We Now Demand! The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa* (Johannesburg: University of Witwatersrand Press, 1993).

<sup>527</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>528</sup> Jackson, 'Cato Manor Revisited', 25-26.

The men were said to not only have been threatened but attacked. It was reported that four people lost their lives while 79 were injured on the first day. The next day, 18 June, the women gathered at the Mkhumbane Beer Hall and, in their struggle with the police, burnt it down.

According to one report, political and union figures like Dorothy Nyembe, Ruth Shabane and Gladys Manzi ‘played leading roles in the campaign’, and Chief Luthuli said afterwards that Natal had seen much activity, ‘most of it in keeping with the Congress spirit, though it was primarily’ spontaneous rather than organised.<sup>529</sup> A witness who was present during the fracas was quoted by *UmAfrika* as follows:

*Sithe sifika laphaya ematsheni amakhulu akaVitoli (Victoria Street) aliqhumisa ipayipi elingenisa utshwala ematsheni ematsheni utshwala bagobhoza phansi, ekulinganiswa ukuthi uma lobutshwala obuchithekileyo bebuthengisile bebuzobuyisa imali engu £100, ngemuva kwalokhu sakhuphuka isimame sibange ngasemakethe laphaya kuWarwick Avenue emabhasini, zashinga ngemva kwaso izimoto zamaphoyisa eziyisishiyagalombili, sangena emabhasini aseMkhumbane sahamba isifazane.*<sup>530</sup>

(At around 11:00 am on 18 June, six buses transported women to the Beerhall located at Victoria Street in the Durban CBD where the women spilled liquor estimated at around £100 in value. They then moved to the bustling bus terminus in the vicinity of the market in Warwick Avenue and boarded buses back to Mkhumbane. The women were escorted by eight police vehicles).

*UmAfrika* reported that at around 2.30 pm, a group of about 75 women entered the Gezizandla Beerhall in Mkhumbane, knocked down sorghum beer containers, and struck drinking men with knobkerries.<sup>531</sup> The number spread rapidly to approximately 200 women who warned the men that they should go home if they wanted to drink liquor. Women blocked the entrance and denied any further entry into Gezizandla. The police arrived at around 5:00 pm but were pelted with stones by the angry crowd. Three policemen were slightly injured.<sup>532</sup>

The women were armed with sticks of all sizes, and when they entered the beer hall, recalls Nomadiphu, they hit all the men in their path, regardless of whose husband it was. When any man asked, ‘what have I

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<sup>529</sup> Magubane *et al.*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 105-6. While the strikes in Cato Manor received national attention, there was a similar women's beer hall protest in Pietermaritzburg at around the same time, which has not received adequate coverage even though the women displayed similar courage. See Sibongiseni Mkhize, “Crowds, protest politics and women's struggles: a case study of women's demonstrations in Pietermaritzburg, August 1959”, *Natal Museum Journal of Humanities* 11, 1999: 62-84 and “A set back to harmonious race relations in the charming city of scented flowers: the August 1959 riots in Pietermaritzburg”, *Natalia* 42 (2012): 65-79.

<sup>530</sup> ‘Kubhujiwe eMkhumbane: Isimame Sivimbezele Ematsheni’, *UmAfrika*, 27 June 1959, 1.

<sup>531</sup> ‘Kubhujiwe eMkhumbane: Isimame Sivimbezele Ematsheni’, *UmAfrika*, 27 June 1959, 1.

<sup>532</sup> ‘Kubhujiwe eMkhumbane: Isimame Sivimbezele Ematsheni’, *UmAfrika*, 27 June 1959, 1.

done?', the women would say, 'move out'.<sup>533</sup> The men did not lay their hands on women but ran out of the beer hall. For Babo, the women had to beat the men because:

... they stayed there and drank alcohol and came back home drunk with no money. The women who hit men were also accompanied by men dressed in women's clothing and wrapped *doeks* like women on their heads. One person was telling a story saying that he heard how hard the punch he got was and realised that it came from a man. It was not easy to recognise who it was as some men wrapped their heads with *doeks*.<sup>534</sup>

Perhaps these 'mannish' punches were delivered by a woman whom Mrs Dube refers to as Nyoni:

*(Interviewer: Impi yamakhosikazi usayikhumbula? Amakhosikazi lawa okwakuthiwa ayeyobashaya laphayana kwaGezizandla?)*

*Dube: Awu ehhe! Uyabo nje abafowethu ababengayanga emsebenzini babekhishwa ezindlini, bafike badakhe sebefika lapha e-tollgate. Hhayi bevutha!*

*Interviewer: Amakhosikazi?*

*Dube: Ha ha ha ha ha! (laughs) Kukhona okwakuthiwa uNyoni. Kwakuyisiqhwaga esikhulu lesu.*

*Interviewer: UNyoni?*

*Dube: Ehhe*

*Interviewer: Inkosikazi?*

*Dube: Ehhe*

*Interviewer: Iyona eyayihamba phambili?*

*Dube: Ehhe.*

*Interviewer: Yini yayenzani?*

*Dube: Yayishaya. Yayingenandoda ingenankosikazi).*<sup>535</sup>

*(Interviewer: Do you remember the fight by the women who went to beat up men at kwaGezizandla?)*

*Dube: I remember it very well. Those who did not go to work were taken out and beaten.*

*Interviewer: Beaten by women?*

*Dube: (laughs) Yes. One was called Nyoni and she was very strong and aggressive.*

*Interviewer: Nyoni?*

*Dube: Yes*

*Interviewer: Was she a female?*

*Dube: Yes*

*Interviewer: Was she the one leading?*

*Dube: Yes*

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<sup>533</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 26.

<sup>534</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>535</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2020.

Interviewer: What did she do?

Dube: She used to beat people up regardless of gender).

The law prohibited women from entering beer halls. Women were allowed to occupy the eating section in the beer hall as they prepared the food, ‘even participating if they were passers-by, but they could not sit down in the beer hall and drink’.<sup>536</sup> Thus, entering this masculine space was an indication of their bravery and refusal to back down. Prohibited beer-brewing and selling continued in the spaces between the shacks. In 1960, legislation on the selling of alcohol was amended to prohibit Africans from obtaining liquor licences in urban areas or townships.<sup>537</sup>

The Congress Alliance organised a Freedom Day Rally at Curries Fountain on 26 June 1959, which drew around 20 000 people, giving the women the sense that the protests were connected to a larger national struggle. The significance of the 1959 Cato Manor women’s protests went beyond the specific area as the demonstrations aided the wider politicisation of women who were collectively demonstrating against their economic and social disempowerment; they also provided a model for women in other areas of Natal, and it is noteworthy that the unrest quickly spread to parts of rural Natal, which were in close contact with urban centres. This underscores the solidarity of African women in urban and rural areas. In an excellent recent study, Jill Kelly shows how women’s protests spread from Cato Manor to all parts of Natal, including Ixopo in the Midlands and Umzinto in the south. By November around 20 000 women had participated in the protests and thousands were convicted of various charges.<sup>538</sup> A popular song of the time implored men to join the struggle.

*Asikhathal’ noma siya bosh’*

*Sizimisele inkululeko*

*Unzima lomthwalo*

*Ufuna ‘madoda*

(We do not care if we go to prison

We are determined to get freedom

The load is heavy

It needs real men)<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>536</sup> Interview, S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 40.

<sup>537</sup> Interview, Mr S.B. Bourquin, 99/4211, Old Court Museum, 36.

<sup>538</sup> Jill Kelly, “Gender, Shame, and the ‘Efficacy of Congress Methods of Struggle’ in 1959 Natal Women’s Rural Revolts”, *South African Historical Journal*, 71, 2, 2019: 232-33.

<sup>539</sup> Kelly, “1959 Natal Women’s Rural Revolts,” 234.

According to Kelly, Albert Luthuli, president of the ANC, acknowledged that the ANC did not inspire the women's protests but he used women's anger to recruit women to the ANC, and to 'shame' men: 'Congress and Luthuli's gendered methods of mobilisation relied upon ideas of both men and women's roles and the potential to shame men'.<sup>540</sup> In a speech read on his behalf at the September 1959 ANC conference, Luthuli said: "Men's silence and inaction to protest against these grievances is shaming us, men." Men, he said, were "supposed to be the traditional protectors and fenders for their family's welfare.... What about it, African men?"<sup>541</sup> Kelly summarises the significance of the protests as follows:

... Women understood the collective.... Their choice to deploy extraordinary violence and emasculating language and song served to shame men into joining them in the struggle and to convince apartheid officials of the legitimacy of their grievances....

Women's violent protests may have been key in the shift to the ANC embracing violence and forming Umkhonto we Sizwe. Kelly quotes SACP member Denis Goldberg: 'Natal dipping tanks, Mpondoland [ ... ] now all those peasant uprisings, I think, were the signal for the ripeness of this situation for a classic, rural-based struggle.'<sup>542</sup>

### **Post-strike meetings**

In what informants remembered as the largest police raid in Mkhumbane, a massive police entourage headed by Major J. van der Merwe blitzed Mkhumbane on 3 July 1959 to search for illegal liquor concoctions. The raid resulted in the arrest of about 50 residents. Ninety policemen led it from the Durban and Pinetown police stations. It was reported that after a meeting between W.E. Shaw, Mayor of Durban at the time, and Lieutenant Colonel D.N. Acker, the police commissioner, it was decided that the Mkhumbane liquor problem should be resolved once and for all. On the day, approximately 45 000 gallons of *isishimeyane* and other types of illegal concoctions were spilled on the ground.<sup>543</sup>

There was a meeting on 18 July and another in September. It is not clear who spearheaded the call for these meetings. At these meetings, the police presence in the area was objected to by residents, prompting back-and-forth deliberations between the residents and the authorities. At a meeting in Mkhumbane in September 1959, attended by an estimated 500 residents, A. Schaffer, chief head of the Bantu Affairs Department in Durban, addressed the agitated crowd. Schaffer promised the residents that the state police would:

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<sup>540</sup> Kelly, "1959 Natal Women's Rural Revolts," 235.

<sup>541</sup> Kelly, "1959 Natal Women's Rural Revolts," 239.

<sup>542</sup> Kelly, "1959 Natal Women's Rural Revolts," 240.

<sup>543</sup> 'Isishimeyana Esiningi Sificwe Amaphoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 11 July 1959, 3.

*Amaphoyisa kaHulumeni akasoze aziphazamisa izakhamuzi nxa zigaya utshwala bomdabu benezimvume zokubugaya futhi buphuzwe lobotshwala ngendlela ehlelekile.*<sup>544</sup>

(... never disturb residents if they brewed traditional legal liquor within the limits of a legal scale; if the liquor was used appropriately and provided the brewers had authorised permission to do so).

The September gathering was an emergency one, and an attempt to soothe tensions as on 12 September, a lethal encounter between police and residents led to two deaths. Two residents died in the section of Draaihoek in Mkhumbane when 25 policemen conducted a raid in search of illicit *isishimeyane*. Based on eyewitness accounts, *UmAfrika* reported that the police:

*... afike abopha abayisikhombisa. Kuthe lapho esebavalele evenini amaphoyisa abantu baqhamuka macala wonke bakhankasa ngapha nangapha amaphoyisa esephakathi, lapho sebepethe izinduku abanye bephethe amatshe. Pho kungasebantu bebesemakhulwini amahlanu. Ngokukhahlamezeka amaphoyisa ahlukana umshungu wabantu wawadabula phakathi, elinye iphoyisa loMlungu lasala lodwa amanye amaphoyisa esengakolunye uhlangothi balifika abantu balishaya selisele lodwa.*<sup>545</sup>

(... arrested seven people. When the people were enclosed in the police van the people surrounded it and approached from all sides encircling the police. The people numbering approximately 500 carried sticks while others had stones. Realising that the police were outnumbered, they dispersed themselves into groups. Seeing that one White policeman had been secluded, the people beat him severely).

The residents were always on the lookout for any government officials in the area. This made Mkhumbane a hazardous area for the police and local officials to set foot in. The supposed 'lawless' nature of Mkhumbane made it difficult for the authorities to gain entry. For instance, in 1959, *UmAfrika* reported that the department that issued business licences was petrified to raid Mkhumbane to check on licences without being accompanied by police. The unnamed official was quoted as saying that 'it would be stupid to raid Mkhumbane and arrest people without police presence; that would be inviting trouble'.<sup>546</sup>

Even though the government issued assurances that liquor rules would be relaxed in Durban, Mkhumbane proved to be an exception. In a meeting of the Bantu Affairs team in mid-October 1959, it was reportedly agreed that residents of 'standing' townships should be allowed to brew traditional beer without seeking permission from the authorities. Mkhumbane did not fall under the 'standing' sites because it was on the verge of being destroyed in terms of the Group Areas Act. Most residents had not yet been removed and continued their daily activities. These brewing rights were afforded to KwaMashu, Chesterville, Lamontville, and Umlazi Glebelands but not Mkhumbane, despite its vast population. The team

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<sup>544</sup> 'AmaPhoyisa Akunakubahlupha Abantu Ngotshwala eMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 September 1959, 3.

<sup>545</sup> 'Kuphinde Kwasuka Esinamandla eMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 12 September 1959, 3.

<sup>546</sup> 'AbaHloli BamaBhizinisi Baswela Ukuphelezela NgamaPhoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 7 March 1959, 1.

recommended that a request be sent to the Minister of Justice and Community Development, M.D.C. de Wet to loosen the laws regarding townships and liquor.<sup>547</sup>

In his address to the clearly agitated crowd in Mkhumbane in September 1959, Schaffer emphasised that the state should not be regarded as the enemy of the residents and that it was not the mission of the authorities to:

*Akusiyona neze injongo kaHulumeni ukuba abantu abakhele imithetho engadingekile kumbe eyisinengiso, kungoba ekhumbula ukuba abantu abazinze laphaya eMkhumbane ngelungelo, kufanele ukuba ilungelo lokuqala ngelabo futhi bangancintisani ngamathuba nabantu abahlala kwezinye izindawo ... uma umthetho wezimvume ungasetshenziswa iziphathimandla beziyobhekana nezinkinga ezingaziwa ... kufanele ukuba izinto ezifana nalezi bazicabangisise ngoba imithetho lena ngeyokuvikela bona ngasohlangothini lokuthola imisebenzi nokwakiwa kwezindlu.*<sup>548</sup>

(... endorse unnecessary and irritating provisions, but it is to ensure that only legal residents settle in Mkhumbane. The primary right should be for the legal residents of the area, and they should not compete for opportunities with residents of other areas in their home yard.... If the authorities were not using pass laws, it would have caused unnecessary difficulty ... The community should thoroughly analyse such laws because it protects their interests, especially in job opportunities and building of their housing schemes).

Schaffer's speech did not go down well with the raucous crowd, especially the statement that the government was on their side. The construction of the new housing scheme in KwaMashu that led to forced removals and the numerous restrictions on the brewing and usage of traditional beer caused residents to regard the government as their adversary. One of the speakers who took to the podium after Schaffer, David Cele, a local resident, spoke out against the burning of local property but seemed to suggest that the community should cause upheaval in Durban's West Street, the street in the CBD reserved for Whites. The authorities promptly relieved him of the microphone, which incensed the crowd who demanded that Cele should be allowed to continue with his speech.<sup>549</sup> They only quietened down when he was allowed to continue.

In late 1959, a Government Gazette was issued stating that persons of colour, the so-called 'other,' were allowed to buy traditional beer from the beer halls and consume it at home. The restrictions were not wholly lifted as permission and scale still appeared in the list of prerequisites. According to a report in *UmAfrika*:

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<sup>547</sup> 'Sebuzogaywa Utshwala Bomdabu EmaLokishini', *UmAfrika*, 31 October 1959, 1.

<sup>548</sup> 'AmaPhoyisa Akunakubahlupha Abantu Ngotshwala eMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 September 1959, 3.

<sup>549</sup> 'AmaPhoyisa Akunakubahlupha Abantu Ngotshwala eMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 September 1959, 3.



*Lemithetho emisha ngotshwala bomdabu iyavuma ukuba umuntu nxa ephethe imvume elotshiweyo athengelwe ngotshwala laphaya ematsheni kodwa kungeqi emagalaneni amane uma buzophuzwa umuntu oyedwa.*<sup>550</sup>

(The new laws on Bantu beer allowed for one to buy liquor at the beer halls provided that an authorised permit is produced. A maximum of four gallons were allowed to be consumed by one person).

This applied to individual consumption, whereas in the case of an event (*umcimbi*) the host was allowed to purchase more liquor provided that written permission was produced. The amended provisions gave the host the right to reserve admission and evict any person who disrupted the event. Bourquin was of the opinion that the new laws were a step in the right direction. Nomadiphu stated that this brewing mode was brought to Mkhumbane by people employed at the brewing companies in the city. These 'brands' were given various names in order to hide their meaning from the police. The names included *gavini*, *maconsana* and *izingodo*.<sup>551</sup> *Gavini*, *sishimeyane* and cannabis were the main intoxicants which attracted arrest. As Nomadiphu puts it - "it was a *prima facie* case of arrest if one was found with these three" (*kwakwaziwa kahle nje ukuthi uyisiboshwa uma uke watholakala uphetho lezinto*).<sup>552</sup>

## Conclusion

The immediate cause of the Beer Hall riots was a police liquor raid 'to stop people brewing their own beer, forcing them to buy a brew manufactured by the Durban municipality'<sup>553</sup> Another cause was differential application of the law, as in some areas 'domestic brewing was permitted while others were not'.<sup>554</sup> Increased liquor raids predated the riots in the area, and such raids triggered the beer hall riots in 1959. Women's struggle in Mkhumbane spread to women in other areas in Natal and KwaZulu in both rural and urban areas.<sup>555</sup> Unlike in 1949, there was no official Commission of Inquiry into the causes of the protests. They were the result of a combination of numerous grievances over the control of liquor production and sale by the authorities and Africans' right to be in the city. Police raids were only a spark for the riots; the actual grievances were deep-seated and of long standing. Nonetheless, 'nobody was prepared for the outburst,' and the authorities were even less prepared for 'the huge wave of unrest and demonstrations' that quickly spread across the province.<sup>556</sup> The women had come from rural areas and other areas on the periphery of the city to find jobs in Durban, and brewing and selling liquor became

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<sup>550</sup> 'Utshwala Bomdabu Sebuzothengwa Ematsheni Buphuzelwe Emakhaya', *UmAfrika*, 31 October 1959, 1.

<sup>551</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 8.

<sup>552</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 9.

<sup>553</sup> Praveen Naidoo, 'Curse of Cato Manor', *Daily News*, 12 September 1994.

<sup>554</sup> Magubane *et al.*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 105.

<sup>555</sup> Sibongiseni Mkhize. Durban Local History Museum, Compiled for Nhlanhla Mtaka for use in the media pack for Mkhumbane Cultural Festival.

<sup>556</sup> Walker, *Women and Resistance*, 231.

their livelihood. Through their a victory, says Nomadiphu, the women of Mkhumbane made their mark as members of the "community" and forced men to recognise their contribution.<sup>557</sup>

The anger and underlying problems remained, and the following chapter examines the grisly murder of policemen in January 1960.

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<sup>557</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 15.

## Chapter Five

### Mkhumbane kills policemen: 24 January 1960

The volatile atmosphere in Mkhumbane persisted for the remainder of 1959 and culminated in the killing of nine policemen on 24 January 1960. The policemen went to work that morning like any other day, not knowing that it would go down as one of the most talked-about incidents of South Africa's twentieth-century urban protest history. Brigadier Hennie Heymans, a policeman at Cato Manor, said in January 1960:

On a lazy, hazy, warm Sunday afternoon, a squad of policemen was at work. Never did they think for one moment that they would become "famous" in their death. Yes, when they came on duty, like thousands of policemen before then and like the police are still doing today. They were inspected, produced their appointments and equipment, lectured to, and posted to their duties. They were clean, sober, and fit for duty. For the first time in our history, and so far the last time in our history, nine police force members were to die! They died a horrible death!<sup>558</sup>

This chapter provides a detailed account of the police killings in 1960. While these killings are mentioned in several studies, none go into the depth that this chapter does, possibly because events were overtaken by the Sharpeville killings in March. While the details in this chapter may be too graphic for some readers, this is done deliberately because of the importance of these killings in the broader story of anti-apartheid protests, especially those centred around Durban. The court case raises important questions about how the testimonies of witnesses changed, possibly under duress from police; witnesses were caught between protecting their community members and facing the retribution of police; divisions within the community about the attitude to police, as well as about memory, recollections and the reliability of evidence. The testimony of witnesses also showed the centrality of beer drinking in African urban culture.

The incident also pointed to a certain naivety amongst police considering that such a small number went into a large concentration of township residents. Police brutality would become rampant as the decade wore on. The testimonies also suggest that African policemen enjoyed a certain level of respect in their communities at this point; this, too, would change dramatically by the 1980s.

The killings and the court case that followed took place in a volatile national political atmosphere. March 1960 marked the launch of an international movement to boycott South African goods. The Congress Alliance called for a three-month boycott of celebrations to mark 50 years of the Union of South Africa

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<sup>558</sup> Brig Hennie Heymans, "1960-01-24: Massacre of Police at Cato Manor: a Subjective View", Available at <https://www.radiofreesouthafrica.com/1960-01-24-massacre-police-cato-manor-subjective-view/>. Accessed 26 June 2017.

on 31 May 1910. The first week of March saw hundreds of Black South Africans protest outside the Durban City Hall where the Group Areas Board was holding hearings. The apogee of anti-apartheid protest was the PAC's decision to hold an anti-pass rally at Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. More than 60 African demonstrators were murdered by the police. Did the murder of their fellow police in Durban impact the action of police, albeit subconsciously, in Sharpeville? It may well have been at the back of their minds

The apartheid state banned public meetings on 24 March, declared a state of emergency on 30 March, and outlawed the ANC and PAC on 8 April 1960. This was followed by the arrest of more than 2 000 peoples countrywide. The *New Age* newspaper, which was an important source of news about Black South African political activity, was banned in early April 1960. Later in the year, White South Africans voted in a referendum on 5 October 1960 to become a republic. This is the wider national and international canvas against which to view local events at Mkhumbane.

Since residents received notices of (Group Areas) removals from Cato Manor in a staggered manner, this fuelled a tense day-to-day atmosphere in the area. Although there were incidents of resistance before the killings, they were dealt with without major incident. It is important to note that there was a gradual build-up to the killings of 24 January. According to municipal records:

On 8<sup>th</sup> January 1960, Durban's Municipal Department of Bantu Administration issued removal notices to the occupants of 100 shacks at Cato Manor's Ezinkawini. Departmental officials found that these notices were not better received than those of the previous February, and they were informed that removals would be as strongly resisted.<sup>559</sup>

Despite signs of burgeoning resistance, the police continued with their raids. Evidence of an aggressive community was evident on the day before the killings. When the police performed a routine raid on 23 January to combat criminality in the area, a group of residents belligerently attacked them. According to police files, this police contingent was 'unexpectedly attacked by a crowd of aggressive people' and had to withdraw from the area.<sup>560</sup> Oblivious of the importance of brewing and hatred of the raids, the police underplayed the incident and returned the following day, 24 January, to search for illegal brewers.

*UmAfrika's* 30 January 1959 issue reported on the killings on its front page, offering different perspectives. The newspaper reported that the incident that left nine policemen dead happened on the afternoon of Sunday, 24 January, in an area known as Mgangeni section. It stated that:

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<sup>559</sup> Ladlau, L.K. "Cato Manor Riots, 1959-60", unpublished MA thesis, University of Natal, 1976, 92.

<sup>560</sup> SAPS Museum File 667-29/2/1B- 6/14-1

*Lokhu amaphoyisa abengamashumi amabili nambili ngesikhathi kusuka isibhelu, kuphume ngesamagundane ayishumi nambili kuohela, okulimale kuwo amabili. Amaphoyisa amathathu kulana afileyo amHlophe abesemancane ngoba abe neshumi nesishiyagalolunye iminyaka yobudala kanti elesine belikade liqeda amashumi amabili khona ngoMgqibelo nje ...*<sup>561</sup>

(The police officials numbered twenty-two, of whom twelve were able to escape, although two were injured. Three of the butchered White policemen were of the young age of nineteen while the other White policeman had just celebrated his twentieth birthday on Saturday, 23 January).

*Ilanga LaseNatal* cited different numbers:

*Icala abathweswe lona ngelokuthi ngomhlaka January 24 babengabanye babantu abahlasela amaphoyisa angu 14 ayehamba efuna utshwala eMkhumbane, aMhlophe engu 4, elinye lomuntu kunguSayitsheni.*<sup>562</sup>

(The accused are charged because on 24 January, they were part of a mob that attacked 14 policemen who were raiding Mkhumbane in search of illicit liquor. Four of the policemen were White while one of the African policemen was a Sergeant).

### **The events of 24 January 1959: Causes**

On 24 January, when the sun was up, 24 policemen, seven White and 17 African, performed liquor raids without incident. When the sun set, however, another contingent of 18 policemen went on patrol. Little did they know that they were stepping on a ticking time bomb. There have been numerous oral interpretations and print reports about the events on that day. Rowley Arenstein, a staunch member of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) until its banning and who remained an activist lawyer even though he was banned, vividly recounted the killings on 24 January:

A policeman stepped back and stood on a woman's toe, and she screamed. And the policeman turned around, saw he was on her toe and got off her toe and started to walk away. And the crowd started to shout at this policeman, "Apologise! Apologise!" And this white policeman just ignored them so now the crowd began to follow them ... shouting, "Apologise! Apologise, Apologise!"<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> 'Abantu Bawabulele Ngezandla Amaphoyisa EMkhumbane. Kufe Ayisihiyagalolunye', *UmAfrika*, 30 January 1960, 3.

<sup>562</sup> 'Selisemajajini Elokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

<sup>563</sup> Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 26. Arenstein's profile is briefly discussed in Chapter one. Born in 1919, he was well known as an attorney, trade union advisor, a personal advisor to Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and a member of the SACP. He was banned in 1953 for being involved in organising opposition to apartheid. He was very influential and had a rich background in South African politics. He died in Durban in 1996.

The version that it all started with a policeman stepping on a woman's foot was embedded in the popular consciousness. When the constable stepped on her foot, the woman from 'one of the shebeens' screamed so loudly that her:

... shouts drew the attention of locals who charged the policemen. The police were forced to take refuge in two adjacent huts, but the angry crowd, which reportedly numbered close to 1 000, broke the doors, killing nine officers, including five black police officers who were stoned and hacked to death.<sup>564</sup>

Ladlau corroborates this version by quoting the Supreme Court judgement and cross-examination of Constable Biyela:

Walking past a crowd of drunken shack dwellers who had just witnessed the arrest of four of their number, Constable Biyela accidentally trod on the foot of a female bystander. He apologised to her, but she immediately turned on him, shouting and hurling abuse.<sup>565</sup>

The official police version also noted that this incident was the trigger:

While searching for a shebeen, Constable Msomi accidentally stepped on a woman's foot. She screamed and demanded an apology. Constables Joubert and Biyela, who were also present, immediately apologised on his behalf. The woman, however, was still yelling despite the apology. When the small group of policemen left her yard, she followed them into the street and threw a bottle at them. She allegedly shouted that the policemen should be beaten up and killed. Her yelling attracted other people's attention, who began surrounding the policemen and pelted them with stones.<sup>566</sup>

Mrs Maphumulo knew the policemen:

*Ngawabona kodwa amaphoyisa sasiwazi onke, elinye laliqashe kwami impela elinguBiyela ngalibona selinezingozi. Basinda bona amanye ashona, eqeleni lapha ayedudulelwa khona phansi emfuleni.*<sup>567</sup>

(I saw the police, and I knew all of them. One of them rented space in my house and was known as Biyela. He managed to survive, and some were killed on the outer fields where they were thrown into the river).

Of those who died, only Sergeant Kufakwezwe Buhlalu and Constable Jeza were buried in Mkhumbane. *UmAfrika* reported the latter's surname as Jesa while *Ilanga LaseNatal* reported him as Jeza. Others who resided in the area, such as Constable Mfanazethu Dlodla, were buried in the areas they came from before

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<sup>564</sup> 'Sharpeville and the Story of Cato Manor', available at <https://amandladurban.org.za/sharpeville-and-the-story-of-cato-manor/>. Accessed 4 January 2020.

<sup>565</sup> Ladlau, "Cato Manor Riots". 94. Ladlau references Supreme Court Records. Manor 158, Judgment, 2789 and the evidence of Constable Biyela at 185 in the same court document.

<sup>566</sup> SAPS Museum File 667-29/2/1B- 6/14-1.

relocating to Mkhumbane. The story of police being thrown into the river was never corroborated, showing how one incident can have many interpretations. In pieces of evidence throughout the case, some mentioned waterless gorges. The police version is that reinforcements were called to the area only to find the ‘bodies of nine young policemen who had been stoned and hacked to death.’ Some of the police, as Biyela mentioned, were from the area and one is left with the question of what kind of relationship the officers had with community members when off duty. Were they respected, and was this a case of “mob violence” taking over?

Newspaper reports noted that Buhlalu and Jeza’s funerals were well attended by community members and the police who performed traditional police salutes and a procession, led by Sergeants, who carried the caskets to the graveyard. Major van der Merwe spoke on behalf of the police, and in his moving speech, said:

*Thina sonke balapha esiteshini samaphoyisa saKwaKito izinhliziyu zethu zidabukile. Ngisho thina sonke esingamaphoyisa amhlophe namnyama. Lamaphoyisa afileyo namhlanje afele emsebenzini wawo. Lento thina maphoyisa iyasithokozisa kakhulu indlela abahambe ngayo lapha emhlabeni. Siyaziqhenya kakhulu ngalamaphoyisa afileyo. Ukudabuka kwezinhliziyu zethu kufana nokwenu zihlobo zamaphoyisa afileyo. Lobo buhlungu neminjunju okusezinhliziyweni zenu nakithina futhi kunjalo.*<sup>568</sup>

(The police force members, Africans and Whites, working at Kito are very saddened by what happened. The deceased police died on duty. It saddens us that they died on duty. We are very proud of our deceased colleagues. The grief and pain in our hearts are no different from the ones felt by your hearts).

The funeral was attended by a large multi-racial crowd, partly because two of the policemen, Buhlalu and Jesa, resided in Mkhumbane, and it was the site of the incident. Members of the Kito Police Station and many residents flocked to the funeral to grieve with the deceased’s families and relatives. There was also a lot of reaction from community members. One report mentioned a woman fainting on seeing the. Those nearby splashed water on her face while others prayed for her, pronouncing ‘*phuma moya omubi*’ (‘the evil spirit should exit you’).<sup>569</sup>

A man was heard asking, ‘why people have so much antagonism against the police because they protect the community?’ He was answered by another who said that ‘the thing is that the police were given wicked rights of violently waking people up while they are asleep.’ The person added that, without such harassment, *abantu babengeke bawazonde amaphoyisa* (‘people would not have hated the police’). The

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<sup>568</sup> ‘Usizi Emngcwabeni WamaPhoyisa’, *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 15.

<sup>569</sup> ‘Usizi Emngcwabeni WamaPhoyisa’, *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 15.

problem, continued the unnamed person, is that most of the police today are young, and look now it is regrettable they are dead. On top of that, however, people would not stand to be woken up by police at night.<sup>570</sup> Hatred of police was often expressed in communities. In March 1960, the Durban Court heard a case of assault where Rene van der Merwe and Raymond Francois Vester were accused of beating a policeman, Zacharia Nkabinde, on 24 December 1959. Nkabinde, who was on his way to report for duty, said his sin was to greet them when they were sitting on a veranda in Umbilo Road, Durban.<sup>571</sup> It was not clear whether the beating was connected to racism or another other motive. What is striking in this testimony is the accusation of the police ‘waking people up while they are asleep’. This suggests that residents wanted minimal interference in their lives. At the same time, the fact that some people noted the protection provided to the community and the large attendance, attests that not everybody opposed the police.

It is worth noting that while Ladlau stated that Constable Biyela stepped on the woman’s foot, the police version has it as Constable Msomi. Either way, the police were forced to flee the scene to escape the angry crowd. According to Rowley Arenstein, the police ran ‘to a hut for protection, and the crowd gathered around the hut and as far as I remember they set the hut alight and the policemen had to run out, and a number of them were killed.’<sup>572</sup> ‘Armed with sticks, rocks, and pangas’, the residents, who were estimated to number around 800, broke the windows and doors of the huts and pelted the police with rocks and iron bars.<sup>573</sup> Ladlau estimated the attacking ‘drunken mob’ as comprising of several thousand.<sup>574</sup>

Appearing in court during the week of 14 to 18 March, Esther Mkhize testified that:

*Iphoyisa uBiyela lanyathela uBeatrice Mokoena onyaweni. Uthi-ke lona iphoyisa leli labuye lamshaya ngempama uBeatrice, khona lapho iphoyisa loMlungu lambamba uBiyela lambuyisela eceleni lithi abaqhubeke. Kwathi lapho esehamba amaphoyisa uBeatrice wabelokhu ewalandela amaphoyisa ebuza ukuthi uBiyela umshayelani, khona lapho kwabe sekulandela ngemumva kwamaphoyisa isixuku sabantu, saqala ukuwashaya ngamatshe maphoyisa.*<sup>575</sup>

(The policeman, Biyela, stepped on Beatrice Mokoena’s foot. The policeman also slapped her in the face, and he was eventually intercepted by a White policeman who told Biyela that they should continue with the routine. When the police stepped back to leave, Beatrice followed them, shouting

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<sup>570</sup> ‘Usizi Emngcwabeni WamaPhoyisa’, *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 15.

<sup>571</sup> ‘Bashaya Iphoyisa Ngoba Libabingelela’, *UmAfrika*, 5 March 1960, 1.

<sup>572</sup> Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 26. Rowley Arenstein was part of the defence team for some of those charged with the killings. He stated that the police were furious with him for ‘disloyalty’ for defending Africans, but he would respond: ‘it is part of the whole fight against apartheid’. He represented many of the accused during the pre-trial at the Cato Manor Magistrates Court between March and April 1960, but did not feature in the main trial between 1 August and 22 December 1960.

<sup>573</sup> SAPS Museum File 667-29/2/1B- 6/14-1.

<sup>574</sup> Ladlau, “Cato Manor Riots”, 94.

<sup>575</sup> ‘Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane’, *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.



why Biyela attacked her. By that time, the residents followed the police and started throwing stones at them).

However, in his testimony in court, Biyela disagreed with the statements that *iphoyisa lomlungu lambuyisela eceleni kwaba Ilona elinxesezela uBeatrice* (a White policeman took him to the side and apologised on his behalf) *nokuthi yena wamshaya uBeatrice* (and that he hit Beatrice).<sup>576</sup> During the trial, Constable Bhulose testified that the White policeman was G.J. Joubert, and there was also a Dlodla who pleaded with the woman on behalf of Biyela.<sup>577</sup>

During court proceedings from 21 to 25 March Constable Biyela took the witness stand and confirmed that *uthuli lwezichwe lwasuka ngemva kokuba esenyathele uBeatrice Mokoena* (the fracas started after he had pressed against Beatrice Mokoena's foot).<sup>578</sup> Biyela also stated that he apologised to Beatrice, but his attempts were ignored as she continued to rant, thus drawing the attention of others in the community. He testified that when he and his colleagues went back to the road, many people began throwing stones at them, including children whom he tried to apprehend. Biyela added:

*... ngenkathi egxosha izingane uBeatrice waqhamuka khona lapho wacosha utho phansi wajikijela ngalo ememeza ethi 'washayeni amaphoyisa'. Uthi-ke uBiyela kwaba yima kumkhanyela kahle ukuthi kanti sebeyashaywa ngempela manje, lapho uthi amatshe ayeseqhamuka kuwo wonke amacala. Uthi-ke uBeatrice wagijima njalo ngomgwaqo waze wayoma phambi kwabo okwathi mayephambi kwabo wakhuzisa isaga wathi 'Afrika'.*<sup>579</sup>

(... when Biyela chased the children, that was when Beatrice appeared to pick up something on the ground and pelted the police, shouting 'attack the police'. Biyela said that it was then that he realised that they were being attacked as stones were thrown at them from all sides. Biyela said Beatrice ran down the road and stood in front of the police and shouted a hymn 'Africa').

During the main trial, which started in August 1960, Biyela testified on 4 August that the police entered Mkhumbane through Road Four (also known as Khumalo Road). He said that they were doing their daily routine search for illicit liquor and checking passes in Shumville. Biyela said that he saw a large crowd near a house where four people had been arrested for possession of illicit liquor or relating to identity documents. While he was trying to gain entry he inadvertently pressed against the foot of a woman and

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<sup>576</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14

<sup>577</sup> 'Icala Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa, *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 2.

<sup>578</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

<sup>579</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

immediately apologised.<sup>580</sup> The woman, continued Biyela, followed him *ithetha imemeza njengomuntu oluhlanya* (shouting like an insane person). Children who were sitting on a wall threw stones at them.<sup>581</sup>

*Ilanga Lase Natal*'s issue dated 30 January 1960 provided an eyewitness account of the killings:

*Amaphoyisa acishe abengu 6 ahlanganyelwe ngaBantu ababalelwa kuma 500 ngaseNewclare emva kokuba kuboshwe inkosikazi yomuntu. Abaleke azivalela endlini lapho kuthelwa khona u3d ngosuku. Izigqumbi zaBantu behlome ngamatshe nemishiza kanye nezinkemba bashaye izindlu lezo zikathayela zaze zabhoboka. Abanye bangenele ngezimbazo umnyango womunye umuntu waze wavuleka, base betheleka phakathi abantu sebewavimbezela amaphoyisa. Ngalesikhathi kuphume elinye lomLungu abalishaya laze layolala ngasemgwaqweni. Noma selilele phansi balithelekela khona kunjalo lafela khona lapho. Amaphoyisa ansundu amabili, uSamuel Rhuba waseGoli noClement Msomi, baphuma ngesamagundane kuleyondlu kanti baphuma nje nansi inqola yamaphoyisa isifika nayo, kwaba ukusinda kwabo lokho. Elinye iphoyisa kuzwakala ukuthi alaziwa ukuthi lashonaphi. Emva kokuba kuphele isibhelu lesi kuzwakele ukuthi amaphoyisa afele ezindaweni ezahlukene, amanye aye afela ngaphansi esiwini. Kubuye kwatholakala ukuthi ngesikhathi ibambene kwadutshulwa omunye wesifazane inhlamvu yangena emlonyeni kuyena.*<sup>582</sup>

(Approximately 500 Black people near Newclare circled about six policemen after a man's wife had been arrested. The mob, which was armed with stones, sticks, and axes, broke down the metal shack. The other mob broke down a person's home with axes and attacked the police. While this was happening, a White policeman tried to escape. They beat him and dragged him to the road where the mob beat him to death. The two Black constables, Samuel Rhuba from Johannesburg and Clement Msomi, came running from that hut, and to their good fortune, the police vehicle had arrived; they survived. The other police's whereabouts were reported unknown. After the fracas it was heard that the other officers died in different sites; some died underneath the rock cliff. It was also reported that in the midst of the brawl, one woman was hit by a bullet that entered her mouth).

*UmAfrika* had another version of what transpired on the day:

*Kungathi okuyikhona kususe uthuli lwezichwe yisidumbu sikaMthembu wakhona laphaya eMgangeni okuthe ngezithuba zawo-5 ntambama kwafika amaphoyisa ezobheka ukuthi uMthembu ubulewe yini. Amaphoyisa amathathu abelapho. Kuthe-ke lapho amaphoyisa efika abahlobo bakamufi bawatshena ukuthi kawahambe akusiyona lena indaba eqondene nawo. Kuthe esalokhu ethatha amazwi obufakazi (izitatimende), baqala abantu babuthana kwabonakala ukuthi sekukubi manje kukhona asebefuna ukukwenza. Njengokujwayelekile abekhona laphaya eMkhumbane kusukela ngemva kwedina enza*

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<sup>580</sup> 'Icala LamaPhoyisa Emkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 13 August 1960, 14 and 'Kufakaza Intombazana Ecaleni Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 1.

<sup>581</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

<sup>582</sup> 'Kufe Amaphoyisa ayi 10 Esibhelwini eMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatali*, 30 January 1960, 2.

*wona umsebenzi wawo owejwayelekile. Kuthe-ke ngezithuba zawo-5.30 ntambama abesebuyela kwaKito ayothulula iziboshwa ezingamashumi amabili. Ngesikhathi esebuya isibili abesehunguka aba ngamashumi amabili nambili. Yingayoke lenkathi lapho okuthiwa abahlobo bakamufi uMthembu bameme abanye abantu khona lapho babuthana esikhulu isinyokotho baqonda ngqo kuwo amaphoyisa esebuya isibili, bakhwela bazehlela ngezinduku, ngocelemba namatshe.*<sup>583</sup>

(What is believed to have caused the scene was the corpse of Mr Mthembu. At around 5 pm, three policemen came to enquire about the death of Mthembu. Upon their arrival, the deceased's relatives informed the police that they should go as they did not need their interference. While the police were taking statements, people started to gather, and it was clear that the people wanted to react. The police had been at Mkhumbane all afternoon doing their frequent routine raids. At around 5.30pm, the police returned to Kito [Cato Manor Police Station] with 20 residents who had been arrested during the raid. Twenty-two police then came back to Mkhumbane. Upon their return, the deceased's relatives called members of the community who gathered and attacked the police with sticks, axes, and stones).

While this interpretation of what happened is different from the narrative of the policeman stepping on a woman's foot, the latter was the most widely accepted.

There was a wider sense of frustration as these killings occurred around the time that Mkhumbane residents were resisting forced removals. Amidst this tense situation, as well as high levels of unemployment in the country and rural unrest over the proposed Bantustan scheme, the obstinate local state carried out its liquor raids with regularity. Ladlau writes that although the municipality which made the decisions kept a 'low profile' in the area, the police were very visible in conducting their 'unpopular raiding duties there'.<sup>584</sup> In the aftermath of the attack, around '500 people were taken to the police station for interrogation' while a 'substantial number of weapons were confiscated'.<sup>585</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> 'Abantu Bawabulele Ngezandla Amaphoyisa EMkhumbane. Kufe Ayisihiyagalolunye', *UmAfrika*, 30 January 1960, 3.

<sup>584</sup> Ladlau, "Cato Manor Riots", 92.

<sup>585</sup> Molefe, "Leisure and the making of KwaMashu", 26.

## AFELA LAPHA YINI?

Nanso-ke indlu eseShumville eMkhumbane eThekwini eyaziwa ngokuthi kwaTiki. Yikhona-ke lapha kuthiwa kwatholakala khona izidumbu zamaphoyisa ezifile ngesikhathi kusuka isidumo esikhulu phakathi kwabantu namaphoyisa laphaya eMkhumbane mhla ku-24 kuJanuary nonyaka. Lendlu bese isele yodwana njena, zonke ezinye zadilizwa. Yona yasala yalinda icala ukuba lingene enkantolo. Nempela-ke inkantolo kade ihambele khona ngolwesibili eledlule, iyozibonela ngamehlo igazi eliphakathi endlini nokuthi izidumbu zatholakala zilelephi zehlukene kangakanani. Funda umbiko wecala.



The barrack at KwaTiki, Shumville, where some of the police were killed.

*UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960<sup>586</sup>

The number of casualties among residents is not clear from newspaper reports after the incident but *UmAfrika* reported two. A woman, Dora Mzimela was reported to have been shot by a stray bullet that grazed her throat. *UmAfrika* interviewed her unnamed partner, who said that he heard gunshots and people making a noise and went outside his house to see what was happening, only for his partner to be hit by a bullet, and he found her lying on the ground. The woman was taken to King Edward Hospital. *UmAfrika* also reported that one Paulos Khaka saw many people gathered at Dennis Shepstone Road while he was on board an Indian-owned bus. He got off to see what the gathering was about, only to meet an angry mob. When he realised that the situation was tense, he left the mob and heard a gunshot to find that a

<sup>586</sup> Title: Afela lapha yini? (Did the police die here?).

Caption: Nanso-ke indlu eseShumville eMkhumbane eThekwini eyaziwa ngokuthi kwaTiki. Yikhona ke lapha kuthiwa kwatholakala khona izidumbu zamaphoyisa ezifile ngesikhathi kusuka isidumo esikhulu phakathi kwabantu namaphoyisa laphaya eMkhumbane mhla ku-24 kuJanuary nonyaka. Lendlu bese isele yodwana njena, ezinye sezadilizwa. Yona yasala yalinda icala ukuba lingene enkantolo. Nempela-ke inkantolo kade ihambele khona ngolwesibili eledlule, iyozibonela ngamehlo igazi eliphakathi nokuthi izidumbu zatholakala zilelephi zehlukene kangakanani.

(Caption: This is a house in Shumville, Mkhumbane, in Durban which is known as Tiki [Tickey]. It is in this house that it was reported that the dead bodies of police officers were found in Mkhumbane on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January this year [1960]. While other houses were destroyed, this one was not. It waited for the commencement of the court proceedings. The court officials visited the place last week Tuesday, to inspect the blood and the location and distance in between the corpses).

bullet had hit him on the side. He fell but managed to crawl to the Cato Manor Police Station (Kito), where he was taken by ambulance to hospital.<sup>587</sup>

Although not as widely reported as the police killings, some Mkhumbane residents who clashed with the police also died. *UmAfrika* reported the death of one person. Mgwazeni Ngcamu was reported to have been shot by a bullet that judge T.J.F. Henchie concluded came from a police gun. Case investigator Daniel Wessels told the court that he was satisfied that the bullet which was retrieved from Ngcamu's body '*ifana nayo yevolovolo elisetshenziswa amaphoyisa*' (was similar to one of the guns used by police).<sup>588</sup> It was not revealed whether or not the policeman who discharged the lethal bullet was summoned to court.

The angry protestors went on the rampage as they marched down the street and attacked everything in sight. One of the casualties was Lawrence Zwane, a local businessman who owned buses and a shop in Mkhumbane. The *Ilanga* eyewitness account reads:

*Umuzi kaMnuz. Lawrence Zwane usinde ngenkulu inhlanhla le, ngokuba uyocasha kwaKito (emaphoyiseni). UMnuz. Zwane unesitolo eMkhumbane. Ubehamba ngemoto yakhe khona eMkhumbane ngesikhathi ehlangana neviyo laBantu elishaye imoto yakhe ngamakhulu amatshe lawa, ethi uphuthumisa umdidiyeli wamabhasi akwaKopeletsheni njengoba ibhasi lakhe bese befuna ukulishisa aBantu. Uthe esebuya bayinethisa ngamatshe imoto yakhe uZwane. Ulimele kanzima. Ufike wathola izwi ekhaya lokuthi sebefuna ukuwushisa umuzi wakhe. Waseke ewuthwala wonke ewusa khona kwaKito. Endleleni baphinde bayishaya imoto yakhe.*<sup>589</sup>

(Mr Lawrence Zwane survived by the skin of his teeth as he hid at *KwaKito* [Cato Manor Police Station, as Africans referred to it. Kito was derived from Cato]. Mr Zwane owns a shop at Mkhumbane. He was travelling in his car transporting the bus inspector to Durban Corporation as people were about to burn his bus when he was confronted by a mob who threw big stones at his car.. On his way back, the mob attacked his car. He was seriously injured. He received a report that his family was also on the verge of being attacked. He took his whole family to *KwaKito*. On his way to *KwaKito* his vehicle was attacked again).

It is not clear why Mr Zwane was attacked but judging from the July 2021 looting and rioting in KZN after former South African President Jacob Zuma was sent to jail, it seems that crowd violence takes on a momentum of its own and there is no logic to who is attacked. Many African-owned businesses were also destroyed in 2021.

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<sup>587</sup> 'Abantu Bawabulele Ngezandla Amaphoyisa EMkhumbane. Kufe Ayisihiyagalolunye', *UmAfrika*, 30 January 1960, 3.

<sup>588</sup> 'Owadutshulwa Ngamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 7 May 1960, 1.

<sup>589</sup> 'Kufe Amaphoyisa ayi 10 Esibhelwini eMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatali*, 30 January 1960, 2.

According to *UmAfrika*, the Cato Manor Police Station, referred to by the newspaper as Kito, received an emergency call at around 6 p.m. regarding the incident. Five policemen, three Whites and two Africans, were directed to attend the scene travelling through Dennis Shepstone Road. Upon arrival, the nine policemen had already been murdered. Due to their arrival, Constable Clement Msomi survived the attack and ran to board the police van. While trying to rescue Constable Msomi, the mob surrounded the police van and pelted it with stones. The White policemen driving the vehicle managed to reverse to safety and drove off.<sup>590</sup> Giving his testimony before the court in August Msomi told a slightly different version of what happened. He told the court that while they were under attack, he left the Tiki homestead while some of his colleagues were lying on the ground, already bruised from the attack.<sup>591</sup> During the first week of the case, the prosecutor confirmed that the police ran to hide in two houses at KwaTiki.<sup>592</sup> As Msomi left the house he was beaten but he was assisted by people he had never seen before, who took him into their home where he was picked up unconscious and the next thing he remembered was waking up in hospital.<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> 'Abantu Bawabulele Ngezandla Amaphoyisa EMkhumbane. Kufe Ayisihiyagalolunye', *UmAfrika*, 30 January 1960, 3.

<sup>591</sup> 'Icala Lokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 20 August 1960, 14.

<sup>592</sup> 'Icala Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 3.

<sup>593</sup> 'Icala Lokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 20 August 1960, 14



Sinibonisa lapho umfanekiso wendawo yaseMount Carmel, eMkhumbane lapho okufele khona amaphoyisa angu-9 ngenkathi elwa nabaNtu ngeSonto lomhla ka-24 kuJanuary ngezithuba zawo-7 kusihlwa, okungegazi elesabekayo kulendawo lamaphoyisa akade ebulawa futhi okuyilapho iqale ngakhona ukubambana yaye yadudulelana kulezindlu. Iqembu labaNtu leli elimile elimangele ngalendobakazi yokubulawa kwamaphoyisa.

(Caption: Shown in the picture is Mount Carmel, at Mkhumbane, where nine policemen died in a fight with residents on Sunday, 24 January at around 7 p.m. This is where there were massive blood spots when police were killed and it was in these houses that the attacks took place. Seen in the picture are residents who were stunned by the police killings). *UmAfrika*, 30 January 1960



Mrs Alice Ntombela, pictured outside her "house" where one unnamed policeman was murdered.  
*UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960

According to *UmAfrika*, Alice Ntombela, an elderly woman, said that she would only 'forget what she saw when she is dead.' She told the newspaper's journalist that she had regarded herself as old, 'but not today, because I have seen what I never saw'. Telling her side of the story Mrs Ntombela stated:

*Ngithe ngihlezi nje ngabona kuphonseka Abantu nephoyisa abanele bangena lalo belioxha, mina ngaphuma ngesegundane. Emva kwalokho ngithe ngibuyela endlini ngahlangabezana nephoyisa selifile sekugeleza igazi endlini.*<sup>594</sup>

(Whilst I was sitting in the house, within a blink of an eye, I saw a policemen being chased by people and he entered the house. I quickly jumped out. When I returned to the house, I was met with the body of the murdered policeman covered in blood that had dispersed in the house).

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<sup>594</sup> 'Ngoze Ngife Ngingakhohlwanga', *UmAfrika*, 30 January 1960, 3.



## UMUNYU NOSIZI EMKHUMBANE



NguNkosikazi Mazoba Mthemba lona ofelwe owakwakhe esidumweni samaphoyisa eMkhumbane. Umbiko uwuthole ngawo umSombuluko ekuseni kwase kuba ukuqala kwezinyembezi njalo.

Pictured is Maxaba Mthembu grieving for her husband. It is not clear which husband the newspaper was referring to because there was no mention of an Mthembu among the police who died during the attacks. The paper wrote *ofelwe owakwakho* (who lost a husband).

*UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960

Ibhosi kaKopeletsheni lena eshe yaba umlotha eMount Carmel eMkhumbane ngeSonto kusihlwa ngezithuba zawo-7, okuthe emva kwesiwombe sempi yamaphoyisa nabaNtu sekufe amaphoyisa angu-9, impi yabaNtu yasulela izandla zayo ebhazini kaKopeletsheni yashiswa; amanye futhi ashaywa nangamatshe.



Shown above is a Durban Corporation bus which was torched during the police attacks on 24 January 1960.

In its issue of 6 February 1960, *UmAfrika* published the names of the policemen who died on 24 January - Sergeant Kufakwezwe Buhlalu from Dundee, Paul Jesa from Mzumbi, Mazondo Nzuzwa from eShowe, Peni Mthethwa from Maphumulo, Mfanazethu Dlodla from eShowe, C.C. Kriel from Free State, Louis William Kunneka from Heidelberg and Hert Jacobus Joubert of Amsterdam in Transvaal.<sup>595</sup> The newspaper printed the names of the African policemen and wrote 'Whites' when listing the other four. Pictures of Dlodla, Nzuzwa, and Buhlalu were published on the front page. Dlodla was 39 years old and left behind a wife and three children. Nzuzwa had entered the police force in 1952 and also left behind his wife and three children. Buhlalu, the eldest of the policemen who died on the day, was 50 years old and had been in the police force for 25 years. He left behind a wife and four children.

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<sup>595</sup> 'Amagama AmaPhoyisa Afayo EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 1.



Pictures of Dladla, Nzunza and Buhlalu. *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960

According to a police magazine, the deaths of the policemen were ‘one of the worst tragedies of our Force.’<sup>596</sup> With this incident, resistance to forced removals continued, and the forced removal programme reached a standstill when a mob butchered these ‘nine policemen’.<sup>597</sup> *Ilanga LaseNatali* reported that this was ‘the first time in the country that such a large number of police were murdered while on duty’ (*kuyaqala ngalesibhelu ukuthi amaphoyisa afe kangaka esemsebenzini waso kuleli*).<sup>598</sup> *Ilanga LaseNatali* reported that a tenth policeman, a White constable, was confirmed dead at Addington Hospital:

*Kutholwe umbiko ekuseni ngoMsombuluko ukuthi elinye (eleshumi) ebolithuthelwe esibhedlela sabeLungu, e-Addington, ePoint, lifile emva kokuba belihlinzwa ngoba bekuzanywa ukusizwa lona liphile.*<sup>599</sup>

(A report was received on Monday that the tenth policeman who was admitted to the Whites-only hospital, Addington, in Point, died after an operation to save him).

*UmAfrika* reported that at the time the newspaper went to print, another White policeman who was said to be the victim of the attacks was reported to be in a critical condition in Addington Hospital.<sup>600</sup> However,

<sup>596</sup> ‘Port Natal’, *The Nonqai*, March 1960, 41.

<sup>597</sup> Jackson, ‘Cato Manor Revisited’, 26.

<sup>598</sup> ‘Kufe Amaphoyisa ayi 10 Esibhelwini eMkhumbane’, *Ilanga LaseNatali*, 30 January, 1960, 1.

<sup>599</sup> ‘Kufe Amaphoyisa ayi 10 Esibhelwini eMkhumbane’, *Ilanga LaseNatali*, 30 January 1960, 1-2.

<sup>600</sup> ‘Abantu Bawabulele Ngezandla Amaphoyisa EMkhumbane. Kufe Ayisihiyagalolunye’, *UmAfrika*, 30 January 1960, 3.

the death of the tenth policeman remains in doubt. On 6 February, *Ilanga Lase Natali* reported that four White constables and five African constables were killed (*amaphoyisa amane aMhlophe namahlanu aNsundu*)<sup>601</sup> and the official police statement listed nine policemen.<sup>602</sup> Print media reports corroborated that Biyela was one of the policemen who survived the massacre. *The Nongqai*, the official magazine of the South African Police, published in Natal, published the names of those killed and those who had escaped.<sup>603</sup>

One policeman, Constable Dlodla, who was known to almost every resident in Mkhumbane while working at Kito was known by his surname. Themba Ngcobo remembers that some of the law officials in the area included an investigator known as Mr Cele and a policeman known as Dlodla who arrested everyone indiscriminately (*owayewumseshi owayedumile uBaba uCele, kukhona iphoyisa okwakuthiwa uDlodla elalibopha noma ubani*).<sup>604</sup> When the interviewer asked Mrs Dube about the January 1960 police killings, the answer was already on the tip of her tongue as she assumed she was being asked about Dlodla. The conversation with Ngcobo unfolded thus:

*Interviewer: Kukhona amaphoyisa lawa okuthiwa ayebulawa eMkhumbane, uyalwazi udaba lwawo?*

*Ngcobo: ODlodla? Iphoyisa leli elalibopha wonke umuntu?*

*Interviewer: Ehhe.*

*Ngcobo: Uhluphe kakhulu emphakathini.*

*Interviewer: UDlodla wayeyiphoyisa lendawo?*

*Ngcobo: Wayeyiphoyisa lika hulumeni. Uyena owayekhathaza kakhulu impela, wayebopha kakhulu.*

*Interviewer: Ehlala eMkhumbane?*

*Ngcobo: Ehhe ehlala khona.*

*Interviewer: Kodwa ehlupha abantu bakhona?*

*Ngcobo: Ehhe, ela kwaKito.*

*Interviewer: Wabulawa yini, umphakathi?*

*Ngcobo: Wabulawa abantu nje, umphakathi.*

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<sup>601</sup> 'Amaphoyisa Asetshelwe Ukuba Aqinise Kakhulu Ekubhekeni Izinto eMkhumbane. Kuphume Isinqumo esivale imihlangano isikhathi esingamaSonto amane', *Ilanga Lase Natali*, 6 February 1960, 1.

<sup>602</sup> They were No 119702 2nd Class Sergeant K. Buhlalo; No 36446 Constable C.P.J.S. Rademan; No 35490 Constable G.J. Joubert; No 36496 Constable L.W. Kunneke; No 34624 Constable C.C. Kriel; No 133633 Constable P. Jeza; No 130543 Constable F. Dhludhlu; No 134706 Constable M. Nzuzza; and No 136349 Constable P. Mtetwa. SAPS Museum File 667-29/2/1B- 6/14-1.

<sup>603</sup> 'Constables C.C. Kriel, C.P.J.S. Rademan, G.J. Joubert, L.W. Kunneke, Bantu 2/Sergt. K. Buhlalo, B/Consts. F. Dhludhla, P. Jeza, M. Nzuzza and P. Mtetwa' were named as having suffered fatal injuries while those who made 'miraculous escapes were Const. A. M. Rheeder, B/Consts. Z. Msomi, M.B. Mhlongo, M. Biyela, B.S. Rhuba, M.R. Bulose and K. Biyela'. 'Port Natal', *The Nonqai*, March 1960, 40. The first volume of the magazine was published in March 1907. It was one of the oldest publications in the country spanning a period of 54 years. The monthly magazine was published in Pretoria and was the official organ of the SA Mounted Rifles, SA Police and SA Prisons Services. The name was changed when the police force was incorporated to form the South African Police after South Africa became a Republic in 1961. *Nongqai* is a Zulu word for people who provide security to the king.

<sup>604</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

Interviewer: *Hawu! Nase nikhathele uyena?*

Ngcobo: *Base bekhathele.*<sup>605</sup>

(Interviewer: Did you know any police officials killed at Mkhumbane?)

Ngcobo: Are you referring to Dlodla?

Interviewer: Did you know him?

Ngcobo: He was so troublesome.

Interviewer: Was Dlodla a police officer?

Ngcobo: He was a troublesome police officer.

Interviewer: He also stayed in Mkhumbane?

Ngcobo: Yes

Interviewer: But he harassed people from the area?

Ngcobo: Yes, he worked at Kito.

Interviewer: Did the community kill him?

Ngcobo: Yes.

Interviewer: Were the people tired of him?

Ngcobo: Yes).

A song was even written about Dlodla. During an interviews conducted by the researcher, Ngcobo and Mbatha sang: *Dlodla, Dlodla, unomlom'obomvu (Dlodla, Dlodla, you have red lips).*<sup>606</sup> Red lips were a sign that a person had consumed too much *gavini* – a potent, illegal home-brewed spirit, and Dlodla may have been brutal to locals when in this state.

About two weeks after the deadly fracas, *UmAfrika* journalists visited Mkhumbane and reported that there were many investigators and police were searching the area. The *UmAfrika* crew also visited the family of Sergeant Buhlalu. They found his wife covered in a blanket, a custom observed by a woman grieving her deceased husband or unmarried son, and his eldest son Moses whom the crew talked to. Moses showed the crew where:

*Izintatheli zakhonjiswa nalapho uSayitsheni Buhlalu bamfica khona abantu emhosheni eseqonde ngasekhaya lakhe. Khona lapho futhi ngezansi komuzi wakhe umufi kwafela elinye iphoyisa uPaul Jesa. Isidumbu sakhe satholwa khpna emgwaqweni sesilimele saphela saphihlizwa nangamatshe ikhanda lingasabonakali.*<sup>607</sup>

(The crew was shown where the residents reached and murdered Sergeant Buhlalu by a gorge, which was close to his home. The body of another policeman, Paul Jesa, was found a short distance from

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<sup>605</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 6 January 2020.

<sup>606</sup> Themba Ngcobo and Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

<sup>607</sup> 'Izidumo ZaseMkhumbane. Izintatheli Zo-UmAfrika Zihambele Khona', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 1.

Buhlalu's home. Jesa's body was found severely wounded on the road with his head stoned to the extent of being unrecognisable).

Speaking with the *UmAfrika* crew Buhlalu's wife said that she did not have:

*... impela angazi nje ukuthi ngizokwenzenjani ngoba kukhona nokuthi bafuna ukushisa nomuzi lona. Ngobusuku bangalo lelo Langa Abantu base befuna ukulishisa ikotishi. Ngalelo langa asilalanga lapha ekhaya, saya kolala emzini yomakhelwane.*<sup>608</sup>

(... a clue as to what to do as she had heard that the residents intended to burn the house. "On the day of the killings the residents wanted to burn our barrack. On that day we did not sleep here, but slept with neighbours").

Buhlalu's eldest daughter also spoke to *UmAfrika*. She stated that when she 'cried seeing her father being murdered and the community members chasing Jesa, another policeman', whom she did not know and who was carrying a knife, whispered to her: 'why are you crying? We do not weep for police here'. She said she then kept quiet. The family told the crew that the incident would forever remain in their memories.

When the police wanted Jesa, continued the Buhlalu family:

*Khona ngesikhathi besafuna iphoyisa uJesa, Abantu balikaka ikotishi lakwabo kwamnyama phansi. Uthi kwabakhona owayelokhu esho nje ukuthi lingenile lapho iphoyisa, alikaphumi. Bathi uJesa wayekade egijime waziphonsa ngaphakathi ekotishini yakwamufi uBuhlalu. Lapho-ke Abantu benza into yamehlo. Bawashaya amafasitele angina ngaphakathi ndawo zonke. Yilapho-ke uJesa aphuma khona ethi uyabaleka. Washo wazithela kubasobozeli. Bathi, nabo ababonanga ukuthi wawa nini uJesa. Baze babona njena esefile khona ngalapho agijime washona ngakhona.*<sup>609</sup>

(The residents surrounded our barrack, and someone continuously yelled that he saw him entering the barrack. Jesa had run and took cover at our father's barrack. Then people pelted windows with stones. It was then that Jesa came out and tried to run away. He was pelted and died while running).

The newspaper reported that when the Buhlalu family was discussing the day's events, they cried continuously. Both Buhlalu and Jesa were buried at Wiggins Road Cemetery in Mkhumbane.

Testifying in court during the 14 to 18 March court proceedings, Sergeant Buhlalu's daughter, Doris Buhlalu, 11, said that she saw a policeman running into their house. She initially thought it was her father but eventually realised it was another policeman, Paul Jesa. Someone with an axe was chasing the policeman. Doris said that she directed the policeman to the lounge where he took off his uniform. It was then that people began stoning the house. The police entered her elder sister's bedroom. A man wearing

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<sup>608</sup> 'Izidumo ZaseMkhumbane. Izintatheli Zo-UmAfrika Zihambele Khona', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 1.

<sup>609</sup> 'Izidumo ZaseMkhumbane. Izintatheli Zo-UmAfrika Zihambele Khona', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 1.

a white vest and black pants (the court heard that it was Abednego Manyoni) entered the house asking for the police, while others began hitting the door with sticks and axes. The young woman revealed that while Manyoni was searching and moving beds, he saw a tin full of money (40 pounds) and took it. The people searched the house, and when her brother arrived driving his father's car, the people screamed, 'here is the police's car,' referring to Buhlalu's vehicle. They stoned it, and it was at this moment that Jesa came out of the house, assuming that a police vehicle had come to rescue him. When he exited the house, a "Coloured" boy stabbed him in the stomach while another person hit him on the head. After finishing her testimony, the girl identified Thomas Nyembe and Manyoni as perpetrators. She was reported as crying.<sup>610</sup>

Sergeant Buhlalu's brother, Winfred Buhlalu, and Mrs Augustina Buhlalu also testified, corroborating Doris' testimony. Mrs Buhlalu repeated what she told *UmAfrika*, claiming that she was coming from church and was told what was happening by her eldest daughter. Mrs Buhlalu identified Manyoni as one of the perpetrators, and recounted that stones 'were pouring like rain' on her house. She repeated the version that Jesa went out of the house, and when her daughter screamed, one person threatened her with a knife.<sup>611</sup> Mrs Buhlalu broke down and was unable to finish her testimony.



#### NAZI IZIKHALI

Izikhali ezimbi lezi; izimolontshisi, awocelamba nezimbozo, nezinduku ezinezinsimbi namatshe esizithwebule esiteshini samaphoyisa KwaKito. Zonke lezi zikhali zibomvu igazi lokuphela izona okuthiwa zazisetshe-nziswa ekubulaleni amaphoyisa angu-9 empini yangeSonto lamhla ka-24 January. Kwesobunxele uMseshi uD/H/Cst. J. J. Van Rooyen noD/H/Cst. J. H. Malan ovathe isudi. Lapha babukisana ngalomhlola.

'Izidumo ZaseMkhumbane. Izintatheli Zo-UmAfrika Zihambele Khona', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 1<sup>612</sup>

<sup>610</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.

<sup>611</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.

<sup>612</sup> Caption: These are dangerous weapons: machetes, axes, sticks with iron bolts and stones photographed at Cato Manor Police Station. All these weapons have blood stains and it is suspected that they were used during the

*UmAfrika* reported that one of the policemen who survived the savage attack by the skin of his teeth was Benjamin Mhlongo, 29, who hailed from Hlabisa in Zululand. He had served three years as a policeman at Kito Police Station. The newspaper printed a photo of Mhlongo's facial wounds and it was alluded that he also had scars on his body from the attack. Mr Mhlongo was rushed to King Edward VII Hospital. The newspaper refers to KwaKhangela (Congella, where the hospital is located, a site near UKZN's Medical School). While in hospital, he received further sad news:

*Okudabukisayo kukaNjomane ukuthi uth e ngenkathi eselimele esesibhedlela kwaKhangela wathola umbiko wokuthi ingane yakhe isishonile ebilele khona esibhedlela sakwaKhangela iphethwe ukufa okuthiwa iKwashiyoko (kwashiokor).<sup>613</sup>*

(What was sad about Njomane (Mhlongo's clan name) was that while he was injured at King Edward Hospital (Khangela) he received the news that his child, who was hospitalised at the same hospital, had died from kwashiorkor).

Another policeman whose guardian angel was on his side was Abner Gamede, who hailed from Vryheid. Gamede was part of the police contingent that had taken the group of people arrested in the earlier liquor raid to Kito Police Station.<sup>614</sup> Fortunately,, he did not return to Mkhumbane with the other 22 police that were attacked.

Reginald Blose, a policeman at Kito, also survived the attack:

*Yena waphuma ngesamagundane ngempela. Wathi lapho ebona ukuthi ibhokile impi yabantu, wangena komunye umuzi wakhumula izingubo lezi zamaphoyisa wagqoka ezokuphola. Khona lapho wasengena kuwo umshungu wabantu abalwayo waphithizela nabo. Okuthe ngasemuva wahosheka waphikelela KwaKito emaphoyiseni eyohlaba umkhosi. Yathi iqabe ifinyelela ingqina yamaphoyisa khona eMkhumbane yafica ukuthi sekulele izidumbu phansi zamaphoyisa. Khona lapho kwasuka omkhulu umsebenzi emaphoyiseni eseqoqa izidumbu zamaphoyisa.<sup>615</sup>*

(He just escaped the wrath of the mob. When he realised that he was in a warzone, he sought cover and ran to a nearby house where he changed from his police uniform into casual wear that he found there. He went back to the mob and pretended to be one of them. He was eventually out of sight and went to report what was happening at the Kito Police Station. When the police contingent arrived at the scene, it found bodies lying on the ground. The police had to pick up their colleagues' corpses).

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murders of nine policemen on 24 January. On the left it D/H/Cst. J.J van Rooyen no D/H/Cst. C.H. Malan who is wearing a suit. They are looking at this scandal.

<sup>613</sup> *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 3. Congella is derived from *Khangela Amankengane* (watch the cannibals/vagabonds) which was one of King Shaka's homestead. King Edward VII Hospital was officially opened for the 'native' community in 1936.

<sup>614</sup> 'Unenhlanhla', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 3. The newspaper reported that these people were arrested because of the 'thing from underground' (*elaliboshelwe into yaphansi*). As discussed in previous chapters, this refers to home-brewed liquor that was brewed underground.

<sup>615</sup> 'Izidumo ZaseMkhumbane Ngokufa Kwamaphoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 3.



Given the above details, Blose can be regarded as a whistle-blower whose tactics worked to save the situation.

### Emergency, Arrests and Trial

After the incident, Mkhumbane became busy due to the police investigations. On Wednesday, 27 January 1960, heavily armed police in two Saracens accompanied the Durban Corporation team to continue the destruction of the barracks at Shumville, the scene of the killings<sup>616</sup>. Residents were subpoenaed to report to Cato Manor Police Station for questioning while police investigated the scene and other places where the incident took place. On 2 February 1960, Frans Christiaan Erasmus, Minister of Justice, declared a State of Emergency in Mkhumbane in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1946, which prohibited gatherings for four weeks. Funerals could only take place with a permit from the Durban Magistrate's Court.<sup>617</sup> The Minister decreed that armed police with Saracens would be present at Mkhumbane until the situation calmed down.



Police watching the destruction of barracks in Shumville on 10 January 1960.

*UmAfrika*, 13 January 1960, 1

<sup>616</sup> 'Kuqaliwe Ukudiliza Imizi EShumville Emkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 13 February 1960, 1.

<sup>617</sup> 'Ivaliwe Imibuthano EMkhumbane. Kuzophela Amasonto Amane', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 1.

## BAYASESHA EMKHUMBANE

Akungeni lutho alulimazayo ngaphakathi eMkhumbane naseChesterville njengoba nibona nje emfanekisweni. Lapho sisikhombisa amasosha namaphoyisa esesha imoto nebhasi. Impela alufakwa ngoba ngisho imoto ingena noma iphuma ibhekwa ngaphakathi nangaphansi komzimba wayo. Lokhu akumele ngezinyawo zombili amasosha namaphoyisa ngoba ngisho nasebusuku yikho.



*UmAfrika*, 23 April 1960

The above picture shows police and soldiers searching at the main entrance and exit point in Mkhumbane.

The newspaper caption read:

*Akungeni lutho alulimazayo ngaphakathi eMkhumbane naseChesterville njengoba nibona nje emfanekisweni. Lapho sisikhombisa amasosha namaphoyisa esesha imoto nebhasi. Impela alufakwa ngoba ngisho imoto ingena noma iphuma ibhekwa ngaphakathi nangaphansi komzimba wayo. Lokhu akumele ngezinyawo zombili amasosha namaphoyisa ngoba nasebusuku yikho.*<sup>618</sup>

(Entry of weapons is restricted in Mkhumbane and Chesterville, as shown in the picture. Soldiers and police are shown searching a vehicle and a bus. The search is intense as cars are searched in their interior and underneath at exit and entry points. Soldiers and police conduct the operation during the day and at night).

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<sup>618</sup> *UmAfrika*, 23 April 1960.

*UmAfrika* reported that not only vehicles, but all persons entering and exiting Mkhumbane and Chesterville were searched. The newspaper added that the soldiers who had pitched their tents around the area gave the car driver a form indicating that the vehicle had been searched. The driver's name and the vehicle's details were included so that law officials stationed in other parts of the city would know this.<sup>619</sup>

The killing of police in Mkhumbane attracted widespread attention, and the government instructed the legal authorities to act swiftly in bringing the perpetrators to book. It ordered a large contingent of policemen to raid and arrest suspects. Many men and women from Mkhumbane were arrested on suspicion of being involved in the killings. According to Rowley Arenstein, the police asked people: "You attacked the police?" and people would respond, "No, it wasn't us; it was John Rhodes or Peter Smith."<sup>620</sup> One of the first to be arrested was 39-year-old Phillip Ngubane, of K.U. 129 in Mkhumbane.<sup>621</sup> By the following Friday, 5 February, 31 people had been arrested.<sup>622</sup> Soon hundreds were in custody, but many were released due to a lack of evidence.<sup>623</sup>

After the killing of the policemen, Mkhumbane became the centre of attention, with the authorities maintaining law and order. Attention then shifted from the news reports and the murders to bringing the suspects before the law. Mkhumbane was occupied by the authorities who arrested suspects as well as delinquents of different kinds. Reporting on the second week after the killings, *UmAfrika* noted that:

*Sekuboshwe inqwaba yabantu khona endaweni yaseMkhumbane ngamacala ehlukeneyo. Abanye sebeboshwe namavolovolo, nawocelemba, nensangu kanti abanye abathelile nokuthela abanye abanazo nezimvume zokuhlala eThekwini. Bangingi futhi abaqoqwe ngecala lokubulala amaphoyisa. Kodwa kade belokhu besahlungwa ngabanye njalo.*<sup>624</sup>

(A lot of people have been arrested in Mkhumbane regarding several cases. Others have been found in possession of revolvers, machetes, and cannabis while others do not have urban permits. Others have been arrested in connection with police killings but are still being filtered).

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<sup>619</sup> *UmAfrika*, 23 April 1960.

<sup>620</sup> Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 26.

<sup>621</sup> 'Sebeyi 31 Abecala Lokubulala eMkheyi', *Ilanga LaseNatali*, 6 February 1960, 2.

<sup>622</sup> SAPS Museum File 667-29/2/1B- 6/14-1.

<sup>623</sup> *UmAfrika*, 30 April 1960, 1, reported that as the case entered its third week, 65 accused appeared in court, with four released due to a lack of evidence against them. This occurred throughout the course of the proceedings. *UmAfrika* also reported that the state prosecutor was Mr C. Reus whilst the defence was headed by Mr B. Fehler in place of R.I. Arenstein and V.J. Mathews who defended Africans in many cases. See *UmAfrika*, 30 April 1960, 1. For a brief profile of Arenstein and the reasons why he could not represent the accused, see Hennie Heymans, '1960-01-24: Massacre of Police at Cato Manor', available at <https://www.samirror.com/cato-manor-massacre.html>. Accessed various times between January and April 2020. Heymans calls Arenstein a 'champion of an African cause' who represented many people of African descent including those from Mkhumbane.

<sup>624</sup> 'Izidumo ZaseMkhumbane Ngokufa Kwamaphoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 3.

Within the first two weeks following the deadly fracas, 31 suspects were charged with the policemen's murder. They made an initial appearance before Judge E.W. Hyland at the Cato Manor Court located at the Cato Manor Police Station (Kito). Their case was postponed to Monday, 8 February. *UmAfrika* published the names of the suspects who were incarcerated at Kito and Sentela (Durban Central Police Station):

Emily Zulu, Florence Zulu, Francis Maphumulo, Philemoni Mkhize, Daniel Mthembu, Siphon Mthembu, Douglas Ntenza, Daniel Khuzwayo, Zwelabantu Zuma, Joseph Khanyile, Roy Hadebe, George Ndlovu, Nelson Thembela Magcaba, Kingsly Nyanda, Bernard Hadebe ... George Ntuli, John Madoda Ngcobo, Beatrice Mokoena, John Khwela, Emily Mbuli, Boyi Cele, Ngobeni Ngcongo, an unnamed 18-year-old teenager, Phillip Ngubane, Victor Nzama, Thomas Nyembe, Johannes Mkhize of Ixopo, Nicholas Mkhize, Namzana Zindela, Payiyana Dlodla and Mfiseni Sibiya.<sup>625</sup>

All the suspects bar one were from Mkhumbane and included females and males. By mid-February 1960, the number of suspects arrested had risen to 60. When the suspects appeared in the Mkhumbane Court during the third week of February, the case was postponed to Monday, 22 February. The accused complained of the treatment they received in custody. One told the judge, E.W. Hyland, that:

*... laphaya etilongweni watshehwa ukuthi uma eke walokotha nje wakhononda ngempatho aphethwe ngayo khona kanye nezinye iziboshwa uyobulawa laphaya ejele elikhulu laseThekwini eSentela ... Lesikhalo salesiboshwa selanywe yizikhalo zabanye ababoshwe kanye naso abakhale ngokuthi "bayabulawa" laphaya etilongweni laseSentela baqhathwa nendlala. Phakathi kwabo abayisishiyagalolunye bavalelwe laphaya etilongweni lakwaKito.*<sup>626</sup>

(... he was told that if he dared lay a complaint in court about their treatment in custody, he would be killed at the Durban Central Prison [Sentela]. The accused's complaint was echoed by fellow accused who substantiated that they were not given food at Durban Central. Nine of the accused were incarcerated at Cato Manor).

The accused who spoke on behalf of others, Boy Cele, also said that some of them had become weak due to hunger as they were continuously reminded that they killed police. Judge Hyland told Cele and the other prisoners that they should tell their story to the unnamed correctional services representative during his visit to the holding cells. Cele responded that they had done so but when he left, the accused were beaten by the police. Magistrate Hyland told the accused that their complaints would be referred to the higher authorities.<sup>627</sup> Another accused, Robert Dlamini, told Hyland that he was scared to go back to prison as they were told that they would be murdered if they complained. Hyland instructed the three White

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<sup>625</sup> 'Amagama Abantu Abazothwala Icala LamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 6 February 1960, 3.

<sup>626</sup> 'Bakhonondile Okuthiwa Babulala AmaPhoyisa Emkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 20 February 1960, 3.

<sup>627</sup> 'Bakhonondile Okuthiwa Babulala AmaPhoyisa Emkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 20 February 1960, 3.

policemen to find an alternative cell for Dlamini. During the main trial in August the head of investigations, J.J. van Rooyen, refuted claims that prisoners were abused and threatened, when asked by the accused's lawyer A.M. Wilson.<sup>628</sup> Given the circumstances, the judge was quite protective of the accused.

When case proceedings officially commenced on Tuesday, 8 March 1960, 61 accused were charged, 30 of whom were represented by seasoned lawyer Rowley Arenstein while V.I. Mathews represented the other 31. The judge was J.E. van der Spuy while the prosecutor was C. Rees. Many community members attended, to the extent that the court was too small and some remained outside. The court proceedings commenced an hour later than the scheduled 9.30 am as the accused were still being given number tags. A table in the court room was filled with items suspected of having been used during the attacks:

*Bekukhona izigqoko zamaphoyisa afayo, amakhobongo, adabukileyo, izingubo ezinegazi, izinduku, izinduku zensimbi nezinguzunga zamatshe konke kunamanembe egazi, phakathi kwalo kukhona nawokhiye nebhuku lasesikhwameni.*<sup>629</sup>

(There were peaked caps of the deceased, torn garments with blood, sticks, sticks with metal bolts, and heavy stones, and all of these had bloodstains. There were also keys and pouches).

On the first day of the case, State Prosecutor, C. Rees, confirmed that the police were in Mkhumbane in search of illicit liquor. In Khumalo Road, 'in a particular house, a woman complained that a policeman had stepped against her toes. The other White policeman apologised on behalf of his colleague and provided that if the woman wished to lay charges, she could do so'.<sup>630</sup> Rees continued that:

*Lo wesifazane wawasukela amaphoyisa ewasho ngomlomo, walandelwa nangabanye bewaphelezela bewasho amaphoyisa ngenkathi ehlisa umgwaqo uKhumalo Road. Khona lapho kwaqubuka ifu labantu aseshaywa njalo amaphoyisa ngamatshe Abantu lapho sebekhuza izaga, Ngalenkathi amanye amaphoyisa kwawabelungu aqala ukudubula, kwashayeka aanye kulaba ababewasukela.*<sup>631</sup>

(The woman chased after the police, hurling insults. She was followed by others who continued with the insults while the police were moving down Khumalo Road. Within the blink of an eye, a mob gathered and started throwing stones, hitting the police. The people began to sing Zulu war songs, and some of the White police fired live bullets, some of which hit the mob).

B.S. Rubha and other policemen who survived the onslaught corroborated this version of events. Giving his evidence before the court on 24 March, Constance Blose (*Ilanga LaseNatal* referred to him as Bhulose) said that he saw an African policeman telling his White colleague to stop shooting and leave.<sup>632</sup>

<sup>628</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

<sup>629</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 12 March 1960, 1.

<sup>630</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 12 March 1960, 1.

<sup>631</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 12 March 1960, 1.

<sup>632</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

During the main trial in August, Blose repeated this statement and said that Constable Jordaan shot a resident in the arm.<sup>633</sup> The Police Commissioner for the Durban and Pinetown Region, C.J. van der Merwe gave the same version of events, supported by Det. Sgt. W. Burt, who was a scene investigator, and Det. Sgt. G. van Zyl.

Phillip Ngubane, an accused in the case whose evidence was presented by Sgt. P.D. Jacobs who had arrested him, said that he had visited his friend and was drinking in Mkhumbane when he saw policemen searching for illicit liquor. Ngubane and his friend hid their brew and watched the police as they searched. It was then that he saw a Black African man beating a woman and a White policeman eventually separated them. Ngubane added that, following this, he saw police walking in Road Four (Khumalo Road). People started to chase after them, and the police opened fire.<sup>634</sup> One policeman identified a spectator in court as a suspect in the killings. He was immediately handcuffed with no resistance offered by him or protest from the audience. He became the 70<sup>th</sup> accused. On Wednesday, 9 January the number of accused decreased to 65, with the others released due to a lack of evidence.

On the second day of the pre-trial proceedings, 9 March, a 17-year-old female, whose father was a policeman, presented evidence before the court and said that she saw ‘Constable Biyela hitting an elderly man, and the White policeman beating a child until the latter fell ... when the police moved down, people started throwing stones at the police with one of the police Msomi, who was in front, throwing the stones back. In that midst of this, a White policeman blew a whistle ... when she went back home, she found that people had surrounded her home, threatening to burn it as they claimed that it was a house of police. When she and her mother managed to dress her father and took him to the rank, they were scared that people might attack him. It at the rank that she heard a particular Gilbert and Ngubane claiming that they had beaten the police, even Dlodla had been killed’.<sup>635</sup> Meni Dubazane testified that he was the one drinking with Ngubane. At the main trial during the week from 8 to 12 August, the young woman repeated her version detailed above, but this time with slight twists. For example, in her second testimony, she did not say that the elderly men fell down due to the beating. When the defence representation asked why this version was different from the previous one, she claimed that the interpreter had failed to record her first testimony correctly.<sup>636</sup> Was this a case of the police and state twisting the witness’ words?

An old man named Johannes Majola testified on 17 March that on a particular day in January (he could not remember the actual date), a man came to his house to borrow money which, he said, he needed urgently. When Majola’s family asked him what had happened, he said *‘besilwa kwanzima namaphoyisa*

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<sup>633</sup> ‘Icala Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa’, *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 2.

<sup>634</sup> ‘Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane’, *UmAfrika*, 12 March 1960, 14.

<sup>635</sup> ‘Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane’, *UmAfrika*, 12 March 1960, 14.

<sup>636</sup> ‘Kufakaza Intombazana Ecaleni Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa’, *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 1.

*sawalimaza. Siqale ngokubulala iphoyisa uDludla okuthe masehlela sathelekela iphoyisa loMlungu* (we were fighting against the police. We started by killing Dludla and then attacked a White policeman).<sup>637</sup> The statement read before the court during the second week of the main trial also stated that Dludla told the Majolas that *uDludla simbulele samshiya edindilizile ulimi lungaphandle seqa isidumbu sakhe sajaha amaphoyisa abeLungu* (we killed Dludla and left him dead with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, and we jumped over his corpse and chased the White police).<sup>638</sup> The old man said that while they were talking, the police entered the house and arrested the man as, after hearing the story, his wife, Maria, went to alert the police who came, led by the one referred to as Cele, and handcuffed him. A statement read by the court in August stated that Maria gave Dludla *gavini* to delay him while she went to alert the police.<sup>639</sup> When Majola finished his evidence, he identified Papiyana Dludla and Nelson Thembela as two of the attackers.

Dladla presented his evidence in October 1960 and denied the accusations. He said that he was highly intoxicated and slept through the attacks. When he woke, he went to Majola's house to buy a bottle of *gavini* to get rid of his hangover. Dludla said that he had a conversation with Majola's wife and others who were there and he told them that Mkhumbane residents had attacked the police, and that they started by killing Dludla. He said that that was when the police arrested him.<sup>640</sup> Dludla told the court that he was a petrol attendant in Brickhill Road in the city and did not go to work on Monday, 25 January, because he had a hangover from drinking too much the previous day.<sup>641</sup>

However, another witness, Maria, reiterated that Dludla told them that *'siwabulele sawaaqeda amaphoyisa'* ('we finished the policemen').<sup>642</sup> Dludla denied this and said that he only heard the news of the police killings at Majola's house. Two other unnamed witnesses testified that Dludla was involved in the police killings. One of them, known as Johanna, said she was present when Dludla told the Majolas that they had killed the police and that many others were also present as they were drinking. Asked by the defendant's representative whether she sold *gavini*, Maria Majola denied it. Dludla was sentenced to death when the case was completed.

An unnamed 17-year-old witness identified Numzana Zindela, Mpaseni Sibiya, and Daniel Khuzwayo as people she saw involved in the fracas. When she completed her evidence, she went outside to breastfeed her child and a man was arrested as he was overhead threatening to stab her.<sup>643</sup> When the young woman

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<sup>637</sup> 'Ukufa Kwephoyisa UDLudla', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.

<sup>638</sup> 'Omame Bawaqedela Amaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 3.

<sup>639</sup> 'Omame Bawaqedela Amaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 3.

<sup>640</sup> 'Bayaliphika Icala Ababhekene Nokubulala AmaPhoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 15 October 1960, 14.

<sup>641</sup> 'Bayaliphika Icala Ababhekene Nokubulala AmaPhoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 15 October 1960, 14.

<sup>642</sup> 'Bayaliphika Icala Ababhekene Nokubulala AmaPhoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 15 October 1960, 14.

<sup>643</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 12 March 1960, 14.

gave her testimony in the main trial, she said that Khuzwayo had come to her home with a scar on his head and asked for vinegar to wash the wound. The girl testified that Khuzwayo said he was coming from a meeting of the ANC, and on his way back, they met a policeman running away whom they beat into death.<sup>644</sup> When R.N. Leon, a member of the defence team, asked the girl why she had failed to point out Khuzwayo during the pre-trial she said, *ejele abantu babebaningi, amehlo emaningi, manje sengiyambona uKhuzwayo ukuthi nguyena owafika ekhaya enengozi* (there were many people in jail, there were many eyes, now I can see Khuzwayo, that he was the one who came home with a wound).<sup>645</sup>

The case continued on Thursday, 10 March. Ester Khumalo, maiden name Buhlalu, the daughter of the sergeant who was killed on the scene, took the stand. She testified that she was in Mkhumbane on the day of the killings. When her mother and sister returned home from church, she heard people ululating, and that is when she realised that the mob was beating the police:

*Wabona kulowomkhathi amaphoyisa amabili amHlophe ebaleka elinye libheke ngakwaTiki, lisukelwa ngabaNtu, abanye babelisukela ngasemuva abanye bezohlangabezana nalo. Uthi ngenkathi libaleka iphoyisa lase liphakamise izandla ... yabona ngemumva kokuba isibuyela ekhaya ukuyobikela unina ukuthi ibone iphoyisa libaleka liyongena ezihlahleni, yabona iphoyisa loMuntu lisukeleka ngejubane liqonde ngqo kubo, lisukelwa ngabantu abanengi ... lelo phoyisa laze layongena kubo. Khona lapho Abantu bafika bawuzungeza umuzi wakubo, abanye bethi 'lingene lapha'. Ngalenkathi uthi bangena emakhosolweni kwakhala ubugogoggo Abantu bashaya indlu ngamantshe, bephihliza amafasitele nezicabha, abanye behlahlela amafasitele ngezimbazo.*<sup>646</sup>

(She saw two White police running. The other one ran in the direction of a place called Tiki, chased by the mob. While running away, his hands were up as if asking for forgiveness; when she went home to tell her mother what she had witnessed, she saw a Black policeman being chased by the mob. That policeman ran to their house and within the blink of an eye people surrounded the house, stoned and cut it with axes ...).

Presenting his testimony on 19 August, Isaac Zulu stated that he saw that a White policeman running and asking people to assist him. People hit him with different weapons. One of the attackers was accused Roy Radebe.<sup>647</sup> Zulu, who confessed to being drunk on the day, said he saw all of this while he was at number 147 in Shumville where there was a *stokvel*. Zulu identified the attackers as Roy Radebe, who hit the police with sticks, and Thembela who was attacking them with a brick. He also said that another White

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<sup>644</sup> 'Kufakaza Intombazana Ecaleni Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 1

<sup>645</sup> 'Kufakaza Intombazana Ecaleni Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 1

<sup>646</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 12 March 1960, 14.

<sup>647</sup> 'Iphoyisa Lomlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1.



policeman managed to leave the Tiki barracks and escape the wrath of the mob. The crowd attacked the other policeman who fell to the ground due to his injuries.<sup>648</sup>

In her lengthy evidence during the pre-trial, Esther Khumalo detailed how they hid underneath the bed while a rain of stones hit their barrack, with residents commanding them to release the policeman. She managed to escape with her children and screamed that there were people in the house. She detailed how one person pointed a knife at her, claiming that she was sympathising with the police. Esther added that when the policeman eventually came out of the house, the mob killed him. She identified one Mhlangeni Khumalo, who said that Esther's home was set alight Esther repeated this version during the main trial when she took the witness stand in August 1960. She said that when she saw the running policeman, she initially thought it was her father, Sergeant Buhlalu.<sup>649</sup>

Esther was followed by Lucy Mdupa who identified Victor Nzama as the one who hit one of the policeman until he died and chased after her asking '*nansi lentombazane ebithi siwashayelani amaphoyisa*' (why are you beating the police?). Mdupa repeated this statement at the main trial and added that Nzama hit the policeman, who had already lost consciousness twice on the neck with an axe, and the policeman died. She also confirmed that Nzama chased after them, and that they took cover at the nearest house.<sup>650</sup> Witnesses during the pre-trial and the main one seem to have followed the same sequence. However, the court did not find the information against Nzama to be concrete and he was acquitted in November.

The policeman who survived the onslaught, Msomi, identified Daniel Khuzwayo, Beatrice Mokoena, Maria Mthembu, Stephen Zuma, George Ntuli, and John Madoza Ngcobo as being involved in the attacks.<sup>651</sup>

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<sup>648</sup> 'Icala Lokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 20 August 1960, 14.

<sup>649</sup> 'Owesifazana Wacashisa Iphoyisa Ethi Uyise', *UmAfrika*, 27 August 1960, 3.

<sup>650</sup> 'Owesifazana Wacashisa Iphoyisa Ethi Uyise', *UmAfrika*, 27 August 1960, 3.

<sup>651</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 12 March 1960, 14.

## Amagama Abantu Ababhekene Necala LaseMkhumbane

Phillip Ngubane (33), 123 K.U. Cato Manor; Victor Ntsebe (23), 63 D.L. Cato Manor; Thomas Nyembe (29), 72 S.V. Cato Manor; Nuzwana Sindela (33), 217 D. Cato Manor; Puyiyana Dinda (25), Paton Road, Cato Manor; Mposeni Sibisa (26), of 30 Manning Road, Durban; Daniel Khurwayo (24), 118 Dabulamani, Cato Manor; Emily Zulu (34).

Florence Zulu (34); Francis Maphumula (26), Philemon Mkhize (24); Tollyase Dolphas Ntsebe (24), Beatrice Mokoena (30), 171 Shumville, Cato Manor; Daniel Mavundla (28), 49 Vause Road Durban; Daniel Mthembu (29); Sibho Mthembu (28).

Zwelabantu Zuma (30); Roy Radebe (29); George Ndlovu (31); Nelson Tembela (33); Kingsly Mavundla (24); Bernard Radebe (28); George Ntuli (30); noJohs Madoda Ngcobo (26), 76 S.V. Cato Manor.

Ingane enceminyaka eyi-18; Emily Mbela (40), 14 K.U., Cato Manor; Joba Khwela (28), 39 K.U., Cato Manor; Mawundeni Lushcal (29), 124 K.U. Cato Manor; Ingane enceminyaka eyi-16 yeKhaladi; Maria Mthembu (40); Bhekifa Nene (28), 198 Shumville, Cato Manor.

Nabhadl Dlamini (34), 34 K.U. Cato Manor; Ingane enceminyaka eyi-15 yeKhaladi; Zoubert Mzani (33), 181 K.R. Cato Manor; Ingane enceminyaka eyi-17; Nki Cele (32), 44 K.U., Cato Manor; Dinguane Mahato (30); Abednego Mawundeni (30), 168 T.S. Cato Manor; Paulus Mraga (35), 275 Somerset Road Locatona.

Thompson Chamane (31), 14 M.C., Cato Manor; Mabele Edwala Mdloini; Faneal Erlson Mvabungu; Joseph Miso; Mabele Gogo (30), 168 S. V., Cato Manor; Makhayise Cele (23), 118 S. V., Cato Manor; Ingane enceminyaka eyi-17; Anna Mabele (40) 36 K.U., Cato Manor.

Stephan Zuma (40) 190 Dabulamani, Cato Manor; Robert Dlamini (29) 45 F., Cato Manor; Edward Gaba (22) 16 K.Z., Cato Manor; Prophet Shari (48); Jeffery Mshali (31), 181 Jeep Lane Cato Manor; Schoolboy; Mthembu (36); Gilbert Mbongwu (34), 118 M.C., Cato Manor; Mhlangeni Khurwayo (25), 213 Benoni, Cato Manor.

Mbubekwen Zuma (42), 42 S.V. Cato Manor; Zwelinjani Khurwayo (26), 138 S.V., Cato Manor; Norman Nkosi (30); Paulina Sekhala (37) Indoda, 74 K.U., Cato Manor; Leah Ndlela (28), 211 D., Cato Manor; Mawundeni Mdima (31); Butgawobeni Madisana (34), 244 B., Cato Manor; Mkhumbi Kabeleh Mthembu (25); kanye nengane enceminyaka eyi-15 yabedala.

**AMAPHOYISA AFAYO**

Const. C. C. Kriel (19), wasoSenekal, O.F.S.; Const. C.P. J. S. Rademan (19), wasoRiverdale, Cape; Const. L. W. Kunene (19), wasoBridelberg, Transvaal; Const. G. J. Joubert (20), wasoAmsterdam, Transvaal; Sgt. Kufakwe-wo Duhlatu; Const. Poni Mthethwa; Const. Paul Jona; Const. Faneatba Dlamini; kanye noConst. Mawundeni Ntsebe.

The names of the people who were suspected of killing the policemen. Their addresses and ages were published. The names of the 'murdered policemen' ('Amaphoyisa Afayo') were also published. This was during the pre-trial at the Cato Manor Magistrates Court.

By the week starting 14 March, there were 65 accused. One Mbinqeni Shandu, who took the witness stand that week, said that the police came to arrest people on the day of the fracas. When he went outside, he met Maqandeni Lushozi, one of the accused, who told him that he was going home to get some weapons. Shandu said he saw people ululating, and Lushozi passed by, perspiring and told him that he had struck the White policemen three times until he fell to the ground.<sup>652</sup> Lushozi's girlfriend Muntu Bhengu, who lived with him, also testified:

*Ngamhla kubulawa amaphoyisa uLushozi wahamba ekuseni wayophuza kuthe makushaya u-4 wantambama wambona esehambela phezulu kubonakala ukuthi kukhona osekumfudumezile. UMuntu uthi wayefike laphaya ekhaya uLushozi wafuna ukhiye, wavula endlini wasebuya ephuma futhi ... esephuma endlini wabe esepethe induku nocelemba, okuthe lapho enza ubufakazi wabezikhomba lezikhali phambi kwenkantolo. Uthi ... uLushozi wantshela ukuthi ubekhona laphaya lapho obekushaywa khona amaphoyisa, uthi washo nokusho wathi aphelile amaphoyisa.*<sup>653</sup>

(On the day of the police killings, Lushozi went to drink and came back home after 4 pm, and it could be seen that he was intoxicated. Muntu said that when Lushozi arrived, he asked for the house keys, opened and went outside with a machete and a stick. Muntu pointed at these items as they were placed in front of the court. Muntu said that Lushozi told her that he was present when police were attacked, saying that they finished the police).

Another woman, Lillian Mzolo, whose boyfriend, George Ndlovu, was one of the accused, testified on 10 August that on that day, she was woken by her mother who told her that people were assaulting the police. Lillian, who lived at 147 in Shumville with Ndlovu, told the court that she was extremely drunk on the day of the attacks and only woke up when her husband, coming from work, was in the house and therefore could not offer much in the way of testimony.<sup>654</sup> There were some reports that witnesses changed their testimony between the pre-trial (March-April 1960) and the main one (August- December 1960). At times the newspapers skipped some parts of the testimonies in their reports. When she went outside, Miss Mzolo said, she saw Roy Radebe who said '*siwaqedile amaphoyisa*' (we finished the police).<sup>655</sup>

Doris Zuma also took the stand and testified that her boyfriend, whom *UmAfrika* described as a 'Coloured boy' was supposed to visit her that day but only came after three days. She told the court that he said that they attacked the police with all the weapons available to them.<sup>656</sup>

Lena Mthalane of the Two Sticks section also testified against her accused boyfriend, Abednego Manyoni:

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<sup>652</sup> 'Liyaqhubeka Icala Lokubulawa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 1.

<sup>653</sup> 'Liyaqhubeka Icala Lokubulawa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 1.

<sup>654</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1.

<sup>655</sup> 'Liyaqhubeka Icala Lokubulawa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 1.

<sup>656</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.

*UManyoni wayesekhaya ngenkathi bezwa umsindo kuthiwa abantu bashaya amaphoyisa. Uthi ke uManyoni wathi kuye 'nginike lesi sikhali sami' uthi uLena yena wanqaba ukumnikeza lesi sikhali esikhundleni salokho wasukuma wangena endlini qede wazevalela ngaphakathi ngoba isithandwa sakhe sifuna ukumshaya ngempama. Uthi uLena uManyoni wasinyakazisa isicabha esifuqa waze wagcina ngokuba amnike uncelemba wakhe wasuka waqonda lapho amaphoyisa eshaywa ngakhona. Ngemumva kwalokho isithandwa sakhe sabe sesibuya. Uthi sathi kuye 'ngiyabona wena ubungafuni ukuba lezinja zife'. Uthi ke uLena wayesho ukuthi amaphoyisa izinja. Uthi ke isithandwa sakhe sabeka uncelemba emqaleni nganhlanye sathi 'nawe futhi ngizokwenza kanjalo', asasho sihamba futhi.<sup>657</sup>*

(Manyoni was home when we heard people were attacking people. Manyoni told Lena to give him his weapon, which she refused and went into the house as Manyoni threatened to slap her. Lena said that Manyoni wrestled with the door, trying to gain entry, and she finally gave him a machete through the window. He then headed to the attacks. Her lover eventually came back. Manyoni said to her, 'I could see you did not want these dogs to die.' He referred to police as dogs. Her lover then placed the machete against her neck, saying, 'I will do it to you too,' as he left the house).

There are several narratives here. One is gender-based violence which is a major issue in post-apartheid South Africa. Clearly, given the way that Manyoni treated Lena, males physically abused women. Women were also not averse to drinking. Also interesting, and perhaps surprising, is that women were prepared to testify against their male partners. Was it because they saw this as a means to escape male dominance? Did they feel trapped in unhappy relationships and regard this as an escape route?

It was reported that on Wednesday, 16 March 1960, a strongly-armed police contingent comprising of 15 Whites and 24 Africans arrested a number of women involved in the brewing and sale of illicit liquor.<sup>658</sup> After arresting about 50 people, on their way to Kito they arrested another three at Nkwalini section, near Ridge View. When Constable B. Boucher accompanied the three to the police van, one of them fought with him, which resulted in him being shot by the police. Police likely received strict instructions to defend themselves against any possible threat after the killing of nine of their colleagues on 24 January.

As reported in *Ilanga LaseNatal*, Constable Bhulose told the court that he was with Sergeant Buhlalu at a house where four people had been arrested and that during the attacks, Buhlalu fell to his knees as he had been severely beaten. Bhulose told the court that Buhlalu told him to run away, to which he responded that he would die with him. When the window was broken they blocked it with a wardrobe. The door, the wardrobe, and the mattress they hid in were all cut by the attackers, and Bhulose hid underneath the bed. Buhlalu ran out, and the crowd attacked him. Bhulose said he heard the attackers saying that one of the policemen was still inside. That was when he left the house, saw people surrounding Buhlalu, and ran

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<sup>657</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.

<sup>658</sup> 'IPhoyisa Lidubule Umuntu Wafa', *UmAfrika*, 9 March 1960, 1.

away. He said he was chased by five attackers whom he managed to escape and went to a house where they gave him pyjamas. Within minutes, people surrounded the house and threatened that if he did not come out, they would burn it down. He escaped through a window and was followed by one person who hit him on the shoulder with a stone as he fled to Chesterville.<sup>659</sup>

It is important to note that not everybody opposed the police, as the example of the family supplying a policeman with pyjamas indicates.

The court interpreter from 23 March, R.R. Mayne, explained that '*Mayibuye i-Afrika ... kusho ukuthi 'kudala i-Afrika laba sezandleni zabeLungu, sekwanele manje, sekufike khona ethubeni lokuba libuyele kubanikazi balo*'.<sup>660</sup> (*Mayibuye i-Afrika* denotes that Africa had long been in Whites' hands, enough is enough now. The time has come that Africa be returned to its rightful owners). The same slogan had been used during the 1949 Riots in Mkhumbane when Indians were forced to leave the area. It was used when Albert Luthuli and others were arrested for burning passes in 1960. *UmAfrika* reported that on 7 April 1960, about 5 000 people gathered in Mkhumbane for a march demanding the release of political prisoners and singing *Afrika, Mayibuye*.<sup>661</sup>

As the crowd tried to move towards Durban Central Prison, known as Esentela, they were stopped by the police before they could even leave Mkhumbane.

In her book celebrating nurses of African origin in KwaZulu (Natal) from 1920 to 2000, Buthelezi writes that one of her interviewees, Mazo, stated that midwifery 'training requirements' involved visiting the homes of the mothers of new-born babies.<sup>662</sup> One of the areas which received frequent visits from the McCord Zulu Hospital was Mkhumbane, and her recollections underscore the extent to which the area was beset by violence. On one of the days during the anti-pass demonstrations, in 1960:

Anti-pass demonstrators were rioting, and the police shot at demonstrators. Nurse Mazo and her friend fled and squeezed into a rickety shack toilet. They could hear the bullets tattooing adjacent buildings. Their midwife's kit was outside the toilet as there was no place for it in the toilet. Their horrifying ordeal lasted for ten minutes. They later walked into an Indian home where their transport was to pick them. The hospital subsequently stopped all home visits to Cato Manor.<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>659</sup> 'Kufakaza Intombazana Ecaleni Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 1

<sup>660</sup> 'Uqweqwe Olimini LwesiZulu', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

<sup>661</sup> 'Bebecishana Abantu EMkhumbane NgoLwesine', *UmAfrika*, 9 April 1960, 1.

<sup>662</sup> Mazo Sybil T. Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers in KwaZulu/Natal - 1920-2000*, (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2004) contents page. In the above quotes Buthelezi is Mazo; she writes about her first-hand experiences.

<sup>663</sup> Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers*.

Mr Hurter, a former senior inspector and registration officer at Bantu Administration, could not remember all the protests because, he said, there 'were so many of the blooming things around.'<sup>664</sup> However, he remembered one mass protest:

They (the protesters) came down Berea Road. There must have been at least fifty to sixty thousand.<sup>665</sup> They were stretched from the top of Berea Road down to Craut Avenue, and they were on their way to the prison to release some of the prisoners, and they were coming here too, but the police turned them back at the bottom of Berea Road, Syringa Avenue and turned them back. I'll never forget that day. I came back here, and there were black stripes right around this office, the way the staff had taken off.<sup>666</sup>

This refers to the protests that erupted after the arrests and/or banning of Albert Luthuli and others following the banning of the ANC in 1960.. Upon hearing the news, the residents of Mkhumbane and Chesterville, where many Africans were living on the periphery of the city, rose up in protest and marched to the city centre to demand their leaders' release. A resident of Mkhumbane reminisced about the incident:

I remember in Chesterville, young street kids went up to all the church ministers and advisory board members, including A.W.G. Champion, who was in his pyjamas, woke them up, gave them sticks, and said: "You have always claimed that you are our leaders. This is the time to show your mettle and lead us." Marchers from Umlazi, Chesterville, Mkhumbane, and Lamontville converged ...<sup>667</sup>

During the main trial, Biyela also testified that he dodged the stones, ran, and hid at a house of a reverend in Shumville.<sup>668</sup> *Ilanga LaseNatal* reported that Biyela told the court that while taking cover at a house in KwaTiki he was hit by a stone and fainted. On regaining consciousness, he fled to safety.<sup>669</sup> However, the 13 August issue of *Ilanga LaseNatal* reported that he ran to a house of a reverend where he hid until he was rescued by the police, who took him to the hospital where he was admitted for nine days.<sup>670</sup> He was admitted to King Edward VIII Hospital for eight days due to his wounds.

Two witnesses, Johannes Sibisi and Mfana John Mhlongo testified against an accused referred to as Thompson Chamane. They said that they lived in the same yard as Chamane and that the accused picked up two sticks from his bedroom and went with them to the 'warzone'. It was stated that Chamane told

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<sup>664</sup> Interview, Mr Hurter, 99/4210, Old Court Museum, Durban, 5.

<sup>665</sup> This is probably an exaggeration as the largest march involving Luthuli was likely the mass meeting to honour the banned leader held at Curries Fountain on 9 November 1961 following the bestowing on him of the Nobel Peace Prize. The march and meeting attracted 15 000 people.

<sup>666</sup> Interview, Mr Hurter, 99/4210, Old Court Museum, Durban, 5-6.

<sup>667</sup> SADET, *The Road to Democracy*, 340.

<sup>668</sup> 'Icala LamaPhoyisa Emkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 13 August 1960, 14.

<sup>669</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

<sup>670</sup> 'Kufakaza Intombazana Ecaleni Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 1

Mhlongo that 'he is standing while it was time for war' and that on his return, Chamane's sticks had fresh bloodstains. He said that he hit an African and a White policeman.<sup>671</sup> Another person whom the eyewitnesses testified against was Anna Mbhele, whom Esther Sibiya, Constable H.J. Pieters and Rose Zulu saw pelting the police with stones and a bottle.<sup>672</sup>

On Thursday, 17 March, Mzikayise Khuzwayo became the 66<sup>th</sup> accused. Ethel Ngema testified that she was in Shumville during the day, and saw a White policeman chased into the corrugated iron-built houses. The White policeman continued Khuzwayo and hid in the trees. When the policeman saw him, he told Khuzwayo not to alert others, and he took the policeman to his house. The police hid in his house, and was saved from the mob.

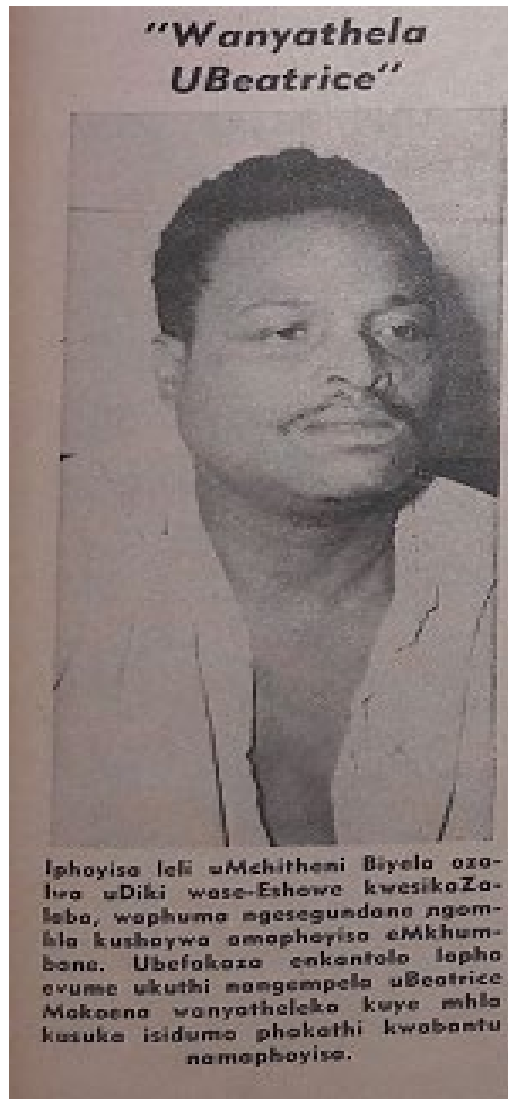
An old man, Johannes Majola, testified that on a particular day in January (he could not remember the date) a certain man came into his house to borrow money and said that he needed it urgently. When Majola's family asked him what had happened, he said '*besilwa kwanzima namaphoyisa sawalimaza. Siqale ngokubulala iphoyisa uDhudla okuthe masehlela sathelekela iphoyisa loMlungu*' (we were fighting against the police. We started by killing Dladla and then attacked a White policeman).<sup>673</sup> The old man said that while they were talking the police entered the house and arrested the man as, after hearing the story, his wife Maria, went to alert the police. When Majola finished his evidence, he identified Papiyana Dladla as the culprit.

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<sup>671</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.

<sup>672</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.

<sup>673</sup> 'Ukufa Kwephoyisa UDladla', *UmAfrika*, 19 March 1960, 14.



Caption: ‘He stepped on Beatrice’s Toe.’ A picture of Constable Mchitheni Biyela, who lived in Mkhumbane but was originally from Eshowe, Zululand.

*UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960





Isithombe sethu sikhombisa ofakazi ababili ababalulekile ecaleni labangama 28 okuthiwa babulala amaphoyisa ayi 9 eMkhumbane ngomhla-

ka January 24. Kwesobunxele uConstable M. I. Biyela kanye noDetective-Head, Const. J. J. van Rooyen. UBiyela ufakaze ngokuthi amaphoyisa ahlaselwa emva

kokuba yena enyathele ngesiphosiso owesifazane. UVan Rooyen nguye owahola abaseshi emva kokubulawa kwamaphoyisa sekufunwa ababulele.

Seen in the picture above are Constable Biyela and Detective Head, J.J. van Rooyen.

*Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960

During the pre-trial, an eight-year-old child, the youngest of the witnesses in the case, testified against the accused. The boy told the court that he was playing with other children in the road on the day of the attacks. When he saw the attacks at KwaTiki, he ran to his home only to find the door was locked.<sup>674</sup> His mother accompanied him to court, and when he had finished his testimony, she asked for forgiveness from the accused, who responded ‘*hamba wena*’ (go away). While passing the accused the mother said *akumina owenze konke lokhu, umfana lona, kuthiwe akaze abakhombe labo, ningambulali umntwana wami* (I am not the one who did all of this, my boy has been told to come here and identify them. Please do not kill my child. Forgive us).<sup>675</sup> The boy identified George Ndlovu, Nelson Thembela, Roy Radebe, and Bernard Radebe as people he saw throwing stones at a White policeman who died on the scene. One of the court interpreters, C.F.W. Nel lifted the boy onto a table so that he could point out the accused.<sup>676</sup> In the main trial in August 1960, the boy repeated this evidence and added that he:

*UNdlovu yena wabona iphoyisa elihlala ngobhongwana walishaya futh nangenduku, uThembela yena walishaya ngesitini uRoy Radebe walishaya emhlane izikhathi eziningi, uBernard Radebe walishaya*

<sup>674</sup> ‘Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo’, *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1

<sup>675</sup> ‘Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane’, *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

<sup>676</sup> ‘Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane’, *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

*ngensimbi kaningi nje laze lawa elibelesele. Uthi umfana balishiya selidindilizile phansi, kalibange futhi lisavuka lapho.*<sup>677</sup>

(... saw Ndlovu clinging to the policeman's neck and hitting him with a stick. Thembela hit the police with a brick. Bernard hit the police with a metal object until the latter fell to the ground. The policeman never woke up).

The boy testified that Bernard hit the policeman with a vehicle's metal steering wheel several times, and the policeman fell to the ground. They continued beating him until he was unconsciousness.<sup>678</sup> Here we see the dilemma for community members. The mother suggests that the boy was forced to testify by the police, and if she had her way, they would likely not have done so. Her plea for 'forgiveness' was not accepted as the trialists responded, 'go away.'

B. Shandu, a policeman who was present on the day but survived the wrath of the crowd, testified that he heard a woman, whom he identified Beatrice Mokoena in the accused box, shouting '*unginyathelile wena*' (you stepped on my foot).<sup>679</sup> Shandu further revealed that:

*... wabuyela emumva ethi akayobheka ukuthi sekwenzenjani, kodwa uthi lapho ebuyela emuva wafica abantu sebebuthene isixuku ... ngesikhathi bebuyela emumva bafica iphoyisa uBiyela, lapho owesifazane eselokhu evimbezele ngomsindo, nokho iphoyisa lilokhu limxesezela.*<sup>680</sup>

(... he went back with other police to check what was happening, but when he arrived, people had gathered into a mob. On their return to the scene, there was Constable Biyela who was busy apologising to the woman. The woman was making a lot of noise).

Constable Shandu continued that Beatrice squeezed through a fence, ululated, picked up a lemonade package, and pelted the police while screaming '*washayeni, washayeni amaphoyisa*' (attack, attack the police). From then, 'An angry mob gathered', and, continued Shandu, a White policeman Joubert fired shots in the air with a revolver to warn the crowd, which did not take any notice. In his evidence Constable Biyela also said that a White policeman fired several shots in the air and by this time *abantu base bewakake macala onke, ngakho-ke ahlehlela khona laphaya kwenye indlu zaKwaTiki okwathi lapho noma esephakathi bawaleta njalo abantu amatshe* (people had surrendered. The police hence backed off to one of the houses at Tiki and the people continued to throw stones). Shandu also recounted that the police backed off to a house known as *KwaTiki* together with four people who had been arrested. People then

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<sup>677</sup> 'Icala Lokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 20 August 1960, 14.

<sup>678</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1

<sup>679</sup> 'Inkosikazi Icela Intethelelo Kwababoshiweyo. "Hamba Wena" – Kusho Impendulo', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 1.

<sup>680</sup> 'Ubufakazi Ngecala Lokufa Kwamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 1.

attacked the house with different weapons. Shandu said he escaped by running to another person's vehicle and driving off. Shandu identified five accused that he said were present and specifically identified Joubert Msani as the one hit by a bullet who ran away.<sup>681</sup>

A White man referred to as an experienced interpreter, R.R. Mayne, interpreted for the court during the case. He had a reputation as one of the best Zulu-English interpreters. He first appeared in court on 23 March. Mayne gained further prominence when he interpreted in the infamous case of Elifasi Msomi, South Africa's "Axe Killer" who was sentenced to death and hanged in 1955 after being convicted of hacking 15 people to death between 1953 and 1955. Mayne interpreted for Msomi. Msomi was known to Africans as 'Ngqavini', the name that they eventually called Mayne after he interpreted for the notorious killer.



R.R. Mayne pictured in court during the case on the police killings. *UmAfrika*, 26 March, 1

During the 21-25 March proceedings, an 18-year-old boy testified that he saw people chasing a policeman and one, who he identified as Dannie, hit the policeman with an axe. The boy also said he had heard Nabodi Dlamini claiming that he beat a policeman to death with a stainless steel rod.<sup>682</sup> However, he could not identify Dannie among the accused. The court investigator, N. Odendaal, who took the witness

<sup>681</sup> 'Ubufakazi Ngecala Lokufa Kwamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 1.

<sup>682</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

stand after the boy, said that while the boy presented evidence, Dannie was present but had his face down, making it impossible for the boy to see him.

Bongekile Cele then took the stand and testified that she saw one policeman being chased by the mob, and that Boy Cele, whom she identified, carried an axe. Bongekile said she cried, and Cele followed her and asked '*ikhona konje intombazane engakhalela iphoyisa?*' (Is there a girl who can cry for the police?).<sup>683</sup> Bongekile said she ran until she reached home. A 14-year-old girl testified that she had been forced by a black policeman known as Mafunda come to the court to make a statement that she signed after being slapped in the face. However, she also admitted that her statement was a true version of events. It appears that the girl tried to withdraw her statement because she felt threatened and pressured by community members, *ngoba yesaba abathize abathi bazoyibulala besho khona laphaya ekhaya* (because some have threatened to kill her at home).<sup>684</sup>

Lucy Mdupha who took the witness stand for the second time in the 21 to 25 March proceedings, told the court that she was attacked and threatened with death by two men and a woman. She said that during the attacks, she was stabbed and her glasses were broken when the woman missed her head. Mdupha told the court that she was saved when a White policeman with a dog appeared on the scene and warded off the attackers.<sup>685</sup> Here, a couple of pointers emerge. One is obviously that testifying posed a threat to those with the courage to come to court. It is probably an indication that most people did not support the killings, otherwise the witnesses' lives would have been under greater threat. More interesting is the number of young people who were called to give testimony. This was likely because they were playing outside and saw the killing, or that children were intimidated by the police to testify. As noted previously, children were always outside shebeens where they kept watch, as recorded in Mariam Makeba's song "*Jonga, jonga, jonga*" (look, look, look) which was a warning to elders from a child on the lookout for police.

Khawuleza mama

Khawuleza mama

Khawuleza mama

Nank' amapolis' azongen'endlini mama, khawuleza

Nank' amapolis' azongen'endlini mama, khawuleza

Jonga jonga jonga yo khawuleza mama, iyeyiye mama, khawuleza

Jonga jonga jonga yo khawuleza mama, iyeyiye mama, khawuleza

Bathi jonga jonga jonga yo khawuleza mama

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<sup>683</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

<sup>684</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

<sup>685</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwaMaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14.

khawuleza mama khawuleza  
jonga jonga jonga yo khawuleza mama  
khawuleza mama khawuleza

[Hurry up mom  
Hurry up mom  
Hurry up mom

Here's the 'police' coming into the house, fast  
Here's the 'police' coming into the house, fast  
Take a look, look at the mother quickly, the mother, the  
Take a look, look at the mother quickly, the mother, the

They say look look look quick mom  
hurry up mom hurry  
look look look fast mom  
hurry up mom hurry]

Bongekile could not identify those who threatened her but revealed that they were many, both men and women. The court ordered that she be taken to a place of safety as the girl revealed that she was scared to go back home. She withdrew her claim that she had been forced to testify. On the third day of her appearance the girl complained of toothache, and the prosecutor ordered that she be taken to a doctor. What is evident is that she gave contradictory evidence in court. On the one hand, she said Prophet Shezi, one of the accused whom she said she saw attacking the police, accompanied her home from a Christmas party, and on the other, she said she walked home alone. This evidence was presented on Wednesday 23 March, and Thursday 24 March, respectively.



Liphoyisa leli uMandla Reginald Blose owaphuma ngesegundane ngamhla kufa amaphoyisa eMkhumbane. Naye useke wangena ebhokisini lakwenza ubufakazi wachazela inkantolo ngokubonayo ngamhla kufa amaphoyisa.

NguNkk. K. Buhlalu lona ongumfelokazi, indoda yakhe uSgt. Kufakwezwe Buhlalu yafela laphaya eMkhumbane kanye namaphoyisa afayo ngesidumo. Naye kadefakaza laphaya enkantolo eThekwini. Ufakaze waze wacela ukuba inkantolo ingabe isaqhubeka nokumbuzwa imibuzo eminingi, esekhala izinyembezi.

Ngu-Esther Khumalo lona indodakazi kaSoyitsheni Kufakwezwe Buhlalu. Naye kade ifakaza enkantolo maqandana necala lokufa kwamaphoyisa eMkhumbane. Indoda yakhe u-Esther inguMphathi wesiteshi samaphoyisa eMnsinsini. Ufakaze waze wakhala enkantolo.

*UmAfrika*, 26 March 1960, 14

There were 69 accused before the court during the 11 – 15 April proceedings as others had been acquitted and others such as Joseph Ndlovu and Petros Chamane had been arrested and appeared for the first time during this week. Presenting her testimony in prison, Ester Hlengwa said that one of the accused, Mphaseni Sibiya, told her that one of the White policeman was praying when he died. Ester told the court that Sibiya had told her that they attacked the police and that he wanted to stab the policeman to gain access to his gun but was intercepted by someone who hit the police with a stone.<sup>686</sup> According to Sibiya, the policeman died.

After 24 days of the initial hearings, during the last week of April, 65 accused were brought before the court as four more were released. By that time, more than 200 people had testified in court.<sup>687</sup> The 65 were officially charged to appear before the judge. The community always attended court in large numbers and it was reported that the gallery always filled to capacity. By this, stage B. Fehler represented all of the accused but two.

After a thorough court process, the number of accused facing trial was further narrowed down to 29. When the trial started, the number fell to 28 after one person died in prison. *UmAfrika* reported that 135

<sup>686</sup> 'Liyaqhubeka Icala LamaPhoyisa Afela EMkhumbane. Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lafa Lithandaza', *UmAfrika*, 16 April 1960, 14.

<sup>687</sup> 'Icala Ngokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 30 April 1960, 14. Philemon Mkhize, Daniel Mavundla, Bhekifa Nene and Edward Gcaba were released by C. Rees.

witnesses were called to court to present their testimonies. More than 50 pieces of evidence, including weapons, were displayed in court, and 83 documents were used in the trial.<sup>688</sup> The youngest was a 16-year-old boy, while the eldest was 53. Most of the 29 accused were between the ages of 20 and 30.<sup>689</sup> Attorney-General Mr. R.A. Evelyn Wright, Q.C. told the court that two of the accused had to be acquitted outright whilst the other 34 were released but could be recharged for the killings, involvement in public disorder or any other case of interest.<sup>690</sup>

As the hearings progressed, police raids continued. For example, on Sunday 10 April 1960, a heavily armed police squad under Lieutenant-Colonel D.N. Acker raided Mkhumbane in the early hours of the morning. The police were from *KwaKito*,<sup>691</sup> the local name for Mkhumbane Police Station. When asked whether the officer who raided Mkhumbane was stationed at the Mkhumbane Police Station, Mrs Maphumulo responded, 'Yes. It was called Kito'.<sup>692</sup> The police station had employees of White and African descent. Mbatha acknowledges that the station employed both races (*abelungu babekhona nabantu abamnyama*).<sup>693</sup> The police were accompanied by soldiers who kept guard while they searched the area. The police did not dare go unaccompanied or with in limited numbers when raiding Mkhumbane because of the experience of 24 January 1960 when so many of their members were killed.

*UmAfrika*, a Zulu and African-oriented newspaper, reported that during the raid, the police disposed of countless litres of illegal liquor, discovered weapons that included guns, and arrested residents without permits to be in the area.<sup>694</sup> As *UmAfrika* noted, this was a planned invasion of Mkhumbane to uncover different illegal activities and residents sought by the law:

... khona lapho kuzwakala nokuthi amaphoyisa abeqaphele nokuthi athole ama phekulazikhuni uma kungahle kwenzek. Khona lapho futhi amaphoyisa abegunyaziwe ngokomthetho ukuba aphenye nezigelekeqe ezingababulali, abagqekezi, nezigebengu lezi ezinamacala ezingatholakali.<sup>695</sup>

(... the police have been authorised to search for 'terrorists' who might be hiding at Mkhumbane. They were also authorised to search for gangsters who were sought by the law for murder, burglary and those who were running away from the law after committing a crime).

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<sup>688</sup> 'Abayi 29 Emajajini Ngecala Lamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 16 July 1960, 3.

<sup>689</sup> 'Lizongena Icala LamaPhoyisa Abulawelwa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 16 July 1960, 1; and 'Abayi 29 Emajajini Ngecala Lamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 16 July 1960, 3. *UmAfrika* and *Ilanga LaseNatal*, two Zulu-oriented newspapers, were published every Saturday with the latter including a number of pages in English. These newspapers reported widely on the killings and case proceedings. *UmAfrika* reserved pages for the case whilst *Ilanga LaseNatal* also published news, although not to the same extent as the former.

<sup>690</sup> 'Abayi 29 Emajajini Ngecala Lamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 16 July 1960, 3.

<sup>691</sup> *Kito* refers to the Cato Manor Police Station. It is the word the Zulus used for Cato.

<sup>692</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December, 2019.

<sup>693</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June 2015.

<sup>694</sup> 'Amaphoyisa Angene Ngovivi eMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 16 April 1960, 3.

<sup>695</sup> 'Amaphoyisa Angene Ngovivi eMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 16 April 1960, 3.

How are we to interpret these raids? This was likely a statement by the authorities that they had imposed law and order and that no threats would be tolerated. They wanted it to be known that anyone who dared to oppose the state and local authorities, and flout laws, no matter how small, would face the wrath of the law.

**Bazobhekana NeJaji Abangamashumi  
Ayisithupha Nesihlanu**

Lana ngamagama abangamashumi ayisithupha nesihlanu abazobhekana nejaji ngecala lokubulawa kwamaphoyisa afela eMkhumbane.

Makewu Phillip Ngubane Nin (39), of 129 K.U., Cato Manor; Sipho Victor Nzama (20), of 60 D.L., Cato Manor; Vusumuzi Thomas Nyembe (20), of 79 S.V., Cato Manor; Mnumzane Zindela (32), of 217 D., Cato Manor; Papiyann Dladla (29), of Paton Road, Cato Manor; Mpaseni Sibiya (23), of 30 Manning Road, Durban; Maayineni Daniel Khuzwayo Nin (24), of 148 Dabulamansi, Cato Manor; Ndokuyebandla Pungula (20), of 65 Umbilo Road, Durban; Sibongile Florence Zulu (23), of 118 K.U. Cato Manor; Makopolo Francis Maphumulo (36), of 122 K.U., Cato Manor; Tafeloyise Dolphes Ntansi (29), of M.J., Cato Manor; Ntombikayise Beatrice Mkwena, of 55 M.J., Cato Manor; Daniel Mandla Mthembu (20), of 85 C.E., Cato Manor; Zwelabantu Zuma (26), of 51 B.K., Cato Manor; Roy Mandlenkosi Radebe (21), of 148 S.O., Cato Manor; Siphiso George Ndlovu (40), of 147 S.O., Cato Manor; Nelson Phathamuzi Tembela (26), of 146 S.O., Cato Manor.

Bernard Radebe (38), of 147 S.O., Cato Manor; Zwangoba George Ntuli (30), of 332 Benoni; John Madoda Ngcobo (33), of 332 Benoni; Emily Mbulu (40), of 14 K.U., Cato Manor; Magwababa John Khwela (38), of 38 K.U., Cato Manor; Aron Boy Cele (24), of 106 Fairview Road, Cato Manor; Magqdeni Lushazi (30), of corner of Ridgeway and Road 1, Cato Manor; Maria Mthembu (40), of 67 Mount Carmel, Cato Manor; Nabedi Dlamini (34), of 43 K.U., Cato Manor; Joubert Sipelo Msani (26), of 101 K.K., Cato Manor; Lizwi Nki Cele (26), of 44 K.U., Cato Manor; Dineani Mbaso (40), of Durban Municipality Barracks; Mbopheni Abediningo Manyoni (36), of 106 Two-atlck, Cato Manor; Nduna Paulos Mganga (36), of Somtseu R.S. Hostel, 279; Thompson Chamane (30), of 14 M.C., Cato Manor; Masote Edwin Mhlomi (28), of 117 S.V., Cato Manor; Fanozi Brian Mgubungu (30), of 119 S.V., Cato Manor; Sibilo Joseph Miya (53), of 116 S.V., Cato Manor.

Mahema Gogo (30), of 116 S.V., Cato Manor; Mzikayise Johannes Cele (21), of 116 S.V., Cato Manor; Anna Khathuzile Mbhele (38), of 56 K.U., Cato Manor; Bhekimpi Stephan Zuma (32), of 199D (Dabulamansi), Cato Manor; Prophet Nsikane Shezi (34), of 120 J.C., Cato Manor; Godla Jeffrey Mtshali (31), of 101 J.C., Cato Manor; Thembinkosi Schoolboy Mthembu (36), of 68 T.S., Cato Manor; Funokwakhe Gilbert Mbongwa (35), of 144 M.C., Cato Manor; Mhlangeni Joe Khuzwayo (25), of 233B, Cato Manor; Mbulekelwa Colenso Zuma (42), of 42 S.V., Cato Manor; Zwelinjani Titus Khuzwayo (26) of 158 S.V., Cato Manor; Mokolosi Norman Nkosi (24), of 23B Cato Manor; Ntombi Paulina Sokhela (37), of 74 K.U., Cato Manor; Mankheli Leah Ndlela (28), of 211 D., Cato Manor; Msoonelwa John Ndima (26), of Bank Road, Durban; Baneanobani Jonathan Madinana (34), of 344 B., Cato Manor; Mkhumbikanowa Jerome Mthembu (26), of Somtseu Road Hostel; Mzikayise Simon Khuzwayo (32), of 91 New Clare; Eric Mluncu Mpanza (37), of 249 Duffa Road; Bantu Elias Khwela (30), of 161 N.C., Cato Manor; Mphindelwa Joseph Ndlovu (38), of 17 M.C., Cato Manor.

**Amagama Amashovisa Afela  
eMkhumbane**

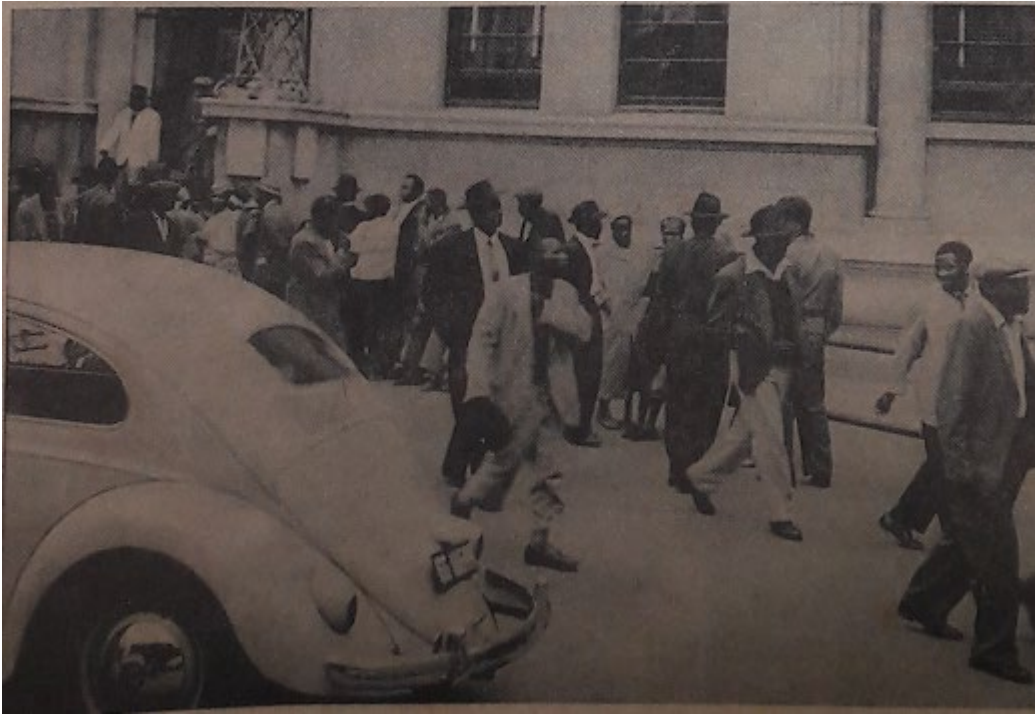
Constable C. C. Kriel (19), of Senekal O.P.S.; Constable C. P. J. S. Redman (19), of Riversdale, Cape; Constable L. W. Kunneke (19), of Heidelberg, Transvaal; Constable G. J. Jourbert (20), of Amsterdam, Transvaal; Sgt. Kufakwazwe Buhlala; Constable Peni Mthethwa; Constable Paul Jesa; Constable Fanezethu Dladla; and Constable Mazondo Neuzo.

The 65 people who were charged at the next stage of the case which started in August 1960.

*UmAfrika*, 30 April 1960, 14



**The Main Trial: 1 August to 2 December 1960**



People attending court proceedings, August 1960, Durban Circuit Court. *UmAfrika*, 13 August 1960

## Nanka amagama ababekwicala laseMkhumbane

Nanka amagama abo: Phayiyana Dladia (29), Mhalekelwa Golensoe Zuma (42), Msayinene Daniel Khuzwayo (24), Mkhumbikanowa Jerome Mthembu (26), Themba Kenneth Mbatha (26), Mabote, Edwin Mohlomi (28), Fanozi Brain Ngubungu (30).

Sillo Joseph Miya (53), Mahemuhemu Gogo (30), Mzikayise Johannes Gele (21), Sipho Victor Nzama (20), Daniel Mandla Mthembu (28), Sipho Ezra Mthembu (18), Siphiso George Ndlovu (40), Bernard Hadebe (38), Roy Mandlenkosi Hadebe (21).

Nelson Phathumuzi Tembela (26), Thomson Chamane (30), Somfane Petros Chamane (38), Thembinkosi Schoolboy Mthembu (36), Mhlangeni Pow Khuzwayo (25), Maqaleni Lushozi (30). Kulabo umthetho ophi bazingane, abathathu baneminyaka engu 17 ababili bangu 10 oyedwa 16. Oyedwa uliKhaladi.

*Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960

## The Trial: 1 August to 2 December 1960

The trial began on 1 August 1960. It was presided over by Judge Justice James assisted by P.C. Tweedie and Ryle Masson, whilst the prosecutors were C. Rees and P.W. Thirion. R.N. Leon, H.E. Hall, R.B. Brink, and A.M. Wilson represented the accused.

The names of the accused who were minors were not published, but *Ilanga LaseNatal* wrote that three were 17, two 16, and one was Coloured. The Coloured young man was identified by Constable Blose in his testimony during the trial as one of the people who pelted police with stones while they were at KwaTiki barracks.<sup>696</sup> One of the 16-year-olds was implicated by another unnamed young boy who testified that he was with him at a site opposite KwaTiki. He said that when the attacks started, the accused gave him his vest and he saw him pelting a policeman with stones. When the accused came back he told the witness that '*uma uke watshela noma ubani ukuthi ngishaye iphoyisa ngizokushaya nawe*' (if you tell anyone that I attacked a policeman you will also fall victim).<sup>697</sup>

The witness also said the accused was present when the mob attacked Jeza, who ran and took cover at Sergeant Buhlalu's house. When he reproached another young boy who was also an accused in the case, the accused said, if he 'talks like that he will also be attacked.'<sup>698</sup> When this young witness presented his side of the story, the court ordered that everyone except the media and relatives should leave the courtroom, presumably to protect the young man and his family as threats against witnesses were common in Mkhumbane.

Evidence during the trial by a 15-year-old identified to the abovementioned 16-year-old accused:

*... wabesebona iphoyisa liqhamuka ngakwaTiki. Labaleka lelo phoyisa lazo layongena emzini kaSayitsheni Buhlalu. Uthi-ke umfana kabuyanga walibona iphoyisa seliphuma lapho, waze walibona selenebe nje laphaya emgwaqweni, lungungwe abantu abaningi belishaya. Uyaqhubeka umfana uthi kwathi lapho esebuya futhi ebheka wafumanisa ukuthi sebeyalishaya khona lapho phansi iphoyisa, kwasala oyedwa. Uthi-ke umfana loyana owabesalele wabesalokhu elishaya ngamatshe iphoyisa kodwa laba abanye bahamba belokhu bemncenga ukuba aliyeke ngoba selishaywe ngosekwanele. Usho phambi kwenkantolo umfana ukuthi ngenxa yokuntenga kwalowo owayeshaya iphoyisa nxa esesuka kulo, kwaba sobala ukuthi udakiwe. Khona lapho umfana ube esesuka ehamba eyokhomba umfana oneminyaka eyishumi nesithupha yobudala ... waqinisa ngokuthi nguye loyana ambona egzoba iphoyisa edakiwe.*<sup>699</sup>

(... he saw a policeman coming from Tiki and running to Sergeant Buhlalu's house. The boy said he did not see the policeman leaving the house; then he saw the policeman's body on the ground, with

<sup>696</sup> 'Icala Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 13 August 1960, 2.

<sup>697</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1.

<sup>698</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1

<sup>699</sup> 'Icala Lokufa KwamaPhoyisa EMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 20 August 1960, 14.

people attacking him. After the mob was gone, one person remained and kept attacking the policeman with stones, while others pleaded with him to stop. The boy said that this attacker could not stand still, and it became evident that he was intoxicated. He then identified a 16-year-old accused and stated that he was the one who attacked the police while drunk).

The young man told the court that he lived at M.K. 22 in Mkhumbane and said that the mob told the accused, '*muyeke manje, usumshayile*' (leave now, you have given him enough beatings).<sup>700</sup>

The first person to testify during the trial was Major C.J. van der Merwe, the police commander of Durban and Pinetown Districts. He said that after being alerted to the attacks, he called for back-up and reached Mkhumbane by 7 pm with his team only to find the bodies of dead and injured policemen. Van der Merwe told the court that the policemen's bodies were near KwaTiki (KwaTickey), but some were still alive and a White policeman he referred to as Reeder was lying down with wounds on his head and body. He ordered that the injured be taken to hospital.<sup>701</sup>

Constable W.F. Krugel told the court that helped picked the severely injured Rheeder up at a house in Tickey. By the time van der Merwe and the back-up arrived, the mob had dispersed, and the smaller number of people that remained torched a Durban Corporation bus. It was difficult to locate the corpses as it was very dark. Van der Merwe also said that the area of Mkhumbane deserved frequent visits by the police because the area produced dirty alcoholic concoctions and was home to gangsters.<sup>702</sup>

Constable W.J. Lombard testified that he was the one driving the vehicle when they raided Mkhumbane with other policemen. The contingent was headed by Sergeant Winterboer and comprised of six Whites and other policemen of African descent, two of whom were sergeants. Lombard said that he left the other policemen on Dennis Shepstone Road and Road 7 after taking 34 people who had been arrested to Cato Manor Police Station. He returned to Dennis Shepstone Road, and on seeing police being attacked, he hooted; those policemen boarded the van he was driving. He said he used the loudspeaker and his colleagues Msomi and Rhubha managed to board the van.<sup>703</sup> N. Braadt also said that he was with the contingent called out after the attacks, and when they arrived at the scene they found the lifeless bodies of Constables Kriel and Jeza.<sup>704</sup>

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<sup>700</sup> 'Omame Bawaqedela Amaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 3.

<sup>701</sup> 'Icala Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1. KwaTiki were corrugated iron houses built by the Durban Corporation. They were known as Tiki because those who stayed there paid rent of a tickey. On 14 February 1961 South Africa adopted a decimal currency, replacing the pound with the Rand. ... The term "tickey" was the nickname for the 3 pence coin.

<sup>702</sup> 'Icala Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

<sup>703</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

<sup>704</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

Following this testimony, the court proceedings were paused to enable court officials to visit the site of the incident in Mkhumbane. Journalists followed the court personnel who were protected by heavily armed policemen in Saracens.



*Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960

The above pictures show court officials visiting KwaTiki, the site of the police killings. The picture above shows onlookers who were reported to have numbered more than 1 000 while the other picture shows the head judge of the case, Justice James and R.B. Wilson pointing to where it was reported that Sergeant Buhlalu and Constable Fanazethu Dlodla were murdered. *Ilanga LaseNatal* reported that the court entourage included Major C.E. Fourie, the Head of the Durban and Pinetown District Police, and prosecutors C. Rees and P.W. Thirion, whilst the accused's representative R.N. Leon, Q.C. was also present as well as many others from the state and representing those charged.<sup>705</sup>

The head of investigations, J.J. van Rooyen, presented his evidence on Wednesday 3 August. He told the court that an estimated 566 stones were used in the attacks. He added that the population of Mkhumbane was around 120 000, and on Sundays, about 100 000 people visit the area for different activities. Van

<sup>705</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

Rooyen told the court that he visited KwaTickey the day after the incident at 5 am where he found two doors broken and 188 stones at room 255, and 199 stones at room 199 with handcuffs and four bullets.<sup>706</sup> Van Rooyen also told the court that he picked up different items at the scene, such as a whistle, a key, knife, and hats, and on Road 4 he found the headgear of two policemen.<sup>707</sup> Asked by the defence if there were many people present on the day of the attacks, he agreed and added that he believed police revolvers were missing that had not been recovered by the time of his evidence.

According to the witnesses' evidence, especially the Buhlalu family during the pre-trial and the trial, the policeman who ran into Sergeant Buhlalu's house was Jesa. Cases of attackers who were reported to have been drunk were common. A certain Amos Khuzwayo testified that his roommate Joe Khuzwayo came back from the attacks carrying a stick and a shirt with bloodstains hanging on his shoulders. Amos testified that Joe *wayebonakala ukuthi uphuzile* (it was clear that he was drunk) and he told Amos that if he got arrested, he should testify that he did not go to the scene and that he was at home the whole day.<sup>708</sup>

A so-called "shebeen queen", Maria Ngcobo, testified that five of the accused were drinking liquor at her house when they heard the noise. She said that Johannes Cele, Mahemu Goqo, Joseph Miya, Brian Mgubungu, and Edwin Mohlomi took sticks and machetes and headed to the warzone.<sup>709</sup> Papiyana Dladla denied involvement in the police killings when he presented his case in October, claiming that he was very drunk; hence, he slept and woke up after the fracas.<sup>710</sup>

When C.J. van der Merwe, commissioner of police in Durban and Pinetown Districts took the witness stand, he said that he had heard that some of the police, Africans and Whites, who were deployed to conduct raids in Mkhumbane consumed liquor at the local shebeens. They disliked raiding these shebeens. He added that some of the police stationed at Kito were redeployed because they misbehaved during raids.<sup>711</sup> He said residents had complained of this behaviour by the police and that he had sent some of the names to the higher authorities to take action.<sup>712</sup> The principal investigator of the case, J.J. van Rooyen, disputed van der Merwe's assertion in court and claimed that there were no cases of police drinking in shebeens.<sup>713</sup>

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<sup>706</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

<sup>707</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

<sup>708</sup> 'Owesifazana Wacashisa Iphoyisa Ethi Uyise', *UmAfrika*, 27 March 1960, 3.

<sup>709</sup> 'Omunye Walicanda Inhlafuno Ngocelemba', *UmAfrika*, 3 September 1960, 1.

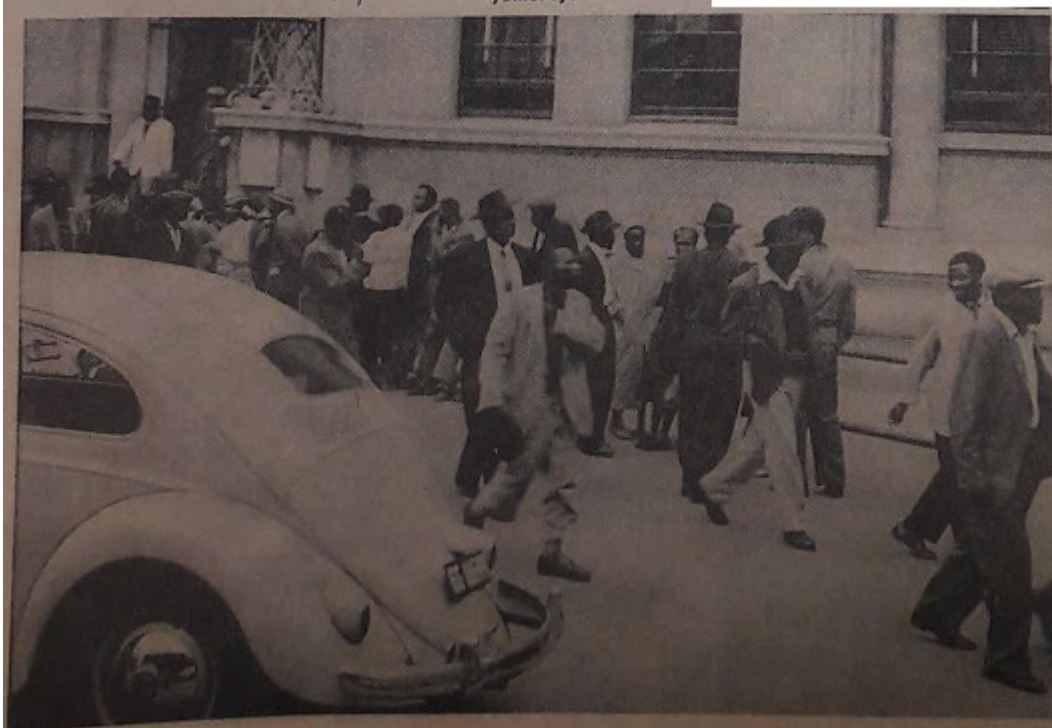
<sup>710</sup> 'Bayaliphika Icala Ababhekene Nokubulala AmaPhoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 15 October 1960, 14.

<sup>711</sup> 'AmaPhoyisa Ayephuza Emashibhini Emkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 13 August 1960, 1.

<sup>712</sup> 'Icala Lokubulawa Kwamaphoyisa EMkhumbane', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 3.

<sup>713</sup> 'Ijaji Labona Khona Lapho Kwafa Khona Amaphoyisa KwaTickey', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 6 August 1960, 1.

Umshungu wabantu baseMkhumbane  
labo, ebezolalela icala lokufa kwa-  
maphoyisa lingene enkantolo enkulu  
yamaJaji.



Caption: People who attended the police killings case at the High Court.

*UmAfrika*, 13 August 1960

A statement made by George Ndlovu after his arrest on 28 January 1960 was read out in court after his lawyer, A.M. Wilson, confirmed it. Ndlovu was quoted as saying that he was coming from work when he saw many people attacking the police at the Durban Corporation barracks, KwaTiki. They were known as Tiki because those who stayed there paid rental of a tickey.<sup>714</sup> The statement read: *ekwehleni kwami ebhasini ngabona abantu Abaningi belwa bebanga umsindo beshaya amaphoyisa* (when I jumped off the bus I saw many people fighting the police).<sup>715</sup> Ndlovu said that he went into his house, and while taking off his jacket, he saw people killing a policeman, and another being chased by the mob came straight towards him. He said he tried to pull the policeman to the side to take him inside the house, but the people grabbed and killed the policeman.<sup>716</sup> This policeman was White and people attacked him with stones. Ndlovu was not harmed and went into his house.<sup>717</sup> Ndlovu's wife, Lillian Mzolo, who testified after

<sup>714</sup> 'UNdlovu Uthi Walibamba Iphoyisa Elisiza. Wabuye Walidedela Abantu Sebefike Qatha', *UmAfrika*, 20 August 1960, 1 & 14.

<sup>715</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1

<sup>716</sup> 'UNdlovu Uthi Walibamba Iphoyisa Elisiza. Wabuye Walidedela Abantu Sebefike Qatha', *UmAfrika*, 20 August 1960, 14.

<sup>717</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1

Ndlovu's statement was read, told the court that she had asked Ndlovu whether he was present during the attacks, and he replied firmly, 'I was not there, I was coming from work.'<sup>718</sup>

When the case resumed in October, the number of accused had been reduced to 27. Most denied any involvement. Daniel Mthembu, a chemist delivery man who was arrested on 26 January claimed that only a certain Sipho went into the 'warzone.' He said he walked far from the battle with Barnabas Ndlovu because he had no identity document, popularly known as *pasi* (derived from *dopass*) to locals.<sup>719</sup> Another accused who denied any wrongdoing was Robert Dlamini, who said that he had carried his machete to the 'warzone' but did not hit the White policeman whom he saw being chased and eventually attacked by the mob. However, he confessed to attacking a policeman with a machete and hitting him hard on his back at KwaTiki.<sup>720</sup> Dlamini told the court that he did not attack to kill, but it was a form of retaliation as he had seen police attacking people in Mkhumbane.

Theminkosi Schoolboy Mthembu, another accused, told the court that on the day of the incident, he was drinking *gavini* at the Mgangeni section and that he only heard about the police attacks at the drinking place. Mthembu told the court that he was a private investigator for the police at Mkhumbane and had assisted the police after the attacks. He also claimed that his salary depended on how many people he had arrested.<sup>721</sup> Mthembu said that he did not go to the area where the attacks took place because people knew him, and there was a possibility of him being attacked as the people hated the police, and some knew that he was a police spy. Two days after the incident, Mthembu testified that he found handcuffs at KwaTiki. While they were being cross-examined at Kito, Mthembu claimed that the police forced him to make a false statement that he had been given the handcuffs by one of the people who had been arrested. Mthembu told the court that this was not true.<sup>722</sup>

Two witnesses, however, testified against Mthembu. Gideon Mzimela told the court that he saw Mthembu striking a policeman with a stick. The witness also identified Mthembu at Kito at an identity parade.<sup>723</sup> Another unnamed witness said that on the evening of the attacks Mthembu came to where they lived and showed him police handcuffs. The witness testified that Mthembu said '*uDludla ngeke uphinde umbone*' (you will never see Dludla again). The witness also told the court that Mthembu said to him that he climbed through the window of the house where the policeman had hidden and pushed the policeman outside, and people killed him.<sup>724</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1

<sup>719</sup> 'Bayaliphika Icala Ababhekene Nokubulala AmaPhoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 15 October 1960, 14.

<sup>720</sup> 'Bayaliphika Icala Ababhekene Nokubulala AmaPhoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 15 October 1960, 14.

<sup>721</sup> 'Afa Izigingqane Amaphoyisa EMkhumbane: UMthembu Uthi Amaphoyisa Amqambisa Amanga', *UmAfrika*, 22 October 1960, 1.

<sup>722</sup> 'Afa Izigingqane Amaphoyisa EMkhumbane: UMthembu Uthi Amaphoyisa Amqambisa Amanga', *UmAfrika*, 22 October 1960, 1.

<sup>723</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1

<sup>724</sup> 'Iphoyisa LoMlungu Lakhala Ngosizo', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 August 1960, 1



Bernard Radebe followed Mthembu and confessed that he felt 'sad' for attacking the police. Radebe told the court that he was drinking on the day of the attacks and when he heard the noise, he took the plank used to stir *isishimeyane* and headed for the battle zone. Radebe blamed the influence of alcohol for striking a policeman above his left knee and that he did not mean to kill him, but to threaten him.<sup>725</sup> Maqadini Shozi testified that he was drinking with a certain Shandu and that he saw a bus burning in Road 1. Lushozi denied that he carried a machete on the day, that he told people he was going to get some weapons, or that he was present or saw the attacks but said that it was customary in Mkhumbane to see people following the police.<sup>726</sup>

Jerome Mthemu, one of the accused affectionately known as Mkhumbi KaNoah (Noah's Ark) by locals, told the court that on the day of the attacks, he was playing a popular local game called dices and denied that he was with his girlfriend, Thoko Ntuli, and Themba Kenneth Mbatha. He rejected Thoko's version that she saw him armed with sticks. He was arrested on 27 February by the police who fired live bullets but missed him.<sup>727</sup>

When one of the accused's representatives, R.N. Leon, Q.C., took the stand in November, he emphasised to the court that it should carefully consider the witnesses' testimonies as they were bound to misinform the court. Leon emphasised that the day's events happened so fast and a lot happened in a short space of time.. Leon also drew on precedents where the accused had misinformed the courts.<sup>728</sup> Prior to presenting his summary to the court, he compared Mkhumbane to a forest. Its burning, he said, was inevitable because people were angry at the police who did not respect residents and made their lives unbearable.<sup>729</sup>

*UmAfrika* reported that Ntombikayise Beatrice Mokoena, the woman whose foot was stepped on by Constable Biyela, and an unnamed male confessed to instigating the attacks on police.<sup>730</sup>

The trial concluded on 2 December 1960. A hundred and twenty-five witnesses gave evidence in court, with 109 called by the state and 16 by the accused's representatives. After Judge Justice James assessed all the evidence, he announced on Thursday 22 December 1960 that ten of the accused would be sentenced to death. *Kwathuka wonke umuntu* (all people in the gallery were shocked) and women covered their faces, but there was no reported noise.<sup>731</sup>

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<sup>725</sup> 'Afa Izigingqane Amaphoyisa EMkhumbane: UMthembu Uthi Amaphoyisa Amqambisa Amanga', *UmAfrika*, 22 October 1960, 1.

<sup>726</sup> 'Wabona Ibhasi Isha', *UmAfrika*, 22 October 1960, 1.

<sup>727</sup> 'Uyalanda UMKhumbikanowa', *UmAfrika*, 22 October 1960, 1.

<sup>728</sup> 'UMmeli Useyibonile Ingozi KoFakazi', *UmAfrika*, 3 December 1960, 1. Q.C. stands for Queen's Counsel and is the title bestowed on barristers or advocates recognised for excellence. The advocate is appointed by the monarch to become one of 'Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the law' or a King's Counsel (K.C.) when the monarch is male.

<sup>729</sup> 'UMmeli Useyibonile Ingozi KoFakazi', *UmAfrika*, 3 December 1960, 14.

<sup>730</sup> 'Useyolala Kobandayo UNtombikayise', *UmAfrika*, 10 December 1960, 1.

<sup>731</sup> 'Sifikisele Usizi Isigwebo. Sebezolengiswa Ngentambo Ababulala Amaphoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 24 December 1960, 1.

The Black section of the court was packed to capacity, as had been the case since the beginning of the pre-trial in March. For the first time in the case, reported *UmAfrika*, the Whites' section of the court was also full to capacity. In passing sentence, Justice James said:

*Inkantolo kube yisibopho sayo ukuba icwaningisise kahle ubufakazi obuqondene yilowo nayilowo obhekene nalo, iphenye futhi nakho konke okungavimbela nokungaveza ithuba lesigwebo sentambo pheze kwababhekene necala. Libe selisho ligcizelela ijaji ukuthi ngenkathi amaphoyisa eshaywa aze afe amanye laphaya eMkhumbane, ayembethe yona imvunulo yobuphoyisa ezama ukuba uhlonishwe umthetho, nawo ayethunywe ngabakulu bawo ukuba bawugcizelele uhlonishwe ... akusho lutho ukuthi abantu babewuhumusha ngayiphi indlela umthetho lona wotshwala, amaphoyisa ayephezu komsebenzi wawo, ezama futhi nokuba kube khona uxolo nokuhlala ngokuhleleka phakathi kwendawo yaseMkhumbane ... impela akungeni njena emqondweni walo ukuthi ukhona umuntu owayengathi lapho ebona amaphoyisa eshaywa laphaya eMkhumbane, kube yinto njena angayethuki futhi angaboni njena nokuthi lokhu kusho ukuthi umthetho usulinyazwe kanzima, angaboni futhi nokuthi abantu abamele umthetho baphethwe budedengu, bayashaywa ...*<sup>732</sup>

(It was the court's duty to do a case-by-case analysis of the accused and take into consideration any aspects that can prevent or support a sentence of the death penalty. The judge was emphatic that the police were attacked and some were hacked to death; they were wearing police uniforms and represented the law that should be obeyed. The police had been deployed by their superiors to order citizens to obey and uphold the law. How residents felt about the liquor laws is not of concern; police performed their duties, which involved maintaining law and order in Mkhumbane. It is hard to believe that a person seeing the police being attacked would not be shocked as it was *prima facie* that people were breaking the law by attacking the police).

In sentencing the accused, the judge clarified that:

*... inkantolo kube yisibopho sayo ukuba icwaningisise kahle ubufakazi obuqondene yilowo nayilowo obhekene nalo, iphenye futhi nakho konke okungavimbela nokungaveza ithuba lesigwebo sentambo kwababhekene necala.*<sup>733</sup>

(... the court had a duty to analyse evidence for and against each of the accused, and investigate every aspect which provides the court with an opportunity to judge against and for imposing the death sentence).

*Ilanga LaseNatal* also published the Judge's speech and in one of the quotes, reported him as saying:

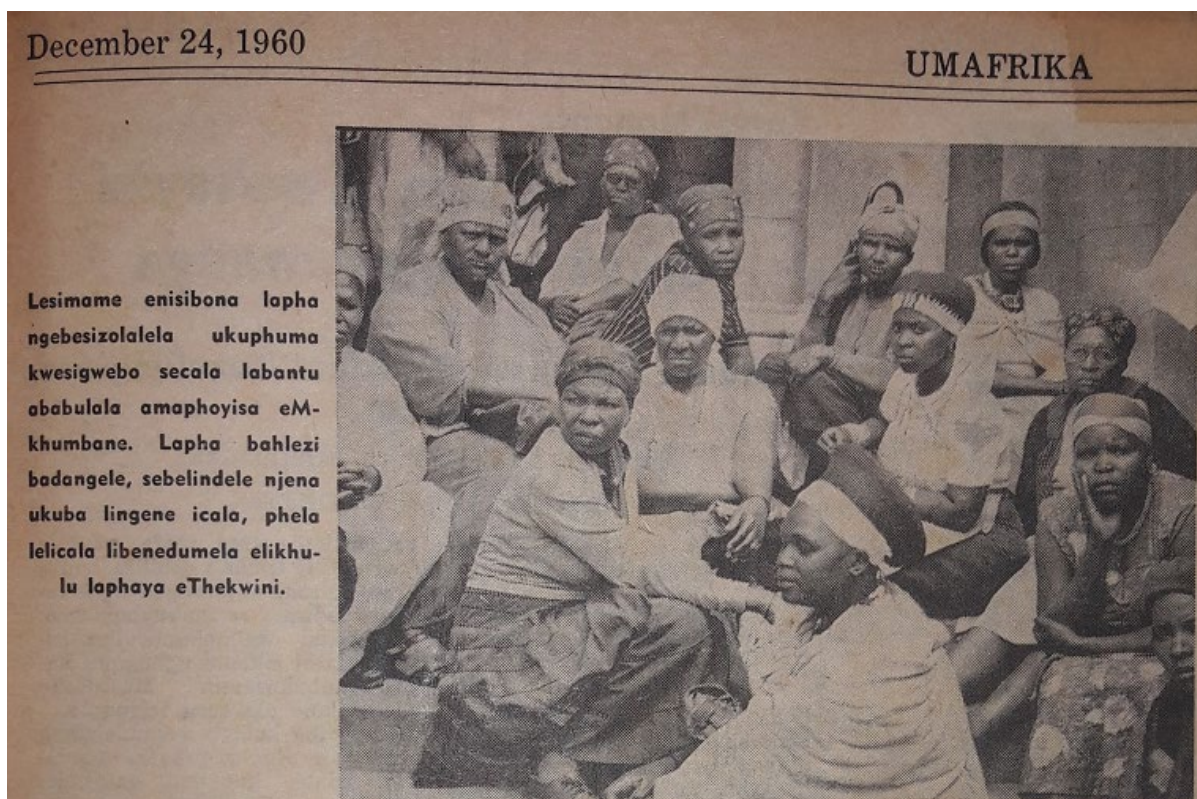
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<sup>732</sup> 'Sifikisele Usizi Isigwebo. Sebezolengiswa Ngentambo Ababulala Amaphoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 24 December 1960, 1.

<sup>733</sup> 'Ecaleni LaseMkhumbane: Sifikisele Usizi Isigwebo. Sebeyolengiswa Ngentambo Ababulala Amaphoyisa', *UmAfrika*, 24 December 1960, 1.

*Noma izinhliziyi zabantu baseMkhumbane zabe zizimbi zithini ngotshwala, amaphoyisa ayenza umsebenzi wawo awunikwe umthetho futhi eMkhumbane ayesisithunzi somthetho nokuziphatha kahle*<sup>734</sup> (No matter how dissatisfied the people of Mkhumbane are about liquor laws, the policemen were performing their lawful duty as they represented the law and public order in Mkhumbane).

Judge James said that the killing of the policemen reflected *njengento eyayiwukubulala kobulwane nokukhombisa izinhliziyi zonya* (a lack of humanity and hearts full of cruelty).



*UmAfrika*, 24 December, 1960.

Seen in the picture are women waiting for the verdict outside the Durban Court on 22 December 1960. The case attracted international interest. The caption on the left of the photograph reads:

The women seen here came to the court to hear the verdict in the case of the Mkhumbane police killings. Here they are seated and distraught, waiting for the commencement of the case. The infamous case became very popular in Durban.

<sup>734</sup> 'Amadoda Ayi-10 Anqunyelwe Intambo Ngokubulala Amaphoyisa', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 24 December 1960, 1.

*(Lesimame enisibona lapha ngebesizolalela ukuphuma kwesigwebo secala labantu ababulale amaphoyisa eMkhumbane. Lapha bahlezi bendangele, sebelindele njena lingene icala, phela lelicala libenedumela elikhulu laphaya eThekwini).*

Before announcing the sentences, Judge James asked the accused if they had anything to say. Many responded that they were breadwinners in their families, with Lushozi still claiming that ‘he was not guilty because he did not attack the police’.<sup>735</sup> The judge sentenced the following to death: Papiyana Dladla, Msayinene Daniel Khuzwayo, Mkhumbikanowa Jerome Mthembu, Fanozi Brian Mgubungu, Sililo Joseph Miya, Mahewu Goqo, Thompson Chamane, Thembinkosi Schoolboy Mthembu, Mhlangeni Joe Khuzwayo, and Maqandeni Lushozi.

Bernard Radebe (38) was sentenced to 18 years (*UmAfrika* wrote 15), Roy Mandlenkosi Radebe (21) and Nelson Phathumuzi Thembela (26) to 12 years, two unnamed males (below the age of 18) to ten years each, one to eight years, and another two males to five years in prison. The one who was sentenced to eight years was also under the age of 18 and the judge said that he would have also been sentenced to death if it were not for his age. Judge James said that:

*Noma iminyaka yakho imincane kufanele ujeziswe ngempela. Kungasho nje ukuthi ngoba nje wenze lokhu, kodwa ukuxwayisa futhi nabanye abangangawe abalisa abakhulayo namabhungu aseMkhumbane ukuthi mabayeke ukuhlasela amaphoyisa bewashaya.*<sup>736</sup>

(Even though your age is below eighteen, you should be punished. The punishment is not because you did this, but also to warn others of your age and the teenagers in Mkhumbane to stop attacking police).

Speaking on behalf of the accused’s representatives, Mr Leon said they were appealing the case, and the court agreed that the appeal proceedings would commence on 16 January 1961. Eight accused were sentenced to five to eighteen years in jail.<sup>737</sup> Mbalekelwa Colenso Zuma, Mabode Edwin Mohlomi, Mzikayise Johannes Cele, Sipiwo George Ndlovu, and three males below the age of 18 were acquitted.<sup>738</sup>

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<sup>735</sup> ‘Amadoda Ayi-10 Anqunyelwe Intambo Ngokubulala Amaphoyisa’, *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 24 December 1960, 3.

<sup>736</sup> ‘Amadoda Ayi-10 Anqunyelwe Intambo Ngokubulala Amaphoyisa’, *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 24 December 1960, 3.

<sup>737</sup> ‘Amadoda Ayi-10 Anqunyelwe Intambo Ngokubulala Amaphoyisa’, *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 24 December 1960, 1.

<sup>738</sup> ‘Amadoda Ayi-10 Anqunyelwe Intambo Ngokubulala Amaphoyisa’, *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 24 December 1960, 1.



*Ilanga LaseNatal*, 24 December 1960, 1

Caption: Seen in the picture on the left is Mrs Martha Chamane, whose husband was sentenced to death. When she heard the sentence, she cried loudly and knocked her head against the wall. Seen on the right are Mrs Chamane and another woman from Mkhumbane after hearing the verdict.

## Conclusion

The police killings prompted several ‘sporadic disturbances’ in Natal and Zululand against agricultural “betterment”, which ‘included the destruction of dipping tanks, crop burning and militant protests by stick-wielding women.’<sup>739</sup> These incidents included well-known ones such as the potato and cigarette boycotts when some White farmers were charged for taking African prisoners and illegally sending them to Bethel district near Ermelo, a city in what is now Mpumalanga province.<sup>740</sup> In protest, women in Natal ‘started going around and wherever they saw potatoes, they ... took the potatoes and threw them on the floor.’<sup>741</sup>

As part of the campaign, they destroyed every potato they saw in the market. Interestingly, though, Bourquin reported that women were still cooking potatoes and complaining about people who were destroying potatoes because of the boycott of the beer halls.<sup>742</sup> It has indeed been claimed that in the ‘immediate prelude to Sharpeville’, the 1950s, Natal, mainly due to events in Mkhumbane, was ‘the most violent province in South Africa.’<sup>743</sup> Mkhumbane was home to many activists and members of the SACP and ANC and ‘served as a residential haven,’ and it was in areas such as Mkhumbane where ‘some of the most serious conflicts in South Africa occurred.’<sup>744</sup> Due to the shock caused by the killing of policemen and ‘the authorities’ subsequent ruthless reaction, the campaign against proposed relocation to KwaMashu dissipated.<sup>745</sup>

The mid-twentieth century was a hotbed of instability, socially, economically, and politically, in South Africa. A comment by the Assistant Manager of the NAD in 1952 describes Mkhumbane:

Two years ago, quite apart from the effects or after-effects of the 1949 Riots, Cato Manor established a time bomb in which the mechanism had already started ticking. Officially Cato Manor was a virtual no-man’s land. Socially, it was a hotbed of prostitution, liquor sale, and every imaginable vice or illicit undertaking, with only a small number of private welfare bodies to stem the tide. Administratively it was a nightmare, and perhaps for that reason, little, if any, an administration attempt had been made. Politically it was a melting pot for several agitators, self-appointed leaders, grafters, cliques, and factions.<sup>746</sup>

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<sup>739</sup> Dubow, *Apartheid: 1948–1994*, 79.

<sup>740</sup> Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 28.

<sup>741</sup> Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 28.

<sup>742</sup> Interview, Rowley Arenstein, 99/4201, Old Court Museum, 28.

<sup>743</sup> Magubane *et al.*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 103.

<sup>744</sup> Magubane *et al.*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 104.

<sup>745</sup> Magubane *et al.*, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, 106.

<sup>746</sup> Edwards, “Mkhumbane Our Home”, 12. Quote extracted from MNAD; H2-CM, vol. 1, Manager, MNAD-Town Clerk, 31 January 1952.

The decade of the 1950s marked an ‘eventful’ epoch in Mkhumbane, as Brigadier Heymans summarised in 1960 in the aftermath of the killing of the police:

As far as I could see, Mkhumbane was even then a keg full of explosives – waiting for the right catalyst to explode at any minute. Various riots took place there – the newspapers were full of it. Major Jerry van der Merwe once appeared on the front page of a local newspaper with a bleeding face after a stone was thrown at him, which struck him in the face. All the factors and actors were present, especially over weekends. Various factors were at play. It was just a question of time.<sup>747</sup>

Riots, rebellions, disturbances, or protests, however one names them depending on one’s perspective, were a prominent part of Mkhumbane’s history from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. This chapter and the preceding two examined these events from the standpoint of the sociology of collective memories, comparing official and popular memories, which shows contrasts in the interpretations of these events by different groups. Older people’s memories give rise to varied interpretations, which show that 1949 was seen as a ‘victory,’ and 1959 witnessed the emergence of African women as a powerful force in their own right, while 1960 was a euphoric but brief passing phase as in the aftermath, the state would reassert its power.

Although the first of these riots occurred more than 70 years ago, they have not been forgotten. Remarkably, some of the memories resemble the Riots Commission’s evidence, suggesting the passing down of community memories. The past continues to live in the present because it serves a purpose for the various groups who were involved, especially Africans and Indians, and has implications for the current context as it is drawn on for different purposes.

The three episodes of violence discussed in this thesis have shown that Mkhumbane was an area of unpredictable and dramatic uprisings. Only a few, if any, former residents of Mkhumbane would concur with this statement, although events proved otherwise. At the root of the riots were multiple causes. The rioters were alienated from the socio-economic and political structures and experienced widespread harassment by police, poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, and poor service delivery. The inability to conduct their “business” was likely the last straw that led to frustration and the outbursts that included burning homes and stores, looting, and even murder.

Such events convinced city officials of the need to relocate the people of Mkhumbane, and the following chapter discusses newspaper reports and people’s memories of forced removals.

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<sup>747</sup> Brig. Hennie Heymans, “1960-01-24: Massacre of Police at Cato Manor: a Subjective View”, accessed 26 June 2017. Available at <https://www.radiofreesouthafrica.com/1960-01-24-massacre-police-cato-manor-subjective-view/>.

Evidence during the trial pointed to many of the contradictions in society. It underscored male South Africans' unhealthy relationship with alcohol; the brutal treatment of African urban residents by the police; the use of African spies to control the African urban population; and police determination to round up those deemed guilty by all means necessary. While the actions of police were brutal, they would get considerably worse as the 1960s wore on. In some senses, there was a naivety about undermanned and insufficiently armed police venturing into an 'explosive' township. This would not be the case a decade later.

Ten trialists were sentenced to death, one of whom later successfully appealed. The Cato Manor 9 were hanged on 5 September 1961, and their families were not allowed to bury them. Those who were hanged were: Thembinkosi Schoolboy Mthembu, Fanozi Brian Mgubungu, Msayineke Daniel Khuzwayo, Sililo Joseph Miya, Payiyana Dladla, Mahemu Goqo, Maqandeni Lushozi, Thompson Chamane, and Mhlawungeni Joe Khuzwayo.

In 2020, the year of COVID-19, Minister of Justice and Correctional Services Ronald Lamola officiated at the handing over of the exhumed remains of the Cato Manor 9, which had been buried in different parts of Pretoria by the apartheid government and given what was termed a "dignified" funeral. This was long overdue as their resistance was against apartheid and its enforcement agencies. We have commemorated those who were "high profile," and influential, and even benefited during the post-apartheid period for too long. The foot soldiers have been side-lined. More needs to be done to find and acknowledge these ordinary people who gave their lives to the struggle. To date, most have not been recognised, and their families have received no material compensation.



## Chapter Six

### *Ikhaya Elisha* (“KwaMashu our new home”): Housing, communal facilities, and transport dilemmas

Many of the workers would be saddened by the relocation to KwaMashu. Through the word of God, all impediments on our path would be evaded.<sup>748</sup>

*Ziningi izisebenzi ezizophatheka kabi ngokuthuthela lapha KwaMashu. Kodwa phela ngegama likaNkulunkulu ziyophebezwa zonke izithiyi eziphambi kwethu.*

- ‘EzakwaMashu’, *UmAfrika*, 11 April 1959

This epigraph was written by Joloza, a columnist for *UmAfrika* newspaper, most likely to offer some optimism, hope, and comfort to the residents of the new township of KwaMashu. The message seemed to be that with the help of God, their path would be eased and the transition made easier. It seemed that the residents felt powerless against the apartheid state and its machinations, and trust in God appeared to be their only salvation for the moment.

The area north of Newlands, which was to become KwaMashu, was a productive sugarcane farm when the DCC decided to purchase this valuable agricultural land to build a township. The name KwaMashu was chosen by Sir Marshall Campbell (1848-1917), a pioneer of the sugarcane industry in the Colony of Natal and a nationally known politician at the turn of the twentieth century, who was the original owner of the land. The land was purchased from the Natal Sugar Estates Company that owned it at the time.<sup>749</sup>

Campbell was known as Mashu among the Zulu [reference for this], and would never have thought that Zulu people’s inability to pronounce his surname would give birth to one of the most famous townships in the country. KwaMashu translates to ‘Mashu's place’. There are many other examples of this that could constitute a separate study; for example, the Zulus called John Dunn

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<sup>748</sup> ‘EzakwaMashu’, *UmAfrika*, 11 April 1959, 16.

<sup>749</sup> For sources that discuss the establishment of KwaMashu and other related content, see Paul Maylam, “The ‘Black Belt’: African Squatters in Durban 1935–1950”, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 17, 3, 1983, Special Issue: South Africa (1983): 413-428; Jason Hickel, *Democracy as Death: The Moral Order of Anti-Liberal Politics in South Africa* (California: University of California Press, 2015); Jabulani Russell Manzi, “The Manifestation of Apartheid Legacy on Housing Within the Durban Metropolitan Region, a Case of KwaMashu Township”, Honours thesis, University of Zululand, 1994; Siphesihle Cyril Molefe, “Leisure and the making of KwaMashu 1958-1989”, MA thesis, Historical Studies, University of Cape Town, 2010; Susanna Godehart, “The Transformation of Townships in South Africa: the case of KwaMashu, Durban”, PhD thesis: University of Dortmund, 2006.

*Jantoni*, derived from his name and surname.<sup>750</sup> Campbell has been described as a person who was ‘venerated and loved by the Zulus’.<sup>751</sup> He has also been labelled as a friend and protector of the Zulus whom they held in very high regard.<sup>752</sup>

Such perspectives should be critically considered. In recent years, polls in the United Kingdom have found that many people thought that colonialism was benevolent and benefited those who were colonised and that Britain should be proud of its empire. This kind of statement has also been made in South Africa, for example, by Helen Zille of the Democratic Alliance and is held by many Whites, with evidence used selectively and uncritically to argue this point. The fact is that on the whole, notwithstanding some technological benefits and infrastructure, colonialism caused massive psychological, social, economic, and political harm to the colonised.

The City Council made plans to develop two prestigious African townships - KwaMashu and then Umlazi. Writing in *UmAfrika*, Molefe noted in 1962 that the ‘envisaged housing scheme at KwaMashu was to be the biggest scheme that the City Council of Durban had undertaken for Africans’ as it involved various departments working together.<sup>753</sup> Between 105 000 and 110 000 people were expected to be moved to KwaMashu by 1962.<sup>754</sup> The newspaper reported that these figures had been provided by Bourquin, who also announced in January 1958, that the Minister of Bantu Affairs Dr H.F. Verwoerd, had given permission for the construction of the houses.

P.H. Thomas, general secretary of the Natal Chamber of Industries, presented a glowing account on the development of KwaMashu to the chamber in September 1960. According to this report, the City Council had purchased 2 620 acres of land in 1955, about 15 kilometres north of Durban, on the railway line to Zululand. The funds for the project were borrowed from the central government. Additional funds were acquired from the Native Levy Fund to level the land, construct roads and streets, and provide water, water-borne sewerage, and electricity. The area was divided into nine units comprising 2 800 houses. Thomas added that:

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<sup>750</sup> Dunn settled and lived with the Zulus for the better part of his life. He is believed to have married 48 Zulu wives and fathered some 117 children. He performed Zulu rituals and customs and lived his life like a typical Zulu person. He acted as Cetshwayo's secretary and diplomatic adviser and was rewarded with a chieftainship, land, livestock, and two Zulu virgins. See <http://www.mtunzini.co.za/dunn.htm>.

<sup>751</sup> Janie A. Malherbe, *Port Natal: A Pioneer Story* (Cape Town: H. Timmins, 1965), 267.

<sup>752</sup> S.B. Bourquin, KCAV 174 and 175, by A. Manson and D. Collins, Westville, 18 and 19 October 1980.

<sup>753</sup> Molefe, “Leisure and the making of KwaMashu”, 18-19.

<sup>754</sup> ‘Kuzongena Imizi Engama - 350 Laphaya Kaashu NgoMarch’, *UmAfrika*, 18 January 1958, 3.

Trees have been planted to give the township a more pleasing appearance.... It is intended that a separate family unit be allocated to provide people with privacy and inculcate in them those family virtues generally associated with middle-class working people.<sup>755</sup>

This was part of the “civilising” mission that Whites had in mind for Africans to embrace the nuclear family, Christianity and morality, work hard, and give up their leisure-time activities and embrace more acceptable ones that did not include alcohol consumption, and strive for personal improvement.

Contrary to city officials’ positive projections, the “new home” was not the desired one for most of the residents of Mkhumbane. KwaMashu was supposed to be better than Mkhumbane in terms of its physical layout and quality of life, but many of those who moved there described it as ‘raw, completely stripped of all conventions’.<sup>756</sup> Lauretta Ngcobo, a formerly exiled writer who focused on women's roles during apartheid, called KwaMashu a human reservoir of Durban.<sup>757</sup> Joloza, an *UmAfrika* columnist, wrote that the Zulu nation had been ‘dumped’ in the sugarcane field, referring to the area’s previous usage,<sup>758</sup> whilst Buthelezi writes that the residents had to bear the ‘brunt of the Africanisation of poverty’ in KwaMashu.<sup>759</sup>

It should also be borne in mind that not everyone from Mkhumbane relocated to KwaMashu for various reasons. Some, as Mzimela explained, bought:

*Abanye bazithengela izindawo ko-Clermont nako-Nanda. Njengami nje umama wethenga indawo eNanda yazodliwa ummeli u-Reggie, kune-case eyaze yavulwa Phakathi kwabo bobabili .... Njengathi nje ubaba wayesebenza kwa-Kwapeletsheni kwa-Transport kwathiwa akathole umuzi endaweni ehamba ibhasi ngoba kufanele avuke ekuseni eyolungisa amabhasi. Wathola indawo e-Chesterville ngoba ewumsebenzi kaMasipala ngo-1958.*<sup>760</sup>

(... places around Clermont and Inanda. Like myself, my mother bought a place at Inanda, and it was taken away from us by Reggies, who was a lawyer. There was a case that was opened between the two of them ... Others bought houses and land in areas such as Clermont

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<sup>755</sup> The Durban Old House Museum. The Natal Chamber of Industries: Housing for Urban African Population (30 September, 1960), 8-9.

<sup>756</sup> Lauretta Ngcobo, *And They Didn't Die*, 31.

<sup>757</sup> Lauretta Ngcobo, *And They Didn't Die*, 30.

<sup>758</sup> ‘EzakwaMashu’, *UmAfrika*, April 11, 1959, 16.

<sup>759</sup> Mazo Sybil T. Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers in KwaZulu/Natal - 1920-2000*, (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2004), contents page.

<sup>760</sup> Mathews Mahlafuna Mzimela, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 16 June, 2015.

and Inanda. In my case, my father worked at the Durban Corporation and was told to look for a place alongside the road where buses travelled so that he could get to work in the morning to perform mechanical duties. He was offered a place in Chesterville because he was working for the Durban Corporation).

Mbanjwa attests that while many of the residents of Mkhumbane relocated to uMlazi B, C, D, and F sections and KwaMashu's B, C, G, and Emaplangweni sections, others went to areas such as Inanda, Clermont, Mbumbulu, and Ndengezi.<sup>761</sup>

### **No marriage certificate; no house in KwaMashu**

As the message of forced removals was delivered through loudspeakers and newspapers, the precondition that houses would only be allocated to those who were married was also delivered. Mr Ngcobo recalls that, on top of forced removals, people were also forced to marry in order to acquire a house in KwaMashu: *Abantu babetshelwa ukuthi abashade ngoba ngeke bewuthole umuzi kwaMashu. Abaningi nje bahamba bayobhala bashada* (People were told to get married because they would not be allocated houses if they were not married. Most people went to register their marriages).<sup>762</sup>

This precondition appears to have resulted in the majority of Mkhumbane's residents falling outside of the 'system'. According to C.A. Hignett, an official of the Bantu Affairs social welfare division, the low number of applicants was due to the fact that only married people, either through civil or customary means, were eligible for houses. Hignett added that his Department had opened a church to deal with the registration of marriages.<sup>763</sup> While the first residents settled in KwaMashu in March 1958, Hickel describes it as 'rigorous process.' He details the process thus:

Displaced residents of Mkhumbane were given first priority, but they had to meet a series of stringent criteria before they could claim their units. Bourquin and the township manager, a man, named R.G. Willson, had the final word when it came to the final allocation of residential permits – near-total power over social engineering. They made their decision according to a set of rules established by the Natal administration known as Provincial Notice No. 383 of 1960, 'Regulations for the Management and Control of

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<sup>761</sup> Baba Mbanjwa, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 June 2015.

<sup>762</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 23 June 2015.

<sup>763</sup> 'Kalishadile Iningi Emkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 1 November 1958, 1.

Native Locations'. This notorious and widely resented legislation decreed that black individuals could only claim the right to a house if they were male, fully employed, head of a family, and married to a woman. The regulations declared that accommodation would only be allocated to "fit and proper persons," which gave the township manager the latitude to reject anyone he felt failed to conform to European norms of personhood and family. Ironically, within the ostensible 'private' modern home, the state decided how the African family would be constituted. These regulations sought to produce a new kind of family tailored to planners' vision of the ideal modern community. By dictating that a household head (a male, by default) could win no more than a single wife, Notice 383 effectively outlawed polygamy in urban areas.

Furthermore, the proof-of-marriage condition rendered ineligible those couples united according to customary law, as acceptable proof of such unions was nearly impossible to procure. Therefore, the ideal-typical township resident was an employed, monogamous male head of a nuclear family in possession of a four-room, detached, single-family dwelling.<sup>764</sup>

C.A. Hignett reported that about half of the residents of Mkhumbane were not married, which made it difficult for them to acquire houses in KwaMashu.<sup>765</sup> Ngcobo said that people 'rushed into courts and signed to get married at that time'. Women and men who were not married were relocated to hostels in Thokoza in the Durban CBD and Jacobs near Clairwood, respectively.<sup>766</sup> Bonner explains that the issue of marriage created hardship, especially for women:

For women, in particular, life changed abruptly. They could no longer sell illicit liquor or other goods and so lost their economic autonomy. They had to prove marriage to move into a house, but then always by the grace of a connection to a man, and so lost their

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<sup>764</sup> See Jason Hickel, *Democracy as Death: The Moral Order of Anti-Liberal Politics in South Africa* (California: University of California Press, 2015), 108-109. Hickel observes that despite all the efforts to create a male-headed nuclear family, the 'type of social organisation that emerged in the townships never perfectly matched' this ideal. See page 110 for four reasons for the rise of female-headed families.

<sup>765</sup> 'Kalishadile Iningi eMkhumbane', *UmAfrika*, 1 November 1958, 1. For an excellent discussion of the meaning of home and family, and how it has transformed historically in Natal (and now KwaZulu-Natal), see Meghan Healy-Clancy and Jason Hickel (eds), *Ekhaya: the politics of home in KwaZulu-Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014). This collection of essays shows how Europeans tried to impose family and domesticity models in the colonial and apartheid periods and how these have transformed as Africans confronted apartheid restrictions and challenged social and economic conditions.

<sup>766</sup> Themba Ngcobo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, June 23, 2015.

autonomy from men. This was most graphically signalled when many were literally married on the spot by the local administration/removal officer as they were waiting for their houses to be broken down. For them in particular, an earlier way of life was lost; a new one was rudely imposed. It is this that most South Africans dimly remember today. It is a memory that many would prefer to forget.<sup>767</sup>

Nomadiphu echoes the above sentiment:

*Kwaqala-ke ukuhlupheka. Kwakuthi uma ufuna indlu ubuzwe inwadi yomshado. Kwasho ukuthi uma ufuna indlu, ncika ngendoda. Baqala abantu ukushada noma bengahlosile benzela ukuthola amalungelo. Uma ungashadile wawubukelwa phansi ngabomthetho, kungaziwa nokuthi ungubani.*<sup>768</sup>

(Troubles began at this time. When one sought a house, she or he would be asked for a marriage certificate. This meant that if you want a house, you should have a man, and that is where people started to marry unintentionally to be granted houses. An unmarried person was not recognised).

Mrs Dube tells the story of her father and stepmother when they arrived in KwaMashu:

*Ehhe ikhona ngoba ubaba wayengashadile nalo-step mother wami. Bafika lapha bashada. Ngathi ngibuya esikoleni wayesethi u-step mother "buka lapha etafuleni, nali iphepha etafuleni lifunde". Hhay ngithathe ngilifunde. Ngithi hawu kade nishada. Athi ehhe sengishadile-ke, sekungowami lo muzi.*<sup>769</sup>

(Yes, because my father was not married to my stepmother. They arrived here and got married. One day I was coming back from school, my stepmother told me to read a paper that was placed on top of the table, and when I did so, I discovered that they just got married, and she stated that the house belonged to her).

However, Mrs Maphumulo does not agree that only married people were given houses in KwaMashu when they relocated. She recalls:

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<sup>767</sup> Philip Bonner, "Apartheid, Memory and other Occluded Pasts", Paper Presented at Third Annual National Oral History: Culture, Memory and Trauma, Richards Bay, 7-10 November 2006. See [http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/9787/OHASA\\_1\\_\\_2006-22-05-2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/9787/OHASA_1__2006-22-05-2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y), 33.

<sup>768</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 2.

<sup>769</sup> Maggy Dube, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 06 January, 2020.

*Hhayi kwakungekho, asikuzwanga. Wawuhamba nge-number yomuzi wakho nje. Uzokushadisa kanjani unekotishi lakho la uhleli? Sekufanele wenzenjani? Kwakufunwa i-number yalelo khaya lakho ohleli kulona ihambe iye KwaMashu. Hhayi-ke ubaba wakwami wathi akakwazi ukuyobukelana nomnyango womuntu ngala, uchitha amanzi silokhu sixabana la. Ngizodlani ngoba akusebenzi muntu.*<sup>770</sup>

(No, we never heard of that. You relocated using your house number. How would you get married if you had your cottage? They only wanted house numbers and took them to KwaMashu to build houses with similar numbers, and people relocated. My husband refused to go there, and he complained about job opportunities on that side, which was the main reason for our survival).

Nomadiphu tells of forced relocations from Mkhumbane to KwaMashu and to Chesterville, a neighbouring location of Mkhumbane. Although she was not sure of the period, she said that one day, a White official from the Durban Corporation came and told people that ‘I will build you beautiful houses because these houses (in Mkhumbane) resemble those of mice’.<sup>771</sup> This man was identified as T.J. Chester, a manager at the NAD. The houses were similar to those in Msizini (Somtseu) and the area was then known as Chesterville. Nomadiphu stated that before that, it was known as Blackhurst.<sup>772</sup> Residents claimed that their troubles started after it was renamed Chesterville by the Durban Corporation, as people had to be married to access houses.

The issue of being married went beyond granting houses to even cases before the law. Nomadiphu stated that if one’s child had been impregnated, the Magistrate would ask whether the mother was married and if the answer was no, the Magistrate would not to entertain issues such as maintenance and domestic abuse,<sup>773</sup> thus affirming the drive to ‘moralise’ and Christianise the African.

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<sup>770</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December, 2019.

<sup>771</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 23. Chesterville was built in the 1930s and was originally designed as a retirement village, but people, mostly from Mkhumbane moved to the area after the 1949 riots and the forced removals. Fred Khumalo states that Chesterville has a ‘history of toughness’ and rose ‘from the ashes of Mkhumbane. See Fred Khumalo, *Touch my Blood* (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2006). The township is one of the oldest in Durban and ‘became a hub of social life for Africans in the city. It housed many of the workers who were employed in different sectors in Durban, and in the 1980s apartheid hot era, the township became a battleground for the warring political organisations’. See Margaret J. Daymond, Dorothy Driver and Sheila Meintjies. *Women Writing Africa: the Southern Region* (New York: Feminist Press, 2003), 448.

<sup>772</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 23.

<sup>773</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 24.

Bourquin stated that, at times, his Department would relax the precondition of being married.

For example:

People must prove that they lived together lawfully and that either a man or woman will not just walk out of the family and then leave a family unsupported or destitute... So we were aiming at a degree of stability and permanence. Still, the absence of a marriage certificate was regarded as a technical point. If people gave us an assurance that they intended getting married or that they could prove to us that they had taken steps to regularise their marriage by the payment of *lobola* ... we would accept them as a married couple ... and we followed up after three or six months to see what progress was made.<sup>774</sup>

The marriage certificate was an 'entrance' problem; the deeper problems affected those that moved to KwaMashu. They included housing, transport, the distance to work, and community facilities. The material losses suffered by evicted families from Mkhumbane were exacerbated by the lack of privacy, autonomy, and security normally infused by an organised family structure. For a short period, there remained a measure of solidarity and support among families such as Madala's, whose immediate neighbours were from Jibacoat in Mkhumbane. However, as noted by Madala Kunene, these relationships soon faded:

Time went by, and we all stayed together until we were moved once more to a place called Emapulangweni, and the families were separated. My family was allocated a single room to live in, at the back of which another family already occupied another room. This was to be our own house, but we were sharing it with another family whom we did not know. They had been evicted from New Clare, a section of Mkhumbane that was known as Mkhalandoda. Another family that we knew from Two Sticks was shoved together with another from Jibacoat. We did not know one another, but because people get along well and love one another, we stayed, and we are still alive today.<sup>775</sup>

Mphostoli Mngadi shared a similar story. Interviewed in 1980 while residing at D. 1490 KwaMashu, he related that he moved to KwaMashu in 1960 after the whole of KwaMashu had been settled. It is not clear whether this is correct. Mngadi confirmed that the first house built in KwaMashu was in 'E' section.<sup>776</sup> He could not recall the year.

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<sup>774</sup> Molefe, "Leisure and the making of KwaMashu", 25.

<sup>775</sup> Madala Kunene, Apr. 1997; in Dlamini, "Township Music", 5.

<sup>776</sup> M. Mngadi, KCAV 326, by C. Shum, KwaMashu, August 11, 1980 and September 22, 1980.



When Mr Mngadi arrived in KwaMashu 'J' section, he stayed in a two-roomed house because, at that time, his salary was not sufficient to afford a four-roomed one. 'J' section was where the smaller two-roomed houses were built for those waiting to be allocated bigger houses. Some residents stayed there for many years and never moved, probably due to higher rentals for four-roomed houses. When his salary increased he was able to buy a bigger house in D section, residing at D1490. He worked at a butchery in KwaMashu where a certain Mr Mnguni employed him. By 1980, the year of the interview, he had worked at Mnguni's butchery for 12 years. In Mkhumbane, he also worked at a butchery in Gezizandla section.

*Emaplangweni* was the starting point for some while others were settled in tin barracks popularly known as *KwaTiki* while they waited for more houses to be ready. The area was known as Kwatiki because residents over the age of 15 paid a rental of one tickey (3d) per day per person<sup>777</sup> The residents called this temporary housing "Emaplangweni", a house made of logs.<sup>778</sup>

Madala said that families were 'piled in a truck' and taken from Mkhumbane to KwaMashu with their possessions and dumped at 'KwaTiki in the township's G section, in a four-roomed house. All four families were crammed into a single four-roomed house no matter how many family members there were'.<sup>779</sup>

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<sup>777</sup> Molefe, footnote 111, describes *KwaTiki* as a temporary site provided by the Corporation. 'The name is derived from the amount of 3d (*uTiki* in IsiZulu for tickey) paid per day by residents in transit.' ("Leisure and the making of KwaMashu," 27).

<sup>778</sup> Molefe, "Leisure and the making of KwaMashu," 27.

<sup>779</sup> Interview with Madala Kunene. Interviewed by Sazi Dlamini, April 1997.

A picture of *KwaTiki*



Source: *UmAfrika*, March 19, 1960

These two areas are where most families were temporarily relocated before being moved to their municipality-approved, official homes.

From *Emaplangweni* and *KwaTiki*, people were moved to permanent houses approved by the city engineer and built of concrete blocks with corrugated iron rooves.

*Ilanga laseNatal* reported that six families were transported by the first truck that arrived in KwaMashu. The families were transported to the neighbouring 7 (Section G), where two houses G171 and G173, were allocated to house three families. The following table lists the family names of those allocated the first two houses after the reallocation had been put on hold for a few months.

Table 3: Residents House Allocation, February 9, 1960

House Room A Room B Room C G 171 Mr. Isaac Ziqubu (married with 6 children) Annah Makhaye (widow with a child) Saliza Nzuza (widow with 3 daughters and 2 grandsons)	G 173 Miss Cynthia Shezi (single with a child)
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Source: *Ilanga laseNatal*, 13 February 1960, 2.

Dubbed *ikhaya elisha* (new home) by the Zulu-oriented newspapers, KwaMashu was the site of new beginnings but also numerous complexities. *UmAfrika* reported that by March 1958, an estimated 350 to 400 families were to be relocated to KwaMashu. They were first placed in temporary housing known to local residents as *Emaplangweni*. The name was derived from the word ‘planks’ because the temporary homesteads were built of wood. One respondent stated that the Zulus tend to name an area after an incident, person, or building component, as was the case in Mkhumbane, which was a stream crossing the area.

An article in *UmAfrika* in 1959 alluded to some of the problems faced by the new residents:

*'Kodwa esikucelela abakithi izindlu zokugeza umzimba nezindawo zokudayisa imifino amakhosikazi nezindawo zokudlala azikabibikho'.*<sup>780</sup>

(We seek bathing places, places for women to sell vegetables, and recreational facilities).

However, complaints by residents seemed to fall on deaf ears. There was a shortage of transport to Durban and low quality housing, as well as inadequate water, shops, and recreational facilities. As the number of people from the different areas of Durban, including Mkhumbane, increased in KwaMashu, there was a need for more shops. In the early years of settlement, it was reported that only Indians had been granted the right to trade or own shops in KwaMashu. As we have seen, Afro-Indian relations were volatile, and Indian trading licences were at the heart of many of Africans' complaints.

A resident named A.P. Ngcobo wrote about Africans' grievances in *UmAfrika* in April 1959. He noted that, while the number of people residing in the area was increasing, there was a shortage of shops, markets, and recreational facilities as the authorities serviced the White and Indian residents of Durban while neglecting Africans who remained at the bottom of the pecking order in terms of delivery of services.

*Bayanda abantu kulomuzi kodwa izitolo zokuthenga azandi ... abaphathi abazimisele ukuba babahlangabeze abantu ngezinto ezeswelekile njengamasilaha nezitolo nezimakethe ngoba okuhamba phambili kubona abelungu namaNdiya kuqala anduba akhothe amavuthuluka umNyama.*<sup>781</sup>

The author also complained that all the shops were owned by members of other race groups, especially Indians. An African-owned tearoom and butchery were about to be opened to serve more than 2 000 residents. Ngcobo asked for the immediate 'provision of bathing spaces, places for women to sell vegetables, and recreational facilities' (*Kodwa esikucela kwabakithi izindlu zokugeza umzimba nezindawo zokudayisa imifino amakhosikazi nezindawo zokudlala ezingakabibikho*).<sup>782</sup>

Rabi Bagwadeen, a lawyer, activist, and member of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC), stated that he once defended a Mrs Dlamini and a group of between 20 and 30 rural women who were

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<sup>780</sup> 'EzaKwaMashu Township: Bakwethu Nokhumbula Ngonyaka Odlule', *UmAfrika*, 4 April 1959, 4.

<sup>781</sup> 'EzaKwaMashu Township: Bakwethu Nokhumbula Ngonyaka Odlule', *UmAfrika*, 4 April 1959, 4.

<sup>782</sup> 'EzaKwaMashu Township: Bakwethu Nokhumbula Ngonyaka Odlule', *UmAfrika*, 4 April 1959, 4.

charged with illegal trading in KwaMashu. Bagwadeen stated that he went to KwaMuhle to ask Bourquin that if the court *subpoenaed* him, he could go to the Verulam court and defend them ‘so that they can trade without being illegal traders’.<sup>783</sup> These traders had been trading in Mkhumbane before being forcibly removed and were not regarded as “illegal”. The women subsequently formed an Association of Illegal Traders in KwaMashu to defend their rights. Bagwadeen said they had ‘little shops in their little homes and were being charged regularly, and the person who was in charge was a person called Mr Oosthuizen’.<sup>784</sup> He recalled that they did not win the lawsuit as they were confronted by a system designed to ‘keep the Black man right down’.<sup>785</sup> Bagwadeen's parents lived in Mkhumbane, and he had first-hand experience of being ‘subjected to the harassment of the law unnecessarily’ and living alongside people like these women.<sup>786</sup> He recounted that he represented people from Mkhumbane on many occasions, singling out, in particular, the viciousness of magistrates Gifford and Oosthuizen. They searched the shops and gave evidence against “illegal” traders.

*UmAfrika* columnist Joloza also lamented the lack of trading premises for Africans in KwaMashu:

*Ngake ngaloba ngakhuluma ngokuthi bayanda bantu kulomuzi kodwa izitolo zokuthenga azandi, ima kuvulwa ezokuqala kuyilokhu ngakhuluma abaphathi abazimisele ukuba bahlangabeze abantu ngezinto eziswelekile njengamasilaha nezitolo nezimakethe ngoba okuhamba phambili ukuba babone ukuthi lemali itholwe abelungu namaNdiya kuqala anduba akhothe amavuthuluka omNyama. Ngikhuluma lamazwi ngoba zisekhona izitolo zamaNdiya lapha iwona asafunza abantu ukudla nenyama abakithi basavinjelwe ngokungawatholi lawo malungelo ngokungabibikho kwezindlu ezakhiwe abaphathi bomuzi waKwaMashu.*<sup>787</sup>

(I once commented on the ever-increasing number of residents in KwaMashu, but there was a shortage of the shops to meet these numbers. We see the first shops being built only now. However, since I commented, the authorities have failed to meet residents' demands such as shops and markets because they aim to enrich Indians and Whites while Africans receive the remainder. I am commenting on this issue because Indian-owned shops in this township feed Africans with food and meat while the latter are forbidden from receiving such rights).

<sup>783</sup> Interview with Mr R. Bagwadeen, 99/4208, Old Court Museum, Durban, 1 -2.

<sup>784</sup> Interview with Mr R. Bagwadeen, 99/4208, Old Court Museum, Durban, 1 -2.

<sup>785</sup> Interview with Mr R. Bagwadeen, 99/4208, Old Court Museum, Durban, 2.

<sup>786</sup> Interview with Mr R. Bagwadeen, 99/4208, Old Court Museum, Durban, 6.

<sup>787</sup> ‘EzaKwaMashu Township: Bakwethu Nokhumbula Ngonyaka Odlule’, *UmAfrika*, 4 April 1959, 4.

Noting the construction of a store, tearoom and butchery in March 1959, Joloza wrote that *Siyathemba ukuthi izakhamuzi zizojabula futhi zizosizakala kakhulu ngokuvulwa kwalesitolo esisha ne tea room*<sup>788</sup>(he hoped that people would be enthusiastic about the new developments for their benefit).

Residents, continued Joloza, had been told by government authorities that job opportunities would be created for African people:

*Njengoba ngikhuluma nje ikhani kuzovulwa isitolo netearoom nebhusha yokuqala phakathi kwemizi engaphezulu kuka-2000, abantu bedla bethenga kwabezizwe. Kodwa ngohlelo esasitshelwa ngalo abakaHulumeni kwathiwa umuzi wabantu sizoba nemisebenzi eyenzelwe abantu bodwa. Kodwa alikho iqiniso ngoba akakabibikho osewutholile ....*<sup>789</sup>

(As I am talking, it is only now that the first tearoom and butchery will be opened to serve more than 2 000 houses. People have been buying from foreign races [Indians]. However, we were informed by the government authorities that there would be opportunities reserved to cater only for the African).

These comments are interesting. Clearly, there was some opposition to the forced removals and apartheid more generally. However, these sentiments also show that some wanted to take advantage of the system to further the interests of various racial groups. If Africans were to be confined to individual townships, the argument went, then Africans should provide services, policing, trade, and so on within these townships. The concern about the Indian monopoly of trade, both real and imagined, was about history and opportunities in the restructured urban landscape.

The numbers of residents in KwaMashu had increased, but, according to reports, services were inadequate. The chairperson of the committee responsible for resettlement in the new townships, A.S. Robinson, estimated that by the end of 1960, around 45 770 people would have settled in KwaMashu, with this number increasing to 57 440 by August 1961.<sup>790</sup>

Relocation to KwaMashu meant increased transport fares, the need to buy furniture and household appliances, and incidental costs resulting from being far from the city. Relocation to

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<sup>788</sup> Ezika Joloza, 'EzaKwaMashu', *UmAfrika*, April 11 1959, 16.

<sup>789</sup> 'EzaKwaMashu Township: Bakwethu Nokhumbula Ngonyaka Odlule', *UmAfrika*, 4 April 1959, 4.

<sup>790</sup> 'Kuzobe Sekungene Abaningi KwaMashu Ekupheleni Konyaka', *UmAfrika*, February 20 1960, 5.

sites far away from jobs and the city of Durban inflicted 'additional hardship through dearer transport costs.'<sup>791</sup> Years later, Bourquin would state that he made a 'powerful plea for the adjustment of black wages', and that some employers responded positively. It is not clear whether he was referring to municipal employees' wages or those in private employment as well. He also stated that the authorities tried, by all means, to legalise "illegal" businesses and trading to enable people to continue making a living as long as they gave the assurance that they 'would endeavour to legalise their position'.<sup>792</sup> They were also offered business sites in KwaMashu.

One of the interviewees for this project, Mbatha, was adamant that women continued selling 'illicit' liquor in KwaMashu. This time, however, they had a new target market of *izimpohlo* who stayed at the KwaMashu hostel:

*Ehhe! Kwakukhona izimpohlo khona lapho eduze. (Impohlo) Umuntu ongenamfazi. Babehlala emahostela. Lalikhona kwaMashu, eMlazi, nase-Jacobs ... Kwakukhona ne-kwatas eyayakhelwe abantu ababesebenza emafemini. Leyo ndawo yabhidlizeka sekuzokwaxhiwa i-Durban Station.*<sup>793</sup>

(Yes there were *izimpohlo* nearby [near KwaMashu living in a hostel]. *Impohlo* [singular for *izimpohlo*] is a person without a wife. There were hostels for *izimpohlo* at KwaMashu, Umlazi, and Jacobs. There was also the one known as Kwatas, which was built for factory workers. It was demolished when the Durban Station was constructed).

Single male workers were relocated to KwaMashu from areas like Msizini hostel and Baumannville as transport was already a problem in KwaMashu. A hostel for these male workers was constructed in KwaMashu. It is still there to this day near B section and is known as *Ezimpohlweni*, meaning 'where only males live', as they had to live alone and perform housekeeping duties, including cooking. A hostel for women was constructed in Grey Street in the Durban CBD and also still stands to this day. It is known as Thokoza Hostel. The male hostel in KwaMashu has been a source of constant conflict and brutal killings since the 1980s due to conflict between the IFP and ANC, and hostel leadership disputes.<sup>794</sup>

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<sup>791</sup> Saleem Badat, *The Forgotten People*, 142.

<sup>792</sup> S.B. Bourquin, KCAV 174 and 175, by A. Manson and D. Collins, Westville, 18 and 19 October 1980.

<sup>793</sup> Babo Mbatha, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, June 16, 2015. Johnson defines *impohlo* as a 'man without a woman' while Hadebe writes that *impohlo* is a grown male person who has no wife (*Impohlo ngowesilisa osekhumile ongathathanga*). See Jill Johnson, *Soweto Speaks* (Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1979), 40 and Samukele Hadebe, *Isichazamazwi SesiNdebele* (Harare: College Press, 2001), 146.

<sup>794</sup> See Anthony de V. Minnaar, *Patterns of Violence: case studies of conflict in Natal* (Human Sciences Research Council, 1992); Lauren Segal, "The Human Face of Violence: Hostel Dwellers Speak", *Journal of Southern*

According to Bourquin, the move to KwaMashu was resisted by Africans because many knew that they would not qualify for houses, and could not make a living through business, or continue with the activities they performed in Mkhumbane. The primary resistance came from people who had interests in Mkhumbane such as illegal traders, shebeen keepers, owners of gambling houses, and even gangsters, as well as others who were afraid of losing their market share. Molefe writes that:

Most of Cato Manor's residents opposed the move to KwaMashu because the township was located far from the city centre. Besides the issue of transport, well-established traders stood to lose business if they were moved to KwaMashu. At KwaMashu, close supervision of traders would be enforced. Illegal petty traders and shebeen queens also stood to lose. The uncertainty of not knowing if the same type of business would be viable in the new location was too much to risk.<sup>795</sup>

Joloza's regular column in *UmAfrika*, *Ezika Joloza*, featured stories of Black township life in Durban with special attention to KwaMashu. In his April 1959 column, he wrote that he had 'thought that the demolishing of Mkhumbane's Tin Town meant that residents who relocated to KwaMashu would not be staying in tin houses as was the case for some' (*Bengithi ukuze kucatshangwe ukwakhiwa komuzi waKwaMashu injongo enkulu kwaku ukuchitha umuzi obizwa ngokuthiwa iTin Town yaseMkhumbane*).<sup>796</sup>

He passionately declared that:

... wona lawo magogogo ekade kuthiwa kuchithwa wona eMkhumbane uKopeletsheni useyabavumela bona labo bantu ukuba babuye bawakhe bawavuse lawo magogogo aseMkhumbane lapha KwaMashu. Okusobala ukuthi uKopeletsheni waseThekwini wayecabanga ukuthi abantu baseMkhumbane uzobakhipha kalula nje futhi abakhele izindlu abazongenisa kizo njengokuphazima kweso. Namhlanje ufundile ukuthi kabayona insangu abantu laba njengoba ayecabanga).<sup>797</sup>

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*African Studies*, 18:1 (1991): 190-227; Ari Sitas "The New Tribalism: Hostels and Violence", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 2, 1996: 235-248.

<sup>795</sup> Molefe, "Leisure and the making of KwaMashu", 25.

<sup>796</sup> 'EzakwaMashu', *UmAfrika*, 11 April 1959, 16.

<sup>797</sup> 'EzaKwaMashu', *UmAfrika*, 11 April 1959, 16.



(... the same barracks which the authorities aimed to destroy at Mkhumbane are being allowed in KwaMashu. It is evident that the Durban Corporation assumed that it would quickly relocate Mkhumbane residents and build them houses within the blink of an eye. Today the Corporation has learned that people should not be taken for granted as they have thought).

Joloza criticised the Durban Corporation for failing to plan the relocation and playing with African people's lives. His other complaint was that KwaMashu was far from the Durban city centre; hence, people had to spend much money on transport. He hoped that the railway system would assist:

*Anginaqiniso lokuqedwa kokwakhiwa komgwaqo wesitimela okuyisona esizoba nosizo olukhulu ekuthutheni izisebenzi eziyimpohlo zaseMsizini uma sezilapha KwaMashu. Kodwa phela ngegama likaNkulunkulu ziyophebezwa zonke izithiyo eziphambi kwethu.*<sup>798</sup>

(I am not sure whether the construction of the railway line has been finished. This will be of much assistance for commuting [male] workers of Msizini when they start to live at KwaMashu. Many workers would be frustrated by the relocation to KwaMashu, but in the name of God, these problems will be history one day).

Joloza was referring to the large number of single male workers who were forced to move to KwaMashu to live in hostels.

Unlike in their previous 'homes' where residents could walk to town, KwaMashu residents had to pay bus fare to travel to and from work from their meagre salaries. The cost of transport topped the list of grievances of the new residents of KwaMashu and they associated it with 'taxes', such as payment for water and electricity. In November 1960, local residents formed a KwaMashu Committee which requested the government to extract monies from the Department of Transport for Bantu to subsidise the unaffordable bus fare between KwaMashu and Durban. They also asked that the Putco bus fare of 9d be decreased to 6d.<sup>799</sup> In the meeting with the authorities from the Durban transport section, the committee also pointed to the shortage of transport, while the number of residents had grown:

*Lapho ikomidi lakwaMashu eliphathele izakhamuzi zakhona izindaba, kuthe lapho libonana nabaphethe intilasipoti phakathi kwendawo, laphawula ukuthi izitimela kazizange*

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<sup>798</sup> 'EzakwaMashu', *UmAfrika*, 11 April 1959, 16.

<sup>799</sup> 'Bafuna Ukuba Yehliswe Imali Yamabhasi aKwaMashu', *UmAfrika*, 7 November, 1959, 1.

*zahambisana nezidingo zabantu njengokuthuthuka komuzi. Kube sekuzwakala ukuthi uLoliwe uveze ukuthi angebe namandla okuba afake izitimela ngokufaneleyo kuyoze kube ngonyaka we-1962.*<sup>800</sup>

(In the meeting with authorities of the transport section, the committee requested that, as the number of people had increased massively, trains should be put into operation in the area. The committee received a response that Transnet had inadequate funds to implement a train system in KwaMashu until 1962).

The issue was not only the shortage of buses but also the high fares compared to those for trains. With the dream of trains becoming the solution to the transport woes in the township, residents were surprised by the arrival of buses from the Transvaal. *UmAfrika* reported:

*Kade siphethwe inkinga yokuhamba kwamabhasi, aseze alamula lowo msindo awaseGoli. Afika ngenhlanhla engalindelwe noma ubani kwathina sasingazi ukuthi awekho kubantu nakuKopeletsheni. Sesibona sesilethelwa asenhla nezwe.*<sup>801</sup>

(We have been complaining about the shortage of buses that a bus company from Transvaal has only solved. These buses arrived unexpected by anyone. We also did not know that the Corporation or Africans do not have buses; we only realised when these buses arrived from the north).

The Putco bus company provided these buses that Joloza refers to. However, high fares remained an issue. As Joloza wrote:

*Sekuyaphela manje ukuthabaza ngezinyawo njengoba izimpohlo kade zenza ziseseThekwini. Sekuzovuleka imixhaka kukhokhwe izimali ngempela uma kuyiwa emsebenzini. Nanto usizi olukhulu lwaKwaMashu.*<sup>802</sup>

(As the *mpohlo* used to do in Durban, the preciousness of walking has come to an end. People now have to fork out money to go to work. This is the sad story of KwaMashu).

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<sup>800</sup> 'Bafuna Ukuba Yehliswe Imali Yamabhasi aKwaMashu', *UmAfrika*, 7 November 1959, 1.

<sup>801</sup> 'EzaKwaMashu Township: Bakwethu Nokhumbula Ngonyaka Odlule', *UmAfrika*, 4 April 1959, 4.

<sup>802</sup> 'EzakwaMashu', *UmAfrika*, 11 April 1959, 16.



*Catching a bus to KwaMashu*  
*UmAfrika, April 4, 1959*

*Ilanga LaseNatal* reported that the Durban Corporation provided buses to transport KwaMashu residents to Durban from June 1960 to 1962. It was forced to do so after residents engaged in a strike in KwaMashu's Duff Road in protest against the lack of buses. The Corporation promised buses at two-minute intervals between 4:00 am, and 7:00 am. The department dealing with railways had in the meantime agreed with the transport authorities to build roads.<sup>803</sup>

*Amabhasi lawo azoqala angene ngo June 1960, kuze kube ngo 1962. Azogijima esuka KwaMashu ashiyane ngemizuzu emibili kusukela ngo 4 ekuseni kuze kushaye u-7. Umnyango wakwaLoliwe usuvumile ukuba usizane nomnyango wentilasipoti yakwaKopeletsheni ukuba basizane ngokwakhiwa kwemigwaqo.*

A budget in the region of £10 000 was allocated to construct the roads that were to take up to two years to complete. Amidst residents' appeals for more buses, the Durban Corporation said it had not refused to work with other bus service providers.<sup>804</sup> It is against this background that the Putco buses discussed above came into the picture.

<sup>803</sup> 'Ukopeletsheni Uzofaka Amabhasi KwaMashu', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 28 February 1959, 1. The government section which Joloza refers to was Transport, which was headed by B.J. Schoeman as the Minister of Transport. Schoeman, a NP politician held this position between 1954 and 1974.

<sup>804</sup> 'Ukopeletsheni Uzofaka Amabhasi KwaMashu', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 28 February 1959, 1.

In April 1960, Councillor Robinson, the chairperson of the Durban Corporation's Bantu Affairs section stressed the immediate need to construct a railway line between KwaMashu and Durban:

*Usecele uLoliwe waleli lakithi ukuba uphuthume awuxhume ngokushesha ujjantshi wesitimela ongena laphaya KwaMashu. Lesicelo sika Mnu. Robinson siqhutshelwe impela kuyena uNgqongqoshe phezu kwemiNyango yonke kaLoliwe walapha kithi uMnu. B.J. Schoeman.*<sup>805</sup>

(Robinson has asked the railway authorities to speed up the construction of a railway line in KwaMashu. Robinson's application has been conveyed to the Minister responsible for railways in the country, B.J. Schoeman).

### **The issue of Bills at KwaMashu**

The story of Nomadiphu shed some light on conditions of KwaMashu – everyone had to find a means of survival. Because her father, who worked on the mines in Johannesburg, had died before paying full *lobola* to her mother's family, her uncle took Nomadiphu to come and live with him in Durban. When Nomadiphu arrived, her uncle told her: ‘now that you have arrived in Durban, my child, you have to seek work since life is a struggle here’.<sup>806</sup> She found a job as a maid (domestic assistant) in one of the suburbs earning a pittance. She would give her pay to her uncle, who gave part of it back to her to buy fabric and sew clothing items, which she sold to supplement her income. Survival was not easy in KwaMashu, with numerous problems such as paying rent and for transport.

The issue of rent in KwaMashu proved to be a quandary for city officials as the residents continuously complained of exorbitant rent:

*Ngenxa yokuba sekuphethe ngokuba kubonakale ukuthi imali eyintela laphaya KwaMashu okuzodinga ikhishwe ngabantu abazongenisa khona, ingumshikashika, kungathi uMkhandlu weDolobha laseThekwini uzocelwa emhlanganweni wawo ozayo, ukuba ukhethe amanxusa azothunyelwa ePitoli ukuba ayobonana noNgqongqoshe weziNdabazabaNtu uDr. H.F. Verwoerd, maqondana nemali eyilente KwaMashu.*<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>805</sup> ‘Ujajekile Ulayini Wesitimela Ongena KwaMashu. Uloliwe Useceliwe Asheshise’, *UmAfrika*, 23 April 1960, 3.

<sup>806</sup> Madlala and Mkhize, *EMkhumbane*, 4.

<sup>807</sup> ‘Asengumshikashika Amalente Azothelwa KwaMashu’, *UmAfrika*, May 3 1958, 1.

(The issue of rent for people who were to be relocated to KwaMashu reached a deadlock and was causing havoc to the city officials. It resulted in proposals that the Durban City Council had to send a delegation to Pretoria to meet Minister Verwoerd to find a solution to the issue).

Not only was the rent high, but services like water also had to be paid for. Water rates were high because residents had to pay a certain amount regardless of usage. Joloza discussed this in one of his columns.

*Umuzi waKwaMashu nawo ubeke umbandela omkhulu wokuthelela amanzi apheka ngawo. Okusho ukuthi noma ungazidela ngokungawasebenzisi njengokuthanda kwakho, kodwa uyodlula uthele leyomali yokuwasebenzisa ngemfanelo yomuzi ohlala kuwona.*<sup>808</sup>

(KwaMashu residents have also been given conditions of paying tax for water usage. This means that even if one takes a hard decision not to use water as one wishes, they will have to pay the stipulated amount per house regardless of usage).

High levels of unemployment and retrenchment from their jobs also made it difficult for residents to pay rent. At a meeting in November 1959 with KwaMashu residents, Bourquin was asked:

*... bayokweziwa njani labo abebevele ezindaweni zemisebenzi emiyo futhi beyikhipha kahle nentela kodwa okuthe ngenxa yokuphungulwa kwabantu emsebenzini base bedilizwa balahlekelwa kanjalo umsebenzi?*<sup>809</sup>

(... about people who resided in KwaMashu but during their stay were retrenched from their jobs)

In response:

*UMnu. S. Bourquin uthe izakhamuzi zalaphaya KwaMashu eziyohlangabezana nobunzima ngenxa yobuthaka begazi kumbe ngenxa yokungasebenzi ngeke zakhishelwa phandle ezindlini zazo ngoba zahluleka wukukhipha imali yelente kumbe yona yokuhlephula entengweni yabakhokhela amakhaya abafuna abizwe bona ngokupheleleyo.*<sup>810</sup>

(Bourquin assured residents who faced genuine problems such as health and unemployment, which prevented them from paying stipulated rents, or those who were paying instalments for house ownership, that they would not be evicted from their houses).

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<sup>808</sup> 'Intela Yamanzi', *UmAfrika*, 11 April 1959, 16.

<sup>809</sup> 'Ngeke Bakhishelwe Phandle Abangenamandla Okukhokha Intelu', *UmAfrika*, 7 November 1959, 1.

<sup>810</sup> 'Ngeke Bakhishelwe Phandle Abangenamandla Okukhokha Intelu', *UmAfrika*, 7 November 1959, 1.

The increase in workers' salaries announced in 1959 did not prove adequate to meet the ever-increasing daily needs of the African population. In a tense meeting to discuss the wages of the 12 000 African workers at the Durban Corporation, 11 members approved the salary increment against nine who supported the retrenchment of ten percent of the African workforce and increases for the other ninety percent.<sup>811</sup>

The DCC announced that it would unilaterally increase the salaries of its African workers 7s 6d. per week from 1 August 1959. *Ilanga LaseNatal* wrote that the announcement was not welcomed by unionists of the time, such as Moses Mabhida, who was the acting President of the ANC in Natal, Canon A.H. Zulu, A.W.G. Champion, and W.M.J. Mseleku because it was inadequate to meet the financial demands that people faced on a daily basis.<sup>812</sup>

### **Problems, Problems, Problems ... but there was still entertainment**

Amidst all the calamities confronting the community, there was still a chance for entertainment. For example, on New Year's Eve, 1959, an all-night event welcoming the New Year was hosted at the KwaMashu community hall. It is not clear how many halls there were in the township at this time. The event, scheduled to start at 8 pm, featured a famous jazz musician and his band who played the then new *PhathaPhatha* songs, Rock 'n Roll, and Jive and there was dancing (*kulekhonsathi kuyobe kudlalwa amaculo amasha ePhatha phatha, Rock 'n Roll, Jive Kanye nezomdanso*).<sup>813</sup>

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<sup>811</sup> 'Sekuvunyiwe ukuba Inyuke Imali YabaNsundu', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 July 1959, 1.

<sup>812</sup> 'Sekuvunyiwe ukuba Inyuke Imali YabaNsundu', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 20 July 1959, 1.

<sup>813</sup> 'Kobe Kungalelwe KwaMashu', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 2 January 1960, 4.

# Kwa Mashu Cultural Association

Ukhethe lwoonyaka lwalenhlangano engasenhla belungomhla ka-1.3.59 lwema kanjalo.

F121 Additional Committee Members.

<p><b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Mnu. A. W. Mkhulini E874 — President</p> <p>Mnu. H. Mzomi F123 — Vice President.</p> <p>Mnu. W. N. T. Zwane E876 — Secretary.</p> <p>Mnu. B. Mkhize F484 — Ass. Secretary.</p> <p>Mnu. H. Sibisi E202 — Treasurer.</p> <p>Mnu. W. Dweba E385 Mnu. Mfeka Mnu. H. T. Madubane</p>	<p><b>PLANNING COMMITTEE</b></p> <p>Mnu. A. P. Ngcobo E439.</p> <p>Mnu. C. Jali E903</p> <p>Nka. E. Nengqai F125</p> <p>Nka D. Madubane F121.</p> <p><b>SPORTS SYNDICATE</b></p> <p>Mnu. O. Khuzwayo F474.</p> <p>Mnu. M. Dumisa E161.</p> <p>Mnu. P. Dladla E882</p> <p>Mnu. M. Nkabindo E529.</p> <p>Mnu. F. Dlamini E324.</p> <p>Mnu. P. Masola F495.</p> <p>Mnu. P. Mgadi E933.</p> <p>Mnu. P. S. Mgwenyane E463.</p>
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*UmAfrika*, April 11 1959, 16



Nanso indlu yesonto laKwaMashu mhla ka-4 kuSeptember. Nampo eThekwini ebelibusiswa ngeSonto abantu bengena ngaphakathi bezozibonela ngawabo amehla.

December 1958 marked the first Christmas for residents in the then newly-built KwaMashu Township. Some residents did not know what to expect on the 'big days' to the extent that some feared for their lives in a township with new people of various characters. December meant that people were off work and spent time with their families, while children were not at school. Crime was rife, peace was not the order of the day, and cooperation was still being tested. To their surprise, the situation was peaceful during the December holidays. One resident A.P. Ngcobo, wrote to *Ilanga LaseNatal* to express her delight:

*Eginisweni ngiyaziqhenya ngoba kulomuzi kuhlange abantu abahlukene kakhulu bekukhona ukwesaba ukuthi ngase ube mubi loKhisimusi khona kodwa sengathi umuntu ubesekhaya ayi edolobheni. Ukuthula bekumangalisa, ukuziphatha kwabantu bakhona kube into ebingalindelwe ubani ngoba bekuhlala ziba khona izigigaba kungakavalwa uma sesibona kanti zibangwa ubumpohlo manje kuvaliwe kwasala izakhamuzi zakhona kube khona ukuthula okumangalisayo. Siyababongela kongaPhezulu sengathi kunganda ukuthula.*

(Truly speaking, I am proud because KwaMashu has different people; hence there was fear among residents that they might have a bad Christmas, but there was calm and peace as if we were home, not the urban area. There was peace; people unexpectedly behaved because the noise was usually from the *mpohlo* [male residents who stay alone] residents, but there was peace. We thank God for this and wish for peace).<sup>814</sup>

However, the festive season did not pass without some bad incidents. Ngcobo added that:

*Zibekhona izigigabana ezincane kakhulu emaphethelweni omuzi ayi ngaphakathi nokho akubanga zingozi ezimbi kangako. Omunye wesakamuzi owathola amanxeba evela eNanda kubahambi basebusuku amenza waze walala esibhedlela.*<sup>815</sup>

(... there were no incidents in inner KwaMashu, but a few were reported on its periphery. One person who was from Inanda was stabbed by night goers and was taken to hospital for treatment).

It is unclear which hospital the person was taken to as there was no hospital in KwaMashu in 1959. King Edward Hospital was, however, already in existence in Durban. KwaMashu

<sup>814</sup> A.P. Ngcobo, 'Bekupholile KwaMashu', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 17 January 1959, 7.

<sup>815</sup> A.P. Ngcobo, 'Bekupholile KwaMashu', *Ilanga LaseNatal*, 17 January 1959, 7.



Polyclinic came being in July 1962 and mainly dealt with infectious diseases and malnutrition.<sup>816</sup> Forced removals affected every aspect of life, including healthcare facilities and staff. In her book on twentieth-century African nurses, Buthelezi mentions a nurse by the name of Zamazulu, whom she writes was the ‘salt of the earth’ and was called ‘a Matron with a Mission or the Matron of Mercy’<sup>817</sup> Zamazulu, who became matron-in-charge of KwaMashu Polyclinic in 1963, was transferred from King Edward VIII Hospital, where she had worked for almost 20 years. The establishment of KwaMashu enabled the opening of health care facilities such as the polyclinic and, Buthelezi observes that, ‘people who settled in KwaMashu found themselves better settled than they had been in Cato Manor’.<sup>818</sup>

The infamous Mkhumbane was officially proclaimed a White area in 1958 in terms of the Group Areas Act, and massive removals subsequently got underway as early as March. While interviewees did not dwell much on KwaMashu as their primary interest was to talk about Mkhumbane, this chapter has drawn on *Ilanga LaseNatal* and *UmAfrika* to tell the story of KwaMashu. Although not all Mkhumbane residents were relocated to KwaMashu, as this thesis has shown, given that it was the first site for such relocations, the township became the symbol of apartheid-era townships and an centre for anti-apartheid resistance. Mkhumbane was one of many South African spaces where the apartheid government pursued its policy of separate development. It imposed its laws to disperse a multi-racial community and define and control where racially-defined citizens could live and work, and how they could travel. KwaMashu was the solution, and it was born out of the apartheid policies.

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<sup>816</sup> Its name was changed to KwaMashu Community Health Centre in 2004 and it expanded its services. However, people still call it ‘Poly’. The author of this thesis, born and bred in Inanda, understands that the communities of Inanda, Ntuzuma, and other surrounding areas were treated at the polyclinic.

<sup>817</sup> Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers*. Buthelezi writes that the polyclinic served the settlement of KwaMashu, which housed 'half a million' people who were caught in the ‘death traps created by the South African kleptocratic oligarchy’.

<sup>818</sup> Buthelezi, *African Nurse Pioneers*.

## Conclusion

### Mkhumbane died, stories remained

In the 80 years between 1913 and 1983, almost four million South Africans were forcibly removed.<sup>819</sup> This raises questions such as the kinds of lives and livelihoods people experienced in urban settings before forced removals; whether forced removals destroyed or transformed lives; what was lost and what was gained in this process; and how the shattering of old lives and the making of new ones is remembered.

These are all pertinent questions that require further, intensified research in both the destroyed and the “new” areas. This research focused on aspects of daily life and events in one area that was dramatically affected by forced removals, Mkhumbane, which bordered the city of Durban. Using oral history narratives as the backbone of the study, supported by newspaper articles, archival records, and secondary publications, this research endeavoured to tell the story of Mkhumbane using the ‘horse’s mouth’ approach. As Sean Field, a Professor of History renowned for his use of oral history put it in his interviews of residents who were victims of forced removals in Cape Town, these ‘unnoticed makers of history also want to be acknowledged and remembered’.<sup>820</sup> It is not merely a matter of giving a voice to these marginalised individuals but also of getting a sense of how they experienced this process.

This dissertation has been a long, at times painful, at times revelatory, and at times uplifting journey for me. I have learnt a great deal in the course of the research and writing and in this final chapter briefly summarise some of the key threads that emerged, viz., oral history as a methodology, race relations in urban settings, stereotypes about Mkhumbane, Cato Manor as a site of political struggle and resistance, and memories and recollections of forced removals.

### Oral history as a methodology

As indicated at the beginning of this dissertation, ‘... central to this dissertation is the use of oral history as a research tool. This study considers how reliable it is as a source of information, its

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<sup>819</sup> Field, *Lost Communities*, 11.

<sup>820</sup> Field, *Lost Communities*, 12.

value, and how it has transformed how we study the past. This issue will focus specifically on issues of memory and nostalgia.’ This study reinforces the notion that oral history must be problematised in all contexts and here I briefly reflect on what it means when oral history is moved from the margins to the centre of historical research, in the context of a study such as this one on Cato Manor.

My position as insider-outsider bears comment. Though an academic historian, as an ‘insider’, being male, African, and Zulu, I am very invested in this research. As stated in the introduction, I was born and raised by my maternal family in what was then the semi-rural area of Inanda on the outskirts of north-eastern Durban. Oral history was one form of the indigenous knowledge system that was established as a regular part of my socialisation and upbringing. Fables and fairy tales would be told to us by the elders. These stories were related as ways of educating and nurturing us for the future. The important point is that oral tradition was not the preserve of any particular (elite) group in society but was democratising in the sense that anyone could share their experiences about leisure time, family, work, and social change that ultimately provided *their* historical perspective.

Most of the residents in Inanda were not literate in the written word, and one form of communication was through orally transmitted knowledge and stories that were passed from one generation to the next. This oral tradition mainly comprised of second-hand accounts transmitted orally and usually reflected the personal experience of the individual relating the story, in this case, my grandmother, but it was something told to her by other elders. A tradition that I inherited from my forebears is praise songs, which I am a practitioner of, and on most weekends, I am called on to perform at some function. The coronavirus pandemic, has, unfortunately, negatively affected this.

I am an insider not only because of my geographic location, race, and ethnicity, but also my embracing of oral traditions. Is this a problem as far as undertaking this study is concerned, given possible contradictions with my professional training? Whilst in the past, research by ‘outsiders’ was considered to be more objective (Hellowell, 2006), with insider research considered partial because of the researcher’s closeness to the subject (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007), it is now generally accepted that all research is influenced by identity and the situated knowledge of

researchers and that the distinction between insider and outsider is a ‘false dichotomy’ (Chavez, 2008, 474).<sup>821</sup>

Undoubtedly, given my location, I identify with the subjects of this study, but I believe that I have been able to set aside my emotional involvement and analyse the research findings in line with my professional training. The situation might have been different if I were living in a small geographically defined community undertaking an oral history of that community, where there were close bonds and established relationships. In such a case, the researcher may not want to upset social relationships and may ask banal questions and offer a non-controversial analysis that omits unsavoury and controversial incidents. In the case of this research, the “community” is too large, too heterogeneous, and too spread out for me to be directly vested to the extent that my analysis was affected.

The reliability of oral histories has been questioned in terms of nuanced memories. Can we rely on the representations of the past provided by oral history? Oral histories, as the historian Ludmilla Jordanova reminds us, are ‘based on the idea that powerful insights can be derived from people talking about their experiences. It therefore gives a certain status to memory, no matter how complex or uncertain this mental faculty may be’.<sup>822</sup>

The understandings of people which come to the fore as they speak about their past provide, as this study shows, a window to experiences that may otherwise have remained hidden. One example in this study is the emergence of narratives on sexuality based on oral histories. This sexual self-disclosure may not have been articulated as clearly and may have remained hidden. The kinds of things that interviewees were prepared to reveal may also be historically context-specific. If South Africa did not have a liberal and socially inclusive constitution that accords equal treatment to people of all persuasions, and if the country were not one where the issue of LGBT rights is spoken about publicly, would interviewees have been willing to share

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<sup>821</sup> D. Hellowell, “Inside-out: Analysis of the insider-outsider concept as a heuristic device to develop reflexivity in students doing qualitative research”, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 11, 4, 2006: 483-494. See: doi:10.1080/13562510600874292

T. Brannick and D. Coghlan, “In defense of being ‘native’: The case for insider academic research”, *Organizational Research Methods*, 10, 1, 2007: 59-74. See: doi:10.1177/1094428106289253

C. Chavez, “Conceptualizing from the inside: Advantages, complications, and demands on insider positionality”, *The Qualitative Report*, 13, 3, 2007: 474-494. Available at <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-3/chavez.pdf>

<sup>822</sup> Ludmilla Jordanova, *History in Practice* (London: Arnold, 2000), 52.

experiences of sexuality? Without having researched this issue, my response would be, 'unlikely'.

### **Exploring race in urban settings**

What do the interviewees' memories and recollections reveal about race relations in Cato Manor and more broadly in urban settings in the greater Durban area? The findings are contradictory. The racial tensions between Indians and Africans through the course of the twentieth century have been well documented. They were especially explosive in 1949 and 1985. For many Africans, the 1949 riots led to feelings of 'liberation' as they won their battle against the Indians who dominated trade in the area. The oral histories provide wonderful insights into how Africans perceived the multiple origins, motives and aftermath of the 1949 riots.

The racial violence of 1985 in Inanda, where I grew up, is not discussed here, but elders expressed similar feelings as Indians were ousted from land they had occupied for many decades and Africans then claimed ownership. What, then, was the interviewees' understanding of race relations in Cato Manor, and how does this compare with the available archival and secondary sources?

The apartheid policy of separating people by race divided South Africans geographically and the system planted an "us" versus "them" mentality between groups. A racial pyramid was created, and many South Africans established their social location, position in the political economy, and identity according to the status of their racial position in the South African sphere. Indians and Africans made up the bulk of the population of Mkhumbane. However, living side by side, race, and class made for significant identity differences. Race meant that Africans had restricted access to the city and had to carry a pass, which Indians did not have to do. Coupled with earlier access to education and higher paid employment, such policies exacerbated differences between African and Indians and bred discontent.

Given the time lag, these differences tended to be downplayed by informants who were optimistic about race relations in Mkhumbane. There is nothing that is substantially new in terms of the narratives about the causes and consequences of the riots. What is interesting, however, is that most oral accounts allude to the 'peaceful racial interaction' in the period after the riots, which,

of course, goes against the archival and secondary evidence. This highlights the importance of contrasting oral with archival and secondary sources to provide new perspectives.

When, in informal discussions, the issue switched to current race relations, there were some negative, even xenophobic comments about Whites and Indians dominating the economy and even about foreigners taking over local people's jobs. On the one hand, there is nostalgia about the past, and on the other, a more pragmatic attitude towards the present where people are affected materially, which likely shapes their attitudes. More research is needed in this area, especially given the turn of events in July 2021. It may be that race relations narratives depend very much on the historical juncture at which they are investigated. During July 2021, after I had submitted my dissertation but before making these revisions, South Africa was hit by almost a week of rioting and looting, following the jailing of former president Jacob Zuma, which left more than 300 people dead, hundreds of thousands of South Africans unemployed, and caused billions of rands in damage.

What is relevant to this study is the emergence of the narrative of the “Phoenix Massacre”. It is alleged that Indian vigilantes from Phoenix who took on the defence of their township in the absence of law enforcement agencies, killed more than 30 innocent Africans. Phoenix was established as an apartheid era township and houses those who had to flee race riots in Inanda in 1985; those who lived in informal settlements in around Durban; and the many who were forcibly removed from their places of residence and dumped in this barren township far from their former places of residence.

The majority of the Indian residents of Phoenix are working class; however, adjoining Phoenix is the African informal settlement of Bhambayi, which is home to hundreds of thousands of people and whose residents are even poorer than those in Phoenix and lack services of any kind. Indian townships were established as a buffer between African and White areas in the apartheid era, and in the current context Indians have come to be seen as an obstacle to African progress. Apartheid may have ended but the legacy of apartheid spatial segregation lives on.

When the violence broke out there were posts on social media about the “massacre” by Indians, and following this the issue of “Indian racism” dominated the print media, radio and television, and social media. There were protest marches to the Durban City Hall, with some marchers

chanting, “one Indian, one bullet”. While we have largely discussed individual narrations in this dissertation, the historical juncture can shape collective memory, which, in turn, may influence individuals’ recollections.

Given the prevalence of strong ideas about Indian racism against Africans, there is an anti-Indian current running amongst Africans (at least in my experience and perceptions from the incendiary racist social media messages I have been receiving and from my interaction with Africans living in townships around Durban and Pietermaritzburg). We also need to consider the impact on Africans of a populist leader like Julius Malema and his Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party, as well as other locally based organisations, who sprout strongly anti-Indian rhetoric.

Memory becomes collective in communities when it is shared and reinforced through various means, as opposed to being contained in the minds of individuals. The ever-changing collective and social memory among Africans as far as historical and contemporary relations with Indians are concerned would possibly result in different responses from respondents if these interviews were conducted today (October 2021). This does not mean that we ignore the findings of the oral history process but simply that we should be aware of this as we seek to find “experience”.

### **Challenging stereotypes about Mkhumbane**

The memories and recollections of respondents also reshape our perception of Cato Manor as an urban township in the apartheid era. This area was unique among the locations and townships of Durban. The settlement emerged in the years before and especially after the Second World War. In terms of both in its racial make-up and size, it was totally unplanned. While Indians settled in the area because of the market gardening opportunities it offered, Africans entered in large numbers as it was the only land available as Indians sought an escape from market gardening and became landlords. Mkhumbane was thus an unplanned and unstructured formation. Its extremely large population lacked formal control, and in a context of elementary policing, it was difficult to control and police Mkhumbane, more so than other areas of African settlement in Natal. Also evident was pervasive distrust of and hostility towards police by the residents of Mkhumbane.

According to Butler-Adam and Venter, the problems of Mkhumbane ‘should not be hidden in an idealisation of poverty’ as services were lacking, there were vast social problems, and there was a common problem of low incomes for dwellers’.<sup>823</sup> Yet, interviewed decades later, these former residents denied this and tended to look back positively at the area, even though contemporary surveys indicated that many residents lived below the breadline and malnutrition and diseases like kwashiorkor were widely prevalent.<sup>824</sup>

What the oral testimony reveals are contrasting images of urban life in apartheid South Africa. Even allowing for nostalgia, what emerges is that despite the terrible living conditions, political oppression, the negative effects of segregation, economic hardship, and the many social ills facing the people of Mkhumbane, this area constituted a “community” for the inhabitants and became an anchor that defined their sense of belonging and identity in the urban setting. We learnt that there was a rich culture in which ordinary people spent a great deal of their time talking, singing, cooking, fighting, and other activities that point to the existence of a vibrant community.

The picture that emerges is of a vibrant community whose former residents remember it with great affection even though we know that the environment was harsh. The residents of Mkhumbane shaped their lives, leisure and socio-economic activities around these communal structures and activities. What these oral histories divulge is that this lively urban township provided a sense of belonging to thousands of Africans, and this confronts the stereotypes of apartheid-era African townships as constituting homogenous but notorious shantytowns.

This sentimentality for the past, or nostalgia for this place, Mkhumbane, may be due to several factors. One was that many of the interviewees were younger when they lived in Mkhumbane and had fewer responsibilities; another was that they live under more difficult circumstances now, which could colour their perceptions of “the good old days”. Residents did benefit from more effortless movement as most could walk from Mkhumbane to their workplace while some were able to earn a living informally without having to go out to work.

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<sup>823</sup> Butler-Adam and Venter, “The Present Residents of Cato Manor”, 16.

<sup>824</sup> Badat, *The Forgotten People*, 142.



Being removed from a place where they had settled and that they called home undoubtedly had terrible effects, such as trauma, which results in many residents wondering who they were and what their status was after ‘having lost their connection to their homeland and ancestral spirits for such a long time’.<sup>825</sup> Group Areas had devastating effects on those impacted by forced removals, which affected many mainly Black South Africans. As Muller observed, once the government deemed that people should move, there was little that they could do: ‘The government had brought into being about twenty separate laws that enabled forced removals, the harshest of which prevented black South Africans from requesting a court interdict to prevent their removal’.<sup>826</sup>

In KwaMashu, informants said, the housing was qualitatively better than Mkhumbane. However, resettlement to KwaMashu was feared for many reasons ranging from acclimatising to the new township, to new neighbours, and a new way of living. Earning a living in KwaMashu proved difficult, especially for those who had business interests or generated a form of income from within Mkhumbane. Transport, recreation sites, shops, and many other social needs were established at a slow pace, making it difficult for new residents to settle.

For those employed in various fields, KwaMashu was a long distance from the city; hence, transport fees were inordinately high, causing economic distress for many families. The order to remove the residents of Mkhumbane to sites which were far from jobs and the city of Durban inflicted ‘additional hardship through higher transport costs’.<sup>827</sup> Numerous other rates and fees were incurred by residents, suggesting that the government moved people prematurely and should have first ensured proper transport and infrastructure. For example, there was no electricity.

The fear of new neighbours and a disturbed social life in KwaMashu crippled those who imagined life in the new township, as Mrs Thipe recalled:

What was great was that when we were still in Mkhumbane the people were united.... If, for example, MaMkhize was arrested for having beer or *isiqatha* and taken by the police to Kito, the neighbours will brew beer for her so that when she comes back she would find something

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<sup>825</sup> Skelcher, “Apartheid and the Removal”, 765.

<sup>826</sup> Carol Ann Muller. *South African Music: A Century of Traditions in Transformation, Volume 1* (California: ABC Clio, 2004), 17-18.

<sup>827</sup> Badat, *The Forgotten People*, 142.

at home. People were united in Mkhumbane. When they were happy together they would be happy, as well as when sad.<sup>828</sup>

As locations shifted and a new life began, which involved struggling to make a living in circumstances that were alien and where the old way of life had been disrupted, poverty struck hard to the extent that people reminisced of the life they had in Mkhumbane. Mrs Dube insisted that there was no poverty in Mkhumbane:

Interviewer: *Usho ukuthi eMkhumbane yayingekho indlala?*

Maphumulo: *Cha, yayingekho into enjalo. Ngihlale ngitshela izingane zami ukuthi uma kuthiwa uMkhumbane awuvalwanga angabe ngiyisigwili ngoba ziningi izinto ezazidayiswa laphaya. Kwesinye isikhathi sasithatha utamatisi emakethe sihambe siye kowudayisa emaphandleni.*<sup>829</sup>

(Interviewer: So people of Mkhumbane did not suffer from poverty?)

Maphumulo: No, there was no such thing. I normally tell my kids that if Mkhumbane was not shut down I would be rich by now because there was a lot of stuff that was sold. Sometimes we would pick up tomatoes from the market area and go sell it back in the rural areas).

As is the case with feminist histories and increasingly with work on LGBT groups, this suggests that we need to employ oral history methodologies to unearth the experiences of marginalised groups, both in general but here, specifically those living under apartheid. The findings were liberating for me personally because they went against all that I had been taught and came to believe when I was growing up. Perhaps of relevance here is the work by Jacob Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia*, which deals with similar issues, as indicated on the jacket cover:

Challenging the stereotype that black people who lived under South African apartheid have no happy memories of the past, this examination into nostalgia carves out a path away from the archetypical musings. Even though apartheid itself had no virtue, the author, himself a young black man who spent his childhood under apartheid, insists that it was not a vast moral desert in the lives of those living in townships. In this deep meditation on the experiences of those who lived through apartheid, it points out that despite the poverty and crime, there was still art, literature, music, and morals that, when combined, determined the shape of black life during that era of repression.<sup>830</sup>

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<sup>828</sup> Miaketso Thipe, interviewed by Thokozana Xaba, 2 March 2002.

<sup>829</sup> Elizabeth Maphumulo, interviewed by Mphumeleli Ngidi, 17 December, 2019.

<sup>830</sup> Jacob Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

However, the responses to forced removals were not uniform.

### **Forced Removals: What do memories and recollections reveal about forced removals within an African township?**

Many generations of South Africans have been victims of forced removals aimed at creating segregated, White-dominated working and living conditions. Forced removals are, rightly, mostly associated with hardship and displacement, and this was undoubtedly the case for the majority of Black people forcibly removed from places of long residence. However, the oral testimony suggests that it is also the case that many others sought to take advantage of Group Areas relocations, especially to KwaMashu in this case, as they presented new opportunities. For those renting tiny spaces, paying high rentals, with no running water and electricity, and living in overcrowded structures, the opportunity to get their own house, with running water and electricity eventually added, was not to be scoffed at.

The oral recollections of respondents underscore the negative aspects of relocation, but also some of the benefits that accrued. This shows that we need to take seriously the agency of Black South Africans under apartheid. While facing oppressive conditions, many sought spaces (in KwaMashu in this case) that they could exploit to effect a small improvement in their personal circumstances, even if the structural conditions were not addressed. This suggests that we re-examine notions of “victimhood” and “agency” as we take seriously the experiences of respondents in order to provide a nuanced picture of life under apartheid for marginalised communities and the impact of forced removals.

### **Cato Manor as a site of political struggle and resistance (the 1959 Riots)**

With regard to Mkhumbane as a site of struggle and resistance, the problems began when police and municipal raids were intensified in a context of heightened national resistance to apartheid, the Treason Trial, and the state’s first move to begin implementing Group Areas. The broader context was the emergence of the ANC as a national organisation and its political campaigns and the Treason Trial, all of which buttressed local resistance. This situation created an unpleasant atmosphere under surveillance. Anger and uncertainty brewed, particularly from 1958 after news

that the residents were to be removed to relocation sites. The situation became volatile and uncontrollable as resistance, boycotts, and upheavals became an everyday activity.

The recollections and newspaper accounts underscore the fact that beer brewing was the main economic strategy through which many urban African women survived. It was not easy for women because the multiple laws that aimed to curtail women's presence in urban areas and their ability to earn a living, created many challenges, be it as wife or mother, as many were breadwinners or played key roles in supporting the family and supplementing family income. The bosses and the apartheid authorities wanted African men to drink, but on their terms. They wanted a monopoly of the beer trade by brewing the beer and selling it in their beer halls. They did not tolerate home brewing by women as it constituted an economic threat to the state, and gave women a freedom that the state could not countenance; hence, beer became the compelling reason for raids in townships and hostels across the country. When women's livelihoods came under threat they took to the streets to protect their socio-economic interests.

The apogee of women's agency and ability to organise was arguably the march to the Union Buildings in 1956, but such protests continued. Threats to their survival were key in politically conscientising women, leading to the explosion of violence in 1959. While women were historically marginalised in apartheid South Africa by the racist regime's political and economic policies, and within their own societies by patriarchy and traditional customs, they overcame these oppressions to often spearhead the struggle for political freedom. The narratives relayed here show that we need to go beyond well-known political figures like Winnie Mandela and Albertina Sisulu because ordinary women were equally involved in the struggles.

This dissertation underscored, for the researcher at least, the value of oral history as a research tool to capture the memories of respondents as well as their experiences of the near past. Oral history is crucial in documenting the story of marginalised communities and in the process adding to social history narratives in the KZN region. It revealed the agency of respondents and provided a means to investigate areas that may not be studied in official histories. Oral history is not just about what happened in the past; it is also about what individuals in the present think happened in the past and how they remember it. Oral history is, however, not fool proof. It too has limitations and we need to subject it to the same critical examination as written texts.

I was lucky to have found transcribed interviews in the Old Court House and Killie Campbell Africana Library, some of which have not been used in any research. Such ready-made transcriptions were mainly with people who held particular public positions who could unpack and verify, if needed, some of the interviewees' stories. Interviews from published research also helped corroborate or confront information that was available to the researcher through interviewees. The lesson that I learned is that there is a need for our public history institutions and universities to establish centres that focus on recording the oral histories of ordinary people's unique life histories and public officials' policymaking objectives, and so on. This will be invaluable going into the future. Our time's major event is the coronavirus pandemic, and it would be an outstanding achievement if we could document people's experiences as they live through the pandemic and their memories of it.

Oral testimonies of the marginalised are absent from official documents. This micro-study focuses on one area, and when comparison is made with studies conducted in other parts of the country, it will contribute to a more holistic picture of the past as experienced by ordinary people. Such studies have been, or are being undertaken, in places like Chatsworth in KZN, in Soweto and Alexandra in Johannesburg; in Kathorus on the East Rand, and in District Six and Bo-Kaap in the Cape. It is important to continue to conduct such research to give voice to those who suffered under apartheid; otherwise, they will remain doubly victimised, brutalised under apartheid, and silenced in the post-apartheid period.

As I completed this research amidst hard times when much of the world was experiencing enforced lockdowns because of the coronavirus pandemic, and thousands were dying daily, I reminisced on my times as a poet and penned the following lines:

## To Mkhumbane

To you, Mkhumbane is a shack land, to us Mkhumbane is home.

To you, Mkhumbane has shacks, to us Mkhumbane has *amabharekisi* (barracks).

To you it is a shack, to us it is a home.

To you it is Cato Manor, to us it is Mkhumbane.

They say we kill Indians because we are jealous.

It was the Boers who killed Indians.

The Boer make us look at Indians as our enemies.

Indians and Africans are together.

*Ingoba ufuna sihambe siye KwaMashu.*

(It is because you want us to go to KwaMashu).

Mr and Mrs Apartheid did not like togetherness.

Togetherness was an enemy of Mr and Mrs Apartheid.

In the existence of our togetherness, Mr & Mrs Apartheid would be defunct.

Togetherness was killed so that Mr and Mrs Apartheid would survive.

Mr and Mrs Apartheid told us to go to KwaMashu and Umlazi,

Mr & Mrs Apartheid told them to go to Chatsworth

*Basisusa ngenkani bayosilambisa*

*(They removed us by force so that we would starve).*

Mr and Mrs Apartheid, what happened to your conscience?

*Uthi asihambe siye KwaMashu.*

(You are saying we should go to KwaMashu).

They tell us we should move.

Women fight the beer and men to save us.

Beer is not *isishimeyane*, what is your problem?

You want us to buy from you, not from our women.

You enter our houses while we are sleeping.

Your boots step on the toes of our women.

When we kill you, you hang us in court.

*Uthi asihambe siye KwaMashu.*

(You are saying we should go to KwaMashu).

We are hungry at KwaMashu.

My neighbour has gone back to the village because he does not have a permit and is not married.

There is no *isishimeyane* here.

We cannot dance, I cannot sing here.

The house is small, the person next door will complain of neighbour nuisance.

The transport fare and rates eat my money before my children can eat.

They write our history without consulting us.

Mkhumbane is known by us.

Mkhumbane's stories should be told by us.

We are Mkhumbane and Mkhumbane is us.

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vi. **Internet Sources**

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**vii. Drama, Plays and Songs**

*Bowungakanani*, a song by Mzambiya featuring Msawawa.

*Mkhumbane: A New Folk Musical*, directed by Alan Paton and produced by Todd Matshikiza.

*Uvukile Umkhumbane (Umkhumbane Has Risen)*, directed by Alfred Duma Nokwe.

*Happiness Through the Mist*, directed by Zeph Nzama.

*Umkhumbane*, a song by Steve Dyer.

*EMkhumbane*, a song by Siphho Gumede.

*Khawuleza*, a song by Hugh Masekela.