CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE: AN HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL EVALUATION, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BLACKS.

by

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ABSTRACT

The impress of history has been particularly profound in the sphere of environmental perception, in that South Africans, both black and white, have had their notions of the environment shaped by the political forces of the past. Accordingly, this study is placed within the context of historical geography, as its open-ended techniques and multi-disciplinary approach is regarded as the most appropriate way of undertaking a study which crosses both historical and environmental boundaries.

A contention fundamental to this study, is that South African environmental awareness and knowledge is at a fairly low level and that black environmental interest and concern in particular, ranges from apathy to outright hostility. It is further contended that the attainment of mass environmental literacy is essential for the success of the environmental movement in this country and that this in turn, is dependent on the adoption of a strategy incorporating an integrated historical, social and political perspective.

Historico-political factors such as: the impact of the colonizing process; the dispossession of the indigenous peoples; the effect of racial attitudes; discriminatory land legislation and, in particular, the imposition of the apartheid system in 1948, are evaluated in terms of their effect on the development of black environmental attitudes. The culmination of these factors has led to a distortion of environmental perceptions and attitudes, as well as to the alienation of blacks from the environment. Conversely, the initially exploitative white response to the environment gradually incorporated a preservationist element, subsequently evolving into a conservation ideology which generally ignored black interests and perspectives.

The policies and activities of the first black environmental organizations are detailed, in an attempt to place their achievements in historical perspective. Research in this area was conducted using primary sources.

Interviews with selected environmental and mass democratic organizations in the Greater Cape Town Region were conducted. Using the techniques of the focused interview, their stance on environmental issues was established and their proposals for a future environmental strategy elicited. It was found that, while only one of the nine mass democratic organizations evaluated had an environmental policy, they were all committed to the establishment of a democratic society as well as to the concept of mass participation in environmental politics.

Based on the insights gained from the historical aspects of the study, as well as an assessment of the proposals put forward during interviews, it is concluded that certain preconditions are necessary for the successful implementation of future environmental strategies, if blacks are to become involved in environmental issues. These are: the destruction of apartheid; the establishment of a democratic state and the enhancement of individual quality of life.

Strategies enabling mass environmental literacy and increased black involvement in environmental issues are suggested, once these preconditions have been met.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAC	-	The All African Convention
AFA	-	The African Farmers Association
ANC	-	The African National Congress
ANSCA	-	The African National Soil Conservation Association
AWS	-	The African Wildlife Society
AZAPO	-	The Azanian Peoples Organization
BC	-	Black Consciousness
Botsoc	-	The Botanical Society of South Africa
CAL	-	Cape Action League
COSATU	-	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CTEG	-	The Cape Town Ecology Group
GAF	-	Green Action Forum
HBD	-	Hout Bay Delegation
KA	-	Koeberg Alert
MDM	-	Mass Democratic Movement
NEUM	-	The Non-European Unity Movement
NF	-	The National Forum
NFA	-	The Native Farmers Association
NGO	-	Non-government organization
N.U.M.	-	The New Unity Movement
PAC	-	The Pan Africanist Congress
SANF	-	The South African Nature Foundation
UDF	-	The United Democratic Front
WECTU	-	The Western Cape Teachers Union
WSSA	-	The Wildlife Society of Southern Africa

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Old Homes

"We pass where life was
the sun showing the place every morning,
where every reflection of our eyes
is attracted to our ancestors,
their deeds destined to become memorials of today.
If only we could, unashamed, place those
cornerstones again
to be our stepping stones,
discipline carried from mother's knee,
learned there, the family
and all to be the sand of the same
home, with all the branches again
of the same heart
Why not the body of the land forever
like the ruins of Zimbabwe living on
the spirits of our ancestors buried there?
While false beliefs like glue
hold our new homes together ... "

D. Mphusu, 1978, p. 51.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Problem

South Africa's many and urgent environmental problems, range from the onslaughts made by a rapidly expanding population on finite resources, to the institutionalized environmental degradation wrought by the apartheid system. These problems have had increasing attention drawn to them, particularly in the last decade (WSSA, 1980a; Fuggle and Rabie, 1983; Christopher, 1984; Timberlake, 1986; Hunter, Siegfried and Sunter, 1989). Determined State efforts in the field of environmental education (Ballantyne and Oelofse, 1989), the government's commitment to the principle of environmental impact assessment in the 1989 Environment Conservation Act, as well as increased media and commercial attention[1] to environmental and conservation issues, might be interpreted as signs of a new and enhanced awareness of these issues in South Africa.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that recent government action represents a radical departure from the authoritarian stance of the past[2], or that it represents an acceptance of the importance of environmental issues, since its commitment to the apartheid paradigm remains an insuperable obstacle, whether in the field of environmental education (Ballantyne and Tooth-Aston, 1989) or environmental issues in general (Timberlake, 1986). Nor can it be said that the majority of the population is any more environmentally aware or knowledgeable about their natural

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1 As evidenced by the media campaigns of, for example, Pick and Pay in publicizing their environmental concern (Weekend Argus, 1989).

2 The present government has a particularly unfortunate record in its dealings with the public on environmental matters (see Chapter 5, section 5.1).

heritage than at the start of the decade (Adler and Ackerman, 1981; Ferrar, 1983; Preston and Fuggle, 1986; Low, 1987; O'Leary, 1989).

The situation is particularly disturbing given the tendency for the better educated and more affluent sectors of society, especially in industrialized countries, to demonstrate an interest in environmental matters (Redclift, 1984). The class bias of environmental concern has been clearly shown by the results of research in the United States of America, where several surveys have found a strong correlation between environmental concern on the one hand, and age, education and socio-economic variables on the other (Dunlap, 1975; Buttel and Flinn, 1978; van Liere and Dunlap, 1980). However, while many researchers and environmentalists agree that there is a greater tendency for participation and leadership to be drawn from the ranks of the more affluent and educated, substantial levels of support exist among the less educated and affluent (Neiman and Loveridge, 1981; Redclift, 1987; Gupta, 1988).

The link between class and environmental concern has been noted by South African environmentalists in the past (Bond, 1973b), and has also been echoed by survey results in South Africa (WSSA, 1975a; BotSoc, 1980; Preston, 1983), which have shown that members of non-government environmental organizations (NGOs) and visitors to game reserves, are drawn mainly from the wealthier and well-educated groups. Within South African society, these class divisions have been overlaid and obscured by the stratification of society along colour lines. Thus these results, by implication, also demonstrate the low levels of

environmental and conservation awareness[3] among blacks, the group which constitutes the majority of the underprivileged.[4]

Further evidence can be found in the fact that few blacks are members of, or even aware of the existence of, NGOs (Mdluli, 1978; Irwin, 1982; Schweizer, 1983; Mckenzie, Johnson, Klein and Sablay, 1988). The low incidence of environmental clubs at black schools,[5] as well as the reluctance of teachers to undertake fieldwork (Vakalisa, 1984; Opie, 1985; Christian, 1988), are significant pointers to the low levels of environmental awareness among blacks. The situation is further exacerbated by the generally negative environmental perceptions and attitudes[6] of many blacks - attitudes which often take the form of hostility

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3 Environmental awareness has been defined as the "level or state of awareness about the environment, including the need for conservation" ; while conservation awareness concerns " the level of awareness about how to use, or treat, the environment. It is therefore a part of environmental awareness" (Irwin, 1982, p.25).

4 see Wilson and Ramphele (1989, pp 19 - 20).

5 This observation is based on the personal experience of the writer, gained while in charge of a hiking and conservation club at a school in Athlone, Cape Town, from 1983 to 1987. The experience of the Wildlife Society's Education Officer in the Western Cape, also tends to support this (Kelly, 1989, pers comm).

6 Perception involves a process of interaction between the perceiver and the environment in which a personal response, based on a subjective, culturally -induced choice from the total stimuli is made. Environmental perception forms part of the same process of sensory encoding of information in which individual response depends on certain cultural characteristics. The cultural milieu is thus of primary importance in shaping perception (Pocock and Hudson, 1978).

Attitudes, being mental summaries of past experiences, are built up from a series of perceptions. Similarly, environmental attitude is a component of environmental perception, relating to behaviour and as such, is an important part of the learned conception of the environment. Environmental attitude is thus the element which disposes an individual to behave in a particular way (Pocock and Hudson, 1978).

and resentment against the traditional environmental movement, since the latter is perceived as promoting the values and aspirations of the privileged (Low, 1987; Khan, 1989).

The elements of apathy and hostility towards environmental and conservation issues prevailing in South Africa today, are cause for grave concern because, as has been pointed out, an informed and enlightened public is the foundation of environmental concern and action (WSSA, 1980a; Huckle, 1986; WCED, 1987; Briceno and Pitt, 1988). Mass environmental literacy should thus be the first priority of the South African environmental movement, a move which would naturally entail the involvement of the black population on a much wider scale than at present.

While the need to stimulate black environmental awareness has been recognized in the past (WSSA, 1951; Vincent, 1961; Bond, 1971; Buthelezi, 1971), direct action has usually been well within the parameters of apartheid policies and, as such, has not met with widespread acceptance from blacks. These attempts have included the foundation of a separate soil conservation organization, the African National Soil Conservation Association, on the initiative of the Veld Trust in 1953 (Switzer and Switzer, 1979), the launching of a separate wildlife society in 1963, by the Natal branch of the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa (Pringle, 1982), and the opening of an 'Africans only' game reserve, the Manyeleti game reserve in 1967 (WSSA, 1974).

The Wildlife Society's African Conservation Education programme (ACE), which arose out of the pilot environmental education course run by Lynn Hurry in the 'Zululand Zone' in 1969 (WSSA, 1973; Taylor, undated), should not be seen as part of attempts to impose a separatist framework on the development of environmental awareness among blacks. The ACE courses appeared to be a genuine response to include blacks in environmental programmes. Notwithstanding the success of these courses, as noted earlier, neither the efforts of the government, nor those of NGOs, have managed to establish a national climate of environmental

awareness and concern. It has been recognized that the failure to convince the majority of South Africans of the potential relevance of environmental issues to their lives must, in large measure, bear responsibility for the alienation of that majority from environmental issues (WSSA, 1981b). In addition, many environmentalists have also criticized the fact that environmental issues are often considered in isolation from, and sometimes at the expense of, the basic needs and aspirations of poverty-stricken local communities (Hanks, 1976; Gcumisa, 1978; Rose, 1981; Infield, 1986; Owen-Smith, 1987, Odendal, 1988). Notwithstanding an increased awareness of the necessity to consider socio-economic issues, however, there has been a reluctance on the part of environmentalists to acknowledge the political basis of environmental issues (Allan, 1981; WSSA, 1981a; Hodges, 1987; Khan, 1989). Hence, studies such as the effect of discriminatory legislation, both pre- and post-1910, on the development of black environmental attitudes, as well as studies on the cumulative impact of such legislation on current environmental response, have not as yet been researched in any great detail.

It is clear, therefore, that the South African environmental movement is faced with many challenges, one of the most important of which is the necessity of establishing mass involvement in environmental politics. It is this researcher's contention that future efforts in this direction will not succeed unless the problem is approached from an integrated historical, social and political perspective. It is hoped that this study, by firstly, examining the historical roots and underlying political basis of contemporary black environmental perceptions, and secondly, examining current black environmental attitudes, will contribute to a greater understanding of the problems found in this area.

1.2 The Aims of the Study

The primary aims of this study are the following:

1. to examine past and current South African environmental perceptions and attitudes within an historical framework.

2. to analyse these attitudes and perceptions from a socio-political perspective.

3. to establish the current environmental policies of selected democratic extra-parliamentary organizations.

4. to establish the aims, objectives and strategies of selected environmental organizations.

The fulfilment of these primary aims will enable possible future directions for environmental and political organizations to be gauged.

1.3 The Approach

The approach adopted in this study, is based on the open-ended, eclectic techniques of historical geography. Traditional interpretations of the disciplines of history and geography, have usually defined history as the study of chronology and geography as the study of chorology. However, the rigid interpretation of geography as a spatial discipline and history as a temporal discipline, prevents the assimilation of:

> " ... the historical mind ... [which] is acutely sensitive to the motives behind action, [and is] contextual in its approach to understanding motives" (Harris, 1978, p. 127).

It is intended to analyse facts not only as they relate in space, but also as they relate through time, as well as to focus on attitudes, motivation and perception within an historical

framework. Since much of the diverse field of historical geography is concerned with perception and related behaviour (Norton, 1984), this would appear to offer the best perspective from which to examine environmental perceptions and attitudes.

Baker has also pointed out the centrality of ideology to historical geography:

> "Ideologies structure time and space: studies in historical geography must logically therefore embrace ideologies as well as being themselves ideological" (1979, p.562).

Indeed ideology, as an integral component of ideas and attitudes, must be considered as an inseparable part of historical geography, if the past is not to be reduced to:

> " ... a past devoid of conflict ... [leading] inevitably to the antiseptic landscapes of much existing historical geographic writing" (Crush, 1986, p.3).

Closely allied to the need to confront the "unfolding struggles of the subcontinent" (Beavon and Rogerson, 1981, p.174), is its corollary, that it should not:

> " ... make the error of relegating their subjects - the deprived and the disfranchised - to the position of spectators ..." (Wellings and McCarthy, 1983, p.337).

In other words, the function of historical geography is not just to catalogue the past, or to portray it as a succession of encounters in which blacks were passive victims or "shadowy background figures" (Crush, 1986, p.2). Instead, historical geographers have an obligation, as do researchers in related disciplines, to make genuine efforts to end black role objectification and instead, to treat blacks as real political figures (Wellings, 1986). Failure to do so, would merely add to the existing statistics and studies of the academic apartheid industry.

Given the continuing debate on whether historical geography is a separate discipline (Guelke, 1975; Gregory, 1976; Moodie and Lehr, 1976), and the difficulty in arriving at an acceptable definition (Norton, 1984), a final definition is not possible. However, the following aspects of historical geography, as defined by various writers in the field (Dickson, 1972; Baker, 1977 and 1979; Harris, 1978; Crush and Rogerson, 1983; Crush, 1986), have been accepted by the researcher as forming vital facets of the discipline:

> The scope of historical geography is unlimited. In its reconstruction of the past, it goes beyond the discipline of history, to encompass such fields as Biology, Literature, Political Science, Archaeology and Anthropology, among others. That is, it adopts a multi-disciplinary approach.
>
> It focuses on attitudes, ideas and behaviour, i.e. the internal processes of change - hence the acceptance of the importance of oral tradition, rituals and other manifestations of cultural activity.
>
> It recognizes the ideological basis of the historical process and the necessity of incorporating events within a socio-political framework, if these events are not to be analysed in a political vacuum.
>
> It acknowledges the contradictions inherent within a politically neutral stance and instead, adopts the critical approach required of a challenging research agenda.

In accordance with the approach outlined above, this study has been structured as follows:

CHAPTER TWO describes pre-colonial black environmental perceptions as a facet of South Africa's environmental history. The main factors responsible for changing these original perceptions and influencing the development of new environmental

perceptions and attitudes, are traced. The emergence of a more narrowly-based conservation ideology, with emphasis on those aspects which form the basis of the dominant environmental paradigm today, is also described.

CHAPTER THREE details the emergence of the first black environmental organization, the Native Farmers Association and attempts to place this, as well as other black environmental organizations, in historical perspective. The role of the black press in promoting conservation and environmental issues is also focused on.

CHAPTER FOUR outlines the main socio-political factors which, during the post-1948 period, were responsible for the continued formation of negative environmental perceptions among black South Africans. This review serves as a necessary background to a discussion of the environmental policies of democratic extra-parliamentary organizations, which follows.

CHAPTER FIVE establishes the environmental policies of selected extra-parliamentary organizations. These policies were established through a series of focused interviews (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.2) held with the representatives of these organizations, as well as through an examination of documents, where available.

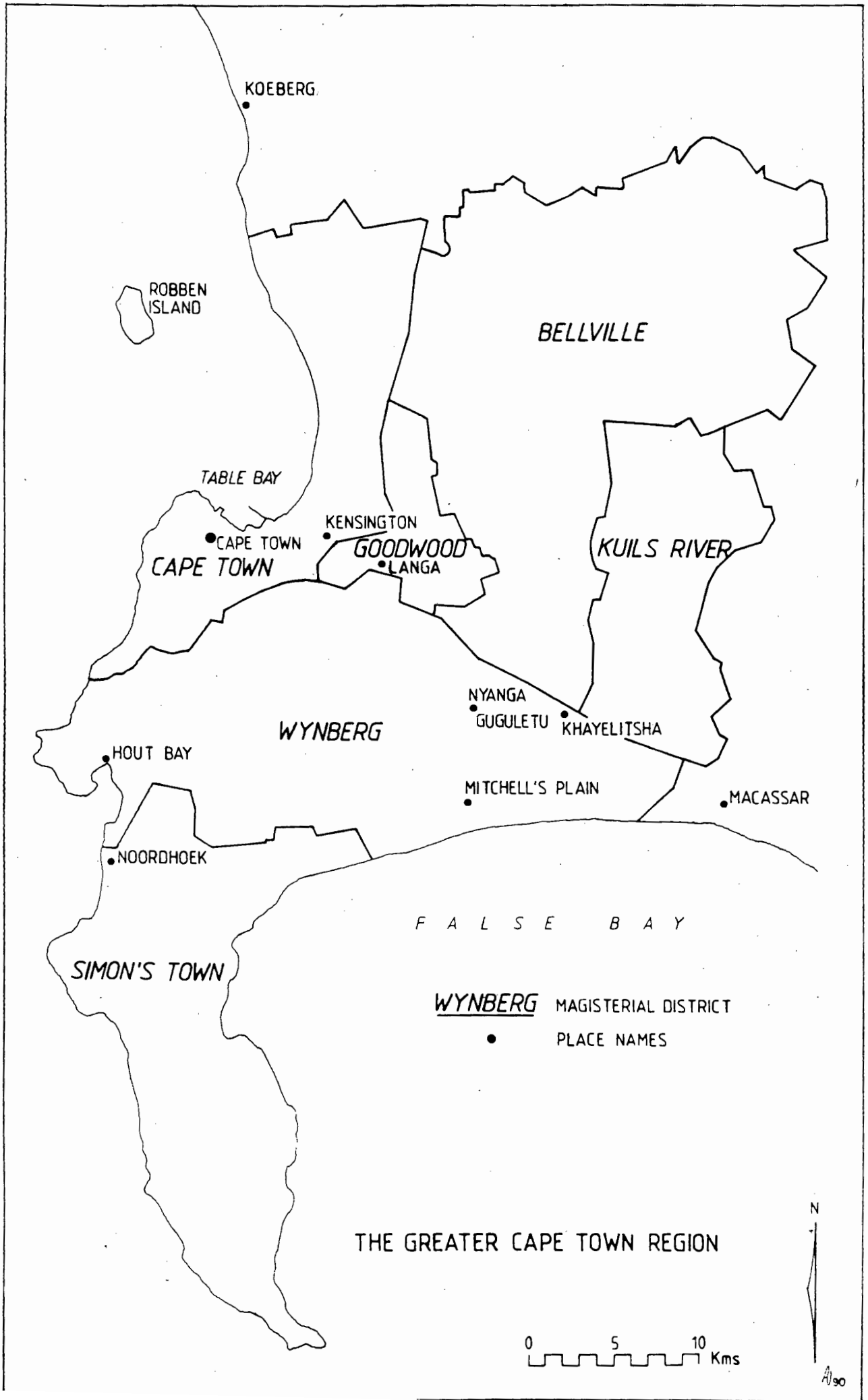
CHAPTER SIX describes the aims and objectives of selected environmental organizations. It also relates the policy and strategies followed in order to achieve those aims.

CHAPTER SEVEN uses the information gathered for Chapters 5 and 6, as well as that gained during the literature review, as the basis for future directions for the environmental movement in South Africa.

1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It will not be possible, in a study of this nature, to examine the historical roots of present day environmental perceptions in any great detail, due to the immense scale on which such a work would have to be undertaken. While the importance of such research to South Africa's environmental history is acknowledged, in this study, the influence of historical factors in shaping environmental perceptions has been dealt with fairly briefly, in the form of an overview. Only those aspects considered to be of major significance have been discussed.

Because of the constraints of time and length, it has been decided to limit the 'study area' for Chapters 5 and 6 to the Greater Cape Town Region (GCTR). The GCTR is defined as consisting of the magisterial districts of Bellville, Cape Town, Goodwood, Kuils River, Simon's Town and Wynberg (see map, next page). However, reference will obviously be made to the national and international context, where appropriate, elsewhere in the study.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KENSINGTON
CAPE TOWN
GOODWOOD
LANGA
CAPE TOWN
KUILS RIVER
NYANGA
GUGULETU
KHAYELITSHA
WYNBERG
HOUT BAY
MITCHELL'S PLAIN
MACASSAR
NOORDHOEK
F A L S E B A Y
SIMON'S TOWN
WYNBERG MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT
PLACE NAMES
THE GREATER CAPE TOWN REGION
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0 5 10 Kms

1.5 A Note on Terminology

While not subscribing to the tenets of racial separatism, for the purposes of this dissertation and, bearing in mind the reality of discriminatory legislation, it was found necessary to use the racial terminology in current use in South Africa. In particular, the term 'black' is used to refer to all blacks, i.e. those classified African, 'coloured', Indian, etc.

The writer deplores the divisive nature of such terminology and notes that many South Africans find its use to be offensive, as well as irrelevant. Further, the writer wishes to emphasize that in using the current racial terminology, it is not her intention to support or promote the ideology of apartheid, but merely to accurately reflect both past and existing situations within South Africa.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

"Only last night it happened that about fifty of these natives wanted to put up their huts close to the banks of the moat of our fortress, and when told in a friendly manner by our men to go a little further away, they declared boldly that this was not our land but theirs and that they would place their huts wherever they chose. "

Jan van Riebeeck, 10 February, 1655, p. 293.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction

> " To be open to the past, is, simply, to be open to the roots of what we are. The past is contrast and perspective for the present" (Harris, 1978, p.124).

If E.H.Carr's (1974, p.22) definition of history as being "...a continuing interaction between past and present", is accepted, then it is to the past that we must look for the roots of the environmental attitudes held today. An historical perspective is essential, because, firstly, present generations have had their notions of the environment shaped by the forces of the past. Hence an understanding of the past is central to an understanding of the formation of these perceptions and attitudes. Secondly, a sense of history enables a proper understanding of "the impact of changing social formations on the environment" (Huckle, 1986, p.15). This allows for a more penetrating examination of events such as the impact of white settlement on the sustainable economies of the indigenous inhabitants.

While the importance of South African environmental history as a key to comprehending present perceptions, motivation, feelings and values has been acknowledged (Christopher, 1973), its development as an integral part of the social, economic and political history of the past, is as yet in its infancy (Carruthers, 1988). While in the past few years there have been a growing number of studies in the field of environmental history (Ellis, 1975; Shaughnessy, 1980; Grove, 1987; Carruthers, 1988), an evaluation of the role, and environmental perceptions of blacks, have remained sadly neglected or wilfully distorted facets of environmental history. This is hardly surprising, given the often Eurocentric focus of the disciplines of both history and geography:

> "White settlers, pastoralists, mining magnates and politicians, and their impress on the landscape are the raw material from which the country's historical geography has been fashioned. South Africa's dispossessed, its slaves, peasants and proletarians, remain shadowy background figures only occasionally glimpsed from the campfires of the white intellectual laager" (Crush, 1986, p.2).

Thus within the context of the historically subordinate position of blacks within society and the polarized nature and history of South Africa, blacks and whites have responded to different cultural traditions during the development of environmental perceptions and attitudes. This situation holds true elsewhere in Africa as well. For example, in describing the history of the Matobo National Park in Zimbabwe, Ranger explained these traditions in terms of the different 'myths' subscribed to by blacks and whites:

> "Whites variously appealed to the ... romantic idea of preserving a specimen of the old Africa, or to the scientific idea of preventing soil erosion and silting, or to their own heroic histories and to their own ideals of utopian nature or to their own ideologies of conservation" (1989, p.219).

A difference in environmental perception was therefore inevitable, because blacks and whites related to the land in very different ways. While blacks related to the land as an environment in which they hunted, grazed their stock and cultivated their crops, whites tended to perceive that same environment from a European, often romanticised, point of view, as a wild and untouched paradise teeming with game (Anderson and Grove, 1987). The evolving environmental ideologies, as products of that era, thus inevitably reflected these different approaches to the environment.

2.2 Environmental Ideologies

2.2.1 The Land Ethic

Fundamental to the question of black environmental perception and particularly that of environmental attitude, is the relationship with the land. The land issue is a central thread which runs right through South African history, from the first war between the KhoiKhoi and the Dutch colonists in 1659 (Dapper, 1933), and continues through the many wars of conquest and dispossession[1] in the ensuing centuries, to the present day. This unresolved conflict manifests itself in the refusal of extra-parliamentary organizations representing black opinion, to accept the current land dispensation (see Chapter 5, section 5.2).

The question of land is a crucial factor and its bitter, divisive legacy, has to be considered when examining South Africa's environmental history, particularly since it is within the context of the land issue that most blacks take their stance on environmental issues (Bond, 1976; Gcumisa, 1978; Buthelezi, 1979 and 1983; Chimombe, 1979; Msimango, 1988; Ngubane, 1988, pers comm).

In pre-colonial Africa, it would be true to say that Africans lived in close contact with nature and that they regarded themselves as part of the environment, not separate from it (Ngubane, pers comm, 1988). Traditionally, the environmental perception of Africans was a positive one (Magi, 1989), drawing its strength from a:

> "...spiritual and mystical bond between the soil and its users, around which so much of their folklore, poetry, religion and language were constructed" (Mphahlele, 1987, p.i).

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1 Davenport describes the history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a "territorial confrontation", in which there was "outright competition for land" (1987, pp 123-124).

The indigenous peoples of South Africa, the San (hunter-gatherers), and the KhoiKhoi (nomadic stock owners), lived in harmony with the land[2], their subsistence economies dictating a frugal lifestyle (Wilson, 1969; Saunders, 1988). While these groups undoubtedly exploited the land and its natural resources with some adverse effects[3], evidence for their largely sympathetic relationship with the environment can be found in the descriptions of the abundant plant and animal life written by callers at the Cape prior to white settlement.[4]

Similarly, the settled agriculturists, Bantu-speaking groups such as the Nguni and the Sotho, may also be said to have had a sympathetic relationship with the land and its natural resources, and that, while a formal conservation ethic was not part of the traditional way of life, when customs and taboos were strictly followed, they in effect protected the environment (Ferreira, 1949; Chavunduka, 1978; Pringle, 1982; Owen-Smith, 1987).

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2 Famine, drought, flood and disease, were ever-present hardships endured by people throughout Africa in their constant struggle for survival, often against an unyielding environment. Without wishing to minimize or to gloss over these realities, it must nevertheless be acknowledged that the Khoisan people lived in a finely-balanced relationship with the environment.

3 Both the Khoi and the San hunted game (Elphick and Giliomee, 1989), while some Khoi groups, lacking cattle, gathered food from veld and beach (Elphick, 1985). The stock owned by Khoi groups undoubtedly had some adverse effects on pasture land, while the Khoi practice of veld burning is evidence of early veld management (Wicht, 1957). However, in assessing the environmental impact made by these groups, it should be borne in mind that their lifestyle was nomadic and that their numbers were generally small. One estimate of the Peninsular Khoi at the time of van Riebeeck, was that numbers varied between 4 000 to 8 000 people (Elphick, 1985, p.92) and about 50 000 for the whole of the S.W. Cape (Elphick and Giliomee, 1989, p.3).

4 see the extracts from contemporary diaries, books etc, compiled by Raven-Hart (1967).

Land was highly valued by all groups, having political and economic significance. The hunting, pastoral and agrarian economies of the various groups required land. And land, or rather the destruction of pasture land by Khoi-owned cattle, was often the cause of conflict between the early Khoi settlers on land used by the aboriginal San hunters (Elphick, 1985). Under the chiefly tenure system, individuals could lose their right to land through proven political disloyalty (Tsotsi, 1981).

Whether hunter, herder or settled agriculturist, no Southern African group subscribed to the concept of the private ownership of land and natural resources. Contemporary research by anthropologists has indicated that the San people, while having a sense of territory, regarded the land, along with its natural resources, as belonging to all (Van der Post and Taylor, 1984). While among the KhoiKhoi, pasture land was regarded as belonging to the tribe. Each band had a person in whom the rights to water and veldkos were vested. Strangers had to ask his permission before using these resources (West, 1979). The Bantu-speaking groups subscribed to a form of communal tenure, with the chief having the right of granting occupation (Letsoalo, 1987).

The pre-colonial land ethic, was therefore one which incorporatd a perception of the individual as an integral part of the environment, as well as an attitude based on a non-destructive exploitation of its resources. It was an ethic which, since it was so intimately bound up with responses to the environment, would not long withstand the imposition of a radically different approach to the environment, such as that embodied by the colony established by the Dutch in 1652.

The impact of the colonizing process, which inevitably destroyed the finely-balanced relationship with the land enjoyed by traditional societies here, as well as in former colonies elsewhere in the world, is best described by Judith Wright's account of the Australian experience:

> "It was the loss of the land which was worst ... Aborigines retreated or were driven out of whole territories into the inhospitable foothills which formed their boundaries. The land was now disfigured and desecrated, studded with huts, crossed by tracks and fences, eaten thin by strange animals, dirtied and spoiled, and guarded from its owners by irresistable and terrifying weapons. The all-embracing net of life and spirit which had held land and people, all things together, was in tatters" (1981, p.27, first quoted by Huckle, 1986).

Events in South Africa followed a similar pattern of conquest, dispossession and expansion as that which occurred in other African colonies, with similar results. Just as in, for example, Zambia, Angola and Namibia, colonial expansion took place at the expense of the physical alienation of the indigenous population, and also inflicted inevitable damage to the environment, its wildlife and natural resources (Huntley, 1976; Vail, 1977; Owen-Smith, 1987; Hamutenya, 1988). It was, however, the physical alienation of Africans from the land, that was to have the most devastating effect on environmental perceptions and attitudes, as the implementation of the Native Land Act, no. 27 of 1913, would show.

Sol Plaatje's historic and much-quoted words aptly reflect the traumatic effect of this Act:

> "Awakening on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth" (1982, p.22).

The Land Act divided South Africa between Africans and whites, making it illegal for Africans to own land in designated white areas, except in the Cape (Davenport and Hunt, 1974). The political, economic and social consequences of this law were far-reaching, since it struck at the very roots of the physical and emotional bond between the land and its users. In economic terms, the effect of the law was catastrophic, as African tenant farmers were forced off white farms and travelled the countryside with their dying stock. Plaatje, then editor of the newspaper, Tsala ea Becoana, took to the road to observe and record the

suffering of the refugees. His description of what he saw, makes for harrowing reading (Plaatje, 1982).

It was, however, the political consequences of this law which would have the greatest impact and which would reverberate down to the present day. Firstly, the Act, by depriving Africans of a stake in their own country, signalled the clear intention of the legislators to deal firmly with the perceived threat of the rising African bourgeosie. Since so many middle class blacks believed in the good intentions of the legislators (Saunders, 1988), the new law came as a great shock and led to a protracted fight, involving most of the educated black elite.[5] Secondly, the act enabled the further estrangement of Africans from the land by laying the basis for later legislation such as the Native Trust and Land Act no. 18 of 1936. This act, which scheduled 13% of the land in South Africa to be released for eventual African occupation (Karis, 1973), would later form the foundation of the Verwoerdian concept of separate development. In terms of this concept, native areas, later to be known as 'bantustans' or 'homelands' and finally, 'National States', were to become the overcrowded dumping grounds predicted by Plaatje (1982) and borne out by current reality (see Chapter 4, section 4.2).

The 1913 Land Act was, arguably, the single most important piece of legislation affecting black environmental perceptions, in that its cumulative effect over the decades has been to distort African environmental attitudes from a previously positive attitude to the environment, to a negative one. While the political significance of the Act should not be minimized, its impact on African environmental perceptions cannot be discounted.

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[5] Black newpapers entered the fight by publishing the full text of the more important clauses of the bill (Imvo, 1912) and hit out at its consequences as a "war of extermination" (Tsala, 1913, p.5). The law also severely tested the newly established South African Native National Congress, which immediately entered the fray (Johns, 1972).

2.2.2 Conservation Ideology

> "Much of the emotional ... investment which Europe made in Africa has manifested itself in a wish to protect the natural environment as a special kind of 'Eden' ... rather than as a complex and changing environment in which people actually had to live" (Anderson and Grove, 1987, p.4).

In the decades, then centuries following the rounding of the Cape by Bartholomeu Dias in 1488, the writings of travellers, hunters, scientists and settlers began to shape and influence the development of white environmental perceptions (Christopher, 1973; Talbot, 1977). The writings of these individuals contributed to a growing perception of Southern Africa as a "strange and forbidding" place, occupied by "ferocious animals and hostile inhabitants" (Christopher, 1973, p.19).

There were, however, many who found the ruggedness of Africa appealing, and a perception of Africa as a wild and unspoilt sanctuary teeming with game, also began to permeate the early conservation thinking of Europeans in Africa (Anderson and Grove, 1987). As Grove points out elsewhere, the development of a European philosophy or ideology of conservation in Africa, has a "coherent and traceable intellectual history" (1988, p.5), one which doubtless first arose as a necessary response to early predations on the environment.

In South Africa, while van Riebeeck's various regulations and 'placaaten' attempting to control the wholesale exploitation of wildlife resources (Rabie, 1976; Pringle, 1982), cannot be regarded as a conscious implementation of a conservation philosophy, they nevertheless represent the first attempts to conserve dwindling resources. These early efforts were followed by several regulations penalizing the burning of land and forest (Wicht, 1957; Rabie, 1976). However, the first real phase of conservation planning came about during the mid-nineteenth century, when the efforts of Dr. Ludwig Pappe in lobbying for protectionist policies, successfully culminated in

the passing of the Forest and Herbage Preservation Act no. 18. of 1858 (Grove, 1987).

The next phase in the development of a conservation ideology began in the wake of the hunting exploits of such individuals as Captain Cornwallis Harris, F.C. Selous and A.H. Neumann. The published reminiscences of men such as these, gave rise to the great romantic myth of that rugged individualist, the hunter, living a carefree, unfettered existence in the wilds of Africa, while notching up unimaginable tallies of game (Podmore, 1955a and b ; Harris, 1987). The following claim made by John Dunn in 1886, is far from atypical:

> "... the finest day I ever made was, one morning before ten o'clock - 23 seacows" (Bruton, Smith and Taylor, 1980).

Given the high numbers of animals slaughtered, the object of such hunting was obviously not subsistence. Instead, hunting became idealized as the Hunt, which was:

> "... surrounded by ideology, and ritual objectives such as the collection of trophies and natural history specimens, [as well as] the pursuit of manliness through sportsmanship" (Mackenzie, 1987, p.42).

Another aspect of the Hunt was symbolized by the hunter as conqueror - conqueror both of the land and the game he hunted. This in turn was a symbol of the colonial European as conqueror/conservationist, both of the land and the people he ruled. Commenting on the hunting stories of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Stephen Gray wrote that:

> "That is exactly what the British adventure yarn was meant to do - foster empire-building ideas, and foster them young" (1986, p.169).

One of the most famous of such 'adventure yarns', was Jock of the Bushveld, which was suffused by author James Percy Fitzpatrick's world view, one in which he:

> "... quite naturally saw the African subcontinent of the 1880's as a place to conquer, to subdue, to bring to heel" (Gray, 1986, p.173).

This element of mastery and environmental control, was very much a part of white environmental attitudes at the time, and was itself a part of the prevailing notions of white cultural superiority. In this regard, the effect of the slave trade on the attitudes of whites towards blacks, was marked (Christopher, 1984). European perceptions of Africa and Africans as 'uncivilized', and themselves as the harbingers of progress and civilization, were incorporated into the developing conservation ideology. This ideology, as a reflection of the social attitudes of that era, not only reflected attitudes of white cultural superiority, but also, by implication, the subordinate status of blacks within society.

As the activities of hunters took their toll on surviving populations of game and these decreased dramatically, hunters and lovers of nature began to unite in an alliance to preserve what remained of their untouched wilderness. Ironically, many an enthusiastic hunter, realising that the future of his sport lay in conserving the remnants of the once huge herds of game, began to support game protection (Schoch, 1959). The new links thus forged between conservationists and hunters, resulted in the passing of game laws and regulations in the late nineteenth century (Ellis, 1975; Pringle, 1982). These regulations, however, had as their motivation not only the wish to conserve game, but also the desire to restrict the access of others, namely blacks (Mackenzie, 1987).

In her account of the history of game protection in the Transvaal, Jane Carruthers draws attention to the link between white power and privilege on the one hand, and the game

protectionist movement on the other, demonstrating the ways in which the movement sought to exclude competition from black hunters by using, as justification, the claim that blacks were responsible for excessive game killing (Carruthers, 1988). White power and privilege versus black exclusion, were also characteristic of the proclamation of game reserves, since black interests were seldom taken into account (Carruthers, 1989). The land chosen was generally uninhabited but it had usually been traditionally used by Africans as hunting grounds and, moreover, in those cases where Africans were resident in proposed game reserves, they were often evicted (Owen-Smith, 1987).

2.3 Conclusion

The environmental ideologies inherited from South Africa's colonial past is thus a reflection of past attitudes, values and norms. The precolonial land ethic, which embodied a positive, utilitarian and largely sustainable response to the environment, had disintegrated under the impact of capitalist expansion and had begun the degeneration into the negative, alienated stance which was to become widespread during the apartheid era after 1948 (see Chapter 4, section 4.2).

The conservation ideology which developed in South Africa, incorporated the Eurocentric focus of colonial society in its tendency to idealize the natural environment with its concomitant desire to preserve it. White privilege, power and possession, as extensions of the colonial paradigm, formed the foundation of the conservation ideology then being forged, while the perception of blacks as environmentally destructive, accurately reflected prevailing racial attitudes. Similarly, the incorporation of white privilege and power into the conservation ideology, was a manifestation of the subordinate status of blacks within society.

The most enduring contribution of South Africa's colonial past to the formation of a conservation ideology, has been the

assimilation, albeit unconsciously, of the twin roles of conqueror and conservationist into that ideology. This has resulted in a situation in which, for the most part, the limitations of this paradigm is still deciding the parameters of environmental considerations today. Thus, an understanding of relevant historical factors, is indispensable to an understanding of the conservation ideology which has dominated South Africa virtually to the present day. It is against this broadly sketched historical background, that organized black environmental response in the twentieth century, should be viewed.

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANIZED ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE AMONG BLACKS - AN HISTORICAL EVALUATION

" Into yokuqala eyaku pakamisa i-Afrika yinkutalo yetu kwintsebenzo yomhlaba. Elo alinaku pikwa bani ... Idabi esilwa lona lendlala likulu, laye likwalikulu nelomkosi wabacasi, osiyazi abangafuniyo ukufundiswa ngolimo kuba iyinto abayiqelileyo benga senakufundiswa nto ngayo. "

D.D.T. Jabavu, 1923b, p.v

[The first thing that will upgrade the standard of Africa is care in working the soil. That could be denied by no-one ... The battle we are fighting against poverty is great, and there are lots of people who support ploughing but other people do not want to be taught farming because they feel farming is a common thing, one does not have to be taught farming.]

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANIZED ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE AMONG BLACKS - AN HISTORICAL EVALUATION

3.1 Introduction

Given the characteristics of the emerging game protectionist movement (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2), it was not surprising that blacks played no part in it. However, while it would be true to say that most blacks were alienated from environmental and conservation issues as defined by whites, relevant environmental issues, such as those revolving around the land issue, agriculture and soil erosion, received a positive response. This is evident, as a discussion of the integration of land demands into the policies of both political and farmers' associations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, will show. Thus it may be said that these farmers' associations channelled and reflected black environmental responses during this period.

The holistic perspective of the early farmers' associations, however, was lacking in the black conservation organizations formed in the 1950s and 60s. A recognition of the political basis of environmental issues and an aggressive stance on the land issue, for example, were notably absent from the policy framework of the African National Soil Conservation Association. Nevertheless, there was a similar emphasis on the socio-economic benefits of conservation methods, particularly as they applied to agriculture.

This chapter deals with the aims and policies of the various organizations under review, and also attempts to place the latter within the prevailing socio-political context. An historical evaluation of these organizations is important, not only in order to place their contribution to South Africa's environmental

history in proper perspective, but also because such an evaluation holds many valuable lessons for the environmental movement in this country today.

The historical evaluation of earlier black environmental and conservation organizations, has not been comprehensively undertaken, instead, three organizations are focused on. These are the Native Farmers Association (NFA), the African National Soil Conservation Association (Ansca) and the African Wildlife Society (AWS). Of the three, only the history and activities of Ansca is dealt with in detail, since nearly complete sets of its magazines, The Ansca News Bulletin and Green Earth, were obtainable. This was, unfortunately not the case with the NFA, since no papers or documents, besides those published by Jabavu (1969), have been traced. Although reports on the activities of the NFA appeared regularly in the newspaper, Imvo Zabantsundu Bomzantsi Afrika, it was unfortunately not possible, given the time-constraints , to undertake a comprehensive study of these reports. Another limiting factor, is the fact that black newspapers such as Imvo, were naturally published in the language of the target community. The number of articles in English are therefore limited. This posed problems for the researcher, since, through ignorance, much is inevitably lost, even when choosing articles for translation into English.

In the case of the AWS, information on its history and activities is extremely scanty. Other than a few references to it in the various souces quoted, no original documents were traced. Nor was it possible, in the time available, to trace individuals who had been connected with the organization. Correspondence with the Conservation Division of the Wildlife Society, did not uncover any further information (Bold, 1989, pers comm).

3.2 Environmental Organizations

3.2.1 Black Farmers' Associations

> "Every civilisation in the world has been built up, bit by bit, by the need for food and the need for things. The path of progress does not lie in buying a white loaf of bread and eating it, but out of learning to grow the corn and grinding it; not in wearing clothes but in weaving them; not in living in a square house but in building it. Agriculture! Production! let these be your watchwords" (Dube, 1912, p.4).

As a result of land loss during the process of white expansion, a system of black tenant farming had come into being. Under this system, African tenant farmers settled on white farms and, in return for being allowed to graze their stock and cultivate their crops, worked for the landlord for a certain period (Letsoalo, 1987).

In a seminal work, Colin Bundy traced the rise of a prosperous class of African peasant farmer, which rose to meet increased market demands in the nineteenth century (1979). The growth of this class was accompanied, in the Eastern Cape in particular, by a social, economic and political ferment which was manifested in the establishment of the first African political organization, Imbumba Yama Nyama, as well as in the establishment of a number of farmers' associations (Odendaal, 1983). Both types of organizations expressed a common political aim, i.e. the desire of Africans to be accepted as part of a modern society. Hence Imbumba Yama Nyama urged Africans to gain prosperity through the pursuit of a wide variety of economic activities, as well as becoming educated, while the farmers' organizations promoted progressive farming ideas (Odendaal, 1983).

This was the start of an amalgamation of environmental and political demands - demands which were to become common to both farmers' and political organizations established elsewhere in South Africa in the early twentieth century. For example, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, one of the principal founders of the

African National Congress, first known as the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), was also instrumental in founding the African Farmers Association (AFA) in the Eastern Transvaal[1]. The AFA had, as its main aim, the encouragement of Africans to buy land and learn progressive farming methods (Benson, 1963). In this particular respect, both the AFA and the SANNC had similar aims, i.e. both felt that the way to progress lay through an enhanced socio-economic and educational status. This extract from an article by the Rev Dube, president of the SANNC, illustrates this similarity clearly:

> "Even if no Agricultural College, no Technical Institute, as yet is established to make the path easy, still, go back to the country; use your reading for improvement, your writing for asking information. Learn from books, learn from others, learn by the use of your eyes. Tillage, carpentering, weaving, house-building, water-storing - these are the paths of civilization in this, as in every other land. Make your beautiful country blossom as the rose and so earn the gratitude and admiration of the best of the white race as well as the salvation of your own" (Dube, 1912, p.4).

By far the most important of these farmers' associations, was the Native Farmers Association (NFA), which was established in 1917 at Middledrift in the Eastern Cape by the young Davidson Don Tengo Jabavu and the Rev. J.E. East, a black American missionary (Switzer and Switzer, 1979). The highly articulate Jabavu, who was later to achieve national renown as one of the founders of the All African Convention (AAC), was the driving force behind the NFA. Jabavu's activities on behalf of the NFA, represented merely one aspect of his life-long crusade for the advancement and upliftment of the African people. As one of only a few African graduates at the time, Jabavu felt it was his moral responsibility to devote his life to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against blacks. To this end, he tirelessly addressed meetings and wrote numerous pamphlets and books on the

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[1] probably in 1911 or 1912

subject.[2] Jabavu's political philosophy was aptly summed up in one of his speeches, 'The Black Man's Place in South Africa':

> "... for the Native, the way for advance was along the lines of education and agriculture. The whole country was certainly the loser by the possessor of a large, illiterate population, and the material enrichment of the Native by habits of industry and enterprise would mean increased financial gain and prosperity to whites as well" (Jabavu, 1923a, p.5).

Rather naively, in the context of white politics in the post-1910 era, Jabavu felt that the class he represented, had a claim to equal treatment with whites (Jabavu, 1932), hence his ceaseless campaigning for equal opportunity in order for Africans to achieve what he perceived as the advanced socio-economic and educational status of whites. Jabavu was a great admirer of black American achievement, particularly in the field of agriculture (Imvo, 1920), and extolled the agricultural training methods of Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee, Alabama (Jabavu, 1969). In many ways, the activities of the NFA reflected Jabavu's concern, not only at the state of African agriculture, but also the subordinate status of blacks in South Africa.

In common with other farmers' organizations, the NFA did not restrict its activities to agricultural concerns but also included socio-economic and political issues. Concerned about the widespread poverty and consequent suffering among farming communities in the Eastern Cape, the NFA adopted the role of pressure group in order to end the discrimination against black farmers and to secure the same benefits as white farmers. To this end, the NFA petitioned the Native Affairs Department (NAD) to issue Xhosa pamphlets on agriculture for free circulation to those interested (Imvo, 1918a); waged a successful campaign for the appointment of government demonstrators (Imvo, 1918b; 1923a;

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[2] Many of Jabavu's speeches were reported in Imvo, while some of his papers and addresses were published in book form. (1969) He also wrote Native Disabilities in South Africa (1932) and collaborated on a farmers' manual written in the vernacular (Mazwai, East, Huss and Jabavu, 1923).

1923g); and was relentless in its efforts to promote the principles of good farming, as well as the necessity for agricultural training (Imvo, 1919c; Jabavu, 1969).

It was in its role as political watchdog, however, that the NFA was at its most vociferous. Many of its meetings were devoted to a discussion of political issues, particularly those dealing with the land and freedom of movement (Imvo, 1919a and b; 1923e). The Land act came in for especially bitter criticism, as members felt that it was the main obstacle to progress, since its aim was to make of Africans a "nation of landless servants" (Imvo, 1923e, p.5). It was the land issue, too, that was the basis of their fight against the East London and Queenstown Farmers Associations. Both these white organizations objected to the sale of land to 'Natives', as well as to the provision of agricultural training in African schools (Imvo, 1919c and d; Jabavu, 1969). Through the pages of Imvo and the East London Daily Despatch, the NFA conducted a vigorous campaign against the racism inherent in these objections (Imvo, 1919e), slating the ELFA for supporting the "absolute slavery and serfdom" of Africans (Jabavu, 1969, p.127) and the QFA for its "negrophobism" (Jabavu, 1969, p.127).

The NFA's standing as an environmental organization with a scope which extended beyond the narrow protectionism of the emerging wildlife conservation movement, was further proven by its position on the Keiskammahoek affair in 1923. According to Imvo (1923b), the case concerned certain Fingo tribes who had been granted free settlement and pasturage by the British government in the Keiskammahoek area, in the mid-nineteenth century. However, during the fifteen years prior to 1923, the Department of Forests had begun encroaching on these lands, resulting in a dramatic decrease in their grazing land. The Forest Department claimed it had taken this action in order "to conserve the sponge sources of the Tyumie and Keiskamma rivers" (Imvo, 1923b, p.5). At the same time, the tribes using the land were heavily taxed for grazing. This situation had given rise to great resentment

and was fiercely contested by the tribes concerned, who had taken the matter to the Native Affairs Commission (Imvo, 1923c).

This conflict of interests was typical of the clash of environmental ideologies in South African history and its resolution was equally typical. On the one hand, the authorities said that the area was overstocked with cattle, resulting in it being trodden out. The government's solution was to "take away part of these people and settle them elsewhere" (Imvo, 1923d, p.5). On the other hand, the local people argued that it was their land, that they were being unfairly taxed and that moreover, the conservation argument was not applicable, since the main sources of the Keiskamma were inaccessible to cattle (Imvo, 1923c).

The NFA followed developments closely since it was felt that this was a situation in which the government's intention was masked behind conservation rhetoric. To the NFA, the issue revolved around land and the powerlessness of blacks:

> "The security of tenure and free grazing form the crux of the whole problem of the injustice of white rulers. The latter call it a 'Native Problem' because their policy is evidently to dispossess the black man of land ownership (as we have seen in the Native Areas Bill) and of free grazing ... under fictitious pleas" (Imvo, 1923d, p.5).

The NFA angrily criticized the government for its "breach of faith" and its "policy of confiscation" (Imvo, 1923e, p.5), as well as for its refusal to grant a commission of inquiry to investigate the issue (Imvo, 1923f.), but to no avail. Despite the efforts of the NFA and the affected tribes, the grazing land was lost and only two villages were granted other grazing land in compensation (Imvo, 1923g).

This setback demonstrated the fundamental weakness of the NFA - given the wider context of the lack of political rights among

Africans[3], the NFA was ultimately powerless in the face of vested white interests. An increasing demand for labour, allied with traditional fears of threats against white hegemony, led to the use of a variety of legislative and other political devices in order to bring about the decline of the African peasantry (Bundy, 1979; Christopher, 1984). Further restrictions and legislative assaults on remaining freedoms and land rights, included the removal of Cape African voters from the common roll in 1936, the creation of the purely advisory Natives Representative Council as a substitute and, in 1937, the prohibition of all Africans, including those in the Cape, from buying land in the towns (Karis, 1973). The effect of these laws, as well as that of repressive labour legislation, was to:

> "... force African squatters from white-owned land into the already overcrowded Native reserves or into the cities, where they would swell the pool of cheap African labour" (Karis, 1973, p.4).

Within the environmental context, the most serious consequence of this type of legislation, was to crush the incipient beginnings of a formalized environmental and conservation awareness among blacks.

Despite the very powerful forces ranged against the NFA, a new environmental ideology was nevertheless being forged. While this ideology no longer regarded the individual as part of the environment, and was not as attuned to the environment as the land ethic had been (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.1), nevertheless, these changing perceptions were not entirely negative. As the activities of the NFA had shown, an environmental ideology which embraced an integrated social, economic and political perspective, was being shaped. The NFA, being the first South African organization to adopt such a perspective, must be considered the first real environmental organization.

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[3] Only those male Africans residing at the Cape and who satisfied the franchise requirements, had the vote (Johns, 1972).

3.2.2 Conservation Organizations

> "If Ansca had continued, what a movement it might have been today. It was the only black conservation movement this country has had. Will it be the last? Did we lose an opportunity we can never recover?" (WSSA, 1975b, p.20).

In 1953, T.C. Robertson, then general manager of the National Veld Trust, took the initiative in helping to start the African National Soil Conservation Association, ANSCA (Switzer and Switzer, 1979). Robertson, greatly perturbed at the scale of environmental degradation in the homelands, as well as the increased rate of soil erosion, felt that an organization propagating the principles of conservation among blacks, was vital (Robertson, 1957). Since membership of Veld Trust was restricted to whites, it was felt that a separate organization should be started. Accordingly, an inaugural conference was held, and ANSCA was launched, with Sam Motsuenyane as organizing secretary and W.B. Ngakane as president.

Given limited funding by the National Veld Trust for the first three years, the young organization was faced with the task of raising black awareness of the enormity of the problem of soil erosion, and of stimulating concern for soil conservation on a national scale. Fueled by the enthusiasm of those who attended the inaugural conference, the indefatigable Motsuenyane embarked on a travel programme to acquaint himself with the scale and nature of the erosion problem. Aware of the necessity of 'marketing' the concept of soil conservation to a community beset by the problems of survival under an increasingly harsh apartheid regime, ANSCA embarked on a series of film tours of the townships. The aim of these tours was to explain and publicize Ansca's philosophy and activities (Ansca News, 1953; Motsuenyane, 1954). In addition, students, student teachers and interested individuals were invited to attend Land Service camps, at which demonstrations and practical advice on soil conservation were given (Bantu World, 1955). Annual conferences, to which influential individuals residing in the vicinity, were invited,

were usually held in the homelands. It was hoped that by exposing these individuals to Ansca's aims and activities, they would help to encourage others to accept the methods of conservation farming.

Ansca also attempted to spread its message through the pages of its publication, The Ansca News Bulletin, later known as Green Earth. The magazine, with articles in English, Sotho and Xhosa, contained articles explaining soil erosion and informing its readers of soil conservation practices (Ansca News, 1954a and 1954b; Hughes, 1954), as well as explaining the concept of conservation farming and how to practise it (Ansca 1955a). In accordance with Ansca's aim of popularizing the concept of soil conservation, the magazine held essay competitions, with prizes for the best essays on soil erosion and soil conservation (Ansca, 1955c). Aware of the desirability of a high degree of popular appeal, the magazine also regularly carried articles emphasizing the socio-economic benefits of conservation practices. Thus there were articles on the medicinal properties of indigenous plants (Ansca, 1956a), the commercial and domestic value of trees (Ansca, 1956d), and the economic benefits of conservation farming (Ansca, 1958a; Motsuenyane, 1958). Continuing its broad-based appeal, many issues also contained articles on health, and gave gardening and farming hints, as well as cheap, nutritious recipes.

One of the most important elements in Ansca's campaign, was its environmental education programme, aimed at both at youth and adults. The educational element of its adult programme was intended to convince the average person, whether urban or rural-based, that he or she had a role to play in conserving the soil, whether this took the form of ending outdated farming methods (Ansca, 1955a), or consisted of the greater involvement of women in Ansca's activities (Motsuenyane, 1957). In this regard, the veteran conservationist, D.D.T. Jabavu (a member of the Ansca executive committee), wrote:

> "To conserve the soil that has been bequeathed to us by a past generation is not an optional matter. It is our inescapable duty because our successors will classify us as being foolish or wise according to the manner we have handled our soil in our time. It is not a matter of colour because there are many people today, both black and white, who are ruining our land by their ignorance or neglect of the elementary principles for obviating donga formations in their cultivated fields and commonages. We must all do something to save the land we are using. Let us join hands with the African National Soil Conservation Committee in its vital task of making our people soil conservation conscious" (Jabavu, 1954, p.7).

It was the youth, however, who, as the decision-makers of the future, formed the primary focus of Ansca's campaign. Articles thus urged the introduction of conservation activities in schools (Ansca News, 1954c), explained why soil erosion was regarded as such a problem (Ansca, 1955e), and gave lists of 'conservation tasks' such as filling dongas, establishing a school nursery, as well as recycling (Ansca, 1956c and Ansca, 1958b). The Land Service camps initiated by Ansca, catered particularly for the youth and several organizations, such as the Transvaal Association of the Non-European Boys' Clubs and the Non-European Girls' clubs, were invited to participate (Bantu World, 1955). The activities of the Ansca film unit were a great success. By the end of 1956, 57 schools had been visited and an estimated 34 208 students had watched films with a conservation theme (Ansca, 1957).

Ansca's ultimate aim was the formation of agricultural clubs at schools, thus, as an encouragement, a Land Service diploma was given to those attending the camps. With this aim in mind, Ansca called a conference of 'Non-European' organizations in the Transvaal to discuss the future of land service work (Motsuenyane, 1955). In addition, there was a suggestion from a member that conservation clubs be started for both youths and adults in the towns and reserves (Ansca, 1956e). Unfortunately, none of these excellent ideas on the involvement of youth in environmental clubs came to fruition.

While Ansca made an undoubted contribution to the fostering of a formalized conservation awareness among blacks during its existence from 1953 to 1958, it could not claim to be a national organization. Its activities were mainly restricted to the Transvaal, with short trips to the Zululand, Ciskei and Transkei homelands. By the end of 1956, Ansca had only 336 bona fide members (Ansca, 1956f) and 3 branches by 1957 (Ansca, 1957). Plagued by constant financial problems, a lack of equipment, transport and paid staff, Ansca was unable to publish its magazine on a regular basis, or carry out its many activities, still less put into action its rather grandiose national expansion programme.

Despite Ansca's very real financial problems, its biggest stumbling block to expansion was not financial, but ideological. Strangely enough, even though several members of Ansca's executive had ANC or AAC links[4], the association itself claimed to be "non-political" (Motsuenyane, 1954, p.1). Possibly Ansca adopted this approach because of the paternalistic nature of its relationship with Veld Trust, or because of its dependence on the goodwill of the govenment in providing demonstrators and experts for its land service camps and conferences.[5] Whatever the reason, Ansca, in an era of increasingly harsh attacks on the liberty of blacks[6] did not further its cause by its close association with the government. While the organization was

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4 W.B Ngakane, the President of Ansca (ANC), Prof D.D.T. Jabavu (AAC), Dr W.F.Nkomo (ANC member until 1953), Chief Sakwe (AAC), Rev S.S. Tema (ANC). Information on individual political affiliations extrapolated from Skota (1931 and 1966), as well as Gerhart and Karis (1977).

5 Further clarification on this, as well as other points of interest, has unfortunately not been possible. Due to the illness and hospitalization of Mr Motsuenyane, he has been unable to accede to my request for an interview.

6 See, for example, Saunders (1988, p.368), for a succinct summary of all major discriminatory legislation passed during the 1950s.

sensitive to criticism of its government links[7] (Ansca, 1956b), this did not appear to prevent its willingness to be associated with such prominent proponents of apartheid as Dr W.W.M. Eiselin, one of the chief formulators of Bantu education, and Dr H.F. Verwoerd, one of the chief architects of separate development (see Ansca, 1955d and 1956b). Ansca's co-operation with the government, through its work with NAD officials, led to widespread suspicion of its role and made its task of promoting conservation farming in homeland areas very difficult (Ansca, 1954). Commenting on this, Motsuenyane wrote:

> "Conservation ... has remained almost entirely a government 'thing' that has to be forced down people's throats. The important and enriching benefits of this work, have at all times escaped serious consideration; instead, people have always succumbed to misleading opinions and suspicions of ulterior and imaginary motives of government officials doing such work" (Motsuenyane, 1954, p.i).

It was Ansca's inability, as demonstrated by this extract, to penetrate to the underlying political causes of the suspicion with which its role in applying conservation measures was regarded, that was to a great degree responsible for its lack of impact. This was nowhere more convincingly demonstrated than in Ansca's singular lack of success in persuading the subsistence farmer of the necessity to practice conservation farming. Articles in Green Earth regularly took the farmer to task for engaging in bad farming practices, such as overstocking (Ansca, 1955b). While such articles pointed out the advantages of modern farming practices and the necessity of not exceeding the carrying capacity of the land, very little attention was paid to the cause of the hostility against the stock reduction schemes of the NAD, or the anger surrounding the lack of land in the reserves. Although an occasional article noted the land hunger of the

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[7] The President of Ansca, W.B. Ngakane, pointed out that since Ansca did not have its own experts, "... it was natural that the association should always look to the experts of the Department of Native Affairs for co-operation" (Ansca, 1956b, p.4).

average farmer (Motsuenyane, 1956), the following extract illustrates a more common theme:

> "The chief drawback in Bantu farming today, is not so much the smallness of the land they own but the fact that most people farm on the level of minimum production" (Ansca, 1955a, p.1).1.

This extract also hints at the elitist, urban bias of Ansca, a bias more clearly shown by the following extract:

> "In its evolution towards the attainment of full national strength and to gain a good following, Ansca will need the services of a large army of influential apostles and voluntary organizers in its front line. No-one else but our enlightened men and women should come to the fore and pilot the way to better farming. By virtue of their education and superior powers of understanding the language of science, they are in a more favourable position than the near-sighted and often ignorant peasant, to aspire for leadership of a soil conservation movement" (Ansca, 1955a, p.1).

While Ansca's desire to attract members of the educated elite was understandable, the virtual ignoring of the illiterate, rural-based workers and farmers who should have constituted their major target, was rather shortsighted. In keeping with the prejudices of that era, illiterate blacks, especially subsistence farmers, were often dismissed as ignorant and superstitious people, whose tenacious clinging to traditional farming methods, usually resulted in environmental destruction (Beinart, 1984). Very little recognition of the black peasant farmer's often ecologically-sound and rational responses to the environment, was given (Bundy, 1979). However, it should be borne in mind that, in order to properly assess Ansca's concentration on the urban black class, this action should be viewed in its historical context. In this regard, Ansca's perspective was typical of the traditional political strategy of black leadership in South Africa, used during that period (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1.1).

In the main, Ansca's articles glossed over the terrible hardships and the conflict caused by arbitrary conservation measures such as the enforced culling and forced removals imposed by the

Betterment Schemes of the NAD.[8] With regard to these schemes, Beinart has noted that:

> "... the pursuit of such conservation measures caused a great deal of conflict ... particularly between officials and African communities. Such conflicts were seldom about conservation techniques. Ideas about how land and natural resources were to be controlled and used, and who should control and use them, must be located in the context of broader political, religious and economic contestations" (1989, p.146).

Thus the animosity and suspicion surrounding conservationist interventions by the state, naturally extended to organizations such as Ansca, whose co-operation with the NAD, meant that it, too , would be perceived in a negative light. This prevented the organization from achieving widespread acceptance in the rural areas, an essential step if it was to establish itself as a national organization. In the end, Ansca's alliance with the NAD, whether from political naivete or expediency, was to prove irrelevant to its continued existence.[9] In 1957, a letter from the newly constituted Bantu Affairs Department was received, instructing the organization to disband and to re-organize along ethnic lines, in order to conform to government policy. The organization was to be allowed to exist only if it constituted itself along the separatist lines of apartheid dogma, and formed eight separate Anscas. Not wishing to comply with this virtually

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8 "Betterment planning officially refers to attempts by successive South African governments to combat erosion, conserve the environment and develop agriculture in the 'homelands', and also to cut down on urbanization, and in some phases even migrant labour, thereby keeping more black people in the homelands... The successful implementation of Betterment planning would require a fundamantal re-structuring of the rural environment... It would also require the movement of substantial numbers of people, both within, and out of rural villages" (de Wet, 1989, pp 326-327).

9 Very likely the latter. In discussing the problems facing Ansca at the time, Motsuenyane wrote that Ansca "had to fit within a rigid framework where most decisions on land rested with government officials" (WSSA, 1975b, p.20).

impossible request, the organization disbanded itself (WSSA, 1975b).

In 1963, a second black conservation organization, the African Wildlife Society, was established on the initiative of the Natal Branch of the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa (Pringle, 1982). Interest in a scheme to involve blacks in a greater conservation awareness, had been aroused earlier, by a series of articles on African attitudes to wildlife by Creina Bond. In one such article, she attempted to place these attitudes in historical perspective, in order to explain the then current lack of interest in conservation issues, the ongoing poaching problem and the encroachment of stock onto game reserves (Bond, 1963). Bond explored such hitherto ignored socio-political themes as the role of economics and politics in the formation of environmental attitudes, pointing out that not only was it impossible to stimulate a love of nature when confined to locations, but also that:

> "Aesthetic arguments for conserving wildlife will not carry much weight with people struggling to live on a low income" (Bond, 1963, p.7).

While the penetrating insights offered by Bond were far from being generally acknowledged in environmental circles at the time, these insights should have augured well for the newly formed African Wildlife Society (AWS). Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. Although the AWS had developed out of concern at the low level of black environmental awareness, the society did not succeed in stimulating greater involvement in environmental issues among blacks. Ironically, the causes for the demise of the AWS were very similar to the problems of Ansca. Like Ansca, the fledgeling society was assailed by financial problems, lack of transport to, and accommodation at, game reserves. Its energies were therefore consumed by the problem of raising funds and providing transport for trips to game reserves. Not having the parent organization's resources, its activities

amounted to little more than an "escape from the dreary greyness of the township" (Pringle, 1982, p.259).

The AWS also shared Ansca's two other major shortcomings, i.e. an elitist bias and the constraints of a paternalistic relationship with a white 'parent' body. The composition of the audience invited to the inaugural meeting, demonstrated the importance the AWS attached to attracting 'influential' individuals. Convened by Simon Ngcobo, a health educator, the meeting attracted many "leaders of the African community ... teachers and school principals, journalists, hospital workers and government clerks" (NWL, 1964, p.19). While the importance of catering for the subsistence farmer, who could "only understand conservation in economic terms" was recognized (NWL, 1964, p.19), it is difficult to see how the organization's aims of stimulating participation in conservation activities and starting game utilization schemes in rural areas, were to be undertaken without a broad-based environmental education programme, which included the rural poor and illiterate. Clearly, such a campaign was not only beyond its resources but also beyond the actual aims of the organization.

The AWS also shared Ansca's problem of being in a position of obligation to a white parent organization, to whom it was indebted, not only for help with money, information and transport, but also for its very existence in the first place. This dependence on another organization naturally limited the effective functioning of the AWS, as well as its ability to function as an autonomous body, capable of formulating its own policy and strategies to achieve its objectives. The AWS' links with the WSSA, must also have served to deflect any intention it might have had to pursue a policy which could have brought it into conflict with the WSSA. Given the many problems of the AWS, its collapse after less than two years, is not surprizing.

3.3 The Role of the Black Press

The effectiveness of both the environmental, as well as the conservation organizations, would not have been possible without the active involvement of the black press. The role of the NFA, particularly as a pressure group, depended to a great extent, on the publicity its activities were afforded in the newspapers. In this respect, the NFA benefitted from the fact that John Tengo Jabavu, D.D.T. Jabavu's father was the editor of Imvo, thus ensuring detailed coverage of the association's activities. This was not due to nepotism, since events involving the educated black class would have been considered newsworthy. Since Tengo Jabavu's political philosophy centred around his acceptance of the division of Africans into 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' (Ngcongco, 1979), his newspaper naturally endorsed any activity designed to improve the status of Africans. Hence the enthusiastic publicizing of the NFA's activities, as well as the promotion of Xhosa farming manuals (Imvo, 1922a).

In addition to the publicity given to agricultural concerns, Imvo was also instrumental in bringing the Keiskammahoek affair to the attention of the public (see 3.2.1). This was not the first time that Imvo had played a major role in exposing instances where the traditional rights of local inhabitants were ignored. Earlier, the plight of the AmaTonga, faced by a government plan to develop Kosi Bay into a harbour[10] , was described in a story carried by Imvo (1922b). The article pointed out that the area concerned had been secured to Chief Ngwanesa'a people as "inalienable" by

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[10] Although the threat did not materialize, it is ironic to reflect that this was simply the first of several harbours in Kosi Bay to be proposed in succeeding years. The most serious threat occurred during the 'Ingwavuma controversy' in 1982. The South African government, without prior consultation with the affected parties, announced its intention of ceding the Ingwavuma Magisterial district to Swaziland (Zaloumis, 1982). Kosi Bay would inevitably have been developed as a harbour (with the same dire consequences for the local tribe) if this had been allowed to happen - fortunately, it was not.

the British (1922b, p.5) and that the AmaTonga's diet of fish in times of scarcity was dependent on their fishing grounds remaining undeveloped.

Imvo was not the only newspaper involved in the promotion of sound agricultural practices. For example, Ilanga Lase Natal featured articles on the necessity of employing scientific farming methods (1911a), and urged the conservation of trees, both as conservation strategies (1911a and 1914), as well as for their economic benefits (1911b and 1911c).

The main vehicle in focusing public attention on conservation and environmental issues during the existence of Ansca, was the Bantu World, known from 1956 as The World.[11] Dr J.M. Nhlapo, an ANC supporter, in addition to being an Ansca member and editor of Bantu World, naturally did his best to garner support for Ansca. He started a new column in the newspaper, "Farm and Garden", to which readers were invited to send any items of agricultural and related interest (Bantu World, 1954a). The column was also used to give publicity to Ansca's aim of raising awareness about the urgency of the soil erosion problem (Bantu World, 1954b). Elsewhere in the newspaper, there were regular notices on the activities of Ansca (Bantu World, 1955; World, 1957). Nhlapo also used the supplement, Mayibuye, to promote the use of modern, scientific farming methods, by carrying articles on the many successes achieved by African farmers in various areas (Mayibuye, 1955a, c, d, e and f), as well as to give publicity to conservation work undertaken by the NAD (Mayibuye, 1955b).

Nhlapo's motivation for his newspaper's involvement in the propagation of soil conservation was simple. Like Tengo Jabavu many years before, he saw the function of his newspaper as being

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11 Up to the time of writing, the writer, due to a lack of knowledge of most African languages, has been unable to trace any black newspapers carrying articles on the AWS. The most likely newspaper, Ilanga lase Natal, contained articles almost exclusively in Zulu, during the period under review.

one "to uplift Africans" (Bantu World, 1954b, p.3). To him, the socio-economic benefits of conservation farming were clear - thus he promoted Ansca's activities as a positive step in the general advancement of Africans. Although Nhlapo died in May, 1957, the newspaper continued its involvement in Ansca's work. An editorial published shortly after Nhlapo's death, dealt with the problems of soil erosion in 'Basotoland', focusing on "unenlightened peasant farming methods", as being one of the main stumbling blocks to progress (World, 1957, p.8). A second editorial in the same issue, deals with the Betterment campaign by the government, arguing that a reduction in stock and the division of land into farming, grazing and residential units, should be accepted as positive steps in improving the land. The editorial urged, "To accept it is not to accept apartheid" (World, 1957, p.8). This was very similar to the stance adopted by Ansca (see section 3.2.2) and shows the same lack of insight into the wider political issues surrounding the Betterment controversy.

While the Bantu World undoubtedly gave Ansca and its activities a lot of invaluable publicity, given Ansca's lack of growth within the approximately 6 years of the organization's existence, it is doubtful whether this assistance was of great significance.

3.4 Conclusion

By the early years of the twentieth century, the environmental ideologies of black and white South Africans had been irrevocably polarized. The European conservation ideology, with its protectionist perspective and white elitist bias, had taken root, manifesting itself in the wildlife protection movement. Meanwhile, the pre-colonial land ethic, in which Africans saw themselves as an integral part of the environment, had changed. Mainly as the result of physical alienation of the black inhabitants, their sustainable natural economies had been

destroyed. The land issue had therefore played a formative role in changing perceptions and attitudes towards the environment.

A new environmental ideology was being formulated among blacks - one which no longer regarded the individual as part of the environment and which was not as attuned to the environment as the land ethic had been (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.1). Nevertheless, these changing perceptions were not entirely negative. As the activities of the NFA had shown, an holistic environmental ideology which embraced an integrated social, economic and political perspective, was being shaped. However, while the NFA represented the first stirrings of a broad-based, formalized environmental consciousness, it was not destined to develop further. As a product of its time, the NFA shared the fate of other black organizations and ultimately fell victim to the many discriminatory laws designed to crush black advancement, which were passed during the 1920s and 30s (see Johns, 1972).

A proper understanding of Ansca and the AWS, and the reasons for their ultimate failure, is only possible when viewed within the political context of the time. Both organizations were conceived and given life as separate black offshoots by white environmental organizations who were primarily motivated by political expediency. The initiators of Ansca were extremely worried by the largely unchecked problems of soil erosion in the homelands and the problems this posed for the rest of South Africa, since creeping desertification is no respecter of political boundaries. The intiators of the AWS were looking ahead at the looming independence of the homelands and the problems they felt this held for the future of nature and game reserves in those areas. While acknowledging the genuine concern which undoubtedly existed among the white promoters of Ansca and the AWS, it must be recognized that this concern nevertheless chose to manifest itself completely within the segregationist framework of the period.

Given the segregationist trend of white politics from the 1940's onwards,[12] which culminated in the establishment of an apartheid society in 1948, the formation of both Ansca and the AWS could be regarded as predictable environmental responses on the part of blacks and whites. Being forced to operate within the confines of an apartheid framework, it was a foregone conclusion that these two organizations were unable to function effectively as autonomous bodies. It was unavoidable too, that they were locked into a paternalistic relationship with the parent bodies, a relationship which prevented them from developing an environmental ideology responsive to the needs of the black community. As a result, neither organization made a significant impact upon that community.

Black environmental organizations ultimately failed to establish a new environmental ideology which addressed the socio-economic and political needs of the community. Nevertheless, these organizations represented serious attempts on the part of blacks, to come to terms with the demands of a changing environment and the hardships of an unequal society. In documenting the history and activities of these organizations, the essential historical context within which contemporary environmental organizations should be viewed, has been established. Thus, the many valuable insights which may be gained through an examination of the responses of these earlier organizations to various problems, may be applied to the current situation. It is against this much-neglected aspect of South African environmental history, that current environmental perceptions and attitudes should be examined.

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12 During the period 1939-1948, the "Smuts government not only stiffened or extended the segregationist policies already in existence but also laid the groundwork for some of the major acts of apartheid" (Karis, 1973, p.73).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EFFECT OF APARTHEID LEGISLATION ON BLACK ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

" South Africa's system of apartheid is usually written about - quite rightly - in terms of its gross violations of human rights and human dignity. But aprtheid also violates the physical environment of South Africa, and the environmental bankruptcy it is creating will ensure misery for generations to come - no matter when and how black South Africans take their rightful place in the country ... "

L. Timberlake, 1986, p. 152.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EFFECT OF APARTHEID LEGISLATION ON BLACK ENVIRONMENTAL PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

4.1 Introduction

> "If I never hear a word about the black rhino and its preservation again, it will be too soon. Here's the country's economy in a mess and all that can be done is to collect 'maphepha' to preserve an animal that to me is as useless as the dinosaur... I am not against the guys who think animals are more important than human beings. They are not the only ones. I know many farmers who treat their dogs better than the black labourers who have worked for them for years... That's the trouble with some people in this land of the Great Divide: they have their priorities upside down " (Musi, 1989, p.6).

Crucial to an understanding of South African environmental responses, is an examination of the effect of racial attitudes and discriminatory legislation on these responses, since such attitudes and laws undoubtedly influenced environmental perception and attitude among both blacks and whites in the past (see Chapter 2, sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2). While it is true that the roots of current black perceptions and attitudes, are deeply embedded in the land struggles of South Africa's colonial past, the causes for the sharpened hostility evident in the above extract, are to be found in more recent history.

Racially discriminatory legislation, particularly that which has been promulgated under the apartheid system, has been singled out as a major contributory factor in the formation of negative environmental perceptions and attitudes among black South Africans (Khan, 1983 and 1989; Schweizer, 1983). A brief examination of the major socio-political factors responsible for the widespread negative environmental responses among blacks, would thus be pertinent to an enquiry into the current

environmental policies of democratic extra-parliamentary organizations.

4.2 Major socio-political factors affecting black environmental perceptions and attitudes

4.2.1 Disempowerment

The most important single factor in the continuing alienation of blacks from environmental issues, has been their increasing political marginalization since the National party came to power in 1948. The link between political powerlessness on the one hand, and an ill-informed, apathetic public, often antagonistic to environmental interests on the other, has been unequivocally recognized (Huckle, 1986; WCED, 1987). Environmental and political literacy have been shown to be inextricably linked, since environmental literacy is impossible without, firstly, an understanding of the political paradigms operating within society and, secondly, unfettered access at all levels to the decision-making processes of society. Without participation in the power mechanisms, it is impossible for politically-vulnerable sections of a society to influence any decisions.

In South Africa, the continuing disempowerment of blacks since 1910 (see Johns, 1972; Karis, 1973), was given further impetus by the imposition of an apartheid framework on society as a whole. Apartheid legitimized racial segregation as well as the socio-political inequalities which had always been an unofficial feature of South African patterns of living (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989). The government signalled its clear intention

to complete the process of the disfranchisement of blacks[1], by the enactment of the Separate Representation of Voters Bill in 1951. Due to this legislation being challenged in court, this process was only completed in 1956, when the Senate Act enabled the government to pack the Senate with its suporters, thus securing the two thirds majority needed to remove Coloured voters from the Common Roll (Carter, 1958). Having thus effectively neutralized all black voters and confined their political aspirations within the dictates of a separatist ideology, the government was free to concentrate on the shaping of its political ideal of an apartheid society.

One of the unforeseen consequences of the bitterness and frustration engendered by the apartheid system, has been the animosity towards environmental and conservation issues displayed by many blacks:

> "Kew Town and other associations throughout the Penninsula have been complaining to the Council to repair their houses and the response has always been 'We don't have money.' Yet the Council wants to spend R60 million on greening the city. This should be the last item on their list of priorities. We fail to see how the greening of the city can improve our living conditions when the very houses in which we live are falling to pieces" (CED, 1984, p.4).

As Low (1987, p.69) has pointed out, the negative attitude evident in the above extract, stems not so much from an anti-conservation attitude, as from anger at the imposed decisions of a "white body on which these groups have no direct representation". Thus the hostility evinced by so many blacks,

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1 The process of black disfranchisement had begun with earlier assaults aimed at reducing the growth and effectiveness of the existing Cape African vote. These included the Parliamentary Registration Act of 1887, as well as the Native Franchise Act of 1892 (Roux, 1964), and culminated in the Representation of Natives Act in 1936. This law, by placing Cape African voters on a separate roll and allowing them to vote only for 3 white members in the House of Assembly, dealt African hopes for an extension of the Cape franchise, a decisive blow (Karis, 1973).

is often more a reaction to their political impotence and is consequently a manifestation of the frustration they feel under a system in which they are denied any meaningful representation or participation.

Lack of political power and the consequent vulnerability of affected groups, is not a problem unique to South Africa. Raymond Dasmann has drawn attention to the many instances of indigenous goups who have had their traditional land and resource rights ignored in the name of 'conservation' (1984). While the South African context is crowded with similar examples[2] (see Player, 1972, Buthelezi, 1973; Bond, 1976; Van Niekerk, 1989), the apartheid system cuts across the class, as well as the rural/urban divide, to render all blacks politically vulnerable. Thus many blacks are totally indifferent to environmental issues, because they feel that their problems and the issues which they regard as important, are often dismissed as irrelevant by mainstream NGO's, whose agendas reflect the values and aspirations of the more privileged class (Low, 1987). Indeed, many blacks not only feel that their needs are ignored, but that, very often, they come a poor second to the claims of endangered species (Musi, 1989).

Thus, the racially-related power structures operating within South African society, give the environment versus people conflict an added dimension. There is a basic conflict of interest between politically vulnerable groups, such as landless blacks, and those expressing concern for threatened habitats (Yeld, 1989). Concern for the environment is sometimes used as an excuse for evicting people, thus further contributing towards black hostility to environmental issues. The following comments

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[2] Ironically, the South African government in an effort to implement the social engineering of its homeland system, has also been responsible for the deproclamation of an existing game reserve in former South West Africa. Part of the Etosha National Park was deproclaimed in order to create the ethnic homelands of Koakoveld and Damaraland (Owen-Smith, 1986).

by white ratepayers in Noordhoek (see map, Chapter 1, section 4.1) on the situation faced by the black homeless of that area, are examples of the insensitive and intolerant attitudes which often lie beneath the surface of environmental concern:

> "the squatters were living on the edge of an ecologically important wetland, which was not being improved by their presence ..."

> "The squatter situation is unacceptable and we have tolerated it so far in anticipation of the removal of these people ... These people must be removed" (Clarkin, 1989, p.9).

4.2.2 The Homelands Policy

Resentment towards the established environmental movement has not only been fueled by feelings of political helplessness, but also by specific apartheid laws, which have further distorted the existing negative environmental attitudes.[3] Such legislation includes the laws which have furthered the pattern of land dispossession, as well as those perpetuating the spiritual and physical estrangement of blacks from the land. In this regard, the homelands policy must be seen as a central element.

The homelands policy, a cornerstone of the concept of separate development, was an extension of the 'reserve' system, whose basis was laid by the 1913 Land Act and the 1936 Native Trust and Land Act (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.1). In 1959, in the White Paper which accompanied the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill, the government stated that the aims of the bill were, firstly, to identify each of the various African groups with its

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[3] Many apartheid laws have contributed to the distortion of black environmental perceptions, notably those curtailing freedom of movement, such as the Natives (Abolition of Passess and Co-ordination of Documents) Act no.67 of 1952, but a detailed examination of the role of such legislation, is outside the scope of this study. A more comprehensive treatment awaits the environmental historian.

own land in the Reserves and secondly, to ensure that Africans entered the 'white' areas as migrant labourers only (Horrell, 1978). The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 gave recognition to these 'homelands', in which Africans would be given increasing powers of self-government, later leading to full independence, if so desired (Horrell 1982). Dr Vorster, who succceeded Dr Verwoerd in September 1966, extended the homeland concept by stating that it would be possible for each group to ultimately obtain full political control over the area concerned (Horrell 1978). Clearly, the homelands policy of the National Party, was an attempt to give some moral justification to its apartheid policy, which could be criticized by its opponents as being nothing more than the imposition of 'baaskap', i.e. white hegemony.

Despite the government's attempts to make the homelands concept politically acceptable, the scheme has proved to be little more than a tragic failure, costly in its waste of human potential (Platzky and Walker, 1985; Letsoalo, 1987; Wilson and Ramphele, 1989). Sol Plaatje, writing in 1916, had commented that the reserves were areas:

> "... into which black men and women could be herded like so many herds of cattle, rearing their offspring as best they could and preparing them for a life of serfdom on the surrounding farm properties ... when age and infirmity had rendered them unfit for further service, they could be hustled back to the reserve pens, there to spend the evening of their lives in raising young serfs for the rising white generation" (Plaatje, 1982, p.417).

Plaatje's words could be applied equally well to the role played by the homelands, later to be known as National or Independent States. The homelands have not developed into the politically autonomous, economically viable states envisaged by the formulators of separate development. Despite 'independence', further land grants and the establishment of border industries, the homelands have remained fragmented, economically dependent and firmly tied to South Africa by socio-economic, historical and political realities. The collapse of the homeland system has

been nowhere more tellingly demonstrated than the statement by General Bantu Holomisa, condemning Transkei's independence as a fraud, as well as his earlier announcement of his intention to hold a referendum on the issue of re-unification with South Africa (Cape Times, 1990b).

The legacy left by the homelands system is not confined to the political alienation of the African people, but also extends to the widespread environmental degradation wrought by a policy of enforced over-population on lands already overcrowded, leading to further overstocking, overgrazing and overcultivation (WSSA, 1980b, Christopher, 1984; Timberlake, 1986; Daniel, 1988). Environmental problems such as erosion, were worsened by the system of migrant labour, since the absence of men from their farms, meant that the labour needed for soil conservation measures, was unavailable. Factors such as poverty, population pressure and the small size of family holdings (all factors institutionalized by the homeland system), have led to destructive land use practices such as deforestation and the removal of dung from the veld, as women try to find fuel for domestic use (Bond, 1977; WSSA, 1981a; Wilson and Ramphele, 1989). Desperation and the need to survive, has entrenched the non-sustainable use of the land in most black rural areas.

While the shaky economic foundations of the homelands policy,[4]

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4 According to the government-appointed Tomlinson Commission, the reserves were already in a bad state and would require enormous sums simply to ensure a measure of economic stability. Further growth would depend on the investment of millions over the following ten years. In terms of land, the commission found that there was sufficient land to meet the needs of only 51% of the population at the time. Based on the most positive projections for industrial and agricultural growth, it was estimated that by the turn of the century, the reserves would be able to support about 2/3 of South Africa's African population of 21 million. However, the level of financial commitment, as proposed by the commission, was rejected by the South African government, which stated that it was not prepared to buy more land than was stipulated by the 1936 Land Act. Furthermore, white capital was not allowed to be invested in the reserves, only near their borders. To date however,

virtually ensured its failure, the system has nevertheless had appalling consequences, particularly in the Western Cape. In 1954, Dr Eiselin, then Secretary for Native Affairs, perturbed at what he considered to be social evils accompanying African urbanization, arbitrarily drew a line (the Eiselin line), near the Fish River in the Eastern Cape and declared that no Africans, except those with Section 10 rights would be allowed to live permanently to the west of it.[5] Dr Eiselin further stated that it was the government's policy to eventually ensure the removal of all Africans from the Western Cape, since this was "the natural home of the Coloured people" , who should therefore receive protection in the labour market (Horrell, 1978, p.70). The mass removal of Africans from the 'squatter' communities, as well as from established suburbs after 1955, ushered in the terrible era of 'influx control', as the government used pass law raids, imprisonment and the demolition of 'squatter' dwellings in a futile effort to stop the unceasing flow of workseekers from the rural areas.

At the same time, the situation facing Africans who, under Section 10, were entitled to live in the Western Cape, was not much better, since, in accordance with government policy, all housing construction had stopped from 1964 onwards. Since the authorities made no provision even for natural increase in the existing population, overcrowding in the African locations, with its attendant social evils, was the inevitable result. In an attempt to cope with the housing shortage, newcomers from the rural areas, as well as 'legals', simply started their own informal settlements, thus setting the stage for further conflict

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less than 13% of the land scheduled by the 1936 Land Act has in fact been made available to the former homelands (Letsoalo, 1987).

5 According to the Native Laws Amendment Act, no.54 of 1952, only Africans who had worked in one area continuously for one employer for not less than 10 years, were allowed to remain in an urban area. Few other exceptions were made to the rule that only those Africans born and permanently residing in an urban area, were permitted to remain there (Horrell, 1978).

with a government determined to enforce its policies.

However, while the homelands system has undoubtedly inflicted intense personal hardship and psychological stress, as well as devastating levels of environmental degradation, Platzky and Walker point out that these are not the central issues and that the system:

> "has to be understood and fought against as a central support in the structure of apartheid. The government's policy of relocation is part of a policy of deliberate dispossession of black South Africans, of excluding them from their birthright.... In the process, they are being systematically stripped of their land and, ultimately of their South African citizenship itself" (1985, p.xxx).

The era of influx control may be said to have come to an end with the belated government acceptance of the permanence of black urbanization in 1986 (Bernstein, 1989). However, the personal and social costs of this failed experiment, still have to be borne by people forced to live in the sterile environment of the Cape's older African townships, as well as in the "islands of poverty" (Dewar and Watson, 1984, p.35) that the new, sprawling peri-urban settlements such as Khayelitsha, seem set to become.

4.2.3 The Group Areas Act

Most of the discriminatory laws passed by the National Party, by striking at the individual's sense of self, and further contributing to a sense of alienation, has consolidated and further distorted the already negative environmental attitudes held by many blacks. The Group Areas Act no. 41 of 1950, by physically segregating blacks, may be singled out as having a major influence in this sphere.

The Group Areas Act provided for the establishment of separate residential areas, to which members of the various population groups were restricted (Horrell, 1956, p.25). The spatial manipulation required to establish rigidly segregated areas,

usually necessitated forced removals and the re-settlement of often large, mainly black communities, at a considerable distance from cities or towns (Horrell, 1956). The emerging new townships of the "apartheid city" (Davies, 1976, p.12), were all built either on the premise that their inhabitants were temporary,and that they would one day return to their 'homelands', or as labour reservoirs, housing workers for the city (Beavon, 1982). As Crush and Rogerson (1983) have noted, an analysis of the development of urban apartheid and particularly of the compound system, as methods of control, and as a means of housing workers as cheaply as possible, forms an important part of the historical geography of Southern Africa.

Equally important, however, are the psychological effects on the individual and the social effects on the community, of life in a bleak, dormitory-like environment. The stunting effect of this monotonous environment, often devoid of life-enriching experiences, has been commented on by many writers (such as Dewar, 1984), who have sharply criticized the "ghettoes of poverty" that many townships have become (Dewar and Watson, 1986, p.3). McCarthy and Smit (1983) have compared the environmental quality of black and white residential areas, drawing attention to the tendency to reserve environmentally select areas for whites.

It has also been suggested that the spatial inequalities and sharp contrasts in the quality of life of black and white South Africans, has had a negative impact on the environmental perceptions of blacks - particularly since blacks have usually been forced to live in areas lacking any natural attraction and situated some distance from areas of scenic beauty, areas often easily accessible to whites (Khan, 1987). It has also been pointed out that displaced communities often harbour deep feelings of antagonism towards the areas to which they have been forced to move (Gerwel, 1975; Da Costa, 1983; Low, 1987). This has had profound consequences for environmentally sensitive areas

such as those on the Cape Flats[6], where issues such as the conservation of rare endemic fynbos species, have had little support from residents (Low and McKenzie, 1988). Thus, as a result of:

> "... the stigmatization arising from the Group Areas Act and the almost physical isolation of non-white communities from issues such as conservation ... the sad fact is that conservation measures ... which can do much to upgrade the quality of life ... are being rejected by the very people who these measures are intending to benefit" (Low, 1987, p.69).

Currently, the provisions of the Group Areas Act are daily being flouted by blacks who find it impossible to obtain reasonably priced accommodation in the areas to which they are restricted by law. In addition, wealthy individuals, using various legal loopholes, are buying properties in upper-income white areas. The response of the authorities has often been contradictory. In certain cases, they are turning a blind eye (Morris, 1990), in others, police have harassed families, hoping to intimidate them into leaving (Cape Times, 1990a). The appointment of a special task force of 70 inspectors who would investigate complaints by whites of transgressions against the Group Areas Act in their neighbourhoods (Morris, 1990), appears to be an indication of the government's desire to allay right wing fears in the wake of the declaration of 'free settlement areas'. Given the government's continued commitment to 'group rights' and 'group identity' (de Waal, 1990), it appears unlikely that the Group Areas Act will be abolished in the near future.

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6 In geographic terms, the Cape Flats is the "sandy lowland area that is bounded by the sea (Table Bay and False Bay), Table Mountain and the start of the wine and wheat growing areas in the east and north-east" (Mckenzie et al, 1988, p.139). However, the prevailing conception of the Cape Flats, is derived from its perception as a Group Areas Act 'dumping ground'. Accordingly. the Cape Flats is popularly regarded as consisting of the black townships of Cape Town, stretching from Kensington to the Bellville magisterial district and reaching across, in a broad band, to the huge townships of Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha (see map, Chapter 1, section 1.4).

4.2.4 The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act

The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act was passed in 1953. The Act provided that any public premises or public vehicle could be reserved for the exclusive use of a particular race and that such action could not be ruled invalid on the grounds that the separate facilities were not substantially equal (Horrell,1954; van der Horst and Reid, 1981). This provided the legal basis for the perpetuation of unequal, separate facilities. During the next few decades, state departments, provincial and local authorities, used the law to provide a grossly unfair and unequal distribution of natural and recreation amenities, as well as of accommodation facilities at nature and game reserves (Hugo, 1974; Cornell, 1978; Khan, 1983).

It has been suggested that difficulty or denial of access to blacks at nature and game reserves, hiking trails, picnic and camping sites has had a detrimental effect on the environmental attitudes and perceptions of the affected communities and further, that the cumulative effect of that exclusion, has resulted in spiritual alienation from the natural environment (Khan, 1983).
Opie has pointed out that the dawning of environmental consciousness and the development of conservation awareness, is very largely dependent on the degree of exposure young children have had to sensitizing experiences in the natural environment (1987a and b). Although the degree of exposure depends on factors other than mere ease of access to the natural environment (for example, the socio-economic status of the family concerned), nonetheless, many blacks have singled out exclusion from natural amenities as well as from game and nature reserves, as a major reason for disinterest in, or hostility to, the whole concept of conservation (Buthelezi, 1971; Gcumisa, 1978; Letsoalo, 1986; Magi, 1989).

Over the years, many inroads have been made into the application of this law (van der Horst and Reid, 1981; Giliomee and

Schlemmer, 1989), culminating in President F.W. de Klerk's recent declaration of his intention to repeal the Separate Amenities Act "as soon as possible" (A. Johnson, 1989, p.1). While the Act remains in force, however, local authorities are legally entitled to enforce its provisions, should they so desire.[7]

4.3 Conclusion

The cumulative effect of apartheid legislation has been to further alienate blacks from environmental issues. In particular, the economic marginalization of blacks has resulted in widespread apathy towards environmental issues, as many blacks are locked in a battle for survival. The political marginalization of blacks has created hostility and antagonism towards environmental issues, as bitter and resentful communities perceive conservation measures to be wasteful and purposeless.

Further contributing to the black sense of estrangement, has been the implementation of the homelands policy, while laws such as the Group Areas Act and Separate Amenities Act, have resulted in an increased sense of physical and spiritual alienation. In addition to the emotional costs of the apartheid system, have been the costs to the environment. Severe, sometimes permanent damage has been done to the environment, especially in the homelands, in pursuit of the separate development dream. Bleak, uniform townships have been built, with little, if any, attention given to environmental planning. Within the environmental sphere, therefore, the consequences of the apartheid system have been far-reaching.

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[7] While beaches have been opened to all, coastal and inland amenities administered by local authorities have not. Many conservative town councils, such as those in Kleinmond and Krugersdorp (Argus, 1989a; Cape Times, 1989a and c), are continuing to exclude blacks from public amenities under their control.

In terms of President F.W. de Klerk's speech at the opening of the second session of the ninth Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, on 2 February 1990, it seems clear that the government is committed to further 'reform', as well as to the principle of negotiation with all those who wish to enter this process (de Klerk, 1990). To this end, restrictions on the ANC, the South African Communist Party, as well as a host of other extra-parliamentary organizations, have been lifted. While the government has committed itself to the recognition of "fundamental individual rights", it continues to recognize group rights, insisting that "the problems of a heterogenous population will [not] simply disappear" (de Klerk, 1990, p.14). The government's insistence on group rights, however, is very likely to cause problems in the process of negotiation, since most democratic, extra-parliamentary organizations see this as a means of perpetuating apartheid in a different guise. Nevertheless, with the admission that it would most likely not be in power by the turn of the century, it appears that the National Party has accepted that the apartheid system is on the way out (Johnson, 1990).

However, even given the increasing likelihood of the demise of the apartheid system, the bitterness and alienation engendered and perpetuated by this system, will not easily be eradicated. Nor, within the parameters of environmental perception and attitude, will its legacy be easily overcome. Indeed, the psychological burden left by South Africa's discriminatory laws, will remain long after the abolition of such legislation. Thus, in evaluating current black environmental perceptions and attitudes, the cumulative effect of South Africa's legislative history, should neither be ignored nor underestimated.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RESPONSE OF DEMOCRATIC EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN - A CURRENT EVALUATION

" ... there are increasing signs that both political and ecological activists are realizing that ... there is vast potential for a new 'green' alliance in the fight to end apartheid. "

Eddie Koch and Dirk Hartford, 1989, p. 10.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RESPONSE OF DEMOCRATIC EXTRA-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN - A CURRENT EVALUATION

5.1 Introduction

> "Conservation and politics make uneasy bedfellows in South Africa. This is hardly surprising in a country where those in authority regard political motives with great suspicion and many citizens carry their political apathy like a badge of pride. It was doubtless this spirit which inspired J.J. Loots, the then Minister of the Environment, to say in 1975 that, 'the environment stands above politics'" (Khan, 1989, p.18).

Having established the historical and socio-political background necessary for a balanced assessment of current environmental responses, attention is now focused on the political arena, as a barometer of attitudinal change within society.

Traditionally, the South African environmental and political arenas have been distinctly separate, with both politicians and environmentalists exhibiting considerable reluctance to 'meddle' in the affairs of the other. In part, this attitude has stemmed from the apolitical nature of environmental issues, especially as projected in the past by certain mainstream environmental NGOs (see Chapter 6, section 6.1). It has also stemmed from the fact that many politicians appear to view environmental conservation as irrelevant (WSSA, 1976; Irwin, 1982; Argus, 1988; Cape Times 1989b; Sunday Times, 1989). Although this situation is slowly changing (Argus, 1989d; Koch and Hartford, 1989), politicians still tend to have a very negative view of the environmental movement in South Africa.

The present government, apart from its wariness of what it probably perceives as the anti-development stance of most environmentalists, has a particularly unfortunate record in its handling of environmental issues of concern to the general

public. Suspicion has often surrounded any attempt by NGOs and members of the public to challenge government action in the environmental sphere. Secrecy, high-handed official actions, the evoking of national security and emotive appeals to patriotism, have typified such controversies as the question of coal mining in the Kruger National Park (WSSA, 1978a and b) and the Armscor takeover of the De Hoop Nature Reserve (Comrie-Greig, 1983a and b). More recently, the Minister of Environment Affairs attacked environmental pressure groups involved in the St Lucia dune mining controversy, claiming that they represented "the extreme left of the political spectrum" (Argus, 1989c, p.5).

Given the government's often negative reaction to public challenges of its role in environmental matters, it appears that the most acceptable environmental paradigm, is one which is biased in favour of natural history. While such a depoliticized environmental paradigm is undoubtedly non-threatening to a government whose power base rests on an authoritarian, undemocratic structure (see Chapter 4), the projection of environmental issues as being ethically and politically neutral, has brought the whole environmental field into disrepute.[1] This is especially so among politically aware black youth, who dismiss the environmental movement as being divorced from reality and therefore irrelevant.[2] Thus, the sanitizing of environmental issues by the government, as well as by established environmental organizations in the past, has had serious repercussions for the environmental movement as a whole, resulting in the further alienation of black South Africans. It has been pointed out earlier (see Chapter 1, section 1.1), that the lack of mass involvement in environmental concern, is a problem that urgently needs to be addressed. One way of doing

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1 See interviews with representatives of extra-parliamentary organizations (section 5.2).

2 This contention is based on informal discussions that the writer has had with members of various student organizations, while in charge of a school hiking and conservation club, during 1983 - 1987.

this, is to ascertain the environmental stance of organizations involved in mass political mobilization in order to determine whether there is a basis for the future participation of these organizations in mass environmental politics. It is within this context, that an examination of the response of selected extra-parliamentary organizations to environmental conservation, should be viewed.

5.1.1 The Basis for Selection

The political organizations chosen for this study, were those extra-parliamentary organizations working for democratic change in South Africa because it was felt that these organizations were the most likely agents to promote mass involvement in environmental politics. The reason for using this as a basis for selection, is bound up with the argument for sustainable development, as put forward in the World Conservation Strategy (WCS). In terms of this concept, the key to a successful conservation strategy, is that it be based on a long term plan of action which precludes the exhaustion of species and ecosystems (IUCN, 1980).

However, the concept of sustainable development means more than just the wise use of the world's resources. As Redclift pointed out in his criticisms of the WCS, the original concept was inadequate since it did not include a consideration of the socio-economic and political factors behind unsustainable practices (1984 and 1987). That this was a shortcoming, was realized by those involved in the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). In a foreword to the global strategy prepared by the WCED, the chairperson noted that:

> "The environment does not exist as a sphere separate from human actions, ambitions, and needs, and attempts to defend it in isolation from human concerns, have given the very word 'environment' a connotation of naivety in some political circles" (Brundtland, 1987, p.xi).

The WCED, in recognizing the links between poverty, inequality and environmental degradation, also acknowledged that a pre-requisite for the implementation of sustainable development, is that disparities in economic and political development be ended (WCED, 1987). Since the present economic and political dispensation in South Africa is manifestly not equitable, it is evident that a socio-political perspective should be an integral element of any conservation strategy followed in this country.

Given the traditionally apolitical approach of the NGOs in South Africa (Hodges, 1987; Low, 1987; Khan, 1989), and the reluctance of the political establishment[3] to take a stand on environmental issues (Argus, 1988; Koch, 1989a; Cape Times, 1989b), it is a matter of urgency that organizations working for democratic change be brought into the environmental arena (Auf der Heyde and Laurie, 1989; Khan, 1989; Koch and Hartford, 1989). If, in addition, it is accepted that mass participation in environmental politics is a vital element in such a conservation strategy, then it is necessary to ascertain the response of organizations working for mass involvement in democratic change to environmental and conservation issues. It is within this context, that extra-parliamentary organizations have been selected for inclusion in this study.

Bearing in mind that the democratic extra-parliamentary opposition is politically heterogenous, it was important to select organizations which were representative of the major ideological viewpoints, in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the varying environmental responses. These viewpoints may be said to be represented by the following groupings:

The Africanist group
The Black Consciousness group
The Charterist group

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[3] Currently, the Democratic Party is working on an environmental policy (Argus, 1989b and the Ecology Party, a 'Green' party, has been established (Sunday Times, 1989).

The Non-collaborationist group
The Workerist group

The organizations represented by the various groups as outlined above, conform to the definition of democratic organizations, in that they are all working towards the attainment of a democratic South Africa. While philosophies, ideologies and strategies in the attainment of a democratic society may differ, the organizations within these groups nevertheless accept the fundamental democratic ideals of a universal franchise and non-discrimination on the basis of sex, race or creed.

It has to be acknowledged that not all democratic extra-parliamentary organizations slot neatly into one particular category, and there is often a cross-fertilization and sharing of ideas and policies. Nevertheless, it may be said that these five groups represent the main strands of ideological thought within the 'liberation movement' as a whole. The Africanist groups, such as the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), base their movement on the ideal of 'pure' African nationalism (see Chapter, 5, section 5.2.7.1), while those adhering to black consciousness as a philosophy (such as the Azanian People's Organization), subscribe to a broader, yet still racially-exclusive, philosophy (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.2.1). The Charterists are represented by those organizations within the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM)[4], which subscribe to the Freedom Charter (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1.1). Those subscribing to the concept of 'principled unity' and the tactic of non-collaboration (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.6.1), are represented by the New Unity Movement and their affiliates. The workerist faction consists of those organizations which espouse the socialist ideal of a worker's democracy (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.1).

Unfortunately, obstacles such as the state of emergency, as well as various forms of restrictions which were in operation for most

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[4] The MDM is a "specific alliance of organizations with COSATU and the UDF at its core" (Usher, 1989, p.6).

of the period under review, made it very difficult to contact organizations such as the ANC, even after the existing restrictions were lifted on 2 February 1990. In other cases, the problem of the thinly-spread resources of small organizations, added to the difficulties already outlined, resulted in rushed, last-minute interviews.

Thus, in assessing the environmental responses of the extra-parliamentary left, it must be borne in mind that, owing to the above-mentioned constraints, a comprehensive treatment has not been possible.

5.1.2 A Note on the Focused Interview

The interview technique was felt to be the best method of gathering information on the environmental policies of the organizations selected. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, very few documents on the subject of environmental politics exist and secondly, because of prevailing political constraints. In view of the continuing state of emergency, and the fact that key individuals and organizations have remained under restrictions for most of the period during which interviews were conducted, a mailed questionnaire was felt to be inappropriate. In addition, the understandable wariness of organizations to correspond with an unknown individual, was also taken into consideration.

The most important reason for choosing the interview technique, however, was the desire to avoid the bias and shortcomings inherent in so many questionnaire surveys. The aim of such surveys, often appears to be the gathering of as much manipulable data and statistics as possible (Chambers, 1983; Wellings, 1986). Consequently, there is tremendous resentment surrounding surveys and research among black communities in South Africa among whom suspicion is often rife, that their views are exploited by career-climbing academics ((Anon, 1981; Davis, 1989). The aim

of this researcher, has therefore not been simply to add to the mass of already-accumulated data on the subject of environmental perception. Instead, in accordance with the approach outlined above (see section 1.3), and, in an effort to avoid the type of uncritical, insular research that Wellings (1986, p.126) has dismissed as mere "documentation exercises", the underlying aim of all the interviews conducted, has been to search for solutions in co-operation with the individuals consulted.

The structured interview, in which a pre-determined procedure has to be followed throughout the interview (Behr, 1983), was rejected as being inflexible, as well as too impersonal. The completely unstructured interview, in which discussion centred around a particular topic, is allowed to flow freely, was felt to be too informal, with the potential to degenerate into little more than an interesting conversation (Bell, 1987). The focused interview, with its framework of prepared questions or topics which allow the interviewer to respond to a given situation by departing from the wording and order of the questions, was the preferred technique (Bell, 1987).

The focused interview combines the advantages of both the structured and unstructured interviews by firstly, enabling the interviewer to adopt a relaxed approach within an informal atmosphere, thus establishing a rapport with respondents. With the emphasis on open-ended questions, respondents are free to express themselves in detail on the subject, as well as on any other considered to be relevant. Secondly, while the technique allows for an in-depth exploration of the subject, discussion is guided around the topic and not allowed to become random.

During the course of the interviews conducted, certain core questions were posed to both environmental and political organizations. These were:

- the environmental policy of each organization.
- the importance attached to current environmental issues

- specific examples of environmental issues felt to be relevant in the South African context.
- suggestions for a strategy which would place these issues on their political agenda.
- any related aspect interviewees wished to raise.

5.2 Selected Democratic Extra-Parliamentary Organizations

5.2.1 The African National Congress

5.2.1.1 Background

The African National Congress (ANC), originally known as the South African Native National Congress, was founded in January 1912, partly in response to the discriminatory conditions of the South Africa Act of 1910 (Johns, 1972). In the two years since Union, it was becoming clear that, far from establishing the equality of opportunity black South Africans were hoping for, the trend was towards imposing the "repressive conditions of the Transvaal, the Orange Free State and Natal" (Saunders, 1988, p.288). Among Africans, it was hoped that the establishment of political unity throughout South Africa, would enable them to effectively oppose the racist measures being taken at that time (Seme, 1911). The ANC, for the most part, followed the traditional style of black politics, i.e. petitions to parliament and deputations to London, up until the 1940s (Walshe, 1970). In 1949, the Congress Youth League-inspired Programme of Action was adopted at an ANC congress, thus ushering in an era of militant, anti-apartheid action, which included the Defiance Campaign of 1952 and the Anti-Pass Law Campaign of 1960.

Government response to these tactics was to use increasingly harsh and repressive methods, such as bannings, detentions and arrests by the thousands.[5] The Sharpeville killings in 1960, in

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[5] Post 1950 information on the ANC is largely based on McDonald (1984).

which police fired on a non-violent crowd, killing 67 and wounding 186, proved to be a turning point for the ANC. The event was followed by the banning of the ANC, which promptly went underground, forming a paramilitary unit, Umkhonto we Sizwe. By the end of 1964, the majority of the ANC leadership, was either in detention, or exile. Since then, the ANC has been based in Lusaka, Zambia, while maintaining offices in several other countries. By the mid-seventies, having exhausted all other courses of action and seeing no other alternative, the organization launched an armed struggle.

The ANC was unbanned on 2 February 1990, at a stage when research for this dissertation had virtually been completed and writing up had reached an advanced stage. While it is impossible to make accurate political predictions, it appears likely that the nature of the government's relationship with the ANC, as well as with other democratic extra-parliamentary organizations will undergo a radical change and serious negotiations regarding the future of South Africa, may well take place.

5.2.1.2 Environmental Policy

The ANC has only recently begun to give serious consideration to the formulation of an environmental policy (Koch, 1989b). However, since its inception, the ANC has had a stance on environmental issues, particularly in relation to the land (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.1). Later in its history, the ANC's position on the land and natural resources, was formally spelt out in the Freedom Charter, which was adopted in 1955.[6] The relevant clauses on land and natural resources read in part:

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[6] The Congress of the People, a national alliance including such organizations as the South African Indian Congress, the South African Congress of Democrats and the South African Coloured People's Congress, as well as as the ANC, drew up a document which aimed at being representative of the political aspirations of oppressed South Africans (Karis and Gerhart, 1977).

> "THE PEOPLE SHALL SHARE IN THE COUNTRY'S WEALTH!
> The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people: The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole ...
>
> THE LAND SHALL BE SHARED AMONG THOSE WHO WORK IT!
>
> Restriction of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended and all the land re-divided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger ...
> Freedom of movement shall be granted to all those who work on the land; All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose ..." (Karis and Gerhart, 1977, p.206).

The Freedom Charter states unequivocally that South Africa "belongs to all who live in it" and firmly endorses the democratic principles of freedom of speech, expression, association and movement. Further, the Charter makes a strong commitment to the establishment of a fully participatory and non-discriminatory society, in which the enhancement of the quality of life of all South Africans, is a primary objective.

Recently, the ANC issued a set of constitutional guidelines, which makes a similar commitment to the democratic principles of the Freedom Charter (S. Johnson, 1989). The clause on land now reads as follows:

> "The state shall devise and implement a land reform programme that will include and address the following issues:
>
> Abolition of all racial restrictions on ownership and use of land. Implementation of land reform in conformity with the principle of affirmative action, taking into account the status of victims of forced removals" (S. Johnson, 1989, p.8).

In terms of the ANC's commitment to a specific environmental policy, in 1986, the organization made a positive statement in support of environmental conservation in a post-apartheid South Africa and declared that the conservation of natural resources would be an "overriding component" in future policy-making (Nusas, 1986, p.29). Currently, the ANC is in the process of

formulating an environmental policy.[7] Meanwhile, it has issued a detailed statement on its stance regarding the environment. In this regard, Max Sisulu, head of the ANC's Department of Economics and Planning, has said that:

> "There is a growing awareness within the movement on important ecological issues and the need to counter with vigour any degradation of the environment" (Koch, 1989b, p.10).

However, Sisulu cautioned that it was impossible to pursue a rational environmental policy within the confines of the apartheid system and pointed out that the homelands system contributed to the institutionalization of environmental destruction. Questioned on the ANC's position on a number of other environmental issues, Sisulu mentioned the organization's concern about the high levels of atmospheric pollution, the fuel crisis, especially as it affects the poor in black townships, as well as the use of nucleur energy. He also made clear the organization's commitment to the use of alternative sources of energy, the use of appropriate technology, as well as its intention to keep South Africa free of nucleur weapons. In conclusion, Sisulu stated that the basic policy approach of the ANC, would be to encourage full community participation in environmental matters.

5.2.2 The Azanian People's Organization

5.2.2.1 Background

The philosophy of Black Consciousness (BC) has its roots in the ideas of Pan-Africanism, as well as in the American concepts of Black Pride and Black Power current in the 1960s.[8] Black

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[7] The following information is based on an article by Koch (1989b).

[8] Information on Black Consciousness is mostly based on McDonald (1984).

Consciousness is a racially exclusive philosophy, founded on principles of self-help. BC groups began to emerge in South Africa, in the late 1960s, reaching a peak of public recognition in the 1970s, through organizations such as the South African Students Organization, and individuals such as Steve Biko. Most BC organizations and leaders were banned in 1977. However, in 1978, the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), was formed, thus once more offering a home to BC adherents. In 1983, AZAPO was instrumental in launching the National Forum (NF). The purpose of the NF, like that of the United Democratic Front (UDF), was to unite blacks in opposition to the constitutional proposals being put forward at that time.

The Azanian Manifesto reflects the racial exclusivism and socialist rhetoric common to BC groups affiliated to the National Forum. The Manifesto stands in direct contrast to the broad-based, non-racial appeal of the UDF (see 5.2.8.1) by opposing:

> "... the system of racial bondage for the benefit of the small minority of white capitalists and their allies, the white workers and the reactionary sections of the black middle class" (McDonald, 1984, p.6).

AZAPO, along with several other organizations, was placed under restriction in February, 1988.

BC adherents have come in for a lot of criticism because of their racially exclusive philosophy. Opponents point to the divisive nature of its philosophy and question its effectiveness in fighting the racist philosophy upon which apartheid is based. BC supporters, however, insist that it does not make sense to include whites in the liberation struggle, since this group forms part of the problem of racial capitalism. Furthermore, no contradiction is seen in adhering to the philosophy of Black Consciousness in the course of an anti-racism struggle:

> "BC sees nonracialism as the outcome of an anti-racist struggle... [in order to establish] a socialist, anti-racist and non-racial Azania" (Ntwasa, 1987, p.9).

The Western Cape Co-ordinating Committee (WECCO) was launched in 1989, in order to replace AZAPO after the February 1988 restrictions had made it impossible for the organization to operate (West, 1989). In February 1990 however, these restrictions were lifted and WECCO has consequently been disbanded (Mosala, 1990, pers comm).

5.2.2.2 Environmental Policy

In an interview with Dr Mosala, President of AZAPO in the Western Cape, he stated that although the organization does not have a formal environmental policy, such a policy would emerge in the near future.[9] To date, it has not been possible for AZAPO to formulate such a policy, given its pre-occupation with many pressing political issues, in addition to the difficuties faced by the extra-parliamentary left in general. Dr Mosala, however, felt that environmental issues were extremely important and that it was vital that the organization recognized this:

> "I don't think it's correct not to have a policy on the environment now. It has to be an important dimension of the liberation struggle. If you postpone it, you will have to start from scratch. You have to start now. You have to engender a culture of respect for the environment."

Dr Mosala identified three key aspects which would form the basis of his organization's environmental response. Firstly, the social and economic structures of the country are seen as an inextricable element in developing an environmental strategy. He stated that since capitalism, by its very nature, exploited the land, the fight aganist capitalism should form part of the fight against environmental exploitation. Secondly, the land question was regarded as fundamental to a consideration of environmental issues. Up to now, land has been regarded as a

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[9] Information on AZAPO's stance on environmental issues, was obtained during an interview with Dr Mosala (1990, pers comm).

commodity, something to be exploited, whereas the land should be regarded with respect, as something sacred.

Thirdly, conditions in the black townships were seen as a major stumbling block in the creation of mass environmental awareness. Dr Mosala criticized conditions in the townships as being unhealthy, as being badly planned, as alienating their inhabitants from the natural environment:

> "If you do not politicize people in terms of the environment, people then think the environment belongs to the oppressors and they treat it ... in the way that they would act against all symbols of oppression ..."

On the issue of liaison with environmental organizations, Dr Mosala expressed his organization's interest. He said that since consideration of environmental issues would soon be undertaken, an effort would be made in the near future, to establish links with various NGOs, once their policies had been subjected to scrutiny. Dr Mosala concluded by saying that environmental issues should play a central role in the educational and cultural life of society. In this regard, he saw a significant role for NGOs in the future.

5.2.3 The Call of Islam

5.2.3.1 Background

The Call of Islam, founded in 1984, has, as one of its primary objectives, increasing the role of the Muslim in political, social and ecological issues (Hassen, 1989). In addition, the Call is committed to spreading an understanding of Islam among non-Muslims, as well as making Muslims conscious of their duties, "especially insofar as it concerns the establishment of a just society" (Call, undated, p.1). The organization is affiliated to the United Democratic Front.

5.2.3.2 Environmental Policy

The Call of Islam has, since its inception, been committed to a formal environmental policy, a situation due in no small part to the efforts of founder member, Moulana Farid Esack. In 1986, Moulana Esack stated that:

> "Our struggle for justice must then enhance justice to our home and all the other species that inhabit it. People's power must specifically exclude our rights to rape and plunder the natural resources as if there's no tomorrow ... we must place ecological issues on the agenda of the liberatory movement" (Esack, 1986, p.5).

During a discussion with the writer, Moulana Esack agreed that many activists had negative environmental attitudes and that, at grassroots level, because of widespread poverty, there was very little knowledge of, or interest in, environmental issues (Esack, 1988, pers comm). While recognizing the impoverishment of communities in matters such as the environment, he felt that it was not enough to sit back and say that the environment was the domain of whites. He saw environmental sensitivity as important, as basic to survival and as a vital part of the liberation struggle. Moulana Esack pointed out that since the average black South African had no "sense of belonging", this was one major reason why environmental issues should be recognized as a legitimate part of the liberation struggle.

Although Moulana Esack resigned in 1989, the Call plans to strengthen its commitment to environmental issues (Hassen, 1989). This commitment stems largely from the organization's religious base, which has also greatly contributed to an holistic perception of humanity in balance with nature. This philosophy is clear from the organization's statement of its principles:

> "We are from the earth and are an integral part of it. Uncontrolled industrialization has made humankind an adversary of nature ... we need a technology that puts people and the ecological balance first ... we want to have a respectful reverence for the earth, its seas, its mountains and the rest of

> creation: these are 'from the signs of Allah'" (Call, undated, p.5).

Recently, another founder member, Ebrahim Rasool, made it clear that the Call of Islam planned a vigorous consolidation and implementation of its existing environmental commitment:

> "The concept of ecology must be politicized - it is no longer a liberal theme. Toxic waste and the depletion of the ozone layer will determine the quality of the new South Africa we are to inherit" (Hassen, 1989, p.18).

5.2.4 Cape Action League

5.2.4.1 Background

The Cape Action League (CAL), grew out of the Disorderly Bills Action Committee (DBAG), set up in Cape Town in 1982.[10] After the Charterist groups and independent unions withdrew from the DBAG, it was re-started as CAL. The organization exhibits:

> "... a number of political tendencies, including the Unity movement tradition[11] and the socialist wing which emerged from black consciousness" (SARS, undated, p.5).

In essence, CAL supports the principles of the Azanian Manifesto, which:

> "... affirms the primacy of working class organization and calls for the establishment of a democratic, anti-racist worker republic of Azania, where the interests of workers would be paramount through worker control of the means of production, distribution and change" (SARS, undated, p.8).

CAL rejects the Freedom Charter (see ANC), being totally committed to the concept of working class leadership and a

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10 Information on CAL is based on SARS (undated).

11 See the New Unity Movement (section 5.2.6).

socialist solution for South Africa. In addition, CAL is committed to the establishment of a united, democratic South Africa. To this end, the organization recognizes that:

> "Unity can only be achieved if we recognize that workers belong to different political organizations and tendencies ... we will not be able to unite all the workers by imposing one political position. Unity can only be a weapon of struggle if we allow the right to disagree and criticize each other. With unity goes democracy. Every decision we make must be through consultation, with mandates, and finally with the support of the majority ... " (CAL, undated, p.3).

CAL is an affiliate of the National Forum, which is the co-ordinating body for a diverse mix of groups, with varying ideological viewpoints.

5.2.4.2 Environmental Policy

CAL does not have a formal environmental policy but, as a result of the environmental concern of some of its members, a resolution on the environment was adopted on 28 January 1990.[12] The resolution was not, however, adopted without debate. Certain members felt that since CAL was a small organization, with limited resources, engaging its energies in environmental issues, was questionable. Others did not see how environmental issues could be translated into a working class campaign. However,

> "... people did feel it was important that the organization, and people in the organization, see thamselves as eco-socialists, as socialists who have a very deep attachment, or a specific atachment ... to the environment, to nature ..." (Soudien, 1990, pers comm).

This agreement resulted in the adoption of a resolution which reads, in part:

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[12] Information on the adoption of a resolution on the environment, as well as the ensuing discussion, is based on an interview with Crain Soudien, a member of CAL's Education Committee (1990, pers comm).

> "For us in CAL, the destruction of our physical environment is a fundamental political and economic issue which begins in the dominance of capitalist culture in our society. In this culture, the attitude to nature and our environment, is rooted in an instrumental and functional approach. The environment is there for human beings simply to manipulate. This creates the space which makes it legitimate for big business and capital to plunder and destroy resources in their competition for dominance of the local and international markets. We reject the political system which encourages that kind of technological and economic development which has no concern for the environment, and call for responsible research into viable alternatives of harnessing nature for the benefit of all humankind" (CAL, 1990).

As is evident from this extract, CAL treats environmental issues as political issues. The organization, therefore, sees clear links between survival strategies which the poor are forced into, and resulting environmental degradation. Thus the fundamental objective shaping CAL's environmental stance, is that of global protection for the benefit of all working people (CAL, 1990).

In terms of the organization's practical implementation of its resolution, it was felt that the moment for launching an initiative was not opportune. Members recognized the fact that although environmental education formed an important part of the process of re-educating a community, it was a long process, one which CAL could not afford to divert its energies into. However, it was hoped to treat environmental issues more concretely in the future by, for example, sensitizing workers to industrial health issues, such as the dangers of working with asbestos (Soudien, 1990, pers comm).

The organization is aware of the fact that environmental concern is linked to a love of the environment, which in turns comes about through a sense of belonging or attachment:

> "I hope that we can reach the point where a love for nature is not seen as a ... white, middle-class attribute ... that we get to the point where working-class people throughout the country, no matter what their colour, can find in nature a level of attachment that shows that all of this is ours ..." (Soudien, 1990, pers comm).

In common with other democratic extra-parliamentary organizations, CAL's environmental stance is inextricably linked to a deep concern for the individual's quality of life:

> "Our struggle is not only for a world free of oppression and expoitation, but also for a world which guarantees for all humankind a life which is rich and abundant" (CAL, 1990).

In an earlier interview with Dr Neville Alexander, also a CAL member, the question of the low priority given to environmental issues in socialist countries, was raised. He commented that:

> "The failure to attend to ecological issues in Eastern Europe, led to the virtual discrediting of industrialization in socialist countries" (Alexander, 1989, pers comm).

He felt that it was essential that environmental issues be conceptualized and incorporated into the socialist framework. Dr Alexander suggested that the youth wings of political groups, as well as the existing network of pre-school children's groups could be used to inculcate a love of the environment, among the youth. Singling out soil erosion as among the most important environmental issues in South Africa today, he further suggested that issues such as these should be focused on by activist groups and linked to broader political issues, in order to secure mass support. Commenting on the future of environmental issues in relation to socialist groups in South Africa, he concluded that:

> "Conservation issues will be very relevant and will be very high on our list of priorities in a post-apartheid South Africa" (Alexander, 1989, pers comm).

5.2.5 Congress of South African Trade Unions

5.2.5.1 Background

In the wake of the labour reforms recommended by the Wiehahn Commisssion in 1979[13], the number of African trade unions had risen dramatically. Calls for worker unity, had, by 1983, led to the formation of two unions: the UDF-affiliated Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) and the AZAPO-linked[14] Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA). 1984 saw greatly increased support for a newly formed union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), the result of a highly successful legal strike. In 1984, NUM was one of the main initiators of a new trade union 'umbrella' body, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). COSATU absorbed FOSATU and brought together more than thirty non-racial trade unions[15]. COSATU is a UDF affiliate.

Besides its trade union activities, COSATU has clearly "stated its intention to confront questions of 'national liberation'" (Saunders, 1988, p.481). The UDF affiliate has also identified itself with the ANC (Brewer, 1989). However, harrassment, raids on its offices and imprisonment of its officials, as well as the imposition of the February 1988 restrictions, which forbade COSATU to engage in any non-union activity, have severely hampered its activities. These restrictions were lifted in February, 1990.

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13 For example, African trade unions were legalized and had the right to organize strikes (Mitchell and Russell, 1989).

14 i.e the Black consciousness organization, the Azanian People's Organization.

15 Information thus far, based on Saunders (1988).

5.2.5.2 Environmental Policy

During a discussion with Nick Henwood (1989, pers comm), it has been established that COSATU has no formal environmental policy and that for most union members, environmental issues do not constitute a major issue. It was further established that union officials recognize that environmental issues are important, and that these have to be seriously addressed by COSATU, as well as the MDM as a whole. Henwood felt that unions would be particularly interested in industrial health and occupational safety issues. The question of asbestos and the dangers posed to workers who have to deal with this substance, was raised as a potential environmental issue which could be used to create environmental consciousness within unions. In this regard, Henwood pointed out that the Industrial Health Research Group, based at the University of Cape Town, acted as a resource/research facility and that its activities included the dissemination of information on various forms of pollution, occupational safety, as well as industrial and environmental health issues.

It has since been established that the Paper, Print, Wood and Allied Workers Union, a COSATU affiliate, has taken steps to educate its members about the effects of weedkiller sprays. There are future plans to discuss the effects of a recent chemical spill on water supplies to the townships where the workers live (Koch and Hartford, 1989).

5.2.6 The New Unity Movement

5.2.6.1 Background

The New Unity Movement (N.U.M.) was established in 1943 as the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). The NEUM was an 'umbrella' body, founded in order to forge unity among the diverse political groupings of the 1940s. Its two principal member organizations were the All African Convention (AAC) the Anti-Cad. The AAC

had been founded in 1935 in order to fight the discriminatory land and franchise legislation passed by the government at that time. The Anti-Cad was an organization which had sprung up to oppose the formation of the Coloured Advisory Council in 1943.

The immediate aim of the NEUM at the time of its establishment, was to attack the imposition of segregation measures by the Smuts government through the medium of a united black front. The movement took a principled stand on non-racialism, rejecting any notion of co-operation with the government. Such co-operation, particularly with regard to participation in the ethnically-based and undemocratic forms of representation offered to blacks by the government of the day, was branded as collaboration. The political weapon chosen to fight attempts to impose separate representation, was the tactic of the boycott, which even today forms part of the enduring legacy of the NEUM, particularly in the Cape.[16]

The NEUM set itself the task of eradicating the "slave mentality of the oppressed" (NEUM, 1951, p.3), by propagating the principle of black unity and non-collaboration, and, at meetings and through its numerous pamphlets, tried to politicize and mobilize ordinary people. These aims and ideals were encapsulated in its "10 Point Programme", adopted in 1944 (NEUM, 1943). The programme, basically a set of "minimum demands which will enable the democratic movement to build a united, democratic South Africa" (N.U.M., 1985, p.14), has also been criticized for the absence of any programme of action (Karis, 1973). The NEUM itself was also criticized for being unrepresentative, lacking a mass base as well as being dogmatic to the point of being unable to work with other organizations, such as the ANC and the Communist Party of South Africa (Lewis, 1987).

The commitment of the Anti-Cad faction in particular, to the principle of non-collaboration, caused problems within the NEUM

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16 Information thus far, based on information obtained from Khan (1976).

itself. These finally came out into the open in 1958, ending in an irrevocable split in 1959. Due to the repressive political climate of the 1960s, the NEUM ended its active political life in South Africa after about 20 years of existence (Khan, 1976). The AAC faction, headed by I.B. Tabata, went into exile and, based in Zambia, he and his supporters established the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA). As a liberatory movement however, UMSA is no longer functioning (Saunders, 1988), while in South Africa, the Unity Movement has been resuscitated as the New Unity Movement (SARS, undated).

5.2.6.2 Environmental Policy

In an interview with R.O. Dudley, President of the New Unity Movement, he indicated that, since the N.U.M. was basically a political organization, fighting for the establishment of fundamental political rights, it does not have an explicitly set out environmental policy.[17] However, he added that:

> "In my experience, working in the Unity Movement right from its inception, as well as in subsidiary organisations such as teacher and civic bodies and trade unions - there is a constant concern over a wide body of issues that may be regarded as being of an environmental nature"

To illustrate this point, Dudley described the work being done by civic bodies affiliated to the N.U.M., in trying to enhance the quality of life in the areas it represents. This was being done by campaigning for improved recreation amenities, the provision of acceptable civic amenities and generally trying to improve the environmental quality of these areas. In this regard, however, he pointed out that there were obstacles in the way of the reconstruction or improvement of the residential environment. Environmental factors such as driftsand, which plagues most Cape Flats townships and which is a particularly acute problem in Khayelitsha, makes life very difficult for residents. People

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[17] All information on the N.U.M.'s environmental policy is based on an interview with Dudley (1988, pers comm).

living in areas plagued by such environmental problems are not interested in putting down social roots and this is reflected in the quality of the neighbourhood. Socio-economic factors such as poverty, small and overcrowded houses, the lack of cultural amenities and activities in the townships, the social and physical distance between most townships and the natural environment, were seen as contributary factors in severely limiting the experiences of township residents and antagonizing them towards, or alienating them from, their environment.

As a retired teacher, Dudley expressed particular concern about the stultifying effects of such sterile environments on the development of children, stating that because their environment was barren, the way in which township children related to the environment, was a reflection of this. This was frustrating for teachers who, when dealing with children from such underprivileged backgrounds, are unable to enrich those children's existing experience because such experience is simply lacking.

In answer to a question on the possibility of the formulation of a future environmental policy for the the N.U.M., Dudley agreed that "a powerful conservation lobby should be founded" and that there was an urgent need for environmental education at both school and community levels. However, he cautioned that:

> "Our concern is not so much with the re-creation of acceptable standards of work, play and the environment, but with something which we hope will emerge from the implementation of the policies of the organization."

For example, it was hoped that the economic policies recommended by the N.U.M would not just create a living wage, but would create a surplus with which to enrich people's lives on many levels, the creative as well as the physical.

The note of caution expressed by Dudley, has been echoed by the N.U.M. affiliate, the Teacher's League of South Africa (TLSA),

which is not only concerned about environmental conservation but also with exposing the ongoing "global robbery" (TLSA, 1989, p.15) in which the industrialized nations of the world have been involved. With reference to South Africa, it was stated that:

> "Certainly the question of conservation is urgent. As is the question of pollution. But aren't these very handy issues to push so that people can be led to forget just who is stripping the veld of its wealth and natural resources in their greedy urge to hog that wealth among themselves?" (TLSA, 1989, p.16).

5.2.7 The Pan Africanist Congress

5.2.7.1 Background

The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) was established in 1959 by a breakaway group of ANC members who were disenchanted with its multi-racial approach and thus viewed the Freedom Charter (see section 5.2.1.1) as a betrayal of the principles of African nationalism (McDonald, 1984). The PAC's founder and leader, Robert Sobukwe, who was to strongly influence the founders of the Black Consciousness movement (see section 5.2.2.1). At its inaugural conference, the PAC made its democratic goals very clear by supporting the United Nations Charter of equal rights (Roux, 1964). While the ultimate goal of the PAC was the establishment of a non racial democracy, the PAC felt that the liberation of Africans lay in the hands of Africans themselves.

The PAC's first major campaign, an Anti-Pass Law campaign, was also to be its last. On 21 March, thousands of people surrounded the Sharpville police station, demanding to be arrested for not carrying passes. Police opened fire on the crowd, killing and wounding dozens of people. A similar demonstration in Langa, Cape Town, resulted in further deaths and injuries (Roux, 1964). On 8 April, the PAC was banned. After its banning, the PAC established itself externally, with offices in New York, as well as in several other cities in Africa.

The restrictions on the PAC were lifted on 2 February and the organization plans to open its South African office in Johannesburg. The PAC already has branches operating in Langa, Nyanga, Guguletu and Khayelitsha (Cruywagen, 1990).

5.2.7.2 Environmental Policy

The PAC has no formal environmental policy but is in the process of focusing attention on environmental issues, with a view to formulating such a policy in the near future. Spokesperson Barney Desai[18] commented that:

> "We are terribly concerned about environmental issues. The environment has been raped and looted, especially by foreign companies, irrespective of the consequences to the people living here"

The organization is presently involved in talks with the Chemical Workers Union in relation to environmental health issues, such as the handling and disposal of toxic waste. The PAC is concerned, not only about the dumping of poisonous wastes, but with a wide range of environmental issues. These issues included: mining operations which were undertaken without regard to ecological consequences; the over-exploitation of marine resources by the fishing industry; advancing desertification; the future of Koeberg nucleur power station.

As a specific example of the type of environmental issue which was causing concern, Desai cited the danger posed to local fauna and flora, by open cast mining in Lamberts Bay on the West Coast.

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[18] Information on the PAC's environmental stance was obtained from Barney Desai (1990, pers comm). Owing to a heavy schedule, Mr Desai was only able to discuss his organization's stand on environmental issues, very briefly.

The land issue was a crucial aspect of the PAC response to environmental issues in general In this regard, Desai stated that the PAC stance is encapsulated by its slogan:

> "This is our land, hence our slogan, Eswilethu i'Afrika (Africa must be returned to its people" (Cruywagen, 1990, p.3).

5.2.8 The United Democratic Front

5.2.8.1 Background

The United Democratic Front (UDF) was officially launched as a broad-based national movement in August, 1983 (Saunders. 1988). In essence, the UDF is a federation, consisting of various affiliated organizations. Ideologically, the UDF espouses non-racialism, within a democratic, united South Africa. Although the UDF has many ANC links[19], it disclaims formal ANC ties (McDonald, 1984).

Since its inception, the UDF has been involved in an ongoing and active fight against the apartheid regime. This has included organized protests, mass rallies and national campaigns on a number of issues, such as the 1983 referendum on the constitution, and participation in the Tri-Cameral Parliament (Mcdonald, 1984). A noteworthy aspect of the workings of the UDF is its commitment to 'people's power', i.e. the assumption of civic and cultural functions by community organizations (Lodge, 1989). This has included the creation of people's parks to commemorate heroes of the liberatory movement, as well as the revision of history to reflect a democratic, non-elitist perspective.

Politically, the UDF has been hamstrung by the imposition of a state of emergency in 1986. The stringent regulations, which

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[19] For example, the UDF has several ANC veterans within its ranks, also, its espousal of the Freedom Charter.

made the reporting of 'unrest' situations difficult, if not impossible, was followed by further action in February 1988, which made it illegal for the UDF to undertake any kind of activity, other than the strictly routine. These restrictions were lifted in February, 1990.

5.2.8.2 Environmental Policy

In an interview with former Secretary and Treasurer of the UDF, Ebrahim Rasool, it has been established that the UDF does not have a formal environmental policy.[20] However, it was felt to be vital that debates and discussions on environmental issues should be held, in order to stimulate an awareness of the importance of such issues at grassroots level. Rasool made the point that, in the UDF, people's senses have been "dulled to such concerns" and that other, more concrete concerns enjoy priority at this time. These issues included land reform, control of the means of production, the problem of unemployment. It was felt that, within issues such as these, there was plenty of scope for the promotion of a type of environmental education which would draw attention to the environmental problems raised by these issues. For example, the land issue, as dealt with in the Freedom Charter (see ANC), deals only with the ownership of land. This could be a starting point for a re-evaluation of people's relations with the environment. Debate on the land clause could stimulate a "respect" and "reverence" for the land, to the extent that this could influence future regulations dealing with the land.

On the question of the future development of industry and the concomitant issue of unemployment, concern was expressed at existing levels of atmospheric pollution, the effect of CFCs on the ozone layer and the production of plastics. Rasool added that:

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[20] All information in this section, is based on an interview with Rasool (1989, pers comm).

> "... whatever efforts we make, if we do not also develop policies on limits to industrialization, then what we'll end up with, is going to be a chaotic ecological system ... We have .. to .. limit the kinds of things which would be produced industrially, have a good look at plastic products. I think that in saying that we must provide employment, work for all, does that mean that factories must be built without regard for the environmental consequences ...?"

Rasool was particularly concerned that in the interpretation of the economic theory forming the basis of future development policies, that the result could be the maximum development of industry in a manner which would be as catastrophic to the environment, as that existing now. The point was strongly made that these issues of concern should be raised within the ongoing discussions and debate centering around the Freedom Charter. Such debates would update its clauses, making it "relevant to our time". In this way a comprehensive policy on the environment could be evolved - a policy which would echo the concern for the land felt in earlier times, when, historically, survival depended on ecological concern.

5.2.9 The Western Cape Teachers Union

5.2.9.1 Background

The Western Cape Teachers Union (Wectu) had its origins during the political unrest and the repressive state response accompanying it, which swept the country in the wake of the adoption of the new constitution in September 1984.[21] By 1985, the political turbulence had grown in strength and fury, and an ever worsening spiral of violence had set in. In response to mass stayaways by workers and students, as well as to a situation in which the government felt it was losing control, a state of emergency was declared in July 1985. Meanwhile, the situation

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21 Information on the origins of Wectu was obtained during an interview with Zubeida Desai, a founder member (1990, pers comm).

in the schools was reaching crisis point. As part of the revolt against the system, schools had responded to the call for boycotts and teachers, who had assisted students during the boycotts by running alternative 'awareness programmes', were being harrassed by the Education Departments involved. In Cape Town, concerned teachers met to discuss their role and response during the boycott.

At a subsequent meeting, where teachers from Cathkin Senior Secondary School on the Cape Flats presented their proposals for the formation of a teachers' organization, a steering committee was formed. By the end of September, 1985, Wectu was launched. The primary aim of Wectu, is :

> "To struggle for a unitary, non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and free education system on all levels, and compulsory education at primary and secondary level as part of our struggle for a non-racial South Africa, free of oppression and exploitation" (Wectu, undated, p.1).

Wectu's commitment to democratic aims and ideals, and its opposition to the inequality inherent in a racially-based education system, brought it into conflict with the state. Many of its members were detained, dismissed or otherwise harrassed. In February 1988, Wectu was listed as a restricted organization.

Wectu is affiliated to the National Education Co-ordinating Committee, which is an affiliate of the UDF.

5.2.9.2 Environmental Policy

In an interview with Yusuf Gabru, chairperson of Wectu, it was established that the organization has no formal environmental policy and, in fact, that it has not singled out environmental issues in any way.[22] However, it was stated that these issues

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[22] Information on Wectu's environmental policy is based on an interview held with Gabru (1989, pers comm).

could appropriately be dealt with as part of "alternative education" and that:

> "I imagine that a progressive teacher, whether they are in Wectu or not, who's teaching Geography, for instance, or Biology, or even Mathematics, would raise these kinds of issues because they would be part of a more liberated kind of education, so whilst it doesn't have a fixed policy, there's nothing in the constitution to stop the implementation of environmental education ..."

Gabru pointed out, however, that future plans to formulate a policy on environmental education, were made difficult because of the continued implementation of the February 1988 restrictions (see UDF)[23]. Nevertheless, Gabru said that:

> "I think that any teacher organization that claims to be progressive, and in fact, even the conservative teachers, should have a policy on environmental study -it's absolutely vital that it form part of an educational programme."

It was felt that in Cape Town particularly, such a programme would be positively received because among many of Wectu's members, there was a fairly high level of environmental consciousness, while among the students, there was a great interest in activities taking place in the natural environment. This was evident in the number of organized walks, hikes and outing arranged by both teachers and students. It was also pointed out that the issue of environmental awareness was greatly influenced by unequal access to natural amenities and the insensitivity of most NGOs to environmental issues considered of relevance by blacks.

Speaking specifically about the Cape Flats townships, Gabru said that issues such as the improvement of the existing environment versus its destruction and rebuilding, needed serious thought by community organizations. He felt that programmes such as the 'greening the city' campaign by the Cape Town City Council,

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[23] These restrictions were subsequently lifted in February 1990.

engendered scepticism and bitterness because very little progress could be seen in this sphere. It was his opinion that environmental issues should be taken seriously by the MDM, and concluded that:

> "... I think it's a very serious issue and that it has enormous political dimensions which I think that people don't actually recognize, and need to recognize ..."

5.3 Conclusion

In summary, when examining the environmental aspects of the policies and programmes of the various organizations selected for review, only one, the Call of Islam, has made a formal commitment to an environmental policy, while the ANC is in the process of formulating such a policy. Nevertheless, all the organizations lacking such a policy, indicated their willingness to place environmental issues on their political agenda and voiced their concern at existing levels of exploitation and pollution of the environment. It was noted that while the leadership of the organisations were all well informed and demonstrated a genuine concern for the environment, this was not usually carried through in practical terms at either policy, or at ordinary membership level. The attitudes of rank and file membership generally mirrored the lack of environmental concern found in society as a whole. It is obvious that, firstly, there is a wide gap between theoretical commitment to environmental concern and practice. Secondly, organizations which are serious about actively implementing their concern, will have to commit themselves to a programme of education and action.

When evaluating this situation, however, it should be remembered that environmental issues, as relevant and important issues, only began to assume significance and a higher degree of public attention during 1989 (see Chapter 1, section 1.1). In addition, democratic extra-parliamentary organizations, besides having to face many crucial issues needing their immediate attention, have

found it difficult to focus on issues regarded by many as less urgent, and as such, best left to be resolved in a post-apartheid South Africa. Constraints such as the state of emergency, in operation since June 1986, as well as state harrassment in the form of bannings, detentions and other forms of restriction, have placed serious obstacles in the way of the functioning of the organizations. Given the prevailing political climate , it has therefore not been possible for these organizations to function in the way that they would like, thus ensuring that many issues, including environmental issues, have not been focused on at all.

Nevertheless, the overall picture which has emerged from the discussions held, is a positive one. All the organizations, besides their concern for the natural environment, were specifically concerned to establish a non-discriminatory, democratic society, in which the individual's quality of life would be considerably enhanced. All discussion pertaining to the environment thus took place within a definite socio-political context and was specifically related to each organization's political policy and objectives. This demonstrable concern for the individual and the environment, may be seen as a positive indication that environmental concern among democratic, extra-parliamentary organizations, will enjoy high priority in the near future.[24] In addition, the unbanning of previously banned organizations such as the ANC, as well as the lifting of the restrictions which had been placed on various organizations, is increasing the likelihood of this happening.

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[24] There are already indications that this is happening. For example, individuals in the leadership of the MDM in Natal have expressed concern over threatened sand mining of the dunes north of St Lucia in Natal. It appears likely that the MDM will join the protest against the mining taking place (Koch, 1989c). Also, a resolution recognizing that the "preservation and rehabilitation of the environment forms a part of the process of liberation", was passed at the Conference for a Democratic Future - a conference at which many democratic extra-parliamentary organizations were represented (Koch, 1990).

These positive indications also serve to raise the possiblity of future liaison and co-operation between the political and environmental lobbies, to a far greater extent than has been possible in the past. It is therefore to an evaluation of the current policies of selected environmental organizations, that attention is directed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE STRATEGIES OF SELECTED NON-GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - A CURRENT EVALUATION

" ... we are all collectively responsible, directly or indirectly, for the poor state of conservation in the Greater Cape Town Region. Whatever our feelings, we have to acknowledge the inadequacies of both government and non-government conservation bodies in the past. Together we must plan meaningful conservation programmes ... "

Barry Low, 1987, p. 71.

CHAPTER SIX

THE STRATEGIES OF SELECTED NON-GOVERNMENT ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS - A CURRENT EVALUATION

6.1 Introduction

As an examination of South Africa's environmental history will show, a keen interest in natural history has always existed. This interest found expression in the work of scientists and natural historians (Talbot, 1977: Grove, 1987). There was considerable lay interest also, however, and such interest culminated in the establishment of the first non-government environmental organizations, such as the Caledon Wildflower Society, established in 1892, and the Transvaal Game Protection Society in 1902. These organizations were followed by the establishment of the Botanical Society of South Africa (Botsoc) in 1913 and the Wild Life Protection and Conservation Society of Southern Africa in 1926 (later known as the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa - WSSA) In 1943, the National Veld Trust, a soil conservation organization, was formed. Since then, the number of NGOs has grown to include such notable examples as the South African Nature Foundation (SANF), Endangered Wildlife Trust and the South African National Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds.[1]

In recent years, the number of national, and particularly locally-based NGOs, has proliferated, as interest in the environment has grown. It has, however, been the impact of the three national NGOs with the longest history (i.e. Botsoc, WSSA and Veld Trust), which has been the most significant, not only in influencing environmental perception and attitude, but also in determining the shape and content of the prevailing conservation ideology.

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[1] Information thus far, on the establishment of NGOs, is based on Schweizer (1983).

Traditionally, the support base of such NGOs as the Botanical Society, the Wildlife Society and the National Veld Trust, has been very narrow, with membership being drawn largely from the white group (see Chapter 1, section 1.1). Black indifference or antagonism to NGOs, has traditionally been regarded as acceptable, with only rare exceptions criticizing this situation (WSSA, 1951; Bond, 1963), until fairly recently. Traditionally, NGOs have reflected the class interests of their membership and, since these have generally been drawn from the educated, more affluent class (see Chapter 1, section 1.1), NGO activities have naturally revolved around those activities and areas of interest designated as important by that class. An acceptance of the existing racial status quo has usually also been an accepted part of the policy of such NGOs, whether explicitly stated, or merely reflected in the pages of its magazines. For example, from the outset, the National Veld Trust made it clear that:

> "Membership is open to South African persons of European descent ..." (Veld Trust, 1944, p.4).

Usually, however, the racial views of organizations were not as bluntly stated as that. More frequently, it found expression in readers' articles. Some typical examples from the pages of African Wildlife:

> "A large colony of pygmies are living in mud huts at Camp Putnam; many of them are servants and hangers-on at the hotel. When one has got over the thrill of seeing pygmies, one realises that they are just a lot of dirty natives remarkable only for their small stature" (Wager, 1953, p.199).

> "Arthur Neumann had an almost uncanny aptitude for getting on good terms, not only with his immediate followers, but with the many strange and sometimes treacherous tribes with which he had to deal. Even W.D.M. Bell, generally regarded as the most successful elephant hunter of all time, and who certainly knew how to handle savages, can hardly have been held in higher esteem" (Podmore, 1955b, pp 207-208).

Nor are such articles illustrative of past attitudes only. A recent article in Veld and Flora, was notable for its patronizing tone:

> "Kirstenbosch was very lucky to have a fairly large coloured village right next to them. This, I think, was closed only years later. It was amazing what long service some of them gave - some worked till retirement when they finally received a pension ... These coloureds were so kind to Isobel ..." (Reed, 1989, p.102).

While organizations such as the Botanical and Wildlife societies make it clear that the content of their magazines does not necessarily reflect the policy of the organization concerned, the racial attitudes displayed in the pages of their official organs, have naturally been regarded as offensive by most blacks. It is, however, the perceived acceptance of the status quo by these NGOs, as well as their elitist, uncaring image, which has been cited by several democratic extra-parliamentary organizations, as one reason for not establishing co-operative links between themselves and mainstream NGOs (Gabru, 1989, pers comm; Rasool, 1989, pers comm; Soudien, 1990, pers comm). In addition, the close co-operation between members of the government and many NGOs, simply serves to deepen black suspicion and mistrust. Veld Trust in particular, has, since its inception, had very close links with the government, working, first with the Department of Agriculture, then later with the Department of Environment Affairs (Schweizer, 1983). Up until 1984, both Veld Trust and the Wildlife Society had the State President as their patron.

The height of state and NGO co-operation may be said to have been reached with the publication of a guide entitled, The Soldier and Nature. This guide was compiled jointly by the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the WSSA and was funded in part, by a donation from the SANF. While one of the aims of the guide is to educate those in the SADF of the need to acquire an understanding of wildlife, as well as the need to conserve it, the guide steps outside environmental parameters, to take a decidedly partisan stance:

> "It is up to you to increase your knowledge of our wildlife and in so doing, gain a better knowledge of the bush than our enemies ... The animals are your allies, treat them as friends and guides for, ultimately, in fighting for our country, we are doing so not just for ourselves, but for our families and friends and also for South Africa's natural heritage - our wildlife" (WSSA, undated, pp 55-56).

Given the factors as outlined thus far, it is not surprising that there is a reluctance among politically aware blacks to become involved in mainstream NGOs. The narrow focus of such NGOs has, however, gradually changed, building upon pioneering articles, such as those published in African Wildlife, under the editorship of Creina Bond.[2] More recently, several articles, published in a wide variety of journals, indicate a broadening of the prevailing conservation ideology, to encompasses the social and human dimension which is part of a more holistic environmental ideology (WSSA, 1981a; du Preez, 1984; Owen-Smith, 1987; Low, 1987).

Organizations such as Veld Trust, now unambiguously state their intention to cater for all South Africans and not just one section of it (Du Preez, 1984). Since 1985, WSSA's African Wildlife, has carried the following statement on its contents page:

> "The Wildlife Society of Southern Africa is a non-racial, non-government, voluntary society concerned with the conservation of southern African wildlife, wild places and natural resources for all the people of the sub-continent."

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[2] For example, Buthelezi (1971 and 1973); Bond (1973a and 1976); Hanks, (1976).

In addition, the scope of activities undertaken, has widened to include black interests and perspectives.[3] It may also be argued that the WSSA's National Conservation Strategy (WSSA, 1981b), is indicative of a major shift in policy to embrace the 'people benefit' concept. The Strategy, however, in avoiding comment on the racial status quo, has been criticized for its lack of commitment to change in the socio-political sphere (Allen, 1981).

However, while the above-mentioned efforts, in addition to the major contribution made by ongoing environmental education programmes by various NGOs, have undoubtedly made a great impact on a wider section of the public than before, it cannot be said that such efforts have yet resulted in a national environmental consciousness (see Chapter 1, section 1.1). Mass environmental awareness, with its concomitant commitment to significant socio-political change, remains to be properly targeted by most NGOs (Khan, 1990, pending).

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[3] An example is the Macassar dune conservation and environmental education project on the Cape Flats, begun by Barry Low of the Botanical Society's Education Committee. This project has been tremendously successful and has now been undertaken as a community project by local schools (Low, 1989, pers comm).

Another local example is the excellent Educational Guide to Rondevlei Nature Reserve (Berruti, 1989), issued by the Western Cape Branch of the Wildlife Society. This groundbreaking guide enables students to confront such fundamental socio-political issues as the relevance of an urban nature reserve to a community hard-pressed to cope with a housing crisis exacerbated by the effects of the Group Areas Act. Elsewhere, in Natal for example, co-operation between NGOs, the Natal Parks Board and traditional healers, has resulted in the latter being able to obtain regular supplies of specially propagated indigenous plants (Cunningham, 1984; Wait, 1988).

Thus, while the emerging trends are encouraging, they are not yet indicative of a genuine policy change on the part of most NGOs.[4] The traditional wariness with which such NGOs are regarded has not disappeared, thus making the evaluation of the policies and practical action undertaken by newer, more progressive, NGOs, of immediate interest. Accordingly, the focus of this chapter will be on local NGOs (i.e. those based in the Greater Cape Town Region), whose policies and activities incorporate the human, i.e. socio-political dimension of environmental concern, and which view the establishment of a democratic society as a necessary pre-condition to the establishment of mass environmental literacy. That is, the basis for the selection of environmental organizations, is similar to the criteria applied to the selection of political organizations (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.1).

6.2 Selected Non-Government Environmental Organizations

6.2.1 Cape Town Ecology Group

The Cape Town Ecology Group (CTEG), arose out of the activities of Koeberg Alert (see Koeberg Alert), when certain members felt the need to consider ecological issues from a broader perspective. The CETG describes itelf as:

> "... a democratic organization aimed at promoting individual and public awareness as ecological issues, and at discovering new ways

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[4] According to the new editor of Veld and Flora, the Botanical Society is committing itself to a major change in direction - a change which, it is hoped, will allow the society to considerably broaden its support base. Cowling, 1990, pers comm).

The Wildlife's Society's Western Cape Branch is very aware of the narrowness of its support base and is keen to expand this. Thus far, surveys in the black townships have been undertaken and discussion is under way to consider ways to broaden its appeal (Glasewzki, 1990, pers comm).

> in which to understand our relatonship with nature" (Rolfes, undated).

At one of the Group's regular 'open meetings', to which members of the public are invited, it was stressed that:

> "... the CTEG is not a conservation organization, rather, it is a group that sees connections between ecology and social issues, ecology and politics" (Cope, 1989, pers comm).

The Group's activities are varied and include holding workshops, contributing articles to newspapers and journals, as well as waging campaigns alerting the public to the dangers of using products containing chlorofluorocarbons. Future activities will include raising public awareness and resistance to the dumping of toxic waste, as well as the compilation of a booklet illustrating ways in which individuals can live more environmentally conscious lives. The CTEG has held successful 'open evenings', which not only allow it to publicize its own activities, but also act as a useful forum in which members of the public may air their views on environmental issues.

The CTEG is particularly aware that, amid the present proliferation of environmental groups, there is a danger in further stretching already thinly-spread resources as well as in a duplication of activities. As a result of this concern, a 'green evening' was held, to which representatives of all environmental and related groups were invited. The response was enthusiastic and, at the ensuing meeting, discussion centred around finding common ground among the various organizations, as well as the establishment of a co-ordinating body which could act as a liaison and resource body, linking all environmental groups in the Greater Cape Town Region. It was hoped that this co-ordinating group would make it possible for the various

environmental groups to participate in joint action on specific issues.[5]

6.2.2 Earthlife Africa

This organization was established in July 1988 by a group of people who, inspired by the actions and achievements of Greenpeace, felt that the time was ripe for an organization "that had grassroots knowledge of the southern African scenario, in line with the 'think globally, act locally', concept" (Earthlife, undated, p.2). The organization has branches in several major cities, including Cape Town. Earthlife's manifesto reads, in part:

> "Earthlife Africa is a multi-faceted group with a sense of shared commitment, contributing skills, resources and experience, to creating a new society where protection of the environment is a pre-condition ..." (Earthlife, undated, p.2).

The organization recognizes that socio-political issues are extremely important within the South African context. Since Earthlife has an holistic perspective on environmental issues, the organization feels that:

> "Earthlife cannot ignore the political context of our existence ... Earthlife acknowledges, and supports, the struggle of many people for an equitable and just socio-political transformation in this country. Earthlife believes that it is essential to compliment the process of political change by promoting a broad-based desire for an environmentally sustainable future, in this country and globally ... We are ... opposed to apartheid as we perceive this doctrine to be a major force of social disintegration. If we are to have any hope of preventing wholesale environmental destruction, we need a stable and just socio-political order" (Earthlife, undated, p.2).

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[5] Information on the 'green evening' is based on notes made by the writer during the course of the meeting, which was chaired by Julia Martin (1989, pers comm).

Earthlife hopes to achieve these objectives through a variety of activities, including participation in, and support of, community environmental campaigns, the creation of consumer awareness of environmentally sound products, as well as the introduction of environmental education issues at all institutions of learning (Hurry, 1989). The organization has been involved in several issues local to various areas, such as the illegal dumping of toxic waste in Pietermaritzburg (Natal), and the organizing of a series of public debates in Cape Town, such as that on the proposed toxic waste plant at Alexander Bay (Snel, 1989, pers comm). The next major campaign, planned for 1990, is around the theme of recycling for the future (Weintroub, 1989), with the possibility of a more vigorous, anti-military, pro-objector stance being taken in the future (Knill, 1990, pers comm).

An important contribution was made by Earthlife Africa at the Conference for a Democratic Future when it succeeded in formally placing environmental issues on the agenda of the MDM (see Chapter 5, section 5.3).

6.2.3 Green Action Forum

Green Action Forum (GAF),which was launched in 1989, is based at the University of Cape Town. Since it started relatively late in the academic year, active recruiting will take place in 1990. The organization is affiliated to Earthlife Africa.

According to chairperson Greg Knill, GAF is using some of the principles of the German Green Movement as a point of departure. These principles incorporate ecological wisdom, social reponsibility, grassroots democracy and non-violence towards the environment (Knill, 1989, pers comm). In addition, GAF subscribes to the principles of 'Deep Ecology", which opposes the task of 'Reform Ecology', in simply repairing the damage done to the earth. Instead, Deep Ecology goes right to the root of

environmental problems in order to prevent further despoliation (Knill, 1989, pers comm). Further, GAF is:

> "... opposed to the technocentric notion that science has all the answers, preferring an ecocentric approach which suggests that the real cause of the environmental crisis lies in human attitudes. GAF accords the environment a value inherent to itself; not merely as a commodity of use to people ..." (GAF, undated, p.2).

With regard to its future programme, GAF intends to use action and protest, combined with discussion and debate in order to clarify the ideas of members, as well as to carry its message to the public. Politically, GAF is committed to the establishment of a democratic, non-discriminatory and non-exploitative society. Further, it recognizes the political basis of environmental issues, acknowledging that the latter should, as a matter of urgency, form part of the agenda of democratic, extra-parliamentary bodies (Knill, 1989, pers comm).

6.2.4 The Hout Bay Delegation

The Hout Bay Delegation (HBD) is an organization which represents the needs and aspirations of the ratepayers, tenants and the homeless, within the black community of Hout Bay (see map, Chapter 1, section 1.4). In 1988, its Environmental and Health Committee was formed, with the aims of monitoring the health hazards posed by the raw sewage pumped into the ocean, protecting the indigenous plants and animals and discouraging pollution and littering through education and clean-up campaigns (Sentinel, 1988). In general, the HBD aims to reach its target community through the consideration of "education, ecology, economic, social and political, factors" (HBD), 1989, p.1) In an interview, the Secretary, Charles Roberts, expanded on this:

> "Basically our policy is holistic and humanistic ... when I say holistic I mean that we use every discipline that we can to achieve our aims and it is humanistic in that we do not ignore the fact that there are human beings present in the environment, and have to be catered for" (1989, pers comm).

The HBD is very aware of the role of socio-economic and political factors in environmental and health issues, particularly in the black Hout Bay Heights/Harbour/Hangberg area, and this is reflected in the broad range of its activities. Hence the HBD deals with such problems as stagnant water in the storm water drains, the pumping of raw sewage only metres away from the nearest homes, the stench from the fish factory, as well as the housing crisis (Roberts, 1989, pers comm). The present housing crisis stems from the application of the Group Areas Act, which resulted in the building of blocks of flats to house those forced to move out of the designated white area. These flats are condemned by residents as inadequate and dangerous (HBD, 1989). The problem of the homeless has also been undertaken. For example, the HBD has liaised with three 'squatter communities' and has assisted the Disa River 'squatters' to retain their land (Roberts, 1989, pers comm).

The HBD's activities also includes walks, hacks, the provision of recreation facilities, as well as an ecology club for children. The organization is also concerned with protecting the rich natural heritage of Hout Bay, especially in the light of future housing development. While the HBD recognizes the desperate need for housing, it is, at the same time, aware of the need for careful, environmentally sensitive planning.

On the issue of liaising with more established NGOs, it was made clear that the organization had no objection in this regard, but that certain problems had been experienced with one particular organization, namely the Dolphin Action and Protection Group (DPAG). The HBD had objected to certain racial terms used in one of the DPAG's newsletters and, in a strongly worded letter, had asked the DPAG to discontinue the use of such offensive terminology (Roberts, 1989, pers comm). The HBD was unhappy with the response from DPAG, to the effect that all concerned should be focusing on the conservation issues at hand. The HBD's stance was that environmental organizations <u>should</u> take a stand on racial discrimination and not perpetuate it by the use of

racially offensive terms. The organization felt strongly that such issues could not be ignored because they were part of the socio-political changes that South Africa still had to undergo (Roberts, 1989, pers comm).
The HBD is non-aligned politically but, as is obvious from its aims and policy, it recognizes the political basis of environmental issues and does not shrink from making political decisions. It has a non-racial policy and believes in social justice for all.

With regard to its success as a community-based organization, the HBD sees its environmental programme as being very successful at grassroots level. Its environmental education activities are hugely popular among primary school age children, with children having to be turned away from its various activities because of the large attendance. Environmental health and housing issues, which directly affect people in the area, are considered important and support for these issues is easy to gain. However, other environmental issues popular among the more privileged communities, such as dolphin protection and heritage conservation (i.e. the preservation of historic buildings and sites), are simply disregarded by the poorer communities of Hout Bay (Roberts, 1989, pers comm).

6.2.5 Khanyisa

Khanyisa, which means 'alight', is a community-based organization, operating in the African townships of Langa, Nyanga, Guguletu and Khayelitsha (see map, Chapter 1, section 1.4). The organization seeks to promote the concept of environmental awareness, i.e. the "love and care of nature and the immediate surroundings", in the communities among which it operates (Khanyisa, undated, p.1). The organization was started in 1988 in order to fight against, and change, the wretched environmental conditions found in many of the poverty-stricken communities living in these townships.

The co-ordinator, Linda Ntshoko, feels strongly about the need for communities to do something positive about the dreary environment in which they lived. Her experiences, while working for the Fairest Cape Association[6](FCA), convinced her of the necessity for blacks to establish their own environmental organizations. Ntshoko found that the FCA was unable to operate effectively in the townships because it was perceived as a white organization, trying to impose its views on the people living there. She was regarded as an agent of this organization, and suspicion was therefore extended to her role as well. Ntshoko herself was unhappy with her function within the FCA, feeling that, because she was black, she was being used as "window dressing" in order to gain credibility for the organization (Ntshoko, 1989, pers comm).

As a result of her experience within the FCA, Ntshoko was extremely wary of being "used" and expressed reluctance to participate in a discussion with the writer. She expressed reservations about the motivation of academic research undertaken among black communities, and made it clear that neither she nor her organization, was interested in "imposed solutions" (Ntshoko, 1989, pers comm). However, once convinced of the writer's aims and objectives in undertaking this area of research, she accepted the latter's bona fides and continued the discussion.

Ntshoko stressed the participatory nature of Khanyisa, making it clear that it was a democratic, community-based organization, in which people are motivated to become actively involved in improving their environment. Khanyisa operates in the four African townships of Cape Town and is directed by a management committee of elected members from the community. The committee endeavours "to meet the expressed needs and wishes of the people ..." (Khanyisa, undated, p.2).

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6 The Fairest Cape Association, is an organization which concerns itself with instilling a sense of pride in the environment and in encouraging Capetonians to care for, and about, the natural and built environment.

Khanyisa also conducts an environmental education programme, in which youngsters are engaged in such activities as tree planting, as well as community activities such as mural painting and planting vegetable gardens at homes for the aged. The programme is enormously successful, attracting hundreds of youngsters between the ages of seven and eighteen. However, funding is a constant problem, resulting in constraints on the scope of the organization's activities.

On the question of political involvement, Ntshoko indicated that Khanyisa was not aligned to any particular political grouping but that it recognized the political basis of all environmental issues. She explained that the organization had adopted that stance because it did not wish to alienate any group or individual, by identifying itself with any specific political organization. Their wish is to involve as many people, over as broad a spectrum as possible, in the activities of Khanyisa (Ntshoko, 1989, pers comm).

6.2.6 Koeberg Alert

Koeberg Alert (KA), was established in 1976, following the decision to site South Africa's first nucleur power station only 30 kms from Cape Town (see map, Chapter 1, section 1.4).[7] At this stage, KA could be described as a 'single issue' organization, more concerned with debating the locality of the power station, than with raising public awareness about the dangers of nucleur power per se. By 1983, however, at a public meeting in Cape Town, a decision was taken to "broaden the focus of the protest" and to place the entire nucleur issue "within its social, political and economic context" (KA, 1986, pp1-2).

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[7] Background information on Koeberg Alert is mainly based on that obtained from an information pamphlet on the history of the organization (KA, 1986).

The aim of the organization at that stage, was to launch a recruiting campaign in order to build a mass-based anti-nucleur organization. It was recognized that the failure of the organization to attract wider, specifically black, support, was directly related to the nucleur debate not being located within a socio-political context. When the aforementioned public meeting had been held, most of its support had come from the white community, with only a few representatives from Atlantis, a 'coloured' township situated 16 kms from the power station. Contact with this community was sucessfully made and meetings were held by the Atlantis Residents Association. Unfortunately, this initial contact was not continued and the link with this community was broken.

Since the mid-1980s, membership of KA has progressively dwindled, possibly as a result of the nucleur issue itself fading as an important issue. Currently, the group functions primarily as a resource base, giving talks at a variety of educational institutions, as well as contributing articles to various publications. During a discussion with Peter Wilkinson of KA, he made it clear that the organization remains concerned about the nucleur issue, and that:

> "I think we would see it as important and in fact essential, that the MDM, and the bodies that make up the MDM, are confronted with the need to take up the nucleur issue and we have attempted in various ways to place the nucleur issue on the political agenda" (1989, pers comm).

KA recognizes that the issue of nucleur power has a low priority for most South Africans and therefore accepts not only the "legitimacy" of pursuing a broader range of environmental issues, but also the necessity for adopting strategies to engage the broader population in environmental issues (Wilkinson, 1989, pers comm). Wilkinson suggested linking the pollution caused by coal burning in the townships to the problem of acid rain, as well as co-operation and liaison between environmental goups, as part of a campaign to get people involved on a wider scale than that at present, concluding that:

> "I think it's really important that organizations actually start to talk to each other and see where their concerns overlap and more particularly, how these concerns can be politicized because ... we certainly believe that the nucleur issue is political, and by extension, we believe that ecological, environmental issues are political ..." (1989, pers comm).

6.2.7 Natsoc

Natsoc is a six year old organization, based on the Cape Flats, with the broad aim of sensitizing people within those communities to the importance and relevance, of environmental issues.[8] Although it did not start off as such, Natsoc has developed into an organization involved in environmental education and, to this end, compiles material on specific issues, makes its resources available to those who need it, educates its members, and conducts walks and trails. For the past four years, Natsoc has successfully worked with a group of teachers, drawing up worksheets and organizing workshops. Recognizing that many teachers lack confidence and experience in fieldwork, the organization's specific aim, has been to increase the awareness and skills of teachers. The members of Natsoc are particularly concerned that many black teacher training colleges do not encourage fieldwork and they hope that, by increasing the environmental awareness of teachers, and equipping them with fieldwork skills, they will be reaching more pupils than if they undertook practical activities with schoolchildren themselves.

Natsoc is firmly committed to the implementation of environmental education and to raising community awareness, particularly in black areas. It was felt that since many environmental organizations already operated in white areas, there was an acute need for environmental organizations to mobilize support among black communities. Members commented that environmental concern was closely linked with affluence and

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[8] The information on Natsoc is based on a discussion held with four of its founder members (Hendricks, Hendricks, Hodges and Share, 1989, pers comm).

privilege. They drew attention to the fact that, since the class and racial stratification of society are closely linked because of the apartheid system, this has resulted in environmental concern being largely confined to the white group. This situation, in turn, has resulted in campaigns such as 'saving the whale' and the protection of Table Mountain, appealing mainly to whites, as the group most able to utilize the recreation potential of the coastal and mountain areas.

As a result of existing constraints, the organization was very keen to involve a broader range of people, previously uninvolved in environmental activities, in its programme. Although Natsoc, since its inception, has never confined its activities to students, during 1989, the organization attracted many more "non-academic" members and blue-collar workers, with no previous environmental interest. The organization ascribes this welcome trend to its quarterly social activities, such as camping, to which members invite friends and family. The emphasis at these camps is on enjoyment of the outdoors as an informal, sensitizing experience. It was felt that, since many townships were situated far from areas of natural attraction, outings like these formed an essential element of environmental awareness.

Members of Natsoc were of the opinion that it was vital that environmental issues were recognized as important issues at grassroots level. It was suggested that one strategy to achieve this, might be to link environmental issues with survival, as well as the enhancement of the quality of life of every individual. Environmental organizations could choose an issue that particularly affected local communities, and use that as an issue to mobilize support for environmental issues in general. The point was clearly made that environmental issues were of great significance within the liberatory struggle, and that the inclusion of these issues was a matter of urgency:

> "We talk about liberation but liberation will be useless if people are going to starve and we don't consider the environment - then

> it's going to affect the quality of life and the level of liberation of the people ..." (Hendricks et al, 1989, pers comm).

Finally, Natsoc members are emphatic about the need for democratic, representative, community-based environmental organizations, in which relevant environmental issues will be undrtaken on a practical level. They feel that while large, nationally-based organizations are stronger in terms of membership and resources, environmental consciousness will only result from a community-based approach.

6.3 Conclusion

The organizations selected for inclusion in this chapter are a diverse mix of organizations, based in a variety of areas, ranging from a university campus and middle class suburbs, to poor township communities. It has to be acknowledged that middle and upper middle class membership still pre-dominates, particularly in the leadership structures. However, given the inherent inequalities of South African society and the privileged position occupied by these classes, it would be naive to expect a major shift in the composition of the membership and leadership of these organizations. Nevertheless, despite this drawback, there is an encouraging increase in participation among a wider spectrum of society, together with an acknowledgement from all the organizations, of the necessity to increase mass environmental participation.

With the aim of increasing public participation, these organizations engage in a diverse range of activities, with, in many cases, an emphasis on environmental education as a tool for raising public environmental awareness. All organizations expressed variations of the common strategy of mobilizing around a relevant, local issue as a means of enhancing environmental awareness. Most importantly, all organizations have distanced themselves from the political and ethical neutrality which has characterized South African environmental organizations in the

past. Furthermore, these organizations acknowledged the political basis of environmental issues, stressing the need to place such issues within a socio-political context.

While all organizations have recognized that, to be successful, environmental organizations have to be truly representative of local interests, it is only organizations such as the HBD, Khanyisa and Natsoc, which have established the foundation of what could become a network of participatory, community-based organizations.

Viewed within the national context, these organizations, with their small membership, their confined target areas, their limited resources, and constant battle for funds, may well appear insignificant. However, these factors are not necessarily all limitations. The size of the organization, as well as that of its 'constituency', could well be used to its advantage. Local organizations find it easier to remain in touch with local issues - thus a network of community-based environmental organizations, inspired by a committed and active core of members, could well develop into a powerful environmental alliance in the future (Khan, 1990).

CHAPTER SEVEN

POSSIBLE FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

" The question of ecology is a very recent concern in all parts of the world and therefore it is not, in a sense, peculiar that in South Africa we have a low priority concern. In many parts of the world ... there has been the emergence of so-called 'Green Parties', that have forced people to take environmental issues seriously. But ... in South Africa, [there are] people who think it has little to do with the struggle for liberation and justice, I mean wrongly, but I think you have to work out your priorities ... you might get involved in a campaign against Koeberg [but] when your children are being shot, when your children are in detention, you would rather say, this is a major life and death issue ... [but] of course the environment, equally, is also a justice issue ... "

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 1989, pers comm.

CHAPTER SEVEN

POSSIBLE FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

7.1 Introduction

This dissertation has attempted to redress an imbalance in South African environmental history by examining the relevant historico-political factors which have shaped the development of the environmental perceptions and attitudes of blacks (see Chapter 2). Through an historical evaluation of black environmental organizations, this dissertation has also focused on the contribution of blacks to the formation of a broader, though ultimately short-lived, environmental ideology (see Chapter 3). Despite positive factors such as an increased national environmental awareness and the efforts of both government and non-government organizations in the field of environmental education, the dominant conservation ideology has, to a great extent, retained its natural history bias, as well as its white, middle class support base (see Chapter 1).

The major social and political factors responsible for the dominance of this narrowly-based conservation paradigm have been examined and it has been concluded that the cumulative effect of apartheid legislation on environmental perception and attitude has been one of distortion and alienation (see Chapter 4). While the prevailing conservation ideology remains largely defined by the class interests of its principal supporters, there are encouraging signs that this situation is being challenged in both the environmental, as well as the political, arenas (see Chapters 5 and 6).

This dissertation has also documented, at a local level, the development of certain environmental organizations, which, by recognizing social, political and economic factors as being

intrinsic to environmental concern, have contributed to the establishment of a broader environmental ideology, as opposed to the existing, more narrowly defined, conservation ideology (see Chapter 6). An interesting development resulting from the incorporation of the human dimension into the parameters of this developing environmental ideology, has been the environmental concern expressed by certain democratic extra-parliamentary organizations, based in the Greater Cape Town Region (see Chapter 5).

Based on the insights gained from the historical aspects of this dissertation, as well as an assessment of the issues raised and the proposals put forward by both the environmental and the political organizations, it seems clear that, if mass environmental literacy is to be achieved, political literacy and the democratization of society must be seen as crucial and indispensable elements of an overall environmental strategy. Certain pre-conditions are therefore necessary for the successful implementation of future environmental strategies. These pre-conditions may be summarized as the creation of the kind of social, economic and political climate which makes it possible for people to be conscientized to the level where they consider the environment as a depletable resource which has to be protected by utilizing it on a sustainable basis.

7.2 Pre-conditions for the successful implementation of Environmental Strategies

7.2.1 The Destruction of Apartheid

The destruction of the apartheid system is an essential first step in adressing the physical alienation of black South Africans from the environment.[1] It has already been made clear, that

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[1] It appears increasingly likely that South Africa is moving towards a situation in which the dismantling of apartheid will become a reality (see Chp. 4, sec. 4.3).

the apartheid system, with its twin doctrines of racial separation and inequality, has institutionalized widespread poverty, with resulting high malnutrition and infant mortality rates among blacks (see Chapter 4; also Wilson and Ramphele, 1989). Coupled with this is widespread illiteracy, lack of political rights, and, particularly among Africans, landlessness. Clearly, the socio-economic and political problems wrought by the apartheid system, are immense. Equally clearly, the most fundamental task facing South Africans today, is the dismantling of this system, as well as undoing the psychological legacy of inferiority, bitterness and hatred imprinted by centuries of discriminatory legislation. Formulating environmental strategies, while continuing to ignore existing poverty, powerlessness and landlessness, is futile because such strategies are destined to fail (see Chapter 4, section 4.2). Thus, the immediate priority, for both environmental, as well as political organizations, is the destruction of the apartheid system.

In the process of reconstruction, all basic needs will require urgent attention. However, because of the bitterness and resentment which continues to surround the land issue (see Chapter 4, section 4.2), it must be singled out as one of the most crucial factors to be considered. Further, since a major strand in South Africa's history has been the extent of state intervention in obstructing black access to the land (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.1), this is an aspect to which a democratic state will have to devote immediate attention.

In their "High Road" scenario, authors Huntley, Siegfried and Sunter, argue for a re-distribution of land, based not on the transfer of land,

> "from haves to have-nots, but rather the provision of equal opportunity to anybody to acquire land, regardless of race, at market prices" (1989, p.106).

The authors, however, do not propose immediate access to the land, noting that the huge gap between average white and black incomes make a "phased transition" necessary (Huntley et al, 1989, p.106). They also feel that black farmers in the 'homelands' must be protected against whites who could take advantage of equal access to the land to buy up huge properties.

Wison and Ramphele make the point that a "radical restructuring of the country's land-tenure system" is required, as well as the abolition of all laws which prevent South Africans from owning or leasing land anywhere they choose (1989, p.310). The authors point out that, while dismantling the structures of apartheid is a necessary step, the "scaffolding nature" (1989, p.310) of such legislation will require the development of policies which will help previously disadvantaged South Africans to overcome the handicaps presently inherent in the apartheid system. Zimbabwe's experience in this regard, underlines the complexity of the situation.

Zimbabwe's colonial history is very similar to South Africa's, resulting in a similar pattern of black dispossession (see Martin and Johnson, 1981). The land question was, therefore, a crucial aspect of the liberation struggle conducted against the Smith regime in the years following the unilateral declaration of independence in 1965. At the end of the civil war which followed, expectations were high after the Zimbabwe African National Union, led by Robert Mugabe, came to power in 1980. Landless peasants who had fought in the war, expected radical changes to be effected. Today, however, only 2,5 million hectares of erstwhile white commercial land has been bought, at great cost to the government, from reluctant sellers (Chung, 1989). This has resulted in only a small number of blacks joining the ranks of white commercial farmers, leaving the larger issue of inadequate land distribution still unaddressed. South Africa, like Zimbabwe, will have to find ways of maintaining high agricultural productivity, along with an equitable solution to the land question.

Serious debate on post-apartheid solutions to the land issue has already begun. In addition to the contributions of the above-mentioned authors, opinion ranges from the Charterist stance of the MDM (see Chapter 5: ANC, COSATU and UDF), to the stance of the Pan Africanist Congress, one of whose members stated that:

> "I would say that the main issue in Azania centres on the repossession of our land" (Badela, 1989, p.22).

In redressing past injustices however, the land debate must not lose sight of the conservation perspective. State intervention in the land issue, has often involved massive overcrowding, leading to ever-worsening environmental abuse, particularly in the 'homelands' (see Chapter 4, section 4.2). In this regard, South Africa has much to learn from the experience of post-independence Africa, whose former colonies faced similar socio-political, economic and environmental problems. Nigeria, for example, has dealt with land reform and conservation issues by integrating the two:

> "Conservation ... is also an important part of the reform process in land tenure systems, land-use patterns, and land management practices ... In Nigeria, land reforms have long been the focus of concern over conservation, being viewed as the best insurance agent against abuse and misuse of land resources. At a general level, the goal of such reforms is a more controlled or guided use of the land and its resources to achieve sustained economic growth " (Areola, 1987, p.277).

Central also to post-apartheid reconstruction, is the tranformation of educational institutions to serve the needs of a free and equal society. Environmental education, with its commitment to a uniform education system to which everyone has free and equal access, and in which the development of independent, critical thought is the objective, is incompatible with the present system. Strategies for a formal environmental education programme will therefore have to wait until apartheid education has been dismantled.

7.2.2 The Establishment of a Democratic State

The spiritual alienation of blacks from the environment has been an inevitable part of their physical alienation from that environment. Care, concern, and love for one's environment, however, can only come about as a consequence of being a citizen in a fully participatory democracy. Only a society in which individuals have free and unfettered access to information and decisions taken about the environment, can hope to involve its citizens in a responsible relationship with their environment.

The link between environmental and political literacy has already been made clear (see Chapter 4, section 4.2), since without accesss to the decision-making structures of a society, individuals and organizations cannot effect meaningful change within that society.

Societies which tolerate or institutionalize poverty and inequality, make it difficult, if not impossible, for the poor to challenge their powerlessness. Empowerment, i.e. strategies to empower the poor, to redress the present unequal balance of power, must therefore form an inseparable part of the democratization process in South Africa. On the issue of empowerment, Wilson and Ramphele have stated that:

> "Power lies at the heart of the problem of poverty in southern Africa. Without it those who are poor remain vulnerable to an ongoing process of impoverishment... A radical shift of the present power structure away form a racial oligarchy to a genuine democracy is essential as part of the process of transforming the South African political economy ..." (1989, p.258).

7.2.3 The Enhancement of Quality of Life

The question of environmental conservation is inextricably bound up with a concern for the quality of life of all the citizens of any given country. It is therefore not surprising that individuals whose entire lives are dominated by questions of

survival, will not evince the slightest interest in environmental conservation (see Chapter 1, section 1.1). One of the basic pre-conditions for mass environmental literacy, is, therefore, the enhancement of individual quality of life. This is best expressed by the phrase, "putting people first" (Chambers, 1988, p.5).

The traditional ways of implementing environmental conservation which have involved the human factor, have usually emphasized such aspects as population control and sustainable resource exploitation. In terms of 'putting people first', this process is reversed, with emphasis being placed on the enhancement of the individual's quality of life. By going beyond the mere satisfaction of basic needs to focus on such quality of life indicators as education, recreation, health, security, access to job skills and environmental quality, the ends of environmental conservation are often served at the same time. It is only when attention is paid to the quality of human life, that the personal benefits of such abstract concerns as population control, become clear.

While Chambers was writing specifically about the rural poor, the following comment holds true for underprivileged people everywhere:

> "It is precisely sustainable livelihoods, with secure rights and ownership, which can integrate what poor people want and need, with what those concerned with population, resource exploitation and rural development, seek. Rural people are not the problem but the solution" (1988, p.20).

7.3 Proposals for Future Environmental Strategies

While the following proposals for environmental strategies to secure mass involvement require the implementation of the foregoing pre-conditions in order to ensure success, nevertheless, much can be done during the transition phase to an

apartheid-free society, in order to lay the basis for that success.

Any environmental strategies aimed at achieving mass environmental literacy, will have to give serious consideration to resolving the problems of apathy and hostility to environmental issues among all South Africans, especially among the poor and disadvantaged. Environmental strategies followed, should therefore incorporate the widest possible spectrum of participation. In the creation of such strategies, South Africans would do well to examine the experience of developing nations in South America, Asia and Africa in dealing with similar problems. While the success of the Green Movement in Western Europe is a heartening example, the environmental strategies followed by former colonies in Africa, with similar histories of land dispossession and racial discrimination, will be of far greater relevance.

7.3.1 The Creation of Community-based NGOs

In the creation of mass-based structures, South Africa should consider emulating the example of countries such as India and Kenya. The activities of India's famous Chipko movement, which resulted in the prevention of the destruction of forest resources by outside interests, is well known (Gupta, 1988). Another, equally well known example, is the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, where community nurseries are slowly reversing the effects of soil erosion (Jones and Maathai, 1983). Whereas local, community-based NGOs have already begun to operate in South Africa, these are small organizations, with no claims to being mass organizations, nor are they yet part of a national network of such organizations (see Chapter 6, section 6.3).

The environmental movement in South Africa still depends too much on the vision and efforts of individuals such as Robert Mazibuko of the Africa Tree Centre. Like the Green Belt Movement,

Mazibuko's Centre hopes to reverse advancing desertification and, through his organization, hopes to persuade his fellow countrymen and women to plant trees (Mazibuko, 1989, pers comm). Unlike the Kenyan movement, however, the work of the Centre is essentially that of one person. Thus, while the efforts of individuals such as Mazibuko are praiseworthy, they have little chance of success, unless and until these efforts are channelled into a network of community-based structures in which participants themselves identify the problem and apply the solution. As Redclift has put it:

> "What makes the social movements of the urban and rural poor into environmental movements is that they seek to define the benefits of development in terms of basic environmental requirements for energy, water, food and shelter ... environmental management must make use of social movements dedicated to environmental ends. It must also make use of the knowledge and experience which people possess about their environments ..." (1987, p.170).

7.3.2 The Broadening of the Support Base of Mainstream NGOs

What then of the traditional NGOs, especially the longest established and largest of these, the Botanical Society and the Wildlife Society of Southern Africa? While these NGOs have thousands of members, with branches all over South Africa, they are unwieldy structures which are not representative of broader community interests (see Chapter 6, section 6.1). Nevertheless, these organizations, with their long history and experience, are treasure houses of knowledge and resources. It would be an irreparable loss if this invaluable expertise were to be lost simply through a failure to adapt to changing realities. Since many established NGOs have demonstrated a willingness to respond to current social challenges (see Chapter 6, section 6.1), it is possible that they can be effectively harnessed to bring about mass environmental literacy.

However, given the suspicion surrounding their perceived acceptance of the status quo in the past, this can only take

place when these NGOs make clear their stand on the democratization of South African society (Khan, 1990, pending). It is therefore to be hoped that established NGOs will make a genuine commitment to the achievement of representative community involvement in its ranks so that meaningful co-operation between these NGOs and community-based NGOs, can take place.

In this regard, the structure and activities of Botswana's Kalahari Conservation Society (KCS), offers many valuable lessons. This nationally-based organization is democratically structured and its activities are based on widespread consultation and participation in decision-making (Hancock, 1989). KCS' creative strategies for mass environmental literacy, include utilizing village libraries and reading rooms, as well as using the nation's literacy programme, as vehicles for environmental education (Hancock, 1989).

7.3.3 The Creation of an Environmental Alliance

It has been pointed out earlier (see Chapter 6, section 6.3), that, while locally-based NGOs are best placed to identify environmental problems affecting the local population, there is a danger of dissipating already thinly-spread resources and of duplicating activities. An environmental alliance, consisting of representatives of local and national NGOs, which co-ordinates activities, acts as a resource base, facilitates co-operation among organizations, as well as deciding on national strategy where appropriate, would be the most effective way to harness and channel these resources.

Besides representatives from NGOs, the alliance could also include representatives from related organizations, such as self-help development schemes and youth clubs. Local examples include Farming in the City (FC) and the Ecological Clubs for Children Organization (ECCO). FC is a self-help nutrition project which teaches people living in Cape Town's townships, the best methods

of growing their own food. It is funded and run by the Catholic Welfare Bureau (Golding, 1989, pers comm). Self-help projects such as Farming in the City, are ideal vehicles for sensitizing people to the environment because they are participatory projects in which the socio-economic benefits of sustainable practices become evident through personal experience.

ECCO is a network of rurally-based environmental clubs, catering specifically for the children of poorer communities in such areas as Kleinmond in the South Eastern Cape (Slingsby, 1987). As a community-based organization which acknowledges the socio-political context within which it operates, ECCO attempts to implement a socially-responsible environmental programme (Slingsby, 1989, pers comm).

7.3.4 The Creation of an Environmental/Political Coalition

The formation of a political and environmental coalition would not only underline the links between political power on the one hand and environmental issues on the other, it would also signal the beginning of an era in which serious co-operation between the environmental and political lobbies could take place. At the local level, there is plenty of scope for fruitful co-operation between community-based NGOs and political organizations, thus ensuring that issues such as housing and industrial health, would receive attention. Such co-operation would also bring urgent national environmental issues, to the fore. In this way, such problems as the energy crisis, particularly as it affects the urban and rural poor, as well as the problem of soil erosion and ongoing environmental abuse, especially in the 'homelands', will be dealt with as the crisis situations they undoubtedly are.

7.3.5 Addressing Relevant Environmental Issues

As a result of the marginalization of the poor in South Africa and the lack of black access to the machinery of decision-making (see Chapter 4), the range and scope of environmental issues have thus far been decided by members of the more privileged groups. In order to overcome the resulting alienation of black communities from the reformist and politically evasive nature of the environmental movement, environmental issues regarded as relevant, need to be identified by those communities. A start has already been made by local organizations (see Chapter 6, section 6.2), while the National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC), which is based in Soweto, has been campaigning around the issue of air pollution, resulting from coal burning in Johannesburg townships, for more than a decade (Koch, 1990).

It is only through the concern expressed by those directly affected, that issues such as the environmental quality of bleak and desolate townships, the carcinogenic effects of skin lighteners and access to clean water and cheap fuel, will be given proper attention.

7.3.6 The Increased Use of the Radio as a medium of mass communication

In South Africa thus far, environmental strategies to reach the general public have usually followed a classic 'first world' pattern, in that the print media, as well as television, are extensively used to propagate the environmental message. Exceptions have included the radio broadcasts of Simon Gcumisa (Pringle, 1982). For the most part, however, NGO campaigns have relied on the print media and, increasingly, television.

This strategy does not make much sense in a country with low literacy levels and limited access to television because of poverty and the lack of electricity in many townships and rural

areas. The radio, on the other hand, is a widely-used medium of communication in both rural and urban areas. As a medium to which many of the nation's poor have access, the radio transcends both literacy and financial constraints, with the potential to become the most powerful medium through which to transmit environmental education.

With regard to reaching rural areas in particular, much could be learnt from the success of a project using radio as a means of environmental education among nomads in Northern Kenya (Allen, 1987).

7.3.7 The Establishment of Centres for Environmental Action and Research

There is an urgent need for the establishment of country-wide centres (similar to the Institute of Natural Resources in Natal), where environmental and related research currently undertaken by various NGOs and educational institutions, can be co-ordinated. Such centres, located in the areas where they are most needed, could play a leading role in identifying local issues requiring immediate attention. In addition, these centres could collect and store relevant data, as well as tap the valuable expertise and experiences of local inhabitants, thus making a useful range of resources readily available.

The functions of such a centre would not be confined to the field of research but would also include the practical realm of problem-solving and action. The type of environmental action and research centre envisaged, would not only be at the cutting edge of relevant research but also, through the participation of local communities, be actively involved in the application of the findings of such research. As Richards has noted:

> "Fundamental, long term, indigenously-motivated environmental research is almost a dirty word as far as the majority of development agencies working in Africa is concerned. And yet the

> imperative importance of such work, and the absolute impossiblity of doing it at a distance are issues that are at last beginning to come into focus. [There is a need for] ... healthy national research nourished by indigenous perceptions" (1989, p.392).

7.4 Conclusion

This dissertation has, firstly, examined the historico-political roots of contemporary South African environmental response in an attempt to contribute to a greater understanding of the negative environmental perceptions and attitudes held today, particularly among blacks. Secondly, through an evaluation of the environmental strategies and policies of selected environmental and political organizations, some of the major obstacles to the establishment of mass environmental literacy which exist today, have been identified. It is concluded that the democratization of society is an essential pre-condition to environmental strategies to ensure mass participation in environmental issues.

South Africa is a land well endowed with rich and diverse natural, as well as human, resources. The exploitation of these resources in the past forms a tragic chapter in this country's environmental and political history, while ongoing exploitation continues to shape the nation's environmental and political consciousness. It is hoped that the issues raised and the ideas put forward in this dissertation, will make a positive contribution to the formation of a dynamic new environmental paradigm - one which is responsive to historical, social, economic and political, as well as environmental, factors.

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PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Dr Neville Alexander, Cape Action League member and Secretary of the Health, Education and Welfare Society of South Africa, 18 November, 1989.

Di Bold, Conservation Division, Wildlife Society of Southern Africa, 19 December 1989.

Mike Cope, member of the Cape Town Ecology Group, addressed an 'open meeting' on the aims and policy of the CTEG, 2 November, 1989.

Shirley Cowling, Editor, Veld and Flora, 26 February 1990.

Barney Desai, former Central Committee member, Pan Africanist Congress, 20 March 1990.

Zubeida Desai, Founder member. Western Cape Teachers Union, 5 March, 1990.

R.O. Dudley, President of the New Unity Movement, 10 December, 1988.

Moulana Farid Esack, National Co-ordinator, Call of Islam, 19 September 1988.

Yusuf Gabru, Chairperson, Western Cape Teachers Union, 21 July 1989.

Jan Glaszewski, Chairperson, Wildlife Society of Southern Africa, Western Cape Branch, 4 March, 1990.

D. Golding, Project Horticulturist, Farming in the City, 17 August, 1989.

Dr Denver Hendricks, Martin Hendricks, Gregory Hodges and Andre Share, Executive Committee members, Natsoc, 27 November, 1989.

Nick Henwood, Regional Secretary, Congress of South African Trade Unions, 31 July, 1989.

Gregory Knill, chairperson, Green Action Forum, 16 October, 1989.

Gregory Knill, discussion based on his observations at the first National Conference of Earthlife Africa, 8 January 1990.

Alison Kelly, Education Officer, Wildlife Society of Southern Africa, Western Cape Branch, 24 April, 1989.

Barry Low, Curator, Cape Flats Nature Reserve, addressed a gathering in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science, University of Cape Town, on "Conservation in an Urbanizing Environment", 10 May 1989.

Julia Martin, Chairperson, "Green Evening", a meeting of environmental organizations, 9 November, 1989.

Robert Mazibuko, Founder, Africa Tree Centre, personal corespondence, 5 September 1989.

Dr J Mosala, Chairperson, Azanian Peoples Organization, 9 March, 1990.

Prof H. Ngubane, Social Anthropology Department, University of Cape Town, addressed M.A. students in the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science on: Environmental Ethics, 23 June 1988.

Linda Ntshoko, Co-ordinator, Khanyisa Environmental Awareness Campaign, 9 November, 1989.

Ebrahim Rasool, former Secretary and Treasurer, United Democratic Front, 28 June 1989.

Charles Roberts, Secretary, Hout Bay Delegation, 30 July 1989.

Peter Slingsby, Co-ordinator, Ecological Clubs for Children, 23 April, 1989.

Stefan Snel, Chairperson, Cape Town Branch, Earthlife Africa, 6 November, 1989.

Crain Soudien, Education Committee member, Cape Action League, 2 February 1990.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Head of the Anglican Church, South Africa, 29 August 1989.

Peter Wilkinson, Member, Koeberg Alert, 8 August, 1989.