

**SPORTS, FESTIVALS AND POPULAR POLITICS: ASPECTS OF THE
SOCIAL AND POPULAR CULTURE IN LANGA TOWNSHIP, 1945-70**

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degree of master of arts.**

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I turn to history not for lessons in hope, but to confront my experience with the experience of others and to win for myself something which I should call universal compassion - a sense of responsibility for the human conscience.

Zbigniew Herbert
Poland.

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ABSTRACT

The rapid industrialization which transformed South African Society after the discovery of minerals, had a profound impact on the lives of most South Africans. The process of urbanization escalated during and after the Second World War because of better wages and job opportunities in the urban areas. South African urbanization was characterized by the brutal manner in which the state dealt with the Black people. The White middle and working classes' fear of being engulfed by this Black tide led to the multi-pronged strategies which were devised to contain and co-opt the Africans, hence the creation of townships like Langa.

This study looks at how the journey from the rural areas to the cities became part of the 'making of Black working class'. Material conditions in the cities were characterized by social squalor and overcrowding. Ghetto-like conditions created ethnic identities and working class culture, consciousness and community struggles came to reflect capitalist domination in the twentieth century township of Langa. Many residents in the township indulged in leisure pursuits such as dance and music which had their origins in the rural areas and this indicated an important cultural resource which they adhered to so as to cope with the alienating and corrosive compound and hostel life. Some of the residents found pleasure in leisure pursuits whose roots and ethos could be traced to the Victorian period such as cricket, soccer and rugby. All these leisure pursuits however, came largely to be influenced by the realities of township life and the general national and economic exploitation. The working class in Langa was not a homogeneous block as there were intense struggles between the migrants and immigrants over township space and resources. Therefore festivals and sporting activities played an important part in the cultural history of Langa township's effort to create "communities".

The last part of the study looked at how the conditions in the city led to the realization by the dominated classes that the solution towards the alleviation of the conditions that they were confronted with was through the formation of structures which aimed at overthrowing institutions of oppression, such as the pass laws.

Acknowledgements.

This study has benefited from the expertise and assistance of a number of individuals. I am therefore indebted to all those who have in one way or another helped towards the final product of this work. Ass. Prof Bill Nasson and Dr Vivian Bickford-Smith co-supervised this thesis at different times. I regard myself as having been fortunate to have been supervised by these two eminent South African historians. However, they have to be shielded from the conclusions and interpretations arrived at in this work. The radical and critical intellectual diet I was exposed to during this study have made an indelible mark in this work. My father, Mr Mokhisane Molapo for labouring in the bowels of the earth so that I am in a position to read and write and to my mother, Maphagane Molapo who has been a wonderful model to me.

The study was made possible by the assistance of people at different libraries and archives. Miss Valleri Haddad from the South African library provided me with a valuable collection on Langa which was very useful to this study. The staff members at the African studies library at the University of Cape Town, the manuscript and archives section, and the state archives knew my research area and were able to point me in the right direction for the relevant information.

As it will be seen from the sources used in this study, oral sources were extensively used in this research. I want to acknowledge those individuals who opened their doors and sacrificed their leisure time to speak to a 'stranger' who showed an interest in their history. Mr Sivuyile Mkaza extended the philosophy of 'ubuntu' to the extreme when we had to trace some older people at odd hours. Mr Knox Mzwandile and Dorah Ngwevela his wife, helped me in such a wonderful way during my field trips.

A community of caring friends made it possible for this research to be completed. Prof Ian Phimister and Mrs Sheila Neumann have been very kind whenever a need arose. Miss Nicky Newton, Miss Pamela Tsolekile, Vicky Groves, Mr Mike Mphahlele, Mr Alex Mshumpela, Mr Jacques de Wet, Tony Harding and Dr John Lazarus have all assisted me in various ways. Mr Thulane Siyasanga Giyose always had to do the difficult job of transcribing the oral documents for me. Mrs Eve Dowling's critical eye has been excellent in the proof-reading of the thesis. Mr Mbelela Mulobela shared with me the lonely and frustrating hours of thesis writing. A special word of thanks goes to Mr Philip Ata Kgosana who willingly shared with me some of his experiences. One person needs to be singled out for the daily concern she had over the whole process which led to the final outcome of this study. Miss Ndileka Mavumengwana has always been a source of inspiration and encouragement.

Without the financial assistance from various people, the aims and objectives of this thesis could not have been realised.

The History Post-graduate grant and the Harry Oppenheimer Scholarship helped me towards the transport and the other daily costs incurred. The Harry Grossley and DAAD paid for my fees and accommodation. I greatly appreciate their assistance. However, the conclusions and interpretations arrived at in this work, are those of the author. If I wrote this thesis in Xhosa or Pedi, it could have articulated the experiences of the urban African differently. To all those who assisted me I say, "ke leboga go menagane ga lekgolo, le ka moso "(thank you very much).

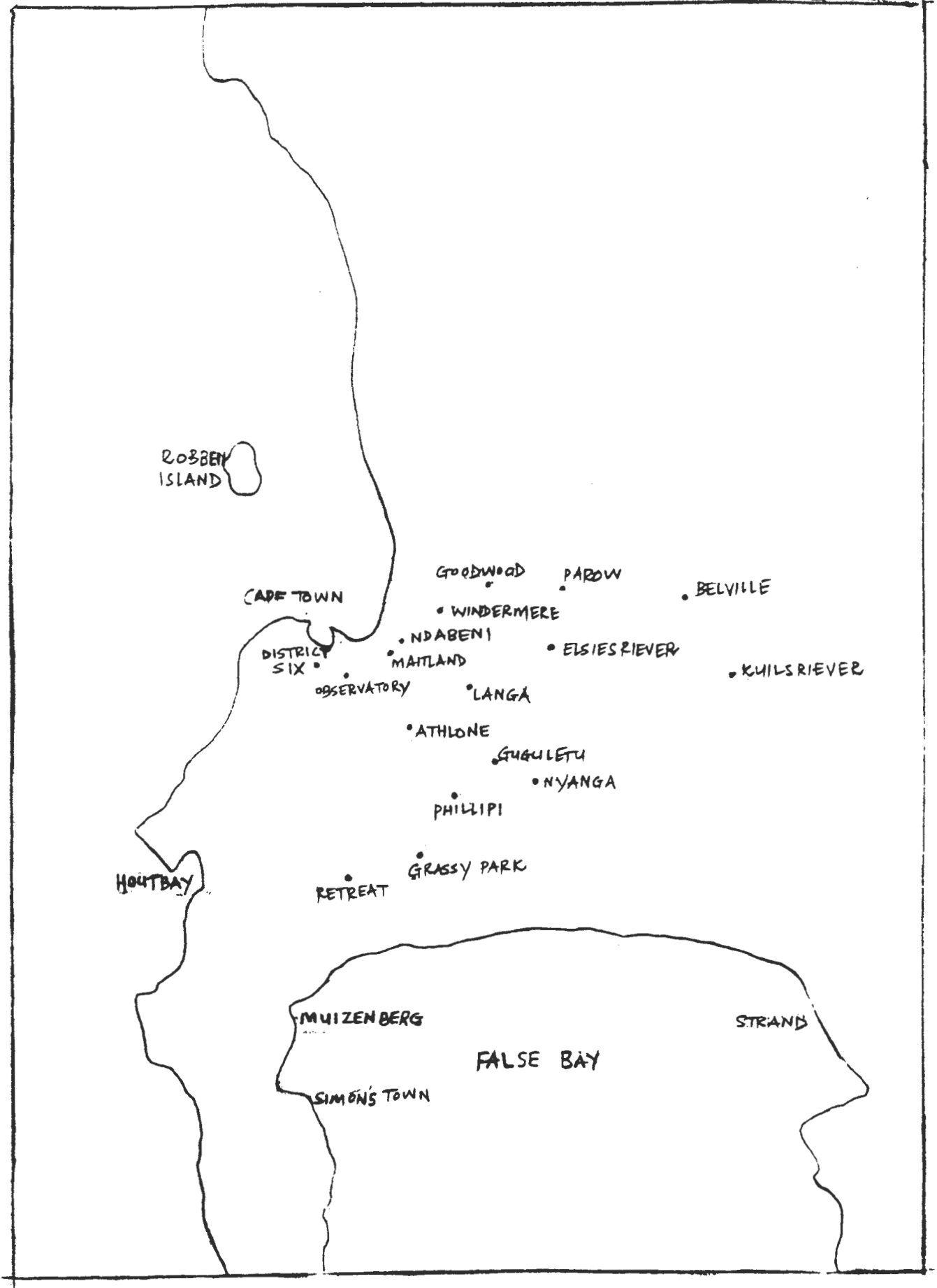
Aluta Continua !.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS.

A.M.E.	= African Methodist Episcopal
A.N.C	= African National Congress.
B.F.A	= Bantu Football Association.
CATA	= Cape African Teachers Association.
CATAPAW	= Cape Association to Abolish Passes for African Women.
COSAW	= Congress of South African Writers.
CSB	= Cape Soccer Board.
CPSA	= Communist Party of South Africa.
CPBTU	= Cape Peninsula Bantu Tennis Union.
FAK	= Federasie Van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge.
FEDSAW	= Federation of South African Women.
JSAS	= Journal of Southern African Studies.
M.K.	= Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation)
NAD	= Native Affairs Department.
N.E.U.M	= Non-European Unity Movement(Unity Movement).
N.L.L	= National Liberation League.
N.R.C.	= Native Representative Council.
P.A.C	= Pan Africanist Congress.
P.A.C.S	= Peninsula African Cultural Society.
PC.VAA	= Peninsula Choral and Vaudeville Artists Association.
POQO(APLA)	= Military Wing of the P.A.C.
SAIRR	= South African Institute of Race Relations
UCT	= University of Cape Town
UWC	= University of the Western Cape.
SARU	= South African Rugby Union.
WPAFA	= Western Province African Football Union.

WPAMA = Western Province African Music Association.
WPBTLU = Western Province Bantu Tennis Lawn Union.
WPRFU = Western Province Rugby Football Union.
WPBCU = Western Province Bantu Cricket Union.

Western Cape



SPORTS, FESTIVALS AND POPULAR POLITICS: ASPECTS OF THE
SOCIAL AND POPULAR CULTURE IN LANGA TOWNSHIP, 1945-70.

INTRODUCTION

My interest in Popular Culture in Langa, grew after I had completed my honours thesis on the same township in 1991.¹ Two chapters from that thesis were presented at the Cape Town History Project Workshop 11-12 November 1991 as 'Popular Culture' in Langa in the 1960s.² The honours thesis had many limitations because of scope, time limit and, importantly, the problem of accessibility to archival sources which were not available to me at that particular time. This thesis, therefore, is an extension and elaboration of the honours.

'Revisionist' history has informed this study, especially the marxist social history of the 1980s which placed more emphasis on oral history, 'history from below' and gender studies. This work differs greatly from the important though static 'structuralist' scholarship of the 1970s which concentrated on the 'state' and capital accumulation without considering the human agency in the struggle towards the formation of a capitalist social order in South Africa. In other words, this work is interested in the world the "slaves" made rather than the one the "slavemasters" made. This, however, is not a naïve rejection of the role the

¹ R. Molapo, 'Identity, Popular Culture and Politics in Langa in the 1960s', (BA Hons, UCT, 1992).

² R. R Molapo, 'Popular Culture in Langa'.

state played in shaping that world, as in South Africa "slaves" and "masters" were bound by a conflicting dialectical relationship after the decline of the independent African chiefdoms which led to many Africans flocking to the cities in search of work. This was well expressed by Cooper when he notes that,

As workers sought to shape their lives as individuals and as members of collectives, they too shaped the life of the city.³

It is important to describe the material conditions under which most Africans in the city lived so that we will be in a position, perhaps, to understand why and what they did at particular times. The majority of Africans who came to Cape Town in search of work were Xhosa speakers from the Eastern Cape. There was also a sizeable number of Sotho speakers from Basutoland, Matatiele, Sekhukhuneland and Malawi. Many of these Africans worked at the docks, on building sites, railways, at municipal work and domestic work. There was also a small elite strata of religious ministers and court interpreters. Some of these workers lived at Ndabeni (place of news), in the first quarter of the twentieth century when it was established in 1901.

During and after the First World War, there was an increased African migration to the city because of better wages and rural poverty and this placed enormous pressures on the meagre housing infrastructure at Ndabeni. The situation

³ F. Cooper, Struggle for the City, (London, Sage Publications, 1983), p8.

led to conditions of squalor in the location because of overcrowding and acute shortage of housing. The bad social conditions contributed largely towards the decimation of Ndabeni in September\October 1918 by the Spanish influenza. Musemwa situates the creation of its successor, Langa Township, in 1923 within the segregationist discourse that was dominant at the time.⁴

The government used the issue of bad social conditions as a scapegoat to move the Africans to the 'model location'. The new location had to resemble the locations in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Bloemfontein. It was recommended by those who supported the scheme that the model location should include both barracks for migrant males on the lines of the compound at City Deep Mine in Johannesburg and married quarters based on the Bloemfontein model.⁵

According to the Urban Natives Areas Act of 1923, all the Africans had to be confined to 'locations' which were closely monitored in terms of entry and exit. However, this was not possible as many Africans were still living at the docks, and in the city and suburbs and did not volunteer to go to the location unless they were forced to move. Even then, they still had other options such as living beyond Athlone or Kensington; "others left for upcountry by the

⁴ M. Musemwa, 'Aspects of the Social and Political History of Langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948', (MA, UCT, 1993), p3.

⁵ C. Saunders, 'From Ndabeni to Langa,' in Studies in the History of Cape Town, vol 1, (Cape Town, 1979), pp174-230.

weekly mbombela train for migrants or by road".⁶ The major reason why many objected to the removal was the increased rents at Langa. 'Single' men had to pay 14s per month as compared to the 4s they had to pay while at Ndabeni. Going to Langa meant increased transport fares as well.

In 1923, the City Council stated its reasons for providing housing for the Africans by stating that,

The primary object of establishing the township is to provide housing facilities for the natives and their families permanently settled in the Peninsula, and also for a reasonable number of natives sufficient to meet the requirements of the community in regard to this class of labour.⁷

The above view was influenced by the Stallardist ideology which perceived the presence of Africans in the cities only in terms of having to 'minister to the needs of the white man and should depart therefrom when he had ceased so to minister'.⁸ After the First World War, Cooper observed that the South African state changed from one that "defined all African workers as criminals to one that defined the vast majority as aliens".⁹

During the Second World War, rural poverty, better wages and job opportunities in the cities attracted many more Africans to the cities. This period was characterised by lack of

⁶ Quoted in C.Saunders, 'From Ndabeni to Langa', p203.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ A.Stadler, The Political Economy of Modern South Africa, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1987), p88.

⁹ F.Cooper, Struggle for the City, p2.

housing, increased urban population which resulted in squatter communities and the radicalisation of Black politics. The state did not show any interest in providing proper housing for the urban Africans. The following figures maybe helpful in understanding the type of housing which Langa residents occupied.

Type	Langa	Year built.
2-Room	572	1927-37
3-Room	270	1934-46
4-Room	18	1937
Dual-Occ	44	1952-3
N.E.51\7	148	1954. ¹⁰

According to the City Council, Langa was originally "planned to provide for a population of 5,000 (men, women and children).¹¹ The township covers an area of "340 morgen".¹² Because of the war and the ejection of Africans from other parts of the peninsula, the township was not able to provide enough housing to all the Africans in Langa. Lodge notes that, "between 1939 and 1952 the African population nearly doubled, the major proportion of this increase being the result of the movement of whole families from the countryside into the towns".¹³ He further notes that the

¹⁰ Yvonne Muthien, "Pass Control and Resistance in Cape Town, 1939-1965", (Ph.D Thesis, Oxford, 1989), p337.

¹¹ 'City of Cape Town: Langa Bantu Township pamphlet 1963', pl.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tom Lodge, Black Politics in South Africa Since 1945 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1990), p11.

two major impulses of this migration were the threat of starvation in the reserves and the deteriorating conditions on white farms.¹⁴ According to Lee-Warden, the increase was "due not only to natural increases, but mainly because of the inability of the Native Reserves to sustain them".¹⁵ The table below shows the population increases in the township from 1953 to 1970.¹⁶

Langa Population

Year	Whites	Male	Female	Children	Total	Mas	Tot
1953/4	39	7320	1650	2938	11908	448	11947
1957	37	7941	1771	3373	23083	1013	23123
1960		21400	4355				25755
1964		22860	4560				27420
1967		26490	5880				32390
1970		27810	4259				31073

(From the Annual reports of the Medical Officer of Health:1960 - 1970)

What is clear from the above evidence is the rapid growth of the population of the township. This rise was higher than the number of houses the government could provide for the

¹⁴ Ibid, pp11-12.

¹⁵ L.B Lee-Warden, 'The Crime of Langa', Africa South, vol. 1. no 3, (April-June 1957), p46.

¹⁶ These figures are official and some were based on the population census. One has to be cautious in the sense that some people did not take part because they feared to be 'endorsed' out of the Western Cape as they did not have 'proper' passes and permits which allowed them to be in the city. But, on the other hand, they are useful to the historian because they show changing population trends during and after the Second World War.

African population. For example, between 1953 and 1956 the population of Langa grew, from 12,000 to about 20,000. These figures show the population was increasing by over a thousand people per year. By 1960, the year of the shootings, the population was 25,755.¹⁷ By 1968 there were 32,370 in this small physical space.

The dominant form of housing for the African working class was the barracks or zones. Wilson and Mafeje noted in their work that, "66 per cent lived in the barracks and 5 per cent in the flats, a total of 18 276 men".¹⁸

The other important indicator in the population statistics, was the way in which the process of urbanisation was uneven. Women were out-numbered by men even before the Second World War period. This factor contributed towards the social violence which existed in the township. At some stages, gender imbalances led to conflicts between 'settled' African residents of Langa and the migrants (amagoduka) over women. Some people even lost their lives during these fights.¹⁹ The gender composition in the township has always been uneven. It was reported that in 1960 the ratio was 10:1 while in 1968 it was 7:1. This unevenness led to the 'victimisation' of women because of the structural imbalances.

¹⁷ 'The Corporation of the City of Cape Town: Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health', (1960, Langa), p11.

¹⁸ M.Wilson and A.Mafeje, Langa: a study of social groups in an African township, (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1963), p16.

¹⁹ See also Ramphele Mamphela, A Bed Called Home, pp106-7.

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On the other hand, the figures show a number of fluctuations. The medical officer stated that, "as the townships, particularly Guguletu, absorb more and more Bantu, there is a corresponding shrinking in the number of Bantu resident in the city".²⁰ The problem with this explanation as provided by the medical officer is that it does not include any single number of those Africans who were endorsed out of the Western Cape even if many went to Guguletu from 1963.

The Nationalist Party Government came to power in 1948. In 1955 the Minister of Native Affairs announced the reduction of Africans from the Western Cape. According to him the solution for the African migration to the city was to repatriate the "undesirable" Africans back to the reserves. This process was linked to their political ideology of balkanising the majority of the people according to their ethnic backgrounds and offering them the so-called political independence in their respective "homelands". The Western Cape was to be a preserve for the Whites as well as the "Coloureds" via the Coloured Labour Preference Policy of 1950. In his minute in the early 1960s, the mayor of Cape Town, Honikman wrote that "Bantu labour in the Western Cape should be replaced gradually by White and Coloured labour without disruption of the economy".²¹ Family settlement in Langa was to be discouraged as the township was to be

²⁰ 'The Corporation of the City of Cape Town: Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health 1963, Langa', p11.

²¹ 'The City of Cape Town: Honikman mayor', (Minute of His Worship the mayor, 1962-1963), p4.

converted into a labour camp that would accommodate about 20 000 by 1960. A Black Sash memorandum noted that between January 1959 and April 1962, "26,211 Africans were endorsed out of the whole Western Cape municipal area".²²

The name "Langa" suggests links with anti-colonial struggles conducted by the African people. Langa is a Xhosa\Zulu word for the sun. But, it is also a shortened form of Langalibalele, the Natal rebel who had been moved from Robben Island to Oude Molen on the Uitvlugt in 1875, and who lived there until allowed to return to Natal in 1887.²³ This was the name preferred by the residents. The superintendent of Ndabeni wanted to know why a rebel should be commemorated in that way as his preference was for Chitamba, the village where Livingstone died. He stated that,

There is no doubt that Dr Livingstone did more for the Bantu races, and the civilisation of the subcontinent than any other human being.²⁴

It appears to me that many of the street names such as Rhodes, Moffat, Merriman and Livingstone were imposed on the

²² BC 579 J2.17. The Black Sash Memorandum concerning the removal of Africans from the Western Cape and other matters concerning the Africans in the Cape municipal area. Of those endorsed out were 7,251 females and 19,140 males.

²³ C. Saunders, 'From Ndabeni to Langa', in Studies in the History of Cape Town vol 1, p174.

²⁴ Ibid, p174.

people of Langa.²⁵ Though Chitamba was not accepted as a street name, a street was named after Dr Livingstone. The street names in Langa are a mosaic of the contradictory nature of colonialism. They include Moffat, Mendi, Moshesh, Washington, Rubusana, Merriman, Makana etc. On the one hand street names reveal the links with anti-colonial struggles. For instance, there is Makana street, named after the man who, in 1819, led the Ndlambe in an attack on Grahamstown and was as a result banished to Robben Island. In 1820 he and 30 other convicts attempted to escape from the island but unfortunately only four men survived while 26 drowned. Makana was one of those who drowned but many Xhosas never believed that and Makana became a symbol of resistance against foreign domination. Peires noted that, "today the wheel has come full circle as young Xhosa turn towards the nationalism of Nxele rather than the humility of

²⁵ See the street map of Langa with all the street names. I have provided two maps on Langa. The first one locates Langa within the broader Western Cape region and was adopted from The South African Township Annual while the second one is a street map. The street map aimed at the historical inaccuracies which exist in many of the maps I have seen on Langa. The first error is found in the Peninsula road maps on Langa. Their location of the municipal offices is inaccurate in that the offices are not at the Eastern end of the township but are next to the police station. Maybe the offices were there at some stage and were moved. This inaccuracy has been repeated by many scholars who used the map. The Cape Times 1993\4 Peninsula Directory with street maps has also repeated the same problem. The other problem with that particular map is that it has only street names and there are no roads. The map does not even highlight important places in the township such as the stadium, barracks, swimming bath, old and new 'flats'. Without the help of comrade Nkosana Kenneth Mguga my criticism of these works would be useless in that I have not provided any alternative. I therefore, thank him very much for having drawn a 'comprehensive' street map of Langa for me.

Ntsikana".²⁶ He further makes the point that Nxele, "died defiant to the end".²⁷ The square between Mqhayi and Sandile streets has been named Makana Square. Robben Island is sometimes referred to as Makana Island. When the island was converted into a high security prison from 1960 to 1991, a link was created with the struggle against apartheid as represented in the symbols of resistance such as Robert Sobukwe and Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. There is Moshesh street, after the founder of the Sotho Nation, Rubusana street, after Rev. Dr Walter Rubusana, author, founder member and vice-president of the South African Native National Congress which became the A.N.C in 1925. Rev. Rubusana was involved in the establishment of the newspaper, "Izwi labantu" (The voice of the People) in East London. He was part of the delegation that went to Britain in 1914 to protest against the notorious Land Act of 1913.²⁸ Ndabeni street was named after Ndabeni where most of the residents lived before they were forcefully removed to Langa in the 1930s etc. It is not very clear who came up with all these names but they were given around 1936. The names suggest a closer relationship between meaning and popular culture. This can also reflect the non-static nature of popular culture which changes over time.

²⁶ J.B Peires, The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987), p74.

²⁷ Ibid, p74.

²⁸ Francis Meli, South Africa belongs to us: A History of the ANC, (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988), pp18, 27, 42 and 45.

The struggles by the African-Americans also made their impact on the township providing names such as Harlem street, after the Black American 'renaissance' and Ghetto settlement. Washington street, the longest, busiest and most accident-plagued street, was named after Booker Taliaferro Washington who was born a "slave in 1856, on James Burrough's 207-acre farm in Franklin County, Virginia".²⁹

The influence Washington brought to South Africa was when he was the principal of Tuskegee School in Alabama and shot to prominence as a national Black spokesman. The school offered some modern agricultural techniques, trained skilled artisans, industrial education and prepared women "students to be good housekeepers".³⁰ The first president of the African National Congress, John Langalibalele Dube, studied at Oberlin, Ohio and on his return to South Africa established Ohlanga, an institution of learning similar to Washington's school at Tuskegee, Alabama. White notes that Washington "was the outstanding black educator of his day, and Tuskegee remains his great and lasting monument".³¹ People who represented a different political camp such as William Du Bois were very critical of his politics and of his ideology of integration into the American system. The other major criticism revolved around his class position, especially his attitude to the farm workers in the American

²⁹ John White, Black Leadership in America 1895-1968 (London, Longman, 1987), p27.

³⁰ Ibid, p31.

³¹ Ibid, p32.

South. It was reported that Washington "reminded blacks that they were to live (and prosper) by manual labour, and to whites, stressed the loyalty and fidelity of Southern Negroes - 'the most patient, faithful, law-abiding and unresentful people in the world'.³² In one extract, Washington assured the Southern Whites not to fear Blacks. He stated that,

As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past, in nursing your children, watching by the sick bed of your mothers and fathers, and often following them with tear-dimmed eyes to their graves, so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defence of yours.³³

Washington preached the gospel of self-help, self reliance and the protestant ethic of hard work.³⁴ This seems to have encouraged many South African Blacks because of the politics of qualified franchise in the 1930s. His castigation of racial inequality was supported by petty bourgeois urban Africans who were becoming frustrated by the state's racial policies which denied them the opportunities of accumulating wealth and property because of their race. However, it seems to me that there was a shared liberalism irrespective of colour reflected in some of the street names. For example there is Merriman (the Cape liberal

³² Ibid, p32.

³³ Ibid, p33.

³⁴ For more of the development of this ideology see Brian Willan, Sol Plaatje: A Biography, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984), chapter 2.

politician) and Jabavu who was also a liberal politician and involved in the qualified franchise in parliamentary politics. It is clear from the above evidence that the names of the streets in Langa township represent the contradictory and conflicting nature of the society many Africans lived in. But, on the other hand, this represent the formation of a 'community' that had different interests which were in conflict. All the names of the streets can be seen in the street map provided.

Methodology.

'Constructing' Langa History by word of mouth.

In this study a number of sources were used to complete this project. They included books, newspaper reports, letters, unpublished theses and extensive interviews. It is therefore important to comment on oral methodology. Certainly it can give the historian the voices which are often absent in official sources:

The bias it [oral history] introduces into history is wholly welcome because it will necessarily direct the historian's attention to the fundamental common things of life: the elements of individual and social experience rather than upon administrative and political chronologies. It makes it possible for the historian to define his subject in the same way as the sociologist or the social anthropologist, and to pick his themes before he starts in the light of their substantive importance, rather than to leave himself at the mercy of his documents, following them more or less compulsively, because there is no other evidence on

which he can draw. The reason why history has so often a particular bias is not I think because of the particular bias of individual historians, but very largely because bureaucratic documents are the ones most often preserved.³⁵

It is now clear from the above evidence that the role and potential of oral history as a source of historical evidence has become a scholarly force to be reckoned with. Oral history, however, has not always been positively received as a methodology. Morris expressed his attitude and his ideological rejection of the proponents of the discipline by commenting scornfully:

The good historian is simply he or she who best reflects 'experience from below'. Don't teach Marxist concepts to your students anymore, hand them tape recorders instead.³⁶

Though, Kinkead-Weakes does not fully support the oral history project as shown by his work, he noted that Morris has, "unfortunately over-stated an ideologically dogmatic expression of exasperation at the sheer triviality of too large a part of their output".³⁷ Thompson noted that,

The opposition to oral evidence is as much founded on feeling as on principle. The older generation of

³⁵ R. Samuel, Oral History no 1.4, (1973), pp119-20.

³⁶ M. Morris, "Social History and the Transition to Capitalism in South African Countryside", Africa Perspective New Series, vol 1, no 5 and 6 (December 1987), p5.

³⁷ B. Kinkead-Weakes, "Africans in Cape Town: State Policy and Popular Resistance", (Ph.D Thesis, UCT, 1993), piv.

historians who hold the chairs and the purse-strings are instinctively apprehensive about the advent of a new method. It implies that they no longer command all the techniques of their profession. Hence the disparaging comments about young men tramping the streets with taperecorders.³⁸

From the above evidence we can see that the use of oral evidence has not received popularity in certain academic circles. This section of this study attempts to show problems and possibilities in using this source especially by looking at the history of those who have been "hidden from history". This is based on my experience of having worked on the history of Langa for the past three years.

In the 1960s Jan Vansina's seminal work on African history, raised a lot of interest in academic circles. His academic interests revolved around reconstructing the history of people who did not depend on the culture of the written records but relied upon oral traditions which were handed down from one generation to the other. This meant that by the time the stories reached new generations they had lost their original contexts. With such conditions, they were the ways in which other people kept their history. According to La Hausse, Vansina was recovering the "lost voices"³⁹ of the African past. The collection of those traditions was a radical break with the Rankean historiography which placed more emphasis on the written records than on any other

³⁸ Paul Thompson, The Voice Of the Past: Oral History, (New York, Oxford University Press), p63.

³⁹ Paul La Hausse, 'Oral History and South African Historians', Radical History Review, 46\7, (1990), p346.

source. This school of thought also emphasised constitutional matters, great events and the achievement of great men.

South African historiography was no exception before the 1970s.⁴⁰ But the development of the History workshops at different South African universities in the late 70s led to a major transformation of historical writing in South Africa. The Witwatersrand History Workshop came into existence in 1977 and seems to have been more successful than workshops in other regions such as the Western Cape. Saunders notes thus: "though the case for the University of Cape Town mounting a major oral history project was put without success for many years-at a time when at the African Studies Institute at Wits and elsewhere major oral research projects were started - eventually a Western Cape Oral History Project was launched in 1985".⁴¹ According to Tatham, it was at the 1987 history workshop that themes such as "oral history and class analysis were suggested".⁴² The above historical overview perhaps could be of help why the oral approach was resorted to. The major reason being the

⁴⁰ For a detailed account see P Burke, 'Overture: the New History, its Past and its Future', and G Prins Oral History'. Both papers are in P Burke (ed), New Perspectives on Historical Writing, (Great Britain, Polity Press, 1991). See also Gayle K Tatham, 'The University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop and Radical South African Historical Scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s', (MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1992).

⁴¹ C. Saunders, 'Cameos and Class: Cape Town's Past Uncovered', in (ed) C Saunders, Studies in the History of Cape Town vol.6, 1988, p2.

⁴² Ibid, p41.

limited nature of the written documents in dealing with particular aspects of the social life of the African people of Langa.

The oral historian faces challenges different from the historian who relies heavily on the written documents in writing history. When I first started collecting data in 1991, there was a perception by some people that I was not a resident of Langa. This revolved around the issue of language as I wanted to explore the life experiences of the 'ordinary' people who could not speak English fluently. But others expected that the research work would improve their living conditions. For example, Nomathemba wanted to know more about the final product of the research work. She asked,

Nina bafana base Rhawutini, le research yenu iphelela phi ? (You Jo'burg boys, where does this research of yours end).⁴³

Succinctly, Bozzoli notes that one informant refused to be interviewed for the second time claiming that,

Nothing had 'come' of her previous interviews so why, she asked, should she be interviewed again.⁴⁴

⁴³ Interview with Nomathemba Kabixa, 17.07.1991.

⁴⁴ B. Bozzoli, with M. Nkotshe, Women of Phokeng. Introduction, Oral History, Consciousness and Gender, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1991), p11.

One of my informants expressed that,

In fact I am happy that it is going to go down on paper. At least so that some will see how much was done, how far we went with this beautiful club.⁴⁵

The first informant saw me originally as an outsider, hence "nina bafana base Rhawutini (you boys from Johannesburg)". At the beginning she was not willing to speak about personal issues to a 'stranger'. Ordinary people expect research to alleviate the hardships of the material conditions they find themselves in. The third informant appreciated the history of the place to be written. His class position was different from the previous two and he saw the value of the written source differently. It can further be argued that the reason why some are reluctant to speak to the oral historian is because there is a lack of "community" ethic among academics and instead of responsibility and accountability the researcher or her work is never seen and when the project is completed it is kept in ivory tower institutions. The notion of 'history from below' then ends only as an academic construction which the 'masses' do not share. As the South African society has been highly politicised, some even go to the extent of asking from which 'political' line the research is conducted.

The other important dimension in this regard is the fact of doing research in a place like Langa, where the ideological struggles between the A.N.C and the P.A.C are clearly drawn, needs to be taken into account. But, even if this research

⁴⁵ Interview with Mr Thami Mgijima, Langa 23.01.94.

has not been written from a particular 'party' stance, it is not value-free because, "history is a political issue".⁴⁶ In his work on Langa, Musemwa made this observation that, "there was some reluctance by some interviewees to talk on the subject of politics and this can be attributed to the fact that the people have just emerged from a period of political repression in which freedom of speech and political involvement of any magnitude was a risky exercise".⁴⁷ I had a similar experience in 1991, partly also because of the taxi violence in the Western Cape at that time. Many residents were cautious of speaking about issues they thought might end in the hands of the police.

Tape recorders are very important tools for the oral historian to have as they give the oral historian the opportunity to produce the exact words spoken by her informants without being accused of misrepresentation. According to Henige, "it is the sound of voice on tape that gives oral history that extra dimension lacking in the written documents".⁴⁸

Contemporary conditions at times led the past to be projected in overdramatised fashion. Many of the older

⁴⁶ Editors's Introduction Radical History Review 46\7 1990, 11.

⁴⁷ M. Musemwa, 'Aspects of the social and Political History of Langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948', (MA, UCT, 1993), p17.

⁴⁸ David Henige, "In possession of the Author" The Problems of Source monopoly in Oral Historiography, International Journal of Oral History, vol 1 no 3 November, (1980), 184.

people in Langa describe Ndabeni as characterised by harmony and as conflict-free, where happiness dominated. The Langa community is projected as being a 'family'. This view seems to be influenced by the 'good old days' attitude.

The difficult life situations in Langa today, brought about by the bad economic situation, transport costs and increased rents, also affected people's consciousness about the past. For example, Mr Mkaza noted,

The difference was that Ndabeni was not as developed as Langa is today. But, still you find that people then were in harmony and they liked the place. So one would always hear them complaining that Ndabeni was one of the best locations, it is like the Israelites when they were moved out of Egypt.⁴⁹

The application of the biblical narrative is very interesting here. Though people knew about their oppression and the general conditions of life at Ndabeni, they still resisted the forced removal. The promises made that life at the 'model location' would be different did not appeal to them in that the cost of living would be high at the new location, hence the resistance. Another overdramatisation of the situation was expressed by Mr Magora, an old township soccer and rugby dribbling 'wizard', when he recalls that

I was the best here in the Western Province and I was the best in Mother City. I used to do miracles. When we are left with 3 or 5 minutes and the score was 5-3. From the centre people trying to go out crying, 'How

⁴⁹ Interview with Mr Mkaza

can we loose man. Look there is some three minutes left. Come on and do something "Licks" man.⁵⁰

It is true that Mr Magora was a good player. Many in the township still talk about his sporting achievements. But it seems to me that there is an element of exaggeration when he says that some started 'crying' expecting him to do 'miracles' in 3 minutes.

Having opted for oral history as a source of historical evidence does not mean that other traditional sources should be forgotten. Tosh noted this point by arguing that, "oral history is not a new branch of history, but a new technique".⁵¹ In a society the written culture improved because the influences of institutions such as schools, universities and churches and the written culture came to dominate in many middle class communities. This meant that the oral medium became secondary but still existed. Keegan made the point that

It is also true that rarely can oral testimony stand by itself as a source of evidence on the past, and it has to serve as a supplement to other, more formal written sources of evidence (printed and documentary) which provide the larger context of public events of political and constitutional, economic and institutional developments in relation to which ordinary people lead their lives.⁵²

⁵⁰ Interview with Mr X.N Magora 7.09.93.

⁵¹ John Tosh, The Pursuit of History, p189.

⁵² Tim Keegan, Facing the Storm: Portraits of Black Lives in Rural South Africa, (Cape Town, David Publishers), p161.

Equally Portelli has argued that: "historical work using oral sources is unfinished because of the nature of the sources, historical work excluding oral sources (where possible) is incomplete by definition".⁵³

But in Langa few records of events are written down by the residents themselves. Orality still dominates most people's lives.

Literature Review

Langa as the oldest African Township in the Western Cape has stimulated some academic interest. There are a number of individuals who have looked at some aspects of Langa history. But more can still be written about this township. Saunders, in two path-breaking articles, wrote about the origins of African segregation in Cape Town. He showed how the ruling class was threatened by the massive urbanisation of the Africans during the Boer War. According to him, this increase in the African population was caused by two factors, (i) The demand for a greater African workforce and (ii) The conditions of impoverishment in the Eastern Cape.⁵⁴

Even if the ruling class was interested in labour, that labour had to be controlled and regimented. The creation

⁵³ A Portelli, 'What makes Oral History Different: In A Portelli, The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and meaning in Oral History, (New York, 1991), p55.

⁵⁴ C.C Saunders, 'The Creation of Ndabeni: Urban Segregation, Social Control and African Resistance', in Studies, vol.1. 1979, p43.

of Uitvlugt (Ndabeni) was such a form of control. He further notes that the removal of Africans to "Uitvlugt location, marks the beginnings of urban segregation in Cape Town".⁵⁵ Forced removals later became a common feature in South African history. The creation of Langa and the destruction of Ndabeni was such an example. And the African population was pushed to the periphery of Cape Town to make way for industries.

A number of postgraduate students attached to the University of Cape Town have produced some interesting work on Langa. In 1954, Botto concentrated on an important aspect, that is, leisure occupation.⁵⁶ Botto's work is rich in data collection but was less successful at the theoretical level. His work shares the same liberal and Christian ideological commitment as Philips.⁵⁷ Botto came from a strong evangelical Christian background which did not accept some of the behaviour of the working class in the compounds and slums, but did not attack the structural forces which led to those conditions. Yet, despite its shortcomings, it remains an interesting work considering that, during the time in which it was written, liberal historiography was still 'hegemonic' in South African history.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p48.

⁵⁶ R. Botto, 'Some Aspects of the leisure Occupation of the African Population in Cape Town', (MA, UCT, 1954).

⁵⁷ R. Philips, The Bantu Are Coming.

In 1963, Wilson and Mafeje published their book entitled Langa: a study of social groups in an African Township.⁵⁸ This work was written from a functionalist anthropological perspective for a White audience. The work showed how religion, ethnicity and regionalism gave the residents of Langa a sense of group cohesion in an industrial area. Many of the issues discussed in the book show how anthropologists of the 1960s bypassed many social historians in documenting the life stories of the 'ordinary' people. The dominant anthropological perception of this period still perceived the African people in terms of groups, hence: Langa: a study of social groups in an African Township. This anthropological genre was dominant in the 1960s when 'groups' seem to have replaced 'tribes', (a creation of colonial anthropologists). Wilson and Mafeje used extensive oral sources and other secondary material for their book. But there are few occasions when the reader hears the voices of those interviewed rather than the voices of the authors. Yet it remains a standard piece of work on Langa and therefore can not be ignored even if the changed South African historiography has imposed a new way of looking at township histories.

In 1988, Philip Kgosana a former UCT student, wrote Lest We Forget: an autobiography⁵⁹. The booklet was about his experiences of the 1960 anti-pass campaign. Kgosana shot to prominence when, as a 23 year old student, he led a march

⁵⁸ M. Wilson and A. Mafeje, Langa.

⁵⁹ Philip A Kgosana, Lest We Forget, (Johannesburg, Skotaville Publishers, 1988).

of 30 000 demonstrators to the city centre. According to Kgosana, the book was written for three reasons. He noted that the motivation came in 1978 in Kampala, Uganda when, "Radio Uganda announced the death of Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, the legendary leader of the Pan Africanist Congress".⁶⁰ There was also continual interest by his children while in exile who kept asking him about his relationship with Sobukwe.⁶¹ The book is very interesting in that it is written from the experience of someone who was in the P.A.C regional leadership in the 1960s and was directly involved in the anti-pass campaign which brought the Cape economy to a standstill. Almost all the African labourers withdrew their labour during that month of siege which affected the economy adversely. According to him the third point was that the book was written as an attempt to put, "together an accurate account of the P.A.C campaign of the 1960 in the Western Cape".⁶² He further states that, "ever since that eventful year, too many write-ups have been done with all sorts of distortions, biases and half-truths".⁶³ A review of the book, 'Kgosana: A man of honour, but a poor Memory' by Tom Lodge appeared in the Weekly Mail in 1988. Lodge disagrees with Kgosana on many issues. According to Lodge, Kgosana should have settled for the Joseph Lelyveld tribute which appeared in Move Your Shadow, in which Kgosana was the youth who in a pair of

⁶⁰ Ibid, introduction.

⁶¹ Address Kgosana gave to the history department, UCT, 16 February 1993.

⁶² Lest We Forget, introduction.

⁶³ Ibid.

shorts led a crowd of 30,000 in a march to Cape Town's parliament during the Sharpeville crisis, a youth who for a brief moment appeared, "to have held the fate of his country in his hand".⁶⁴ According to Lodge, the account of the "March Days" in Cape Town, 1960, "is on several occasions demonstrably untruthful".⁶⁵ The review goes further indicating that, Kgosana had actually started writing his autobiography in the 1960s, one for Drum in 1960 (published as "The story of my exiting life" in February and March) and the one in Kampala in 1974 under the present title. A copy of that was lodged in the University of London's Institute of Commonwealth Studies in 1976. Though Lodge respects Kgosana's political maturity, he is disappointed by the way in which his recollection of events of 1960 "should be so ungenerous and misleading".⁶⁶ The dispute between the two, has not been resolved.⁶⁷

A number of honours students have also explored some aspects of Langa history. In 1989, Nazeema Mohamed finished a thesis about the history of Langa High School, the "first

⁶⁴ Kgosana: A man of honour, but a poor memory, Weekly Mail 20-26 May 1988.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ See also a video cassette addressed by Kgosana about his experiences in the 1960 march. During the question session when one student asked about Lodge's interpretation of the events his response was "The one who calls me a liar" (emphasis is mine). See also T Lodge, 'The Cape Town Troubles', JSAS iv 1978, New Nation 10-21 March 1991, 'The March that shook the Cape'.

African High School in Cape Town ".⁶⁸ The emergence of the school has been well located within the broad expanding political economy of the Western Cape, interests of the ruling class and those of the African community in Cape Town. Her work has integrated a number of primary sources which make her thesis so rich in experience. She has also included oral interviews which make her work lively and interesting. Another thesis on the township appeared in the same year. Kondlo looked at "The Culture and Religion of the People of Langa from 1938 to 1958". According to him, the people of Langa were able to build a cohesive world of their own. They organised around the sphere of religion and culture and asserted their lives as dignified and meaningful beyond the definitions set by the social system.⁶⁹ The thesis is able to show how a sense of 'community' was created by the people of Langa in different forms through the Christian church and other cultural activities in the township. The thesis has been written from a Marxist perspective that is not sensitive to gender struggles. The history of the independent African churches portray a strong spirit of resistance against the 'established' churches but does not explore the gender compositions of these churches. For example, in my experience of church activities in the township, I found that many members of these churches are women but control and management are in the hands of

⁶⁸ Nazeema Mohamed, 'Langa High School: The Struggle for Existence. The first Twenty Years in the History of Langa High School', (BA Hons, UCT, 1989), p14.

⁶⁹ M.K Kondlo, 'The Culture and Religion of the People of Langa during the period ca.1938 to ca.1958', (BA Hons, UCT, 1989), p5.

"elders" who are male. That aspect is not highlighted in his work. The work explores the formation of a Black working class. The cohesiveness which Kondlo, Wilson and Mafeje talk about at times hides, rather than reveals, the class conflict that existed in the township. My work will explore some of this conflict. In his thesis, Kondlo used extensive oral sources in showing us the culture and religion of the people of Langa, but the use of those sources ended on the interpretative level only as his informants are not given any room to voice their experiences towards the formation of that culture and experience.

Another thesis, "Aspects of the Social and Political History of Langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948", has just been completed.⁷⁰ The major contribution of this work has been on the relationship between the residents of Langa and the City Council. Musemwa has explored the complex relationship the residents and the City Council had over structures such as the Advisory Board and Vigilance Association which were meant to co-opt the settled, conservative, rent paying residents of the township into the White-controlled Cape Town City Council. According to Musemwa his study attempted "to present a substantial account of how the residents' lived experiences, frustrations, disillusionment and crisis of expectations, manifested through resistance and protest against the paternalistic Cape Town City Council, became a fertile ground for nationalist

⁷⁰ M. Musemwa, 'Aspects of the Social and Political History of Langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948', (MA, UCT, 1993).

politics".⁷¹ The part that I found very interesting in this thesis is Chapter three which deals with how the aspirations of the African petty bourgeoisie were threatened by the City Council's encroachment into what "Africans in Langa saw as their exclusive business trading domain".⁷² This conflict with the City Council culminated in the 1947 beer riot. Some of the points raised in Musemwa's thesis cannot be dealt with here because of space.

Ramphele has recently published a book on Langa, entitled A Bed Called Home.⁷³ This book was based on her doctoral thesis.⁷⁴ The dominant feature in this book is how the notion of space has been explored to interpret the living conditions of the migrants in Langa. Ramphele explores the pressures exerted on workers by the limited living spaces by probing deeper into the political, economic, ideological, physical and social component which led to the creation of that 'space'. The book has been written from a contemporary perspective. With the crumbling of the apartheid regime, hostels are being upgraded to mark a break with the historically single-sex male hostels. This she argues gives men power over women because of the uneven nature of urbanisation in South Africa. She notes that "space determines the framework within which social relations are

⁷¹ Ibid, p2.

⁷² Ibid, p4.

⁷³ Ramphele Mamphela, A Bed Called Home: Life in the Migrant Labour Hostels of Cape Town (Cape Town, David Philip, 1993)

⁷⁴ Ramphele Mamphela, 'The Politics of Space: Life in the migrant labour hostels of the Western Cape', 1991.

conducted and legitimised".⁷⁵ The conditions described in the book appear more vivid because of the beautiful photographs by Roger Meintjes which support her analysis. Other issues dealt with in the book can not be dealt with in this study because of different periods. But, her concept of space will be applied in this study especially in the section of sport where there were conflicts over the use of playing fields.

Another doctoral thesis, "Christianity, Class and Consciousness: A case study of Langa Township, ca.1927-1960" is in progress.⁷⁶ The central argument in Hartley's work is to explore the religious history as South African historians "have largely focused their work upon political and material forces, a vast amount of history lies uncovered". Still, this thesis does not deal with the areas that this study is concerned with, as we will demonstrate.

The Thesis.

This study places more emphasis on the social and popular history of the local community of Langa in Cape Town. According to Samuel social history is concerned with 'real life' rather than 'abstractions', with 'ordinary people' rather than the privileged elite, with everyday things rather than sensational events.⁷⁷ This study does not

⁷⁵ Ramphela Mamphela, A Bed Called Home, p3.

⁷⁶ Guy Hartley. At this stage it is still a proposal and therefore can not quote extensively from it.

⁷⁷ Raphael Samuel, 'What is Social History?', in J Gardiner (ed), What is History Today?, pp42-57, (London, Macmillan Press, 1988), p43.

only attempt 'filling' some gaps which exist in the history of Cape Town, but also at remapping the contours of the historical map. The works which have been mentioned in the literature review, highlight the vast interests in some aspects of Langa history. But, importantly, do not deal adequately with the issues that this thesis is attempting to address. But, at times, it is the very different interpretations we arrive at which are important. The other important aspect of this thesis is the time framework of 1945 to 1970.

Chapter 1 is about the leisure pursuits of the people of Langa. Sporting activities were an important component of urban festivity. Through sport we are able to see the difficulties which confronted the urban Africans and how they coped with them in their respective situations. The other very interesting thing about sport is that it reveals how differently men and women are socialised. Visiting Langa in the afternoons, one is struck by the gripping events brought about by street cricket and soccer. Boys get socialised into the world of sport earlier than their sisters who are often found busy with household chores such as cooking, washing etc. This also shows how the process of stratification had taken place in Langa because of sporting activities such as cricket and tennis as compared to those in a squatter community.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 deal with aspects of popular culture as represented in festivals. The concept of popular culture

also needs to be defined where possible. Asa Briggs pointed out the complexities of using the term by noting thus:

It is easier to participate in, to enjoy, to deplore, or to explore popular culture than it is to define it.⁷⁸

For Peter Burke popular culture is seen as the 'unofficial culture, the culture of the non-elite, the subordinated classes.'⁷⁹ The 'unofficial' and 'non-elite' cultures will refer to the prevailing culture of many individuals in the township and was different from the 'cultures' of the ruling class. But, on the other hand, cultures are not static as they influence each other. In a very broad and inclusive frame-work, it is the popular culture of the subordinated classes in a society where Africans were, by law, subordinated.⁸⁰

Chapter 2 concentrates on the annual ethnic festivals such as the Moshoeshoe, Fingo and Ntsikana. It is argued in this chapter that festivals reveal both hidden and overt meanings and therefore our analysis of this 'fluid' situation should not only end at the 'ethnic' level but should go deeper and beyond the 'ethnic' stereotypes. Festivals also meant different things to different people and this chapter will provide a comparative analysis of these commemorations.

⁷⁸ Juliet Gardiner, (ed) What is History Today, p120.

⁷⁹ Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (London, Temple Smith, 1978), p1.

⁸⁰ Rachidi R Molapo, 'Identity, Popular Culture and Politics in Langa in the 1960s', (BA Hons, UCT, 1991), p15.

Chapter 3 deals with the 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Festival. This festival was an indication of how the state was involved in shaping popular occasions, such as festivals, ironically persuading the oppressed people to celebrate conquest at the hands of the Boers. This festival was different from those dealt with in chapter two which were initiated by the people themselves. Though many oppressed people in South Africa resisted taking part in the festivals, as shown during the defiance campaign, some Africans did attend the 'festival of shame'. Langa is one place that embodied those conflicts and contradictions.

Chapter 4 is about the annual commemoration of the soldiers who died during the First World War when their ship, Mendi collided with another and over 600 of them were drowned. Because of the problem of sources, this part gives some aspect of the national perspective even if local history is the major focus of this study. The Mendi annual celebration represents a different history as compared to the other ethnic festivals and was used by African nationalist leadership to entrench this festival within nationalist African political ideology.

Chapter 5 examines African resistance in Cape Town. The major component of this struggle was around rent increases and pass laws as particular to Langa, even if Langa can not be understood in isolation from the broader political economy in the Western Cape. The Conclusion will attempt to give a summary of the major arguments in this study.

TRY AGAIN CRICKET CLUB 1ST XI

W. P. BANTU CRICKET UNION

Winners of MAUBERGER CUP (League), Season 1943-1945



Photo by MAXIM'S STUDIO, 5, Hanover Street, Cape Town

Standing Row-Left to Right H. M. GCILISHE, M. P. TSIKA, J. H. BALENI, B. KHABELI, B. NKULOMBE, H. KOBESK, G. GCILISHE
(Chairman) (President) (Treasurer)

Sitting Row-Left to Right— S. M. NDLWANA, T. N. DIKWENI, D. M. MPONDO, W. MHLOM, H. K. JACOBS
(Captain)

Bottom Row-Left to Right— T. MUIJIMA, A. MAGOULA (Score-keeper), ALEX. MSHUMPELA

CAPE TIMES

Collection
Versameling

S.A. Library / Biblioteek

No: PHA: *Black people: soc life*



Ntsikana Celebration, Langa 1954.

CAPE TIMES
Collection
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No: 974A: Black people: soc life



Moshoeshoe Day Celebration, Nyanga, 1956.

CHAPTER ONE

Leisure, Class Formation and Struggle.⁸¹

Introduction

Sport as a leisure occupation has only received fairly recent attention in academic circles. It has not only become a subject of academic pursuit, but also a subject of conflicting views on its meaning and role in society. According to Stedman-Jones, sport is fundamentally about play, fun and amusement.⁸² Musemwa sees sport as a "form of escapism from the otherwise dull and monotonous tenor of township life".⁸³ To Philips, city conditions such as

⁸¹ Part of this chapter appeared as a section in my honours thesis, Molapo R.R, 'Identity, Popular Culture and Politics in Langa in the 1960s', University of Cape Town, (1991). Chapters 3 and 4 were presented to the Cape Town History Project Workshop 11-12 November 1991 as Popular Culture in Langa in the 1960s. As an honours thesis I did not have the extensive archival sources because of the difficulty in getting information under the "closed period". I therefore had to rely upon oral sources which in a way were helpful towards the study but there were some gaps which could be filled up by linking both archival and oral sources. Even if I have consulted archival sources, the information about the history of sport particularly township history remains very scattered. Having to construct the history of sporting activities from correspondence though helpful remains a challenge in providing a comprehensive study on this particular area. The major problem is that most of the rugby, cricket, soccer and tennis clubs this study is concerned with, are no longer existing. Some of the players have either retired to the rural areas, died or become scattered in South Africa. But I managed to interview some of the old players through whom I think we will be in a position to understand the nature of sport in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁸² G Stedman-Jones, Sport, Politics and the Working Class (New York, Manchester University Press, 1988), p1

⁸³ Muchaparara Musemwa, 'Aspects of the Social and Political History of Langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948', (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, March 1993), p127.

illicit beer brewing and prostitution were "dens of immorality filled with loose women".⁸⁴ He further noted that the Natives "are undermining their health and morals through a failure to use their non-working time in activities that build up their bodies and character".⁸⁵ Because of the conditions outlined above, the church had to move in and "capture the leisure time of millions" of Natives so that they could be "taught morals".⁸⁶ According to Botto, "sport is a great leveller; all classes of people come into contact with one another more intimately. Through sport we get into friendly terms with anybody, thereby our circle of friends is widened".⁸⁷

The above views are important in considering the role of sport in society. Sports such as soccer, tennis, rugby, cricket, and horse racing reflect the way in which a society is structured. Many of these sporting activities were brought to South Africa during the expansion of the British Empire. Holt observed that, "wherever the British Empire went, the gospel of sport went with them".⁸⁸ Odendaal shares the same view when he argues that, "the enduring legacies of British Colonialism has been the

⁸⁴ R Philips, The Bantu Are Coming, (Great Britain, Billing and Sons Ltd, 1930), p58.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p58.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p158.

⁸⁷ Botto R Some, 'Aspects of the Leisure Occupation of the African Population of Cape Town', (MA Thesis, UCT, 1954), p109.

⁸⁸ Richard Holt, Sport and the British, (London, Oxford University Press, 1990), p6.

institutionalization of British sports in the former colonies".⁸⁹

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first one will attempt to give the historical background which explains why many British leisure occupations were accepted by some members of the indigenous communities. The second part proposes to show how African sport is to be understood in the context of urban segregation. The third part will show, through sport, how the black working class was not a homogenous entity, but reflected conflict within the working class amongst other things, because of ethnic and regional solidarities.

I

When the Cape Colony was reoccupied by the British in 1806, leisure activities such as cricket, horse-racing, rugby, soccer and tennis were introduced. As the British Empire was expanding, it also brought with it the social institutions which reflected the class divisions of British society especially through sport. This was an era of sport which was, however, initially confined to the white members of the Empire. Odendaal notes that "the Xhosa were interested spectators at the cricket matches and horse races that came to be staged in the new frontier towns that were

⁸⁹ Andre' Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport and Society in South Africa in the nineteenth Century, pp193-214', in J.A Mangan, Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism, British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914, (London, Frank Cass, 1988), p193.

springing up in the conquered African territory from the onset of such events in the 1850s".⁸⁰ The establishment of Mission schools such as Lovedale and Healdtown in the Eastern Cape, and Zonnebloem in Cape Town, provided a fertile ground where those leisure pursuits could be cultivated. Couzens and Odendaal agree that sports, like football and cricket, were introduced and became "popular at Zonnebloem"⁸¹ in the late nineteenth century.

As the early mission colleges were established in the Cape Colony, the Xhosa people became the first Africans to be influenced by some of these British leisure pursuits.⁸²

But the presence of the British did not mean that some of the pre-colonial African leisure pursuits like hunting, boxing, dancing, stick fighting, and cattle, sheep and goat herding came to an end. An interesting view was expressed by William Hubberly, in 1790 in a Xhosa society where stick fighting was still very popular. He notes, thus:

We often had dancing and cudgelling, with parties I sometimes joined. One time there being visitors, they prevented me to play with them but not being so accustomed to their mode of the game...he hit me some hard blows over the head, etc...but some of my friends, the natives, hinted at my adversary not to strike so hard but that had no effect, for he shortly after gave me a severe blow which cut my head, and as soon as I

⁸⁰ A. Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians', p196.

⁸¹ Tim Couzens, 'An introduction to the History of Football in South Africa', in B Bozzoli (ed), Town and Countryside, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), p199.

⁸² André Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport, race and Class in South Africa before Union', Africa Perspective vol.1 no7/8, (1989), pp72-93.

felt the blood run down my neck I forgot my dependent situation and instantly threw away the stick, closed in and fisted him, but he not being acquainted with that kind of sport I gave it him pretty handsomely....which put my opponent in such a rage that he would inevitably have killed me, if it had not been prevented by the people of our village.⁹³

What is interesting from the above story is that some migrant in Langa after the Second World War, and in mining areas in South Africa, particularly on the Rand known as 'amalaita' (those with lights), still took part in this form of leisure activity. An example of this took place in 1956 during the police riot. Rev.S.P Lediga, minister of the Presbyterian Church, said after the confrontation with the police that, "You cannot pin it on one thing only. You have raw Africans coming here who are used to settling arguments with sticks at home, while you also have educated African youths who will not work and who prefer to drink and

⁹³ Cited in Mostert Noel, Frontiers, p195.

gamble".⁹⁴ What emerges from the above evidence is that stick fighting was a leisure activity but during this time it became an art of warfare. The other interesting aspect of this narrative is over the issue of rules which exist in every sport and during industrialisation rules also changed and time became important. But, at times, some spectators or the players may not accept the rules given by the referee according to their understanding of the game. In some areas this culminated in 'hooligan fighting' between spectators. (More of this will be dealt with by looking at the relationship between players and spectators).

The other important agent of British leisure pursuits was the army. Rev. Gideon Sivetje suggests that blacks watched the soldiers play in Pietermaritzburg long before the Anglo-Boer war.⁹⁵ During the South African war, many Blacks were recruited as drivers, cooks, scouts and labourers. This meant

⁹⁴ Cape Times 1 December 1956. This issue of the 'decline' in 'morals' has been a big concern among parents. For example, the response of Rev. M Mabizela and the Anglican Church, said that he had found country people who came to live at Langa were on the whole law-abiding. Young people born and bred at Langa "have no manners" (Times 1 December 1956). I want to thank Nazeema Mohammed who made me aware of this 'decline in morals' in her research on Langa High School. The problem with this perception was that the effects of industrial capitalism were making themselves felt. Some elders were still expressing some form of nostalgia for the African past. The situation of overcrowding was made worse with the clearing of Windermere and Kensington. This heightened the conflict which culminated in the confrontation with the agents of the state, the police. For a detailed research on the moral code in a Xhosa society, see Satyo Sizwe, Sex patterning of Language in Xhosa, Centre for African Studies Africa Seminar, Wednesday 9 May 1990.

⁹⁵ **Tim Couzens**, 'An introduction to the History of Football in South Africa', in Bozzoli B, (ed) Town and Countryside, p200.

that some were influenced by the British soldiers. The link with the army has been highlighted by Couzens who notes that in 1891 a meeting for a soccer parent body was formed. This occurred "at a meeting held in the Highlanders' quarters of the Drill Hall at which representatives from the Royal Artillery, East Yorkshire Regiment, Cape Town Highlanders and the North Staffordshire regiment were present".⁹⁶ The names of these regiments are British and some "Coloured" soccer and rugby teams were given those names indicating the influence brought about by the British army as a social institution. At this stage, most of the sources portray the Blacks as only being spectators at these games. But this phase changed as the sport became rooted in their communities after many were proselytised at the mission institutions.

II

The segregation that dominated South African cities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, did not leave sport unaffected. In the nineteenth century Cape Town was emerging as a racially constructed society. White ethnicity encouraged White social mobility at the expense of those labelled as 'other than white'. The state and other dominant classes in Cape Town articulated "poor whiteism" to create a social order which promoted the interests of the dominant classes. Bickford-Smith, notes that, "by the late 1880s most sporting activities were apparently informally

⁹⁶ Quoted in Tim Couzens, 'An Introduction to the History of Football', p199.

segregated, and separate organisations came into existence to cater for 'white' and 'coloured' in this respect".⁹⁷

He further argues that due to the segregation that was taking place, a "Coloured" cricketer, T Hendrickse, was "prevented by the White-controlled Western Province Cricket Union from playing for his team, Woodstock, in the club championship."⁹⁸ By 1905, segregation in schools in Cape Town was complete and this affected the playing of sport. With the creation of Ndabeni as an African settlement in Cape Town, the White dominant classes in Cape Town were able to separate and control African labour that was flowing into the city. The creation of Langa in 1923 reinforced that social separation of the 'races' and meant that Langa residents had to get their own sporting facilities, as 'Natives'. In the 1950s the National Party government institutionalised segregation laws on practises which had been introduced prior to 1948. The 1923 Native Urban Areas Act, the 1950 Group Areas and Population Registration Acts were some of the important pillars upon which urban segregation was based. They confined the different South African races to their 'respective' places in South African society.

By the 1950s urban apartheid was beginning to be in crisis. As the city was dependent on 'Black' labour, many

⁹⁷ Quoted in Bickford-Smith V, 'A special tradition of multiracialism' Segregation in Cape Town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in W James and M Simons (ed), The Angry Divide, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1988), pp47-62, p53.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p53.

hotels, construction work, docks, factories and the domestic sector were in need of 'cheap' African labour. But leisure facilities were not provided for that labour. Articles appeared in the English media attacking the City Council for not providing leisure facilities for those 'wandering' native males who were "strangers in a foreign land".⁹⁹ A contributor to the Cape Times by the name of Major-General Theron reported that, if conditions are such that men concerned can find no constructive outlet for their surplus energies, society must share at least some of the blame for the mischief.¹⁰⁰

In 1957, another article appeared in the Cape Argus with the headline that "200 Sea Point Servants have nowhere to go".¹⁰¹ Some of the workers in Sea Point worked as chefs, waiters, gardeners and domestic servants. They had to look for alternative forms of entertainment as the nearby beach was "Whites only". The Argus went further stating thus:

The real snag for a native living at Sea Point is, of course, the 2s.6d (return) train and bus fare he would have to pay to reach his place of entertainment.¹⁰²

This meant that, because of urban segregation, all the Africans who were employed at different parts of the Peninsula had to go to Langa for their entertainment. Transport costs and time were wasted when people went to the

⁹⁹ Cape Times, 10 January 1955.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Cape Argus, 13 November 1957.

¹⁰² Cape Argus, 15 November 1957.

township. Even if playing fields were available in Sea Point or Green Point, they could not use them as they were not meant for them.

A statement which followed in the newspapers, entitled "The Facts", argued that "this enforced idleness in their leisure hours is an important contributory cause of immorality and crime".¹⁰³ "The Facts" failed to address the socio-economic conditions which caused crime in the township, only emphasising the moral issues and failing to address the complex socio-economic structures which led to crime. The other important point was that the statement was aimed at a racist middle class White audience that was threatened by the 'wandering' Africans in areas classified "Whites only".

III

Rugby

The history of rugby in Langa is closely linked to the proletarianisation of the African people. Peires noted that, "according to tradition rugby (mboxo=a thing which is not round) was introduced to the Xhosa by a Reverend Mullins".¹⁰⁴ He further states that the first adult club still remembered is the Union Rugby Football Club established in Port Elizabeth in 1887.¹⁰⁵ As many of the workers from the Eastern Cape took part in rugby matches in

¹⁰³ AWC 124, 'The Facts'.

¹⁰⁴ J.B Peires, Work In Progress, 17 April 1981.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

Langa, it can be argued that the seeds of rugby playing had been sown in the Eastern Cape many years before Langa. But, in Langa, rugby took a 'formalised' form only in the 1930s. With the emergence of a small de-ruralised African population and the establishment of Langa High School in 1937 the playing of these leisure pursuits became institutional. According to Mohamed, "one of the most significant activities at Langa High School was sport such as rugby, cricket, soccer and netball".¹⁰⁶ She further noted that, "it was the rugby team, though, which was the pride and joy of the school".¹⁰⁷ The above evidence shows how the ritualised sporting activities which developed in the British public schools, became entrenched in Langa. The establishment of the High School in 1937 meant that the local rugby, soccer and cricket teams were injected with talented players who came to 'defend' the Langa 'community' against 'external threats'. Wilson and Mafeje argued that the Black people were first interested in rugby in Cape Town were the "Coloured" people. It is worth quoting them at some relative length here. They noted thus:

The first non-White group to be interested in rugby in Cape Town were the Coloured people. The Strongest Coloured club was the Busy Bees, it was open to all non-Whites, and included a few African members. As the African increased they formed their own section, still constitutionally linked with the original club. This was in 1923. As the African section began to assert itself, conflict developed. Some Africans sided with the Coloured members whose knowledge of rugby they

¹⁰⁶ Mohamed Nazeema, 'Langa High School', p72.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p73.

acknowledged, others were totally opposed to Coloured domination. A split occurred, and about 1928 the present Bantu club was formed by those Africans who rejected Coloured leadership. The Bantu was an exclusively African club and it welcomed every African interested in rugby.¹⁰⁸

This pattern of inclusion and exclusion became a common feature in the way teams were formed in the township. When those African players who remained in the Coloured team broke away as well, they formed the African Busy Bees. Members of the Busy Bees were predominantly from King William's Town and East London. The formation of these clubs not only reveals rural-urban divide but also divisions according to bigger and smaller towns. In 1938, those from the smaller areas such as Peddie, Mount Coke and Alice broke away from Busy Bees and formed the Harlequins and Morning Stars (ikwezi). What is interesting about the name, the Harlequins, was that in the 1880s there was a famous rugby team in England with that name and there still is. Holt notes that rugby and soccer followers/participants were based on school loyalties with leading "London teams like Richmond, Blackheath, and Harlequins (whose members were reputed to prefer sherry to beer after a game) having a privileged social standing".¹⁰⁹ The naming of these teams then suggest the influences or links the British had with their former colonies. But, this was not imposed on people as the rugby players themselves chose that name. For example, the Mamelodi Sundowns soccer team is called the

¹⁰⁸ M. Wilson and A. Mafeje, Langa pp114-115.

¹⁰⁹ Richard Holt, Sport and the British, p27.

'Brazilians' by its supporters. This suggests the wish by those fans to have their team performing like Brazilian soccer teams which are highly respected as far as soccer is concerned. Wilson and Mafeje further argue that the 'home' and the urban environment contributed towards the formation of some of the teams. They noted thus:

Most members of this club (Harlequins) come from villages and country towns on the Border, and they lived in Langa in the barracks and zones, whereas the majority of the Busy Bees come from the larger towns of King William's Town, East London, and Grahamstown, and they lived in Salt River, Woodstock, and District six, so rural urban differences and homeboy loyalties are both expressed in these clubs.¹¹⁰

The immigration that took place during and after the Second World War, led to more pressures in some of the teams. Towards the end of 1942, players originally from Queenstown, Burghersdorp, Molteno and Thembuland broke away from the Bantu to form Thembu United in 1943. While in 1947, a big club for the 'Capetonians', called 'Mother City' was formed.¹¹¹ What comes out of the above evidence is how the urban-rural divide became clearly drawn. 'Mother City' became exclusively for those who were born and bred in Cape Town. Mr Mshumpela expressed it in this way,

¹¹⁰ M.Wilson and A.Mafeje, Langa, p115.

¹¹¹ Interview with Mr Alex Mshumpela 15 September 1992. Mr Mshumpela is an old cricket and rugby player. He was involved in the formation of Mother City and at times acted as a player coach. Some of my informants mentioned his involvement on a number of occasion. See also the illustration provided on Try Again Cricket Club.

You could never have a local production, so we got fed up with that. We got fed-up with that, why not bring our own stars. So, we formed this club, Mother City. The name says, We are the owners of the area (my emphasis).¹¹²

Mr Faku, who played for Mother City from 1958 to 1973 expressed it so overtly by stating that, "It was strictly a Langa team", a "team that hates anything that comes from outside Langa".¹¹³ Wilson and Mafeje noted thus:

One of the conditions of membership is that the recruit should give evidence of having been in Cape Town for a continuous period of at least five years.¹¹⁴

The above evidence suggests that some of the state's influx control measures were used by the Africans themselves in discriminating against those who were regarded as 'outsiders' (amagoduka). The conditions were not too different from the section 10 rights which stratified the Urban African population into 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. According to that clause, those Africans who worked for a particular employer for 10 or 15 years continuously could be exempted from being endorsed out of a proclaimed area. This clause also stratified the urban African proletariat in that many women and migrants were denied the rights of owning properties in towns.

In 1968, a women's section was established in the Mother City. But, the roles which women played were recruiting,

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Interview with Mr M.Faku 24.10.1991, Langa.

¹¹⁴ M.Wilson and A.Mafeje, Langa, pp116-117.

cheering, laundry and also providing catering when there were visitors. Mr Faku noted that "we never used to hire any ladies for washing our outfit after the march. We used to collect all those smelling jerseys and took them to our lady's section and had them washed up".¹¹⁵ For example, in 1966, members of the Western Province Rugby Union, under which Mother City played, were urged to start Women's Associations as they "were bound to the kitchen at the moment".¹¹⁶ Some women still have badges and uniforms for 'Mother City'.

Mother City became a dominant team in the local league. In 1966 they were praised for the achievement of "winning five cups out of seven".¹¹⁷ At the trophy presentation held at Langa Civic Hall in 1966, the "fabulous Merry Macs"¹¹⁸ provided them with music. This, indicates a link with other forms of popular culture such as music. By the late 1960s, the standard of rugby in Langa was reported to be declining. Reasons for the decline varied from non-cooperation to lack of facilities. Mother City faded off in the 1980s even if measures were taken to revive it. They proved very unsuccessful in attempting to reach the standard of the 1950s and 1960s. Rugby teams which played in the local league were United Homeboys, Bantu, Tembu, Busy Bees, Mother City, Harlequins, Langa High School, Olympics and Red

¹¹⁵ Interview with Mr Faku.

¹¹⁶ Cape Argus, 19 October 1966.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

Lions. The names of these teams also need elaboration as they are very interesting.

Some of the names of these teams indicate places of origin and the `nature` of consciousness at the time, and some, as part of popular culture, are ironic. For example, a name like `Bantu` was actually liked by some participants who were proud of being the indigenous people of South Africa, and broke away from the "Coloured team under the banner of the `Bantu`. This, however, does not suggest that the "Coloureds" are not indigenous people. It can be argued that they were the predecessors of the "people", but came to be informed by a different ideology and context. Hence the term "Bantu" did not have the same derogatory connotation as when used by the apartheid state. Hence by the 1950s sporting clubs, rugby, cricket and soccer resolved that they did not want to be called `Bantus`. This shows resistance against state ideology which was dividing people according to ethnic backgrounds. From the above evidence it can be argued that names and meanings change over time. From the name `Busy Bees` it can be suggested that it was introducing a work ethic that was practised by bees with their discipline and hard work. The colours of their jersey also suggested the resemblance with that of bees.

Teams in Langa played under the Langa Union. In 1951, they extended that to incorporate Nyanga, Retreat, Kensington and Parow. The clubs formed the Western Province Rugby Football Board. The history of these bodies reveal conflicts between the dominant and dominated classes. The South African African

Rugby Board is the oldest and was established in 1935. Many of the teams in the township affiliated to the SARU (South African Rugby Union) instead. This meant that they were not recognised by the all-White controlled body, the South African Rugby Board.

The following illustration shows a breakdown of the different bodies to which teams were affiliated. Clubs belonging to SARU (not affiliated to the Nationally recognised body of the South African African Rugby Board).

Langa Based		Guguletu Based	
Mother City	Harlequins	Fezeka High	Crusaders
Thembu	Langa High	Blue Birds	Ikhwezi
Bantu	Home Boys	Hungry Lions	
Busy Bees			

Clubs Belonging to SAARB

Langa Based
 Red Lions
 Lily Whites

Affiliated to

Analysis	SAARB	SARU	Total
Langa based clubs	2	7	9
Gugs\Nyanga clubs	5	13	18
Total	7	20	27 .119

SARU clubs were not officially recognised. But they outnumbered the clubs which are officially recognised by virtue of being affiliated to the SA Rugby Board .120

Clubs belonging to the 'official' body were given the advantage of using facilities provided by the City Council. Amenities became used by Council to win clubs to their side

119 AWC 27, p2.

120 AWC 27, p3.

(SARB). The following extract reveals the conflict that emerged because of the use of facilities. Curnick Cecelo Mdyesha, a sport administrator in the township, wrote to the Department of Bantu Administration highlighting the conflict over fields by stating the fact that,

"SARU is allowed to make use of of our grounds when we and our Union are not allowed to use grounds belonging to Coloureds will ultimately lead to trouble of a very serious nature."¹²¹

Cricket\Tennis

Cricket and Tennis, like soccer and rugby, have strong British roots. This is not surprising in that Britain's former colonies, such as Pakistan and India, have maintained that legacy to the present moment. According to Cashman "cricket has assumed the proportions of a craze in India".¹²² The game was even played at Ndabeni before they were forcibly removed to Langa. The eleven cricket clubs which existed at Ndabeni played under the Western Province Cricket Union which was affiliated to the South African Cricket Board. This meant that cricket and soccer were the dominant games which received popularity in Ndabeni and Langa, before rugby was introduced. The squalid social conditions in the township led to a situation wherein the

¹²¹ AWC Curnick Cecelo Mdyesha, a Langa sports person, writing to the Department of Bantu Administration and Development.

¹²² Richard Cashman, 'Cricket and Colonialism: Colonial Hegemony and Indigenous Subversion?', pp258-272, in J.A Mangan Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism, p258.

streets became the popular arenas of leisure expression. The streets created local solidarities, group consciousness and were the training fields for many township young stars. Mr Mshumpela expressed it in this way showing how they (the boys) learned the game without been taught,

No, they will learn from other boys in the streets. You play in the streets, you learn from other boys. You go on as you grow and you improve. You form clubs in the township, that area, that area, and you play against each other and that way, they improved their skills and even the elderly people who played in the clubs, that is how they started playing cricket .¹²³

This is the view that was shared by many township players be it in terms of soccer or cricket. Ndebele shared the same view by stating that,

The boys of Mayaba Street had divided themselves into two soccer teams. That was how they spent most days of their school vacations: playing soccer in the street.¹²⁴

In many working class communities the streets are the centres of sociability, political education and economic activity. This is an indication of overcrowding and lack of leisure facilities. In his study on District Six, Nasson noted that,

District Six, as in lumpenproletarian Islington, the rough culture of the street ran through life like a brightly coloured thread. There were unstaged

¹²³ Interview with Mr Mshumpela.

¹²⁴ Njabulo S. Ndebele, Fools and Other Stories (Johannesburg Ravan Press, 1990), p1.

entertainments which onlookers could stand back and enjoy, like noisy squabbles between neighbours over shared street washing lines, pavement fights, swaying and toppling drunks, or the sorry sight of a hawker's fruit and vegetable barrow upending, scattering and mashing its contents .¹²⁵

The streets and the Langa High School became the places where many of the township cricketers received their training. Remembering how they grew up as boys, Mr Mgijima stated,

We could afford to play in the streets. When a car or a horse cart comes along, we merely removed our stumps and wait until it passes and we go back again.¹²⁶

From the above evidence, many boys did not face the dangers of playing in the streets. The number of cars were very few compared to today whereby one finds small boys 'competing' with cars to use the streets.

In 1946, a cricket team was established at Langa High School. Those who constituted the core of the team were Thami Mgijima (captain), Ben Malamba, A Dumlwa and L Somtseu. The team was joined by other small boys who were initiated into the sport because of street cricket. During the same year Langa High School was flooded by a number of African students from Lovedale and Healdtown because of strikes. The students were welcomed by Mr I.D.Mkize, the

¹²⁵ Bill Nasson, 'She Preferred Living in a cave with Harry the snake-catcher' Towards an Oral History of Popular and Class Expression in District Six, Cape Town, c.1920-1950s, pp285-309, p295', in P Bonner et al (eds), Holding Their Ground, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1989).

¹²⁶ Interview with Mr Thami Mgijima 23.01.1994.

principal. The two institutions were also known for their keen interest in cricket. This meant that the Langa High School Cricket Club was reinforced with good players and became a team to be reckoned with.

By 1947 the team was very strong and two cricketers, Ben Malamba and Thami Mgiijima were selected to represent the Black Western Province team. According to Mr Mgiijima, "this marks the emergence of Ben Malamba who later on represented the "Non-White" South African team, that was a combination of Coloureds, Indians and Blacks".¹²⁷ The Non-White South African team toured Kenya in 1947 and a Kenyan team came down to play South African Blacks afterwards. It was during that game that Ben Malamba emerged as an outstanding cricketer.

Ben was not the only good player as there were others from the "Coloured" community who also performed very well. Mr Mgiijima states that,

There was amongst the players, a famous D,Oliviera. They used to call him "Dolly" by the Coloured community. He was the star of the team.¹²⁸

"Dolly" made a good impression on the British during the Kenyan game. He was later recruited by the English County Cricket and ultimately represented England. Another player who joined "Dolly" was Abrahams, a player from the Non-White South African team. The recruitment of these players has

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

left some bitter memory within the African community of Langa. According to Mr Mgijima,

Ben Malamba should have gone too had it not been that he was Black (laughs.....) I must say it because even at the time when this Non-White team was formed, these were the days of the Unity Movement. It was very hot in the 50s, the Unity Movement here in Cape Town. The coming together of Blacks and Coloured but even then there was discrimination. You know Coloured people in Cape Town never accepted us fully and I doubt very much that they will easily accept us, more especially the middle class group is always pro-White more than us. So, that is how Ben failed to get to County Cricket.¹²⁸

South African sport was affected by racist policies which characterised South African society. The apartheid state penetrated deeply into the world of sport. This can be seen from the teams which played under the South African Non-White Union under which those who were 'other than White' played. This was the penetration of apartheid ideology into sport. By 1953, the Unity Movement provided a counter ideology to that of the state and it was resolved that there would be no more Bantu, Coloured, Indian and Malay teams. By 1956, the Western Province Cricket Union was formed. This move to unity was encouraged and challenged the state's segregationist ideology. But there was internal conflict within the Union as some Africans were complaining of being discriminated against by "Coloured" and "Indian" officials who were influential in the Union which is why, Mr Mgijima

¹²⁸ Ibid.

notes that they were not accepted by the Coloured middle class that was pro-White.

Teams which played under the Western Province Bantu Cricket Union, had their headquarters in Langa and were, 'Try Again C Club', 'Transkeian Tembu C Club', 'Brotherly C Club', 'Far East C Club', 'Home Bachelors C Club', 'King's Sons C Club', 'Eastern Vultures C Club', 'Victoria East C Club', and 'Ocean Sweepers C Club'. Africans who played in these teams were principals, teachers, clerks, interpreters, ministers, messenger 'boys' and other Africans who were not highly educated and 'cultured'. This, in a way, shows the stratification that was taking place in the township. Archer makes the point that cricket is the "game that only gentlemen could play".¹³⁰ Participants were, to quote Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians'.¹³¹ In other words, they were the people who could afford to buy the necessary equipments and had the time to learn the game. A name like 'Try Again' suggests the difficulty in learning the game of cricket as compared to learning soccer or rugby for example. But on the other hand, it was the incorporation of the ethos of self-improvement which many Blacks inculcated in their communities. This ethos encouraged iron discipline and punctuality amongst players.

¹³⁰ R. Archer, The South African Game, (London, Zed, 1982), p84.

¹³¹ André Odendaal, 'South Africa's Black Victorians: Sport, Race and Class in South Africa before Union', Africa Perspective vol.1 nos 7 and 8 (1989).

For example, Mr Mgijima noted that, "where there is no discipline there is no success".¹³²

Players in the Ocean Sweepers came from the Peddie district and worked in town and at the city hospital. King Sons were from Kingwilliams' Town and included Mr Stanley Yengo, a well known soccer and cricket player in the Eastern Cape. Home Bachelors C Club was a Langa based team and produced a player like Ben Malamba. When cricket ceased to be played in the streets, layers of stratification began to emerge as the buying of equipment which was very expensive meant that only those relatively privileged, by township 'standards', could play the game. Perhaps Holt's observation of sport is applicable here when he notes that, "social distinction remained an integral part of sport."¹³³

Despite the fact that apartheid South Africa did not recognise the 'Black Victorians', the dusty township streets produced stars who are still role 'models' in the township. They transcended the victim stereotypes and went beyond what the social order intended them to be with very limited resources at their disposal. Some of those included Ben Malamba, Walter Fuku, Morris Maxaba, Khusele Mnobo, Themba Magele, Themba Buku, M.S "Cappy" Ndlumbini, H.H.Z Mpondo, Thami Mgijima, Sinda and Gilbert Ndlwana to name but a few.

¹³² Interview with Mr Mgijima.

¹³³ Richard Holt, Sport and Society in Modern France. (London, Archon Books, 1981), p189.

Some families were able to produce talented cricketers and soccer stars as mentioned above.¹³⁴

Tennis

Tennis is a leisure activity that was enjoyed by a small fraction of the residents of Langa. Despite this, it has a long history and therefore deserves attention even if it was not popular. There were clubs at Ndabeni, Cape Town and 3 in Langa which formed the Cape Peninsula Bantu Tennis Union. But this body faced many problems. The following letter, by Mr Josia Mazula, a prominent Langa sports person writing to Advocate Molteno in 1941, reveals the nature of the difficulties the Union was facing.

Rome was not built in a day, so though this Union has done so much, there is still more needed for accomplishing the difficult work it has undertaken, namely, that of sportsmanship amongst Africans. You happen to be one who is greatly interested in Bantu welfare, and the above Union being sure of that humbly request you to present to it a trophy, which will be given to a runner-up in the gents championship competition. All Africans will be greatly encouraged in the use of sports for, truly speaking, this will be something new to them. Therefore Sir, the above Union humbly requests you to be the means of that great spirit of progress by presenting this never-had-before trophy.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ For a detailed information see the interviews with Messrs A Mshumpela, Knox M Ngwevela, Thami Mgijima and Geoff Jibilee Ndzuzo. All the interviews were conducted by R Molapo.

¹³⁵ BC 579.A24:11.

In much of the sports correspondence, White people were projected as agents of 'progress'. Molteno, Worrall and Rogers were amongst those perceived to represent progress by some sporting officials in the township. In 1945, the body had financial disputes and the Union disintegrated.¹³⁶ Dues were 25s. a season, per player, and some members failed to pay.¹³⁷ In 1951, one club in Langa was resuscitated and by 1953 the Western Province Bantu Lawn Tennis Union was founded with 50 male\female members.¹³⁸ Facilities which were provided for tennis players included three fully enclosed cement surfaced tennis courts and a newly constructed club house and toilet facilities which are "all in high standard".¹³⁹ By 1957, the estimated cost per year was £950. In 1958, the tennis body was known as the Langa Lawn Tennis Club. Tennis was not as popular as soccer, cricket or rugby. But this tells us more about the class formation that was taking place in the township. An African petty bourgeois strata which consisted of ministers, their wives, nurses, students and teachers developed an interest in this sport. This shows that petty bourgeoisie women were involved in some form of sport while the majority of working class women were relegated to the 'domestic sphere', while others joined choral societies and church choirs. This, to a certain extent shows how middle class leisure activities have a more 'balanced' gender composition because

¹³⁶ M Wilson and A Mafeje, Langa, p125.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ AWC 124 Recreational Facilities.

¹³⁹ AWC 27 Main File-Langa: 48 Sports Facilities 1937-1974.

the "middle class" women achieved some form of financial independence from their husbands and could buy the necessary equipment which most working class women could not afford. For a gendered break-down of these activities, see the illustration in the conclusion.

Soccer

The history of soccer in Langa was not in many ways different from the other leisure activities mentioned above but showed some differences because it was less elite than cricket or tennis. Patterns of labour migration became reflected in the ways in which the teams were formed. The names of those teams indicate the places from where most of the players came. This was a similar pattern with rugby and cricket. But the major difference with soccer was in terms of the popularity it received amongst the working class people. Even, from its origin, soccer remained a working class sport. Holt noted that "football was the property of industrial workers, the rugby of the middle class".¹⁴⁰ According to Walvin, who was referring to England, the popularity of football emerges from the fact that it is rooted in popular tradition. But the underlying importance was that it was cheap and could be played anywhere. He argues that football could be "played in a limited space, needing only a minimum of equipment, its skills and excitements could attract both the individual and large

¹⁴⁰ Richard Holt, Sport and the British, p266.

groups".¹⁴¹ This was and still is the case when one walks through the streets of Langa as they will be full of hawkers as well as cricket and soccer players.

The popularity of soccer can even be traced to Ndabeni before the notorious forced removal. In 1927, the Bantu Football Association was formed. In 1936, after the move the Association expanded and came under the Cape Soccer Board, an organisation for African soccer teams only. Most of the teams in Langa played under that board.

Ethnicity and regionalism dominated the history of soccer in Langa township. Teams which played in the local league were the Transkeian Lions, African Rovers, Natal Wanderers, Zulu Royals, Blue Birds F.C, South African Police Team, Free State Callies, Basutoland Happy Lads, Matlama F.C, Linare F.C and Blywood Bombers. The names of the teams show the nature of South African proletarianisation. The journey to the city did not terminate ties with the countryside. During the industrial revolution in England, names like "Rovers" and "Wanderers" were common names which indicated migrancy. In Langa there were teams like 'African Rovers' and 'Natal Wanderers' reflecting the life style of continual migrancy which is an experience common among migrant workers throughout Southern Africa. In his experience of exile, Mphahlele has noted that, "it begins at home".¹⁴² Migrant workers from particular regions would belong to a

¹⁴¹ James Walvin, Leisure and Society, (London, Longman Group Limited, 1978), p87.

¹⁴² Es'kia Mphahlele, The Wanderers, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1984), p6.

team that had players from their area. Wilson and Mafeje argue that players in the Transkeian Lions came from Umtata, Kokstad and Umzinkulu.¹⁴³ Players in Basutoland Happy Lads, Matlama and Linare came from Basutoland, while those in the Free State Callies came from the Orange Free State. (Matlama comes from the verb to bind but has some historic significance among the Sotho). Sanders notes that those who were initiated with Moshweshwe became his special regiment and were known as the "Matlama".¹⁴⁴ By the late 1940s, Matlama Football Club existed in the mines on the Rand, showing the proletarianisation of the Sotho. But in the Western Cape, Matlama becomes visible in the late 1950s as most migrant from Basutoland belonged to Basutoland Happy Lads. Botto notes that there was a Basutoland Happy Lads club at Langa, Athlone and Kensington.¹⁴⁵ The formation of Matlama shows regional divisions within Basutoland. Mr Moholobela, argues that,

Rene re bapala bolo-sehlopa sa rona ene ele Matlama-tlamolla pere di fule ntwá kgolo ke hosane (Matlama e ne ele ya Matsieng. (We played soccer and our team was Matlama-tlamolla pere di fule ntwá kgolo ke hosane (Untie the horses for grazing as the big war is tomorrow).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ M. Wilson and A. Mafeje, Langa, pp113-136.

¹⁴⁴ Peter Sanders, Moshweshwe of Lesotho, (London, Heinemann, 1971), p3.

¹⁴⁵ R. Botto, 'Some Aspects of the Leisure Occupation of the African Population in Cape Town', (MA Thesis, UCT, 1954), p113

¹⁴⁶ Interview with Mr Mahlomola Moholobela 27.09.1993, Guguletu, Ny 95.no2.

The above comment shows Mr Moholobela praising his soccer team and at the same time employing war imagery. This shows the development of male cult that when they get into the playing field they are just like soldiers going into a war situation. The police soccer team was different from the other teams. It was based mainly on a particular institution of employment which was the agent of the state. Its 'ethnic' composition was not as overt as in many of the soccer teams. The Blue Birds soccer team was for players who were "born and bred in Langa".¹⁴⁷ Mr Mkaza further pointed out that "There was no other way of doing it. If I joined a foreign team, that would put me in great trouble".¹⁴⁸ In a situation where industrialisation had created uneven competition for resources, this form of rivalry was inevitably bound to happen. On the other hand, the apartheid state used the existing divisions to advance its own political and economic interests by dividing the people according to their respective ethnic backgrounds. These rivalries were common and Langa was no exception.

Individual and group consciousness were constructed in the streets of Langa. This is evident from the above narrative whereby street loyalties were forged. Hence Mr Mkaza argues that he would have been in 'trouble' if he played for a 'foreign' team. The streets, from where most of the Langa based players came, were Harlem and Bunga. These street loyalties were what I was able to notice even in terms of cricket and rugby. These forms of regional loyalties also

¹⁴⁷ Interview with Mr Mkaza.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

contributed to conflict among the elders and the young men. Mr Ngwevela, noted that,

At school we were a close group, friends you know, so friendship was there always. So we joined one team. My father did not like that idea of me playing for Try Again. He wanted me to play for a team of people from Fort Beaufort, named Eastern Vultures, which he played for since he was originally from Fort Beaufort.¹⁴⁹

The squalid social conditions in the 1950s and 1960s contributed to many worries from parents. Many parents complained of teenage pregnancies, theft, drunkenness amongst the Youth and many saw the playing of sport as alternative ways of keeping their children away from such influences. Participants could agree. One informant stated that he joined a soccer team because:

I was trying to avoid drinking, trying to avoid to be loose you know. I thought by playing football that was something that was going to build me up, or trying to give me a constructive life.¹⁵⁰

This view is similar to the one expressed by Kwesa who joined a singing group,

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Mr Knox M Ngwevela 5.09.93. What is interesting about Try Again Cricket Club is that it was originally composed of players from Keiskamahoeck but later changed and became a Langa based team. There was also the dominance of ex-Langa High Scholars. But the conflict between fathers and sons emerged because of different loyalties. His father wanted him to play for his team, Eastern Vultures Cricket Club but because he was born in Langa, felt that he had to do what other boys were doing. This also reveals the horror brought about by apartheid which created an identity crisis amongst many Black people. The divisions between rural and urban were clearly marked. Telephone conversation with Mr Knox M Ngwevela. 15, 11.93.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with Mr Mkaza.

Because it makes a person clean, and proud of himself... many people love music because music keeps a person away from hooligans, you become clean, collected and refrain from bad things like drinking liquor.¹⁵¹

In 1962, there was conflict within the Langa based team, the Blue Birds, and a new team by the name of Young Ideas Football Club, was formed with M Ngambu as president, G Mpela as secretary, N Xelo as treasurer.¹⁵² The main cause of the conflict, it is believed was based on the pattern of soccer that was being played. As young stars, they enjoyed the dribbling type of soccer, which occupies a special place in the township leisure. This concentrates on providing entertainment, rather than scoring goals. In the 1970s the Young Ideas football club was known as Bafana (Boys) Football Club. There is a view held in the township that the nickname for the South African Soccer team of 'Bafanabafana' (Boys-boys) came from the one in Langa.

In 1959, the City Council built a stadium worth ten thousand pounds.¹⁵³ for the people of Langa. The stadium was enclosed by a wall and contained both a rugby and soccer field. "Each field has an enclosed stand with accommodation for about 200 people in both and with changing and dressing rooms".¹⁵⁴ There were also open seats around each field,

¹⁵¹ Veit Erlmann, 'Singing brings joy to the distressed', Paper given at the History Workshop of the University of the Witwatersrand, 1-14 February 1987, p19.

¹⁵² AWC 119 Correspondence-Sport Bodies 227.

¹⁵³ Cape Times, 13 June 1960.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

with total seating accommodation for about 10,000 people.¹⁵⁵ The building of the stadium was a turning point in the history of leisure occupation of the people of Langa. This meant that leisure was rapidly being commercialised and the days when people could go to the open fields to be provided with free entertainment were over.

Soccer teams, which had to use the stadium, were in constant conflict with the City Council over the collection of money. Only teams which played well were to be allowed to play in the stadium while those which were not so impressive had to play outside. This, together with the 30% demanded by the Council for gate-taking, led to the boycott of the stadium in 1960. These figures were based on Transvaal towns which had more spectators than in Langa. The control over the stadium by the superintendent of Native Affairs also highlighted the conflict which existed in the township. For example, in 1962, Young Ideas Football Club used the stadium without Rogers's permission and this led to tension between him and the leadership of the club. Rogers requested "please advise me immediately on whose authority you made use of these grounds, as I take a very serious view of your action in this regard".¹⁵⁶ The impact of a 'closed compound' like this stadium, meant that, spectators were also expecting to be provided with quality entertainment, as they had paid for getting into the stadium. The popular appeal brought about by the playing of soccer during weekends has

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ AWC 119 S.A Rogers writing to Mr S.Vokwana.

made soccer a form of urban festivity. When there are big matches being played in the township, the game is no longer for the players only as the spectators take part in singing, dancing and at times hurling abuse at the referee or supporters of the other team. Hearing the crowd cheer is a way of motivating your team to score goals. Mr Xhelo, a well known township soccer and rugby dribbling "wizard", remembers when he was on the field and hearing the crowd cheering,

Licks, Licks, please, zamela majita, Licks, Licks,
please, Zamela majita kuba sithembele kuwe
(Licks,Licks,please help the men as our trust is in
you).¹⁵⁷

The above evidence shows the remarkable involvement of the people in their contribution towards the creation of popular culture. They have given Mr Xhelo, a nickname, "Licks". A word like "majita" is a creation of 'locations' and the influence of Afrikaans as it is part of "tsotsitaal" (gang language). Majita refers to men and is a subculture (colloquial) language, which came into existence with the creation of the 'locations'. In many of the soccer and rugby matches players are given nicknames such as 'Licks', 'Bomber', 'Vulture', 'Section 10', 'Dynamite', 'Tiger', 'Fire', 'Maria-Maria', 'Mathambo (Bones)', 'Ri' 'Yster (Iron)'. Some of these names associated a player with 'horror' but in the actual fact, this suggests that those players were the cream of the team and were the best. While 'section 10' was an indirect way of mocking the system of

¹⁵⁷ Interview with Mr Nimrod Magora Xhelo 7.09.93.

oppression as brought about by the imposition of passes on the majority of the African people. But, here it highlights the fact that one section of the population is given preference. 'Bomber' and 'Yster' associate those players with some aspects of the industrial period, especially those who play defence. It can therefore be argued that some of those names show a closer link with popular culture in providing entertainment and laughter.

The history of sport is also part of the history of collective violence which can be caused by many different factors. With the kind of regional rivalries mentioned above, this violence also spilled on to the soccer or rugby fields. The referee is seen as a person who represents 'authority' and when the game is being played there is occasional abuse hurled at him for offering a penalty or a corner-kick to the other team. This objection could, at times, lead to the spectators invading the pitch and refusing defeat with the accusation that the referee was 'bribed' by the other team. At times, the captain of the team can refuse to accept the rule because he feels he will be seen as a "coward" in the township for accepting defeat, for example, at the hands of the amagoduka (migrants) who are looked down upon in the township. Mr Mkaza notes that, "if a spectator wants to knife a ball, he knifes it".¹⁵⁸ Knifing was common even on the Rand and often resulted in the destruction of property, as well as leaving some people dead. The Guardian reported in 1950 that "the day is coming when officials will have to be armed with revolvers

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Mr Mkaza.

at meetings and cup presentations, and referees protected with wire-mesh and moats from disgruntled crowds. During this season, referees have been attacked by spectators, who did not hesitate to use their belts and knives, when they decided to show they did not approve of their decisions".¹⁵⁹ In some racist circles, this form of violence became associated with notions of inherent black 'hooliganism' at soccer fields. This perception is not different from the contemporary 'black on black' violence 'mythology'. But this is a failure to understand the complex societal forces which have shaped people's responses to defeats. Wilson and Mafeje noted that when there were games at the Langa stadium between various teams, the Busy Bees always cheered the Harlequins and vice versa. At one stage a fight broke out between a Kensington team and the Harlequins. The Border players were the first to rush to help their 'homeboys'. But when a border player was restrained on the grounds that the dispute did not concern him, he retorted "you cannot say that, these are my homeboys, those are my fellow small boys".¹⁶⁰ This form of solidarity was based on their historical loyalties as migrants. The other point about this case was that many of the migrants came to town with a relative who might be an uncle, cousin, brother, headman or an elderly person who even handled the wages of some of the young migrants for fear of tsotsis (gangs) or 'township women'. Because of his understanding as an 'elder', he felt that, it was his 'duty' to protect his 'homeboys'.

¹⁵⁹ The Guardian, 1 January 1950.

¹⁶⁰ M. Wilson and A. Mafeje, Langa, p116.

Conclusion

The history of sport in South Africa cannot be considered without examining the way in which British colonialism took place. Many of the leisure activities, were leisure pursuits which reflected the social structure of British society, but were exported to the colonies by missionaries, administrators, soldiers, and other colonial officials. Blacks received these influences at missionary schools such as Lovedale, Zonnebloem, Healdtown and emerging locations in Kimberley. Blacks who were not privileged to go to mission schools, were influenced during their services in the South African war of 1899-1902.

The decline of the independent African chiefdoms, due to colonial conquest, led to many Africans migrating to the cities in search of job opportunities. Migrant workers became 'transmitters' of leisure pursuits which were not available in their home towns. The Eastern Cape has a long history of involvement in rugby and cricket, unlike African townships in the Transvaal, where soccer is the 'only' form of popular recreation. The history of leisure occupation of the people of Langa reveals ambivalent and contradictory forms of struggles. Firstly, the way in which 'township' residents and migrant workers treated one another. Secondly, in 1947, Mr Barney W Mtyala (secretary) of the Langa Vigilance Association, wrote a letter to Advocate Molteno requesting him to come to Langa as residents "will ask the Mayor of Cape Town to expel Mr S.A Rogers"¹⁶¹, as he

¹⁶¹ BC 579 A24 1122.

has been the "source of nothing but trouble at Langa and in the whole Peninsula where the Native is located".¹⁶² During the beer riot in 1947, the slogans were "No beer hall", "Smash the kitchens", "down with the superintendent".¹⁶³ This conflict with the superintendent (or his assistant Mr H Worrall) is evident even with the relationship with the local civic and political organisations such as the A.N.C Langa branch and later with the P.A.C in the 1960s. For example, in 1958, when the African National Congress Women's League held a conference in the township, women from other areas were denied entry into Langa by Rogers who did not issue permits to them.

But on the other hand, there were competitions amongst soccer, cricket and rugby teams to appoint him or his assistant as their patron. For example, in 1960, Natal Wanderers elected him as their "patron of the year 1960".¹⁶⁴ In 1962, the Langa Cricket Union, "unanimously elected Rogers, patron of the Langa Cricket Union".¹⁶⁵ They further requested him to "donate a trophy to be competed for" and to allow the Union to call the trophy, "S.A Rogers floating Trophy".¹⁶⁶ There were a large number of such requests from a wide range of clubs. The significance of this was that while on the one hand political organisations were having

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ The Guardian, 13 March 1947.

¹⁶⁴ AWC 11 G.S Tebele writing to Mr A.H Worall.

¹⁶⁵ AWC Mr A.Dingwa writing to Rogers.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

conflict with the leadership of the superintendent, on the other hand sporting bodies were showing elements of 'apolitical' tendencies.

Cricket and rugby started in England as middle class games but when they were exported to the colonies they took on different forms depending on their different social and political conditions. Rugby became a sport that enjoyed popularity amongst African workers from the Eastern Cape, while cricket was played by the African petty bourgeoisie, namely teachers, clerks, messenger 'boys' and interpreters. These comprised an 'elite' whose aspirations were frustrated by the White state which confined them to the locations and forced them to carry passes like any other African workers. They were prohibited from buying any property in the city and therefore became a deformed 'middle class' shaped by the South African racial laws. By the end of the 1950s many cricket clubs in Langa were disbanding.

In 1958, there were only three teams, the Homeboys, Langa High and Try Again, still existing. In 1968, Try Again was the last club to disband. This state of affairs was caused by a number of factors. Many good players were recruited into the Coloured and Indian teams. Cricket facilities in the township were very bad as the common complaint was the lack of good pitches. The sport was also becoming more and more expensive and this meant that only a few individuals could afford it. The following graph shows the type of games played in the township in the 1950s,

Name of org	No(sex)	Nature of sevice	Race
WPAMA	60-80 (m)	Dance	Native
PC and V	80-100 M and F	Choral	native
PACS	100-150 M.F	Choral	Native
WPAFA	300 M	Football	
Native.			
WPRFU	200 M	Rugby	Native
WPBCU	200 M	Cricket	Native
WPBLTU	50 M.F	Tennis	Native
Boxing Club	46 M	Boxing	Native
Body Building Club	6 M	B building	Native
Casino Union	200 M.F		Native ¹⁶⁷

The statistics above show the popularity of soccer in Langa with 300 men taking part. Rugby and cricket were rated as having the same following in the 1950s. These statistics were collected in 1957 by Josiah Mazula, a well known sports person in the township. As I have shown in the beginning the history of leisure is the history of male leisure. Women were outnumbered by men in every sport. The only one that shows any balance was Tennis, which shows how some middle class sports have a 'balanced' gender composition. Although the majority of working class women were confined to the kitchen, many women distinguished themselves in singing clubs.

This chapter has also attempted to clarify the claim made by some scholars, Musemwa included, who see sport as a form of "escapism from the dull and monotonous tenor of township life".¹⁶⁸ But sport continues to be played even in areas of

¹⁶⁷ AWC 124 Recreational Facilities 6.5.52 to 18.3.77. Key Words. M=Male, F=Female. WPAFA (Western Province African Football Association). WPRFU (Western Province Rugby Football Union). WPBCU (Western Province Bantu Cricket Union). WPBLTU (Western Province Bantu Lawn Tennis Union).

¹⁶⁸ M. Musemwa, 'Aspets of the Social and Political History of Langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948), (MA Thesis, U.C.T, 1993), p127.

great affluence. Is this also another form of escapism?. For example, soccer in the Transvaal has become dominated by players who grew in the townships. It is used as a rapid agent of social mobility. This 'poverty of theory' appears also in Botto's who argues from a middle class perspective by stating that "sport is a great leveller: all classes of people come into contact with one another more intimately. Through sport we get into friendly terms with any body, thereby our circle of friends is widened".¹⁶⁹ Yes, it is true that through sport people make friendships. Sport also provides people with fun and sociability. But the struggles between different social classes in society are also reflected in sport. For example, Mr Norman Ngcongolo who played for Ciskei Swallows from 1956 till 1977 argues that as a 'family man' he felt there was no discipline in sport. He felt humiliated by amakhwenkwe (boys) who were insulting one another on the playing fields and this upset him. According to him rugby had to be played constitutionally and in a disciplined manner.¹⁷⁰ What this evidence reveals is the generational conflict that has spilled over on to the playing fields. These are some of the hidden forms of struggles which are not informed by popular nationalist politics but are struggles within struggles. This, therefore, shows how African society is not only divided in terms of class, kinship, gender, ethnicity but also in terms of age and generatioin gap.

¹⁶⁹ R. Botto, 'Some Aspects of the leisure Occupation', p109.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Mr Norman Ngcongolo 24.10.91, Langa.

Through sport, the ambivalent and contradictory nature of a capitalist society is revealed. During the week, most sporting activities took place in the afternoons after work and the meagre facilities would be invaded by too many people in such a small physical space. The rule of the clock, which regulated their lives during their working hours, was also with them at their leisure times. Botto notes that on Saturday afternoons matches begin as a rule at 1.p.m and continue until visibility becomes too poor.¹⁷¹ This issue was made even worse in the 1950s because of the Sunday Observance Act which forbade matches to be played on Sundays. Many of the matches were therefore played on Saturdays in the hope that people would go to church on Sundays. In other words, the men and women from Langa who took part in sport were not only oppressed and exploited by the squalid conditions of the township, but were also subjected to the rules of industrial time.

Other ideas which the chapter attempted to look at have been expressed by Whitson and Hargreaves when they noted thus:

sporting activity, we contend, can never be adequately explained purely as an instrument of social harmony, or as a means of self-expression, or as a vehicle for satisfying individual needs; for this ignores the divisions and conflicts, and the inequalities of power in societies, which if we care to look more closely, register themselves in sports. Nor can their social role be explained simply as a means whereby the masses are manipulated into conformity with the social order, capitalist or otherwise, for to do so is to regard

¹⁷¹ R. Botto, 'Some Aspects of leisure Occupation', p48.

people as passive dupes, and it ignores their capacity to resist control and to stamp sports with their own culture.¹⁷²

The following chapter aims at looking at ethnic festivals which constituted an important component in the social history of the township. The chapter also aims at showing that ethnicity is limited as a concept to give us a fuller understanding of what these festivals were all about. This, perhaps will help us understand the festivals from a different angle in using class, 'gender', nationalism and the alienating urban environment as alternative explanations of these occasions. The chapter also suggests that the meanings embedded in these festivals are not always overt but hidden and that it is the task of the historian to explore for them. This will be done by providing a comparative analysis.

¹⁷² D. Whitson and J. Hargreaves, quoted in Stedman G Jones, Sport, Politics and the Working Class, p8.

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Ntsikana Celebration, Langa 1950.

CHAPTER TWO

Moshoeshoe, Ntsikana and Mfengu Festivals in Langa Township, 1943-1973.

Introduction

In the previous chapter we saw how a particular society could be understood through the history of its sport. This also showed how leisure activities have recently received attention in academic circles. The other important event in the history of Langa, "Cape Town's oldest black township"¹⁷³ has been the annual celebration of ethnic festivals. After conducting a number of interviews in Langa in 1989, Kondlo correctly pointed out that most of the ethnic festivals "started in the 1940s".¹⁷⁴ In his conclusion, he noted that by the "end of the 1950s all the tribal celebrations in Langa were disappearing".¹⁷⁵ There is some generalisation which has been made even by other nationalist historians who have argued that in the 1950s and 1960s the "backward" ethnic identities were being replaced by the more "forward-looking" forms of identities such as nationalism. While there are problems with the above view, some historians have attempted to explain the emergence of ethnicity in social and economic terms. According to Bickford-Smith, social and economic factors are "crucial to

¹⁷³ Cape Argus Monday September 13 1993.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with Mr Zibi S by Kondlo K M Langa 1989.

¹⁷⁵ K.M. Kondlo, 'The Culture and Religion of the people of Langa during the period ca 1938-1958', (BA Hons, History, UCT), p40.

an understanding of the relationship between ethnicity and class".¹⁷⁶ Beinart understands "ethnicity as an important element in developing migrant organisation and consciousness".¹⁷⁷ As the population of Langa was largely migrant during the 1950s and 1960s, it is important, perhaps, to locate the festivals within the context of migrancy and class formation. The festivals reveal the way in which the African experience of urbanisation was uneven in that many migrants still clung to identities which were constructed in a rural context. These festivals became celebrated almost every year. Kondlo concludes by stating that the Moshoeshoe festival was not popular with the wider public and the Basotho were accused of "exclusiveness and tribalism".¹⁷⁸ While Musemwa states that, "occasions such as the Ntsikana, Mfengu, and Moshoeshoe Day celebrations, while indicating group cohesion, often led to 'tribal' animosity especially between the Xhosa -speaking people and the Mfengu"¹⁷⁹, who also spoke Xhosa. In as much as I share the central argument with Musemwa in his thesis, Langa did not experience the brutal 'tribal' animosity as explained by Phimister and Van Onselen in the case of the 1929 Bulawayo

¹⁷⁶ Bickford-Smith Vivian, 'Commerce, Class and Ethnicity: Cape Town at the Advent of the Mineral discovery (c1875)' Social Dynamics, 13(2)32-45, (1987), p32.

¹⁷⁷ Beinart W, 'Worker Consciousness, Ethnic Particularism and Nationalism: the experience of a South African Migrant, 1930-1960' in S Marks and S Trapido, The Politics of Race Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa. (London, Longman Group, 1987), p289.

¹⁷⁸ K.M. Kondlo, 'The Culture', p42.

¹⁷⁹ Musemwa Muchapara, 'Aspects of the Social and political History of langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948', (MA Thesis UCT March 1993), p136.

"faction fights".¹⁸⁰ or the "Faction Fighting" in Benoni which was brought by the Basotho "Russians". Bonner has recently provided a fresh explanation of the Molapo and Matsieng 'faction fights'.¹⁸¹ This explanation is completely different from the 'tribal animosity' that took place in Langa township. The Langa animosity cannot be compared to the Bulawayo and Benoni experiences as it will be shown in this chapter because of different interpretations.

The chapter aims at exploring the emergence and meanings of the ethnic festivals. It will attempt to move away from the narrow and static explanations that saw these festivals as only being 'tribalistic'. Such simple categorisations do not provide us with the context under which most Xhosa, Basotho and Mfengu migrants lived. The other issue to be highlighted is that there was much more resistance towards the 'Fingo' festival than towards that of Mqshoeshoe or Ntsikana because most Xhosa believed that the Fingo collaborated with the British during the colonial period. Some brief historical background to the festivals will be of importance in understanding the emergence of these activities. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first deals with an overview of the festivals, while the second will provide a comparative analysis of these festivals.

¹⁸⁰ Phimister I and Van Onselen C, 'The political Economy of tribal animosity: the case study of the 1929 Bulawayo "faction Fight"', JSAS 1, 1979.

¹⁸¹ P. Bonner, 'The Russians on the Reef 1947-1957, Urbanisation, Gang Warfare and Ethnic Mobilisation', in P. Bonner et al (eds) Apartheid's Genesis, (Johannesburg Ravan Press, 1993), pp160-194.

In 1919 a "progressive section"¹⁸² within the Basutoland National Council suggested the commemoration of Moshoeshoe Day. After the debates within the Council, it was decided that 12th March, be made a "public holiday"¹⁸³ by proclamation no. 14 of 1919, amending the Public Holidays (Basutoland) proclamation of 1912. According to Maloka, the BNC was set up in 1903 as an advisory structure to the chief colonial administrator, the Resident Commissioner, in Lesotho. The structure was virtually made up of chiefs.¹⁸⁴ The reason to commemorate Moshoeshoe Day was the role Moshoeshoe played in Basotho history as the founder of their nation. During the devastation that the Boers inflicted upon the Sothos, Moshoeshoe appealed to the Cape Colony for help. Writing to the Cape Colony in 1862, he said, "I will be under the Queen as her subject, and my people will be her subjects also, but under me".¹⁸⁵ By 1868 Basutoland was given into the hands of the British Crown. Entering into an 'alliance' with the British did not mean that they could treat the Sothos the way they wanted. A good example of this was the Gun War of 1880-1 when the imperial colony wanted to disarm them. De Kiewiet argued that,

The disarmament was part of the process of extending
the control of the Cape Colony over all tribes and

¹⁸² Basutoland News Tuesday, 12 March 1940.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Eddy T Maloka, "Faction Fights" or "Fixed Bayonets" Against Sticks and Stones: Basotho Migrants and Violence on the Mines, 1886-1939, History Seminar, October, 1993, p7.

¹⁸⁵ Peter Sanders, Moshweshwe of Lesotho, (London, Heinemann, 1971), p26.

territories as far as the Natal border. To govern a large area so filled with quarrelsomeness the Cape felt that it had to have the most positive guarantees of peace. Arms in the hands of the tribes, especially in the strongest and most self-conscious tribe of them, were an incentive to war and rebellion. South Africa, and not the Cape Colony alone, had chosen as the most important immediate aim of its native policy the complete subordination of the native population to European control. The Cape forced war on the Basuto much in the same way that war had been forced on the Zulus.¹⁸⁶

The Gun War was an important event in the history of Lesotho. The significance of the war was that the Sotho fought against both the Boers and the British. The memory of war against external control has been embedded in popular memory by the older generation. Coplan notes thus:

The gun war, really the Basotho war of independence, was one of the most significant events in Southern African history, for it detached Basutoland from the Cape, led to direct imperial rule from Britain, and set the pattern for the exclusion of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland from the Union and their eventual emergence as independent states.¹⁸⁷

This decision of the Basutoland National Council of commemorating Moshoeshoe became used by Basotho migrants to construct a Basotho ethnicity in an industrialising South Africa.

¹⁸⁶ Quoted in Fundisi, The African Communist no.80 First Quarter (1980), p71.

¹⁸⁷ David Coplan, 'In the time of Cannibals: Basotho working Class Aurature and the meaning of Sesotho'. Centre for African Studies, UCT, Africa Seminar, 29 March 1989, p12.

The celebration of Moshoeshoe Day mushroomed in the 1930s in different parts of South Africa. A number of these festivals took place on the Rand.¹⁸⁸ Many Basotho worked in the South African mines for many years, but the increase in Basotho migrancy escalated in the late 1930s. This is attributed to the 1932-3 drought that hit the mountain kingdom very hard. During the Second World War, the rise of manufacturing industries meant that the Basotho migrants were absorbed into industry and the mines. The celebrations also took place in Aliwal North.¹⁸⁹ In the Western Cape it took place at different places depending on the decision reached by the Western Province Moshoeshoe Committee. The places which became associated with the celebration were Kensington, Langa, Paarl, Nyanga, Guguletu, Brackenfell and Worcester. These celebrations indicate the extent to which migrancy had reached Basutoland in that most of the people who went to the celebrations were workers.

Oral evidence suggests that the celebrations of the Moshoeshoe Day in the Western Cape started at Kensington where some of the Basotho migrants resided. Mr Mahlomola Moholobela, a migrant from Lesotho found the day being celebrated when he came to Cape Town in 1943.¹⁹⁰ For example, the 1946 leadership in Kensington was as follows, president, Mr B Machakela, vice president Mr Joseph

189 Mochochonono 7 January 1939. The exact date when the celebrations begin are not clearly stated in newspaper reports but they appear in the 1930s.

189 Frontier Post and Times 1946, 47, 50 and 1953. I also want to thank Candy Malherbe for providing me with this information she found during her field work.

190 Interview with Mr Mahlomola Moholobela 27.09.93.

Oliphant, secretary general, Mr Augustine Metsing, assistant secretary, Mr Lephoto, treasurer, Mr J Seroke, organisers, Messres I Moohi, A Letsaba and Ntasa.¹⁹¹

Archival sources suggest that the celebration of Moshoeshoe Day in Langa lasted from 1947 till 1966 when Basutoland received its political independence. These celebrations were organised by the society which was known as "Mokhatlo oa Khopotsa ea tsatsi la Moshoeshoe Hlohleng ea Kapa", (The Peninsula Moshoeshoe Day Celebration Society). The leadership consisted of chairman, Mr J.J Shasha, Mr O Ntsane, Mr Joseph S.C Mokhehle, Mr R Mphela, president, David M Gaboutloeloe, secretary. The problem of continual migrancy affected the leadership of the society as names kept on changing reflecting their links with the countryside. In other words, the migrant population lacked the infrastructure, which depended elsewhere on subsidies, to keep the organisation intact. The individual who became associated with the society for a long time was Mr Isrome Sello who became its secretary and was a talented musician. A letter written to Rogers revealed the following about him but the major content of the letter was a plea for the provision of accommodation:

Mr Sello is a very important man in this committee. He has a peculiar ability in music and is the best the committee can produce to organise anything in the line of music. His staying out of Langa is a stumbling block to the committee's progress and it is in view of this the committee appeals to you sir, The committee is

¹⁹¹ The Free State Advocate a supplement of Mochochonono 4 May 1946.

aware of the fact that there is home shortage but hopes that you could do your best please sir.¹⁹²

The above evidence shows that Basotho migrants were also based in different parts of the Peninsula. For Mr Sello to come to Langa meant that they had to go through the official channel of getting permits to be in the township. The aims and objectives of the society were similar to other societies in the country. They noted that they wanted to "commemorate the placing of Basutoland under the British Crown"¹⁹³ or to acknowledge an "agreement made between Queen Victoria and the Basuto leader, Moshoeshoe, on March 12, 1868".¹⁹⁴ The ideas were inculcated into the migrants at burial societies, drinking parties and articles in Mochochonono or Umteteli wa Bantu which always carried articles which informed them what was happening at home or at work.

Columns such as 'Litaba tsa sechaba sa Moshoeshoe' (News for the people of Moshoeshoe) were common in these newspaper reports. Such structures were a source of support to many who were struggling to find accommodation and through such 'home-boy' associations material support was provided to those in need. Both the immigrant and migrant population of Lesotho were informed of what was going on at 'home'.

¹⁹² Mr J. Shasha writing to Rogers 28 May 1951. In the main file AWC 230 Moshoeshoe Memorial Celebrations 10.3.49-7.3.73.

¹⁹³ AWC 155 Moshoeshoe Celebration.

¹⁹⁴ Cape Argus 10 March 1966.

The sale and consumption of liquor in African townships was subjected to state control which, however, did not always work as the residents of the townships were, (to use Bozzoli's concept of 'life strategy')¹⁹⁵ able to use occasions such as the celebrations as an opportunity for brewing 'kaffir' beer. As the brewing and sale of beer was prohibited, the celebrations provided people with legalised sociability in that people from different parts of the Peninsula could come together for the festivals. There is a strong element of nostalgia in some of the older generation for the amount of beer or meat they ate. One report stated "feast of beer, and two oxen slaughtered".¹⁹⁶

One of my informants had this to say in connection with the feast:

Tjhelete ya kgomo re ne re entsa hore re be le yona, hobane mekgatlo ena entsha seabo sa R50,00. Worcester, Paarl, Langa, Nyanga le Guguletu. (We had to make a collection for buying an ox all the time. Branches from Worcester, Paarl, Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu contributed R50,00 each).¹⁹⁷

The money that was collected would be kept safe until the following year. But what is important is that they were always looking for a farmer who could sell them an ox at an affordable price. Many argue that, without meat or beer, there was no festival. Other activities could only follow when these two aspects were finalised. This also suggests

¹⁹⁵ B.Bozzoli, with M.Nkotsoe, Women of Phokeng, p236.

¹⁹⁶ The Frontier Post 24.3.1950.

¹⁹⁷ Interview with Mr Moholobela.

that some people simply went to festivals for what they could eat rather than to consider the meanings which were associated with such occasions.

In 1949 the Moshoeshoe Memorial Committee made an application for a permit to "brew 80 gallons of kaffir Beer for Saturday and 80 gallons for Sunday".¹⁹⁸ The reason for making such an application was to avoid being raided by the police. The raid mainly applied to those who were selling liquor and who were in most cases women. But, for cultural functions, an application had to be made under Regulation (6)1 of government Notice no 88 dated 21st January 1949 which provided that

The officer authorised may, on application in the case of a function which has been approved by the urban local authority, issue a permit to enable a householder or a number of householders jointly to brew, manufacture or possess kaffir Beer for supply gratis to the persons present at such function.¹⁹⁹

After the Langa application for the permit to brew was granted, another application came from the Windermere members of the society. Their application requested permission to brew, "200 gallons".²⁰⁰

The manager of Native affairs was not impressed by the Windermere application as it exceeded the amount which the authorities stipulated for such occasions. During that week

¹⁹⁸ Report of the Meeting held on 11.3.1949, in file AWC 230.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Rogers and his policemen went to Windermere. As the process of beer brewing takes time, some of the women found the bureaucratic delays unacceptable to them. Many even went to the extent of brewing more as the law 'protected' them for that weekend. These were some of the survival strategies and hidden forms of struggles which were used by these women.

The 1949 Moshoeshoe Programme raises some interesting issues. The programme was as follows,

- .Prayer Rev Mafata(Bantu Methodist)
- .Speech by Chairman Mr J.J Shasha.
- .Song by The Great Basutoland Choir.
- .Rev Lediga (Presbyterian Church)
- "Historical speech in the life of chief Moshoeshoe and Bringing of his people under Great Britain".
- .Mokhibo-(Basutho women traditional play).
- .Address the local superintendent
- .Representative Ntsikana.
- .Address by rep of Mfengu.
- .Advisory Board.

Khotso Pula Nala.²⁰¹

The difficult task that faces the historian is to interpret a programme like this one. Speeches which were made were not recorded and therefore one is left with scattered information. But the above programme can perhaps be interpreted in the following way. From the evidence it is clear that the churches shared in those community activities. Programmes were always opened and closed by prayer. This was the case even with political meetings in the township. This can be attributed to the influence of missionary education which most Africans were exposed to.

The superintendent was always present at community gatherings of this nature as a government official. For example, the Frontier Post in Aliwal North reported that, "As in previous years Moshoeshoe's Day was celebrated by the local Basuto people in the recreation ground of the municipal location on Sunday afternoon. The gathering was addressed by the Native Commissioner, Mr B.H Wooler, (also the magistrate).²⁰²

Langa was not an exceptional case as Rogers, Worrall and Sir Hugh Stephenson, the Commissioner for the Protectorates, used to address many of the gatherings. Mr Moholobela had this to say about the British Commissioner, Sir Hugh Stephenson.

One a e tla haholo Langa. Moo sehopotso se neng se tshwarelwa teng. Ho sa ntsane hona le monna e mong ya neng a bitswa Ralebelo Sello. One a tseba sekgowa haholo. One a meme commissioner hore ebe teng moketeng mana Langa, ka mehla ene etsamaye le mofumahadi wa yona le ba-lebelledi ba bedi ba hae. One a iketla ha ale mona, mme one a ntsha seabo sa hae le yena ho tlatsa hore mokete o tswele pele.

(He used to come usually to Langa where the memorial was to take place. When there was still Mr Ralebelo Sello, who knew English very well. He invited the commissioner to be there at Langa. The commissioner was always with his wife. He enjoyed himself and also donated his present (gift) so that the function should proceed).²⁰³

It is not clear why the British commissioner only came when the function was held at Langa only.

²⁰² The Frontier Post 22.3.1946.

²⁰³ Interview with Mr Moholobela.

The Superintendent of Native Affairs also took part in many community activities. There was even competition among soccer, rugby, and cricket teams to appoint him their patron. Perhaps, by electing him a patron meant that their chances of receiving material assistance were high. But there were other teams in the township which had African patrons who were businessmen. It can therefore be suggested that this was linked to their influences in society hence their appointment as patrons. (See chapter 1 on the history of sport).

The gender composition of the programmes will be considered under the comparison and differences of the festivals. The two organisations, the Langa Advisory Board and the Langa Vigilance Association were almost the organs of civil society even if they were initially introduced to accommodate the settled urban African population into the White controlled Council of the City of Cape Town. For example, in 1956 it was argued that the Advisory board, "can merely bark, but has no teeth".²⁰⁴ The Advisory Board was not in many ways different from the Vigilance Associations which were meant to accommodate Africans into the existing institutions of oppression rather than transforming the social relations of power in the city. Wilson and Mafeje noted a, "Vigilance Association which claims a membership of about 300 and represents the older and more conservative rent-payers in the married quarters of Langa".²⁰⁵ The early

²⁰⁴ New Age Thursday, May 17, 1956.

²⁰⁵ M.Wilson and A.Mafeje, Langa, p8.

politics around the Advisory Boards and the Vigilance Associations have been treated in detail by Musemwa.²⁰⁶

The power struggle among the Basotho migrants in the Western Cape affected the operation of the Moshoeshoe society in Langa. The following letter from a 'faction' within the Basotho community of the Western Cape highlights such a conflict. The letter was from Nyanga and addressed to the Manager of native Affairs there.

Mr H Pansegrouw
 Manager of Native Affairs
 Nyanga

Sir

As it is well known to you that the Moshoeshoe Memorial Feast has been celebrated with success here at Nyanga, which has now become a central Bantu settlement in the Cape, we here wish to make it known to you sir that there is a misunderstanding, because the Cape Town Basotos split away from us and are organising a counter Moshoeshoe Memorial at Langa.

We predict from past experiences that this counter memorial is going to result in chaos or even fights which may cause blood shed.

We would therefore request you sir in your official capacity enlighten the manager of Langa thus.

Signed (i) A Ramokotlo. (v) C Lemena
 (ii) Mokoe (vi) J Tsesana.²⁰⁷
 (iii) W Dole
 (iv) M Moseleba

A letter from Mr David M Gaboutlolo, secretary of the organisation, was written on the 10th February about a delegation that had to see Rogers about this conflict. The

²⁰⁶ M. Musemwa, 'Aspect of the Social and Political History of Langa Township', 1993.

²⁰⁷ Letter in file AWC 230 Moshoeshoe Celebrations.

delegation from the committee consisted of Messrs Shasha, Mphatsa, Motaung and Maafrika. After the delegation had seen Rogers it was decided that the celebration had to rotate among all the branches so as to avoid further conflict among migrants and immigrants. It can be argued that, though they all came from Lesotho, their status as migrants and as immigrants also differed and this affected the society. A similar observation was made by Bonner in Benoni when he argued that, "It was the scale and rapidity of this transition from migrant to immigrant status that was responsible for the Russian's development".²⁰⁸ It needs to be made clear that the comparison here does not mean that the Nyanga based faction was developing into the "Russians". But the point is that the massive dislocation of people, especially with the emergence of Nyanga as an emergency camp in the 1950s, exerted organisational pressures on the Moshoeshoe society which developed into conflicts among the Sotho. The Langa based group was perceived as the settled one while the Nyanga residents were seen as migrants. The Nyanga based group were exploiting the impression that was created that the Basotho were a "violent people". (They argued that, "we predict from past experiences".) In the late 1940s and 1950s, a Basotho gang known as the "Russians" caused lot of fights, deaths and thefts in some townships in the Transvaal. As these activities involved a lot of violence, the Nyanga based group used the perception that was existing that the Sotho were a violent people. They

²⁰⁸ P. Bonner, 'The Russians on the Reef 1947-1957', in P. Bonner et al (eds) Apartheid's Genesis 1935-1962, p169.

also claimed to have been the oldest branch as the, "Basotos split from us".²⁰⁹

What is also interesting about this letter was the patronage and paternalistic relationship which developed between the superintendent and the people in the township. They saw him as the 'Father' or the 'Guardian' and referred to themselves as 'Your obedient servants'. This type of language and ideology was prevalent in much of the correspondence with the superintendent from residents in Langa. This, however, did not mean that they were truly his blindly obedient servants, but that these were survival strategies as they knew what their rights were. But, on the other hand, Rogers treated them in the manner of a 'compound' manager in a mine who wanted to maintain his hegemony by his 'divide and rule' tactics.

In 1960, another challenge faced the Moshoeshoe Society. Some members from the Northern barracks collected money in the name of the organisation, but did not bring it to the main body. Complaints made were that those collecting the money were not even taking part in the celebrations. As I have highlighted in the 1949 programme, the society was dominated by the elders while the young men and young women were left out. It seems to me that there was a generational consciousness and this led to conflict. The youth mainly featured in the dance and sport. This conflict was even exacerbated by the Native Affairs offices which handed out

²⁰⁹ Letter in file AWC 230 Moshoeshoe Celebrations.

nets and poles and had control over the playing fields, thus undermining the authority of the elders.

Members of the Moshoeshoe Memorial Society used some forms of popular culture to improve the financial position of the society. In 1957 Mr J.M Sello wrote a letter stating that the committee decided, "to make use of some of its members, by forming football teams, and therefore to promote competitions whereby funds can be raised".²¹⁰ The teams included "Free State Callies", "Matlama", "Linare", and "Lilala" all Basotho soccer teams their names reflecting the different regions from which the Sotho came. This was a common feature as we have seen. For example, Mr Moholobela, a migrant from Matsieng stated that, "Matlama ke ya Matsieng-ke ya heso kwana, ke batho ba Matsieng ba Morena Moshoeshoe (Matlama is from Matsieng, my place-for the people of Mr Moshoeshoe).²¹¹ This division of teams contributed to the competition, but also fragmented the African working class into 'insiders' versus 'outsiders'. This also highlights the nature of consciousness at the time whereby the people were involved in the construction of ethnic identities and not only the White state can carry all the blame. The rapid process of industrialisation led to the competition for material resources such as housing, leisure and the dominance over urban space. Bozzoli succinctly expressed this point by noting that, "consciousness is

²¹⁰ Mr J.M Sello writing to superintendent of Langa.

²¹¹ Interview with Mr Moholobela.

formed historically, within a nexus of structures, experiences, relationships and events".²¹²

In 1960, an advert was circulated in the township about the soccer competitions. It was as follows,

"Soccer.Soccer !
Moshoeshoe 's Cup Competitions

Free State Callies FC vs Matlama FC
Linare FC vs Lilala FC

Admission:"21- All Round:"²¹³

Relationships between Britain and her colonies were maintained till the latter received their political independence. In 1964-1966 the Western Cape Moshoeshoe Memorial Society was 'fortunate' in bringing the British Commissioner for the protectorates, Sir Hugh Stephenson, to Langa. According to the correspondence with the manager of Native Affairs, it appears it was difficult to bring him to Langa. The Boer-British conflict was still alive in that, in 1961, South Africa was made a republic and by so doing had terminated the links with the Commonwealth. This shows the mistrust the Boers had with the commissioner's association with the Africans as in the oral evidence he always had his body guards. In 1966, Stephenson was given 'royal' treatment by Basotho of the Western Cape. In his speech he challenged the Basotho migrants that their country was moving towards political independence but was economically dependent on South Africa. He stated that

²¹² B.Bozzoli, with M.Nkotsoe, Women of Phokeng, p239.

²¹³ The advert was issued by Patcon Press, 30 Business Centre Langa, File AWC 230.

"Basutoland is not, unfortunately, endowed with many natural resources".²¹⁴ At the Moshoeshoe celebrations the Basotho clung to their Sotho identities. In 1965, the Cape Times reported that, "many were wearing brightly-coloured blankets and traditional hats".²¹⁵ While in 1966 the same paper described "a crowd of hundreds of men, women and children in traditional Basuto hats and blankets".²¹⁶ As identity took different forms at different historical periods, we now turn to another ethnic festival, the Fingo festival which aimed at tracing the history of the Mfengu.

Some aspects of Mfengu history

In the 1820s the Mfengu emerged out of the Shakan wars a devastated people. They did not have access to livestock and land which were central to political and economic independence at that particular time. Peires noted that there was a "sudden influx of Mfengu refugees".²¹⁷ The Mfengu came from the Hlubi, Bhele, Zizi and other smaller clans. More than 10,000 Mfengus arrived in the land of the Gcalekas, in Butterworth, where they were well received by Hintsa. Mostert noted that when they were asked,

'Who are you ? What do you want ?

²¹⁴ Cape Times, 4 March 1966.

²¹⁵ Cape Times 15 March 1965.

²¹⁶ Cape Times 4 March 1966.

²¹⁷ J.B Peires, The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence, (Johannesburg Ravan Press), 1987, p41.

Their reply was, 'Siyam Fenguza; 'We seek service! We are hungry!.²¹⁸

They were then called ama-Fengu, 'Hungry people in search of work by the Xhosa people, but corrupted by colonists into 'Fingo'.²¹⁹ The position which the Mfengu occupied in Xhosa society became exploited by colonialist agents. According to Fast, they 'were not in a strong economic position hence their acceptance of the Christian gospel'.²²⁰ She further noted that many were incorporated into the Xhosa "busa clientship system".²²¹ Missionaries and other colonial agents created the perception that clientship meant that the Mfengu were slaves who were held in bondage by Hintsa. Xhosa society was not egalitarian as there were kings, commoners, control of women's production and reproduction. But it was colonialism that expropriated the best lands to the Whites and created a labouring class whose labour was exploited by the colonialist. According to Peires "no such class existed in precolonial Xhosa society".²²²

On 8 March, 1835, about 17,000 Mfengu with 22,000 cattle and thousands of goats made formal entry into the Cape colony

²¹⁸ Noel Mostert, Frontiers, (Great Britain, Mackays of Chatham, 1992), p606.

²¹⁹ Ibid, p606.

²²⁰ Hildegarde Fast, 'African Perceptions of the Missionaries and their Message: Wesleyan at Mount Coke and Butterworth 1825-1835', (MA, University of Cape Town, 1991), p151.

²²¹ Ibid, p151.

²²² Ibid, p103.

under their self proclaimed shepherd John Ayliff. When asked about this move, they were reported to have said, 'Siya Emlungweni', 'We are going to the land of the right people'.²²³ It is important to note that Mostert equated "White", "Emlungweni" with "right people". However, the above date became controversial and contested by the Xhosa residents of Langa. As land was important to their survival, they fell into the colonialists trap by being granted land as a way of breaking the formidable resistance that the Xhosa waged against the expanding colony. Some were settled in Peddie in Ciskei while others were brought to the Western Cape to work on farms, docks, railways, building industries and other sectors where African labour was in demand. The intention of the governor of the Cape colony, Sir Benjamin D'Urban was very clear. He stated that,

The Fingo community would supply military support against Hintsa, the Xhosa paramount chief; the colony would get the labour of 'sober, industrious people, well skilled in the tasks of herding and agriculture'; the land in the Peddie district to which they were moved was 'worse than useless' but, he confidently expected, 'would be turned into a 'flourishing garden' by the newcomers; finally, and this was at the heart of the strategy, the Mfengu would form a human buffer between the colonists and the Xhosa foe.²²⁴

They did not only act as a buffer zone but became involved in colonial wars on the side of the colonial and imperial forces. They were active combatants in the wars of 1846,

²²³ Noel Mostert, Frontiers, p722.

²²⁴ Quoted in Colin Bundy, The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1988), p33.

1850-53, and 1877-78, on the imperial side.²²⁵ Even when Moshoeshoe handed his country over to the British Crown, the Mfengu and Tlokwas were on the side of the Boers.

Fingo and Urban Ethnicity

John Tosh makes the point that, "history is collective memory, the storehouse of experience through which people develop a sense of their social identity and their future prospects".²²⁶ While Bonner approaches the same issue from a different perspective by stating that "ethnic cultures and identities possess a reality in South Africa which it would be myopic to ignore. As the growing role of vigilantes at the present moment suggest, it can also be politically unwise. Ethnic identities, as can be seen from much of the rest of African literature, need to be confronted and understood, both as instruments of manipulation from above and as modes of accommodation and adjustment from below".²²⁷ The above historians raise key issues towards understanding the formation of the Fingo Association in 1943. This Association persisted till the late 1950s. In early 1943, a group of Mfengu (led by Garcia Nongauza, a former City Council nominee in the Advisory Board) formed this association²²⁸ which consisted of G Nongauza, chairman, G Bokwana, secretary, P Zuma, Treasurer.²²⁹ Members of the

²²⁵ Ibid, p34.

²²⁶ J.Tosh, The Pursuit of History, p1.

²²⁷ P.Bonner et al (eds), Holding Their Ground, p11.

²²⁸ B.Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town', p166.

²²⁹ BC 579 A24.256.

Executive Committee were P Zuma, convenor, G Bokwana, J Mafu and C.J Nabe.²³⁰

When the Association was formed, the manager of Native Affairs in Langa, Mr Rogers, did not even consult with the Langa Vigilance and Advisory Board on the matter. Members of the Langa community and those in the above bodies expressed their anger and bitterness at Rogers for his authoritarian control of the township by allowing the association to be formed. On the 3rd of March 1943, a delegation from the Langa Vigilance Association led by its chairman, B Ntshinga, went to Rogers's offices to, "lodge its objections against any form of Fingo Memorial in this township".²³¹ The delegation resolved that Rogers had not raised a finger to stop this or to call order as "it was clear that the manager had permitted himself to be used as an instrument to fan racial and or tribal hatred in the township of which he was the Head, the Father and the Guardian".²³²

They further noted that Rogers did not take into account the views of the delegation which had several Fingo members. He had "heard the language used against the Xhosa people, he had seen for himself the ugly mood of the meeting,

We have resolved that the holding of this memorial in an industrial centre and a cosmopolitan area like Cape Town will definitely antagonise the welfare and future

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ BC 579 A24.241.

²³² Ibid.

peace of the various elements of the Bantu peoples of Langa and of Cape Town.²³³

Despite the objections which were raised towards the Fingo Association, in the middle of May 1943 a pamphlet was distributed in the township which aimed at mobilising support for the new organisation. Part of it read as follows:

Would it be a disgrace if we congregate to revive the oaths of our Grandfathers under the milk tree on the 14th May 1835? If you are a Fingo what prevents you from joining the Association of Fingos? This is an Association. Meetings are held every first Sunday of the month at Langa, 4.p.m....²³⁴

The pledges which their ancestors made during the colonial period in 1835 were:

- (i) To be loyal to the government
- (ii) To educate their children
- (iii) To help the missionaries.²³⁵

The above pledges need to be seen in context. Was there any continuity or discontinuity as the British government gave way to an Afrikaner apartheid government? The earlier part of this section attempted to link the 'emergence' of Mfengu identity with the British conquest of independent Transkei, and argued that the form that it took was predominantly that of manipulation from above to meet the labour needs of the colony. Webster noted that the major needs of the colony

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ BC 579 A24.256.

²³⁵ Cape Times, 13 May 1953.

were for, "land, labour and security".²³⁶ The attitude of many people in the township was based on their past memory and the present situation in which the Fingo wanted to be treated differently as British "subjects" as they had been during the colonial period. This became the major reason why the Fingo Association was both formed and resisted. According to Wilson and Mafeje, one informant told them that, "this is a painful and unforgettable day when the Mfengu betrayed the Xhosa and sold them to the Whites".²³⁷ While Ngwevela in the same vein stated that, "people do not like that festival, saying we can't celebrate whilst we were "slaves" and the land was taken away from us".²³⁸ The conflict situation was made worse by the form in which the celebration took place. One report stated that, "Fingoes in full tribal costume, will march from a spot on the outskirts of the township ("Butterworth"), to the Langa Market ("Peddie").²³⁹ As the celebration day, 14 May, was meant to be a holiday, and some Mfengu stayed at home, this meant that few industries were affected by the 'holiday'. But, at times it appears that some companies did not recognise that holiday. For example, in 1951, Mr Joseph Papu, president of the Association who became chairman of the Langa Vigilance Association in 1954, appealed to employers to release Fingo workers for the celebration. He noted:

²³⁶ Alan Webster, 'Unmasking the Fingo', University of the Witwatersrand Press, 6-9 September, (1991), p7.

²³⁷ M.Wilson and A.Mafeje, Langa, p36.

²³⁸ Interview with Knox Ngwevela 05.09.1993. Knox is the son of the former president of the ANC in the Western Cape, Mr Johnson Ngwevela who passed away in 1987.

²³⁹ Cape Times, 12 May 1951.

I shall be grateful if all employers of Fingoe tribes men will release their employees on these days which mean so much to us.²⁴⁰

There is enough evidence to show that some industries responded to these calls as Fingo 'tribesmen' were said to be 'law abiding' workers, while they had a different attitude towards workers who were involved with the Langa Workers Association. This Association articulated working class interest beyond ethnic divisions. This perception of 'law abiding' was also used to refer to the residents of Langa and to some people from the rural areas in official correspondence. This ruling class perception was put to shame during the 1947 beer riot, police riot of 1956 and largely during the 1960 pass campaign. According to this perception, any resistance was attributed to 'outsiders', 'communists' and 'agitators'.²⁴¹ In 1956, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd of the Nationalist Party appealed to Black people to remember the oaths their ancestors took in 1835. Out of this appeal, one newspaper report noted that, "Verwoerd's army of 'Good Boys' is growing".²⁴² The report went further stating that,

The Fingo celebration will be held at Langa Hall, Langa, on May 12, 1956, for the purpose of renewing their vow when they solemnly promise that they will be

²⁴⁰ Cape Times, 12 May 1951.

²⁴¹ For some of this perception see also the last chapter on urban politics.

²⁴² New Age Thursday, 17 May 1956.

loyal to the government, help the missionaries and educate their children.²⁴³

The oaths which were taken in 1835 were taken at a particular historical period. The government of the time was also different from that of the 1950s. The appeal made by Verwoerd was a way of legitimizing the apartheid regime. His government even made it very clear the type of education Black people had to receive. This system of education known as Bantu education aimed at preparing the African child for servitude while the White child was trained for the ownership and control of the 'means of production'. The South African state brought education which was under the control of missionaries into its hands to achieve that objective. This educational dispensation can be linked to the observation made by Ndebele when he noted that, "Black society was the object of White experimentation in social management".²⁴⁴

The role of religion in society is always ambivalent. Religious forces can be mobilised towards the overthrow of an unjust government but at the same time religion can be used to legitimate an existing unjust social order. In other words, religion can be a double edged sword which can move in different directions depending on the class, nationality and the particular interests served. A good example of this point was when Rev John Ayliff, a missionary in Butterworth, led the Mfengu migration to the Western

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Njabulo Ndebele, 'Liberation and Crisis of Culture', South African Review of Books February\May 1990, p23.

Cape. He was described as the "Father of the Fingo".²⁴⁵ The Fingo migration was 'blessed' by the missionary community in Butterworth with the claim that he (Ayliff) had "rescued the oppressed from their Gcaleka overlords".²⁴⁶ In 1953, a Cape Times report noted that the speakers at the Fingo celebration, "will recall how the Fingos, led by the Rev John Ayliff, migrated from the Transkei to the Western Cape".²⁴⁷ According to Villa-Vicencio, "missionary conquest was dependent on imperial protection, making missionaries both conscious and unconscious agents, along with traders, soldiers and imperial administrators, of the British domination".²⁴⁸ It is therefore argued, in this case, that evangelism was linked to colonial expansion. When they were brought to the Western Cape, the Mfengu had to do manual labour at the docks, farms, construction sites and at the City Council. Bickford-Smith makes the point that in 1892, some of the Mfengu migrants, "were kept in a building at the docks (which had been used ten years before to house labourers from Delgoa bay) and were subject to a 9.p.m curfew".²⁴⁹ From the above evidence it is clear that the Mfengu migrants were subjected to a worse form of exploitation than in Hintsa's place. The section now turns

²⁴⁵ A Webster 'Unmasking the Fingo', p5.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Cape Times, 13 May 1953.

²⁴⁸ Charles Villa-Vicencio, Trapped in Apartheid, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1988), p48.

²⁴⁹ Vivian Bickford-Smith, A 'special tradition of multi-racialism? Segregation in Cape Town in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, pp47-62, p56, in James Wilmot and M Simons (ed), The Angry Divide, (Cape Town, David Philip), 1989.

to another festival which had a profound impact on the labouring class in Langa township.

The Bantu 'Saint' and Langa township.²⁵⁰

The formation of the St. Ntsikana Memorial Organisation in Langa in 1944 did not receive the hostility that the Fingo Association did. Though Ntsikana had a Xhosa ethnic background, ethnicity was not the primary issue as the festival promoted a different loyalty, that of the Christian gospel. It is believed that Ntsikana prophesied the coming of the "White man carrying a book (the Bible)²⁵¹, and a "holeless button (which symbolised money)".²⁵² Ntsikana was converted to the Christian faith in the nineteenth century and became one of the influential evangelists in the Eastern Cape. The popular belief among many African Christians is that he was the "Bantu" saint, but he has not been officially canonized by established Christianity. The central idea expressed in his vision was that of total submission to God from whom peace and protection comes according to classical Christian belief. According to the historian George Theal, his song, 'Ulu Thixo omkhulu ngose

²⁵⁰ This study does not intend to provide a historical background around Ntsikana as this has been dealt with by other historians. See K.M Kondlo, 'The Culture and Religion', p35, J de Gruchy, Cry Justice (London, London, 1986), pp56-59, Janet Hodgson, 'Ntsikana's Great Hymn A Xhosa Expression of Christianity in the early 19th century Eastern Cape', Centre for African Studies, UCT, Communications no 4.1980. But I intend comparing the Festival with the other festivals in the township.

²⁵¹ Cape Times 'Saint' to be Honoured', 24 April 1954.

²⁵² Ibid.

Zulwini' was "capable of stirring the feelings of his countrymen more than any other poetry yet written".²⁵³ The theme of protection from God was linked to the song by Kondlo when he says that it was, "The great blanket with which we are clothed".²⁵⁴

The Western Province St. Ntsikana Memorial Organisation established a scholarship fund to achieve the two main objectives which were in his vision, (i) To embrace Christianity, (ii) To educate their children.²⁵⁵ From the above evidence it can be argued that ethnicity was not promoted as the interests of the organisers were those of educating the African children. A number of students at Langa High School and at the University of Fort Hare were able to secure the St. Ntsikana scholarship. For the fact that he was regarded as the "Cape Bantu saint"²⁵⁶ meant that he transcended the ethnic divisions which existed in the township but promoted the Christian gospel among all Africans. The ethnic divisions in the township were dealt with by the creation of a spirit of ecumenicalism by involving almost all the churches in the township. This was even the case with the Mendi scholarship fund which concentrated on the education of 'needy Bantu' children. Rev James Calata was the National president of the St. Ntsikana Memorial Society. He was also Secretary General of

²⁵³ Cape Times, 17 April 1959.

²⁵⁴ K.M.Kondlo, 'The Culture and Religion', p36.

²⁵⁵ Cape Times, 24 April 1954.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

the African National Congress from 1936-1949.²⁵⁷ His relationship with the A.N.C was always a concern to the manager of Native Affairs, Mr S.A.Rogers. The major fear that Rogers had was that the occasion could be used to propagate A.N.C campaigns.

The following table, though inaccurate, could be useful in assessing the 'popularity' of 'traditional' festivals.

Name	Act	Est. participants	
		m	f
Fingo	Community, dance, plays, singing	500	200
Mendi	Community Singing	400	250
Moshesh	Community Singing	300	100
	African Dance		
Ntsikana	Community Singing African Dance	500	200. ²⁵⁸

The above figures were based on estimates and are very static because they do not show any 'rise and fall' over time. Though it is difficult to know exactly the number of people who went to these festivals sometimes the figures were more than 300 or 500 hundred as provided in the estimate. For example, in 1954, the Cape Times reported that, "hundreds of Africans from as far afield as Cradock, Worcester, Paarl and other parts of the Western Province"²⁵⁹ came to the Ntsikana festival. In 1958, the same paper

²⁵⁷ Francis Meli, South Africa Belongs to Us: A History of the A.N.C., (Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1988), p209.

²⁵⁸ R. Botto, 'Some Aspects of the Leisure Occupation', p140.

²⁵⁹ Cape Times, 24 April 1954.

reported that, "about 1,000 Fingo Tribesmen will take part in a symbolic march today".²⁶⁰ While in 1959, the Cape Times reported conservatively that, the Ntsikana celebration, "drew a large and respectful crowd"²⁶¹ while in the same year the Moshoeshoe festival was attended by about, "2,000 people".²⁶² The point being made here is that it is not clear how many people attended these festivals. Some of the newspaper estimates were made a day before the actual festival took place and therefore such estimates have problems for any historical accuracy.

The ethnic festivals had many common features. The leadership in all these festivals revealed distinctions of age, class, gender and ethnicity. Male elders and chiefs occupied special positions within these festivals. Chiefs could be distinguished by their leopard skin attire from the commoners. The picture on (26.4.1954 Ntsikana celebrations) makes this point much more clearly than the words of a text can express. Women were confined to the 'domestic sphere' as they did most of the cooking, serving and dancing. This feature was not only common in 'traditional' organisations but also in nationalist organisations as well. For example, in 1960 during the siege in the township, Ntantala makes the point that, "as these were meetings for men, we went there dressed as men with scarves round our heads".²⁶³ In his

²⁶⁰ Cape Times, 14 May 1958.

²⁶¹ Cape Times, 13 May 1959.

²⁶² Cape Times, 16 March 1959.

²⁶³ Phyllis Ntantala, A Life's Mosaic, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1993), p179.

observation of ethnic festivals Van Onselen notes that they reflect place of origin or what he calls, "historic achievement, or the attributes of manhood and virility".²⁶⁴ Women did not just withdraw and let the men dominate the scene, as they introduced the famous Basotho women choral song, the 'mokhibo kneeling dance'. One of my informant stated that, "Re ne re dula ditulong, re lebella bahlanka ba bapalang lebaleng. Bo mme ba ntse ba didietsa (ba hlakisa), (We would sit on chairs, watching the young men in the playing fields. Women were ululating and praising them.)"²⁶⁵

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to move beyond the stereotypes which have been created around ethnic festivals. We also saw how the unique histories of the Xhosa, Mfengu and Sotho affected the nature of the celebrations. In other words, the chapter attempted to show that the festivals offered people some kind of social identity, in an urban environment which was very hostile to many Black people in South Africa, even if these festivals were celebrated only once every year. This point has been well expressed by Tosh when he sees history as a collective memory. The gatherings meant that the working class could share their experiences in different ways.

²⁶⁴ Charles Van Onselen, Chibaro (Great Britain, Pluto Press, 1976), p187.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Mr Moholobela.

It was also shown how ethnicity has become a problematic concept in South African politics. The objections to the Fingo memorial can be seen from the perspective that Fingo ethnicity was created from 'above' because of their experience of colonial collaboration. The conflict, brought about by the celebration of the Fingo festival, was made complex by the involvement of successful businessmen like Mr P Zuma and Mr C.J Nabe who were the executive members of the Fingo Association. Cooper notes that, "ties of kinship, ethnicity and clientage can either be a source of mobility or the basis of a dangerous autonomy".²⁶⁶ This ambivalent and unstable relationship was given room to flourish, in that the petty bourgeoisie and the working class were 'kraaled' in the same space because of the 1923 Urban Areas Act, the 1950 Group Areas Act and other laws which made life for the African people difficult. The aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie were blocked and because of this squeeze, they were made to identify with the 'masses' but at times this led to the adjustment from below by mobilising ethnic sentiments for social mobility. But, during times of popular outrage, this strata of businessmen suffered enormously, especially during times of boycott campaigns. A good example of this was during the Van Riebeeck festival when some of the merchant class were lured by the state with notions of 'progress' and 'civilization' to come to the festival. As a result they suffered terrible economic losses because of consumer boycotts or isolations. The point being made here is that township business strata is a

²⁶⁶ Frederick Cooper, Struggle For The City, p38.

very fragile sector that has no security because of the laws which have shaped South African politics.

The life of King Moshoeshoe has been an inspiration to many people not because he was a Masotho but for what he did which was an inspiration to nationalist leaders. In 1946, the president of the Moshoeshoe Society, Mr B.S Mokhehle, introduced his celebration speech by stating, "Sons and daughters of Africa I deem it a special honour to address you this morning"²⁶⁷. The language used in the speech was that of a Pan Africanist leader who always refers to his or her followers as sons and daughters of Africa. He went further to state that, "My friends, I want to make it clear to you that Moshoeshoe's Celebration has no tribal frontiers, everybody who wants to honour this great son of Africa is welcomed".²⁶⁸

In his work on Basotho history, Sanders notes that, "one of the first events in the independence celebrations was the unveiling of a statue of Moshoeshoe, whom the Sotho people justly regard as the founder of their nation".²⁶⁹ The above evidence challenges the claim made by Kondlo that the Moshoeshoe celebrations were "exclusive and tribalistic".²⁷⁰ It can therefore be argued that Moshoeshoe had more meaning to some people than to others. Many of the people who took part in the celebrations and those involved in the nation

²⁶⁷ Mochochonono 6 April 1946.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Peter Sanders, Moshweshwe of Lesotho, p1.

²⁷⁰ K.M.Kondlo, 'The Culture and Religion', p42.

building project, saw in Moshoeshoe a leader who could be an example towards that goal. In 1966, Moeti had this to say about Moshoeshoe. He stated that, "this year we observe the bicentenary of the birth of one of the most outstanding African statesmen that ever lived: King Moshoeshoe 1".²⁷¹ From the evidence above it is clear that the historical Moshoeshoe was different from the 'tribalistic' one who was celebrated at Langa. Kondlo's use of the concept of tribes is very static as it suggests notions of 'backwardness' and 'conservatism'.

The chapter also shares the observation made by Musemwa about the Xhosa-Mfengu conflict because of the latter's collaboration with British imperialism and with the apartheid government because of their concept of 'loyalty' to the government. However, it is argued in this chapter that the Xhosa-Mfengu conflict did not develop into the brutal 'knobkerrie warfare' that characterised fightings in

²⁷¹ Sello Moeti, 'The Legacy of Moshoeshoe', Sechaba October, (1986), p1.

the mines and compounds.²⁷² The difference with the Western Cape was the fact that the Cape did not experience the rapid social disruption brought about by mining capital. The African population in the Cape remained very small and consisted largely of the Nguni group and this affected the nature of the conflict compared to the mining situation where there was a large African workforce from different ethnic backgrounds. Both Musemwa and Kondlo treat the Mfengu as a homogeneous bloc and do not highlight the class interests and stratification within the Mfengu members of the community of Langa. The conflict that was portrayed was between the the Xhosa and Mfengu but does not explore the resistance by conscientised Mfengu towards the Fingo celebration itself. This shows the generational

²⁷² For a detailed comparison of 'Faction Fighting' see T Ranger, "Faction Fighting", *Race Consciousness and Worker Consciousness: A note on the Jagersfontein Riots of 1914*, SALB, vol 4, no5, 1978, W Beinart, "Political and Collective Violence in Southern African Historiography", JSAS, vol, 18.no3, September, 1992, I Phimister and C Van Onselen, "The Political Economy of Tribal Animosity: A case study of the 1929 Bulawayo Location, "faction fight" JSAS, vol.6. no 1, 1979, T.E Maloka (Still a W.I.P paper but has some very interesting ideas around this area), "Faction Fights" or "Fixed Bayonets" Against sticks and Stones: Basotho Migrants and Violence on the Mines, 1886-1939, History Seminar, October 1993. P Bonner, 'The Russians on the Reef, 1947-1957', pp160-194, in P Bonner et al (eds) Apartheid's Genesis 1935-1962, (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1993), Jeff Guy and Motlatsi Thabane, 'The Ma-Rasea: A participant's Perspective, pp436-456', in Belinda Bozzoli (ed), Class, Community and Conflict (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987). What is common from the above works is that "faction fighting" was rife on the mines and in the compounds. Competition for resources, ethnic labour organisations, lack of recreational facilities and the poor living conditions contributed largely to the 'faction fights'. Though workers in Langa lived in barracks and zones, their conditions were not the same as in the compounds. The other important aspect about Langa was the fact that the majority of the people were Xhosa from the Eastern Cape and this reduced the level of 'faction fighting'.

consciousness that has developed among Mfengu Youth in that their liberation is tied up with that of the majority of the politically oppressed and economically exploited people. Ndebele's observation can be applied to the Mfengu youth as well when he argues that they had catapulted themselves into the forefront of the national liberation struggle because of the "perception by the youth that their parents did not do enough to combat their oppression".²⁷³

The chapter has also shown how the people themselves were involved in shaping that social identity in an urban environment that was very insecure and hostile to many people. The following chapter will be showing the involvement of the state in shaping popular culture. In other words, the Van Riebeeck Festival, became shaped according to needs of the state and bringing Africans to the celebration as third class citizens.

²⁷³ Njabulo S. Ndebele, Rediscovery Of the Ordinary, (Johannesburg, Congress of South African Writers) 1991, p70.

CHAPTER THREE

Jan Van Riebeeck in the Langa Market Hall: The case of the Jan Van Riebeeck Celebration of 1952.

Introduction

When Mrs Patricia de Lille of the P.A.C said that the statue of Jan Van Riebeeck, on the Cape Town foreshore, should be "thrown into the sea"²⁷⁴, there was a mixed reaction from some quarters within the South African community. Professor Kader Asmal of the A.N.C shared a similar view to those of the Federasie Van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge that the "destruction of monuments could be followed by the destruction of people-as has happened in some parts of the world".²⁷⁵ The specific controversy around the symbolism of Jan Van Riebeeck is as old as the conquest of the indigenous people at the hands of the Whites since the colonial period. This conflict was intensified in 1952.

Four years after the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, they organised the Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Celebration. As the social history of Cape Town is full of a variety of festivals, it is argued in this chapter that a closer analysis of the festivals is needed for a better understanding of the social, political and the ideological context which gave rise to such festivals. The Van Riebeeck festival was an elite festival in which the state was involved in shaping the nature of the occasion as compared to the other popular festivals dealt with in the previous

²⁷⁴ Cape Times, 3 April 1993.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

chapter. The apartheid state used the festival as a 'renewal' of loyalty and the construction of public history for South Africa. The history that was being constructed was Euro-centric and glorified the role played by Whites with their notions of "progress" and "civilisation". The Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Celebration meant a lot more to the White population of South Africa, as many were able to trace their "common heritage" back to 1652, than to the Black majority. For them, the 1950s was a period of oppression, the Suppression of Communism Act, the Group Areas Act, the Mixed Marriages Act, the Bantu Education Act and the Population Registration Act. All of this legislation further polarised South Africans. However, not every White person accepted the state's control of how the past had to be remembered. Black nationalist movements such as the All African Convention, Non-European Unity Movement, African National Congress, Teachers League of South Africa and other civic bodies such as the Langa Advisory Board, Langa Vigilance Association resisted being incorporated into this type of celebration. It is argued in this chapter that the festival meant the celebration of conquest at the hands of the Whites, for Blacks had nothing to celebrate as the apartheid regime was consolidating its power base.

The chapter has three aims: To provide a historical context for this festival; to highlight popular resistance against the festival and to explore the conflict and contradictions which existed in Langa township. The festival will be compared to the other festivals which took place in the township.

Van Riebeeck in Context

The arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck in South Africa was the beginning of political and economic domination of the Blacks by Whites in South Africa. The process of dispossession which the Khoi and San were exposed to was extended to other parts of the country in that the majority of the Black South Africans became landless during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948, they organised the Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary celebration of 1952. According to the planners of the celebration, Dr Daniel F Malan, the leader of the party had to give a "signal over the radio that will light bonfires all over the Union and set the church bells ringing to announce the beginning of the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival".²⁷⁶ This message had to be given on the 4th of January 1952 in the little town of Ohrigstad.²⁷⁷ Ohrigstad was one of those towns established by the trekkers who left the Cape Colony in the 1830s and the action linked it to Afrikaner nationalism in the 1950s. This meant that wagons would leave other smaller Afrikaner towns, such as

²⁷⁶ Natal Daily News, 28 December 1951.

²⁷⁷ According to Delius, Ohrigstad was one of those communities established by Trekkers from the Cape Colony. P Delius, The Land Belongs to Us (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1983), p30. In the twentieth century Ohrigstad has become a farming area in the hands of the Afrikaner farmers and on the other hand has become associated with the Afrikaner right wing which does not want to see political and economic change taking place in the country. The Weekly Mail Survey, South African politicians A-Z, October, 1993 notes Constand Viljoen, a former chief of the SADF in the 1980s and presently a leader of the right wing has a farm in Ohrigstad.

Groblersdal, Messina and Nelspruit as well as those as far away as Namibia, Port St. Johns in the Transkei and even the Netherlands, for Cape Town. Other Afrikaners had to join those travelling to the Cape on the way. The first mail coach had to take 86 days travelling at "five miles an hour over the 30 to 35 miles a day".²⁷⁸ As the Afrikaner used ox wagons for their transport, this meant that they had to give the animals time to rest on the long journey to Cape Town. The festival had to coincide with the April school vacations in the Cape.

The involvement of the Black people in the festival was left in the hands of the Department of Native Affairs. The N.A.D was influenced by the Stallardist ideology which differentiated the African people into detribalised and tribalised Natives. In early September 1951, Mr Sampson, an official of the Native Affairs Department from Pretoria, came to Langa to talk to the residents of the township about the festival. The residents were told of the importance of Africans taking part in the coming Jan Van Riebeeck festival. According to Mr Sampson, the residents of Langa would be in a better position to know what was expected of them after a series of lectures were conducted which showed their 'stages of development'. The developments would show three stages of their history. The first stage would depict Africans before the colonial period, "smelting from the ore,

²⁷⁸ P.E Evening Post, 13 October 1951.

making mats and clay pots etc".²⁷⁹ He argued that he had found someone in "Swaziland who could do these things".²⁸⁰

The second stage of development would depict how Africans began to be educated by going to church and learning how to weave wool.²⁸¹ According to him the third stage would depict 'modern' Africans. He argued that there would be, "educated Africans on show-professors, lawyers and teachers".²⁸²

After the N.A.D officials had presented their plans to the residents of Langa, a research committee was established to look into the N.A.D proposals. On the 27th September 1951, the National Council of African Women, the Society for Young Africa (SOYA), Langa Vigilance Association, The A.N.C branch, Traders Association and the Rugby Football Union gathered at the Langa Market Hall declaring their non-participation in the festival. Their objections revolved around immediate township experiences as unambiguously expressed by Mr Johnson Ngwevela, a member of the Langa Advisory Board and of the African National Congress when he said,

It will give a false picture. You will not see Africans's homes being raided by the police, the pick-up vans, pass arrests, pondokies, the merciless

²⁷⁹ The Guardian September 1951.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

ejection of illegal squatters. No thinking African can support such a festival.²⁸³

The first stage aimed at depicting the iron age period but that was linked to colonial intrusion which was depicted as bringing 'civilisation' and 'progress' to the African people. The N.A.D also constructed a kraal surrounded by huts. When the Zulu women were invited to the festival they were "asked to be their tribal selves in a kraal which the Native Affairs Department will feature as one of the exhibits in the Bantu pavilion at the stadium at the fair on the Cape foreshore".²⁸⁴ What emerges from the above evidence is that the festival was influenced by segregationist ideology. For example, one source stated that the festival had to take place in town, while that of Africans had to be organised "outside of the official structures of the festival committee by the Native Affairs Department".²⁸⁵ The 'Bantu pavilion' was part of the Group Areas Act thinking which had penetrated the festival as the racial lines were clearly demarcated. The above evidence is far from the wishes of the planners of the festival as it was believed to be a "symbol of national unity".²⁸⁶

²⁸³ The Guardian, September 1951.

²⁸⁴ Queenstown Daily Rep 10 December 1951.

²⁸⁵ Van Riebeeck Festival Guide book and Catalogue, Cape Town (1952), p59.

²⁸⁶ C. Rassool and L. Witz, 'The 1952 Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Celebration: Constructing and Contesting Public National History'. Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Africa Seminar, 25 August 1992, p7.

Popular Resistance and the Van Riebeeck Festival

The Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary celebration brought about unity and conflict in the township of Langa. The Methodist and the Langa market halls were centres of activities during the period leading to the celebration. Pamphlets were distributed and meetings called urging people not to take part in the celebration. These were occasions where 'derived' ideologies were given a platform on which to flourish. For example, Mr M.S 'Cappy' Ndlumbini remembers being told, "we must not ah...go to it or to encourage the Boers to win us over".²⁸⁷ The above view was shared by Mr Mkaza when he said, "they were saying the Boers are trying to win you over to their side".²⁸⁸ The dominant view that existed in the township was that the festival was for Whites hence the hesitance by many in taking part.

At the A.A.C Conference, held in Bloemfontein on the 17th and 18th December 1951, the conference resolved to boycott the Jan Van Riebeeck festival. The N.E.U.M, an affiliate of the A.A.C, became a vehicle through which the A.A.C resolutions were spread in the Western Cape. On the 18th March 1952, the N.E.U.M announced its mass boycott campaign on the parade. Throughout that month meetings were held in many residences and schools in the Western Cape. Some were held at "Hawston, Strand, Cape Town central, Schotsche Kloof, Bloemhof flats, Vasco, Kew town, Gleemoor, Rylands, Welcome Estate, Grassy Park, Claremont, Retreat, Langa and

²⁸⁷ Interview with Mr M.S.Ndlumbini 22.01.1994.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Mr S.Mkaza 23.11.1993.

Nyanga".²⁸⁹ According to Ntantala, who was involved with the CATA, their motto was 'We have Nothing to Celebrate'.²⁹⁰ She further noted that as members of CATA they "worked in areas where there was a concentration of Africans-Langa, Nyanga, Simonstown, Retreat, Elsies River, Eureka Estate and Goodwood".²⁹¹ The enthusiasm shown at some of these meetings was an inspiration for a left wing political formation that has become associated with the Western Cape. In their reports they stated that, "the spirit at all the meetings was high and the people have taken up the boycott and made it a household word".²⁹² It was further reported that all the, "Langa meetings were crowded to the limit".²⁹³ Oral evidence shows that the N.E.U.M existed in Langa, although as Mr Ndumbini says, "they were not many but vociferous".²⁹⁴ Members consisted mainly of teachers. Ideas of the Unity Movement were able to penetrate into Langa through SOYA (Society for Young Africa), started by the influence of I.B Tabata and which targetted the migrant workers of Langa in exporting 'derived' ideologies to the rural areas, and CATA which was an affiliate of the A.A.C.

The anti-festival campaign gave the N.E.U.M a platform to launch attacks on its political rivals, particularly the

²⁸⁹ The Torch, 18 March 1952.

²⁹⁰ Phyllis Ntantala, A Life's Mosaic, p150.

²⁹¹ Ibid, p 150

²⁹² The Torch 18 March 1952

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Mr M.S.Ndlumbini 22.01.94.

A.N.C and the Communist Party. For example, in 1945, the N.E.U.M organised a meeting against passes in Langa but the Langa A.N.C branch disrupted that meeting and "denied the right of the N.E.U.M to hold meetings in Langa".²⁹⁵ When Isaac Bongani Tabata was addressing the residents of Langa, he reminded them of his experiences at the hands of his political rivals. He noted thus:

The time when Langa was a home of all sorts of Liberals, and when Langa had rejected the Unity Movement, We shall return, Now we had returned and Langa was welcoming the Unity Movement and ridding itself of the disease of "Kahnism".²⁹⁶

"Kahnism" refers to Mr Sam Kahn who represented Africans in parliament in the Native Representative Council. When the government introduced the Suppression of Communism Act, Mr Sam Kahn was the first communist to be expelled from the House of Assembly. Sam Kahn, Brian Bunting, Donald Molteno, Ben Turok, Margaret Ballinger and Walter Stanford were some of the Whites who represented Africans in parliament in the Native Representative Council. The roles which they were playing through a structure such as the NRC were never accepted by other political formations which were opposed to what they referred to as a "dummy institution".

An example of this political conflict took place in 1952. Members of the Western Province Advisory Board and Vigilance

²⁹⁵ Quoted in Gavin Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall A History of South African Coloured Politics (Cape Town, David Philip, 1987), p229.

²⁹⁶ The Torch 18 March 1952.

Association invited Mr Sam Kahn and Mr Fred Carneson to address them at the Langa market hall. When the chairperson, Mr Ngwenya, called Mr Carneson to address the meeting, three Africans suddenly stood up from various parts of the hall shouting

Mr chairman! Mr Chairman! We don't want to hear these so-called Native Representatives and No white man may enter this hall.²⁹⁷

The above evidence shows how different political views were not accepted by some people in the township. Objection to a different political view often took a clandestine form. This lack of political tolerance aimed at disrupting the whole gathering because it was addressed by Whites.

The resistance against the Van Riebeeck festival gained momentum during the week of the 4th of April. The N.E.U.M and the A.N.C-led alliance organised rallies to challenge the government over the political situation in the country. One report stated that,

Ten thousand people attended a mass meeting organised by the A.N.C, the Cape Indian Congress and the Franchise Action Council) on the parade on 6 April 1952, to protest against the Van Riebeeck celebrations and show support for the Defiance Campaign.²⁹⁸

Demonstrators carried placards which said,

²⁹⁷ The Clarion, Thursday, 26 June 1952.

²⁹⁸ Quoted in B.Kinkead-Weekes,(Ph.D Thesis, 'State Policy and Popular resistance'), p280.

Votes for All, Africa Back, 300 years of white oppression.²⁹⁹

The A.N.C and its allies protested all through that week beginning on the 4th April, the date of the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck at the Cape. The campaign was linked to what became known as the 1952 Defiance campaign. The campaign was organised to resist against six unjust laws. These included, "the pass laws, stock limitation laws, the Bantu Authorities Act, the Group Areas Act, the Separate Representation of Voters Act and the Suppression of Communism Act".³⁰⁰

Though the A.N.C-led alliance and the N.E.U.M were against the Van Riebeeck celebration, they did not stage joint campaigns because of ideological rivalries. The latter was very hostile to the A.N.C because of its relationship with the Communist Party. Bundy notes that the N.E.U.M has been "characterised as Trotskyist; [and] it was bitterly critical of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA)".³⁰¹ For example, in 1950 the A.N.C was accused of being, "the den of Communist party stooges".³⁰² Despite the divisions that the South African resistance movements had, the Jan Van Riebeeck festival was successfully boycotted.

²⁹⁹ John Pampallis, Foundations of the New South Africa (Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 1991), p195.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, p195.

³⁰¹ Colin Bundy, 'Land and Liberation: Popular rural Protest and the national liberation movements in South Africa, 1920-1960', pp254-285, p255, in S Marks and S Trapido (eds) The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth South Africa

³⁰² The Torch Monday, January 1950.

'Selling-out, the politics of Collaboration?'

Oh....Oh...heh..you know those were labelled sell-outs and many of those had very hectic times in the community. They were isolated by the community and of course it was not big, they were not many.³⁰³

Even if the Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival was resisted effectively in certain circles, it would be incorrect to conclude that the dominated classes of Langa responded with one voice. Despite meetings and pamphlets distributed to boycott the festival, this seems to have fallen on deaf ears. Some teachers and merchants defied the calls and went to the foreshore. The principal of Langa High School, Mr I.D Mkize, and other primary school principals took some school children to the festival.

A Langa High student who sang in a choir that went to the festival remembers seeing,

Lots of things, there were the long wagons which were used long ago when Jan Van Riebeeck and all that came down here. The three ships, Dromedaris and the others and then on our side, the Ricksha people from Durban, traditional guys, Amabaqa, Amazulu. They were being asked to dance their Baxa dances.³⁰⁴

Many of the students at the High and Primary schools did not have much choice as the teachers made all the decisions. But the above view shows how wagons have become associated with Afrikaner nationalism. On the other hand, the learning

³⁰³ Interview with Mr Mgijima.23.10.94.

³⁰⁴ Interview with Mr S.Mkaza.25.11.93.

by rote, that has characterised Primary and Secondary schools history books, always include, the three ships, Dromedaris, Goede Hope and Reiger the ships which belonged to the D.E.I.C. and were brought to the Cape by Jan van Riebeeck and his settlers.

Teachers at Langa High School were divided on the issue of the festival. The teachers belonged to different organisations such as the Cape African Teachers Association an affiliate of the A.A.C, the A.N.C. and the Western Province Bantu Teachers League. Members of the W.P.B.T.L were not prepared to, "wear amabeshu" (loincloths).³⁰⁵ Despite the fact that they were not prepared to go to the festival, a class and cultural dimension of wearing amabeshu was something which the teachers resented. The wearing of amabeshu is associated with boys who go to circumcision schools before they reach the stage of 'manhood' in Xhosa society. The teachers at the school felt humiliated because of this insensitivity by the N.A.D officials and I.D.Mkize's request. This attitude seems to have been different from the one showed by the 'ricksha boys' who danced at the festival with their amabeshu. The teachers further refused to "teach Mpondo-Tswana-Zulu dances in the tribal schools envisaged in his recommendations".³⁰⁶ The educated strata refused to be divided along ethnic lines which was what the government was trying to do since it came

³⁰⁵ See a reply to Mr I.D Mkize's circular letter by teachers belonging to the W.P.B.T.L, BC.925 UMSA Collection 1952-1953.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

to power in 1948. Mr. I.D Mkize and his group were accused of having herded together an, "unthinking crowd".³⁰⁷

After the festival had taken place, Mr I.D Mkize reported in his 1952-53 principal's report that,

The year 1952 will long be remembered as that which spelt doom and disaster to the school, shaking its very foundations and pointing in no uncertain terms to its impending downfall. The storm that had for long been gathering in the distant horizon suddenly swept over the bewildered inmates of this school and left behind a heart-rending scene of unprecedented desolation. The aftermath of the turmoil concomitant with the tercentenary of the arrival of Jan Van Riebeeck was the mushroom growth of soap-box orators who, in their desire to be in the limelight, completely neglected their students and the inevitable crash followed.³⁰⁸

The above evidence reveals the division that existed in Mr Mkize's staff members. With teachers divided on the issue of the festival, crises of leadership developed in moments like those of popular resistance where a clear political stance was needed. The context of popular politics brought with it challenges to his type of leadership. It seems the principal acted on his own without consulting the views of other teachers. If that happened, his idea that 1952 spelled "disaster and doom to the school, shaking its foundation..." was false, rather it was because of the oscillating tactics which he himself developed when dealing with the educational authorities. His style of leadership

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Principal's Record Book, annual reports for the years 1952-1953, quoted in N. Mohamed, 'Langa High School', p108.

was the one in which the principal alone decided on the direction of the school without the involvement of other interested parties. The perception that Mkize was creating about the storm that suddenly 'swept over the bewildered inmates' becomes an official view. The 'bewildered' inmates could read the political situation very well for themselves. Two of his students had this to say,

I was enjoying it because I was still at school. There were two groups. It was a group that belonged to the Non-European Unity Movement and the African Convention. Then they were saying the festival should be boycotted.³⁰⁹

While another student felt that,

Ja, some students from Langa went. This was the beginning of the end of the late I.D Mkize at Langa High School. A great school master, we still respect him. A great school master, a great scholar and we as his ex-students were very worried about his involvement in Liberal politics. He was a very well respected man in the whole of Cape Town in educational circles. And not because of the fact that he was the first Black M. Ed, but also of the fact that he was a great teacher among the teachers who have taught me.³¹⁰

The views of the students reveal their understanding of the political situation in the country. It was not only the students who were worried about his involvement in Liberal politics, but some teachers among his staff members as well. Another teacher who was critical of I.D Mkize's liberal

³⁰⁹ Interview with Mr M.S 'Cappy' Ndlumbini 22.01.94.

³¹⁰ Interview with Mr T.Mgijima 23.01.94.

politics was the late Mr Siwisa, a teacher at the same school. Ntantala makes the point that,

I.D Mkize lost all the respect people had for him on the issue of the Van Riebeeck Celebration. ³¹¹

I.D Mkize has left a legacy in the Black communities in the Western Cape. In 1939 with a degree from the University of London he took over as principal teacher at Langa High School.³¹² By 1942, he had completed his Master of Education degree. His activities were not confined only to the school, as his name appears in other community-related programmes including, the Mendi festivals, rugby, cricket, political and other teacher related programmes.

He has become a 'model' to some people in the township. His academic qualification made him the 'natural' leader of the people. For example, in 1946, Rev Citashe invited Advocate Molteno and D.M.Buchanan to come and address a Langa Vigilance Association gathering at the AME church in Langa. The invitation said that, "Your presence will consolidate our feelings of brotherhood".³¹³ It went further stating that, "Mr I.D.Mkize our M.Ed will be the first speaker".³¹⁴ Despite the fact that this was a form of class expression, the people of Langa were proud of his educational qualification hence 'our M.Ed'. It has been noted earlier that he was the first African in Cape Town with that

³¹¹ Phyllis Ntantala, A Life's Mosaic, p151.

³¹² N.Mohamed, 'Langa High School', p54.

³¹³ BC 579 A24.990.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

qualification. From 1947 to 1950 he was the president of the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA). He was also a member of the African National Congress, but of the generation of Dr A Xuma, and the Rev J.A Calata, and not a product of the 1949 Youth League. When the moderate Cape African Teachers Union was formed in 1953, I.D Mkize became its president. According to Ntantala the dissident group emerged at the "instigation of the Native Affairs Department, launched his Cape African Teachers Union, collecting around him all the collaborating elements to form this body".³¹⁵

Van Riebeeck Festival versus local festivals

The popularity of the 'ethnic' festivals in Langa can not be compared to the 'White' ethnic festival of 1952. The following interviews say a lot about the attitude of many people in the township. A number of people shared the same views. When asked if they knew anything about the Van Riebeeck festival some said,

No, I only heard about it.³¹⁶ Mr Ndzuzo responded by stating "I never witnessed it, I only heard about it. I do not have any idea of it".³¹⁷

While Mrs Macozoma said that, "At that time things were very hard, most people were not interested, they did not care about such celebrations. People were getting to know about

³¹⁵ Phyllis Ntantala, A Life's Mosaic, p153.

³¹⁶ Interview with Mr Edmund Galela 5.09.93.

³¹⁷ Interview with Mr Jubilee Geoff Ndzuzo 5.09.93.

politics and getting involved, until Sobukwe came to inform people more about politics".³¹⁸ For Mr Mgijima the response was, "of course we were deadly against the festival".³¹⁹

What emerges from the above evidence is how many local people did not show any interest in the Van Riebeeck festival even if they had heard about its occurrence. Some people could remember the Van Riebeeck they heard about at school rather than from the days of the "celebration". This also shows how the 'ordinary' people were cut-off from the propaganda of the state and the nationalist political organisations. But the narrative by Mrs Macozoma highlights the political struggles which took place in the Cape in the 1950s as many Africans were endorsed out of the city, and the vicious implementation of the pass laws which culminated in the massive 1960 anti-pass campaign. Many of the people could talk more about the festivals which took place in the township as compared to the Van Riebeeck. For example, Mr Ndlumbini had this to say,

Well with ah...Mendi was looked upon as an occasion where all the Africans were involved. Mendi was the ship that sunk with our Black soldiers. Everybody took that at heart you see than the Van Riebeeck.³²⁰

The annual festivals which took place in Langa contributed to the social and political history of the township. As the

³¹⁸ Interview with Mrs Constance Macozoma 5.09.93.

³¹⁹ Interview with Mr T. Mgijima 23.01.94.

³²⁰ Interview with Mr M.S.Ndlumbini 22.01.94. Chapter 4 has attempted to show the Mendi celebration which Mr Ndlumbini is referring to here.

festivals took place almost every year, many residents could identify with them more easily than with the Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Celebration that took place only in 1952. The other major difference was the fact that the Van Riebeeck appealed more to the Whites, as it glorified White achievement at the expense of Blacks, particularly the Afrikaners because of Afrikaner nationalism of the 1940s and 1950s.

Conclusion

The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Celebration aimed at constructing a public history for South Africa which was Euro-centric. The festival intended to consolidate the power of the Nationalist Party after 1948 and was used by the government to try and win most Whites to their side as they shared similar European roots. What is important about this point is the fact that the state was using race to deal with the political and massive urbanisation and the competition that took place in South Africa since the Second World War. This, however, does not mean that all the Whites supported the Nationalist Party with all its segregationist vision. The Euro-centricity of the festival was well expressed by Mr Eyssen, a member of parliament for Heidelberg, when he compared America to South Africa. He noted that,

The music of the White man in America has practically ceased to exist, and today the Negro's jazz music has

practically become their national music - a great pity.³²¹

This was a warning that he was giving to White South Africans that they had to protect 'traditional' White music. In his review of the festival he filled pages about what happened. As far as the Blacks were concerned, he wrote only a line stating that "The Natives had their share".³²² The whole celebration, despite its motto of "we build a Nation"³²³ was designed for the Whites.

The dominant segregationist ideology of the 1950s, epitomised in the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act, was clearly displayed during the festival. The Blacks had a place reserved for them in the stadium called the 'Bantu Pavilion'. They were excluded from the major activities in the celebration. One report stated that

The festival committee was working in collaboration with the Native Affairs Department and the Cape Town City Council in arranging a programme for Africans in the final week of the festival, and in addition, it was planning an exhibition of Natives arts and crafts.³²⁴

The festival projected Africa as being 'backward' and 'primitive'. The legacy of the nineteenth century which projected Africa in that way was carried into the twentieth century. According to Harries, "Africa was not only "dark"

³²¹ 'Union of S.A House of Assembly Debates' volume 77, 18 January - 14 March 1952, pp6284.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Natal Witness 'Bantu Crafts' 19.9.1951.

because its essence was hidden in pre-history; it was also a continent of: dark things" and "dark forces".³²⁵ This theme of "darkness" and "civilisation" was displayed at the festival. For a better expression of this, see the picture by students from the drama department from the University of Cape Town depicting Africa being in chains. The "Africa awakes" float was presented by Dr T.B.Davie, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University from 1948 to 1955. T.B Davie has now become a symbol of the annual liberal expression of "Academic Freedom" at the University of Cape town.

According to the planners of the festival, colonialism was projected as bringing "progress" and "civilisation". An Algerian psychiatrist summed up the manifestation of colonialism by noting,

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it.³²⁶

This was the case during the festival as the pageant depicted European history. The South African past was not presented in a balanced manner in that the resistance to colonial conquest was never shown. But, what is important, is that the Nationalist party government used the festival

³²⁵ Patrick Harries, 'European Ideas, African Identities: H.A Junod and the Notion of Tribe', p2. Paper presented at conference on Ethnicity, Identity and Nationalism in South Africa: Comparative Perspectives Grahamstown, April, 1993.

³²⁶ Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, (England, Penguin Books, 1967), p169.

to justify its social engineering schemes which were characterised by the forced removals, pass laws, and the elimination of its political opponents in vicious ways.

Some of the oppressed people in South Africa did not accept what the government was doing because they went into the streets demanding an end to White domination and votes for all. But, on the other hand, the festival exposed the contradictions and conflicts that existed in Langa township. Some members of the Langa community defied the calls to boycott the festival which "glorified White domination"³²⁷ by joining the Boers at the foreshore. Perhaps what Genovese has noticed can be applicable to those members of the Langa community who refused to listen to the African leadership. He noted that, "Whenever paternalism exists, it undermines solidarity among the oppressed by linking them as individuals to their oppressors".³²⁸

The last two chapters have shown how other 'ethnic' festivals appealed more to the ordinary members of the Langa community than the Van Riebeeck festival.

The legacy of colonialism in South Africa is marked by the number of colonial names and statues which have mushroomed throughout South Africa. Rassool and Witz have succinctly expressed this view by stating that

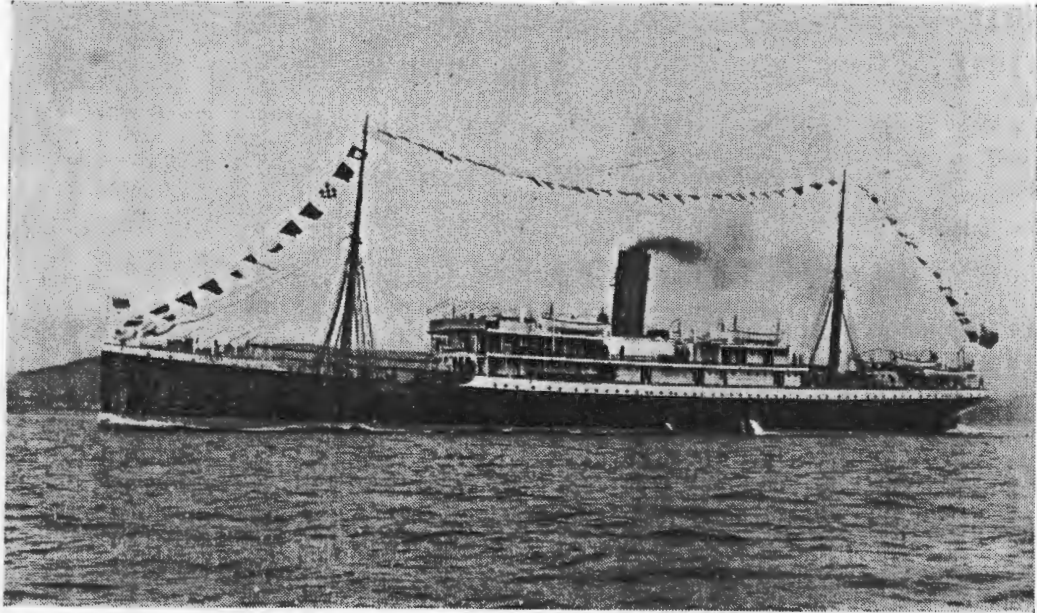
[The statue of] Van Riebeeck continues to watch over South Africa, its future and its uncertain past. The question is, how long will it maintain its vigil.³²⁹

³²⁷ The Friend, 10 July 1951.

³²⁸ Eugene D Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll, (New York, Pantheon Books, 1975), p5.

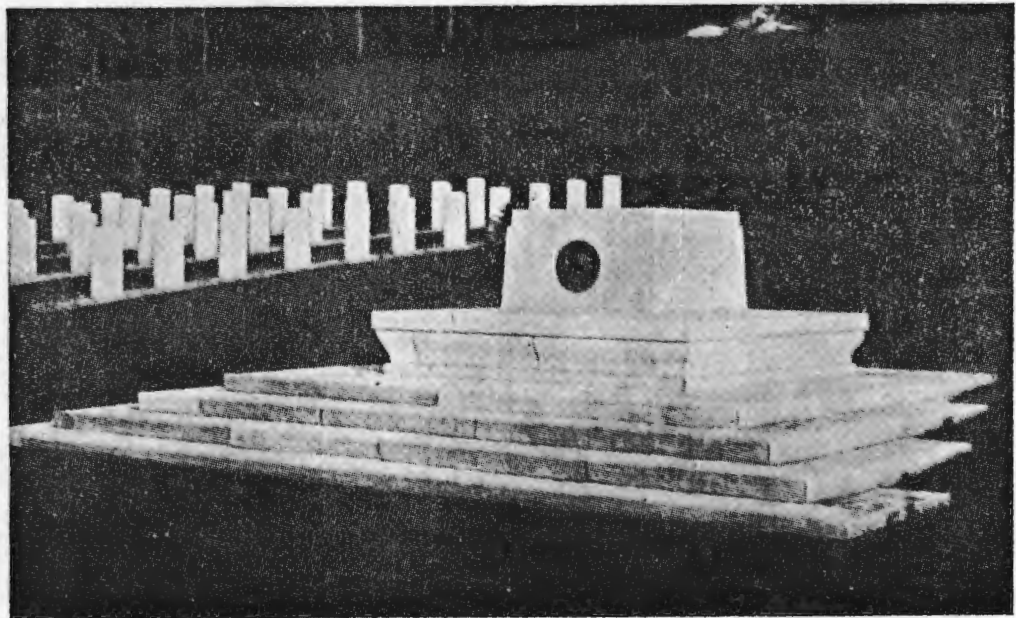
³²⁹ C. Rassool and L. Witz, 'The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tcentenary Festival', p26.

This thesis now turns to another important festival that has remained rooted in African nationalist political thinking from the First World War till the present moment. When over 600 Black soldiers drowned in the English channel in 1917, many Blacks back home did not forget the supreme sacrifice paid by those soldiers. This sacrifice has remained clearer in the memory of many Black South African than in that of those in authority. The Mendi song, which was composed in commemoration of the soldiers who lost their lives, became an inspiration to freedom fighters to overthrow political and economic domination. This was a festival that received popularity in different parts of South Africa.



Troopship "MENDI"

*Sunk in the English Channel, February 21, 1917, with the loss of 625 members
of the South African Native Labour Corps.*



*War Memorial erected at Rouen by the French Government in honour
of South African Natives who died on active service, 1914—18.*

CHAPTER FOUR

The Mendi Celebration: 1951-1967.

Introduction

Annual celebrations have been a crucial part of the social history of Langa Township. Some of the celebrations have disappeared from the public eye, but have now been enshrined in popular memory. They varied from Fingo, Mendi, "Van Riebeeck" and Ntsikana. But what was common among them was the fact that they all dealt not only with how the past was remembered, but also with the way in which the past and the present shaped each other. These celebrations had some form of popularity and profound impact on the urban African masses in Cape Town. The Mendi celebration, which is the focus of this chapter, was a memorial to the sacrifices many Blacks made during the First World War when African warriors left their assegais at the kraals and went to war, dying tragically when their ship, Mendi, collided with the liner Darro.

Existing literature on Langa shows a number of inadequacies as far as the Mendi celebration is concerned. Botto, R (1954) devoted a short paragraph on the Mendi celebrations in Langa.³³⁰ Kondlo (1989) filled in the gaps which exist in Botto's work by conducting a number of oral interviews.

³³⁰ R. Botto, "Some Aspects of the leisure Occupation of the African Population in Cape Town", (MSOC Thesis, UCT, 1954), p139.

One of his informants was awarded the Mendi Scholarship to study at the University of Fort Hare.³³¹

Musemwa (1993) notes that in 1941, the National Liberation League "sought to capitalise on the annual commemoration of the Mendi tragedy".³³² According to him, they regarded the Memorial gathering, that was to be organised by the Committee of Langa Church Ministers in February 1941, as an opportune occasion, for 'working African sentiments in order to arouse war fever, which is conspicuously absent in Langa.³³³ This aspect of the National Liberation League's programme does not show whether they succeeded in using these occasions to win support for their programme of action or not. The above works have some weaknesses. Firstly, the subject of war and society was not the primary interest of their research work. Secondly, we are not told of the period the celebrations started or when they came to an end and why. The Mendi celebrations do not only reveal the political opportunism of the National Liberation League but other aspects such as the aspirations, culture, ideology and politics of the people of Langa. This chapter has provided a brief historical overview on this topic.

In this chapter, I intend showing that the Mendi celebration was not only a Langa issue but that it was celebrated in

³³¹ K.M.Kondlo, "The Culture and Religion of the People of Langa during the period ca. 1938 to 1958", (BA Hons, UCT, 1989), p41.

³³² M.Musemwa, 'Aspect of the Social and Political History of Langa Township, Cape Town, 1927-1948', (MA, UCT, 1993), p163.

³³³ Ibid, p163.

many parts of South Africa. I will also attempt to show how a celebration, like this one, became a fertile ground where the ethos of self-improvement and 'progress' was cultivated within African communities, and how the Mendi celebration provided the churches with the opportunity for Christian ecumenism. But this atmosphere, on the other hand, gave the churches the opportunity to create mythologies which were linked to the church-constructed doctrines. As the process of rewriting South African history has begun, it is hoped that this will not be the last word on the subject.

When the First World War broke out in 1914 it started as a white man's war. But, because of the nature of colonialism, many Africans became involved in the war on the side of their 'mother' countries. By 1916, the Imperial government asked the government of a Boer General, Louis Botha, to help the British Empire with soldiers. This request was received with mixed feelings by the South African population. Some Whites were concerned about the social influences which would possibly affect Blacks in Europe, making them conscious of their social status in South Africa. Also, going into a war meant that they had to carry firearms which was not allowed (This is explained on the next page). Mr Mkaza noted that

Ja, they were taken from here to France. They were told that they were to be soldiers over there. Only to find out that when they got there, they were just labourers like kitchen 'boys', some put in small hospitals to take care of the soldiers. None of them were soldiers.³³⁴

³³⁴ Interview with Mr S.Mkaza 21.07.93

The carrying of firearms by Blacks was rejected in many White circles. According to Grundlingh

The existing nature of social relations might be threatened, and the position of the white minority jeopardised by blacks trained in the use of firearms.³³⁵

But on the other hand, serving in the war was an opportunity for many Blacks to express their loyalty to Queen and Empire. In his study of the South African War of 1899-1902, Nasson noted thus:

At the time of war, black colonial petty-bourgeois politics was lodged squarely within the incorporationist structures of Cape liberalism. Its political and cultural expressions provided a general social location and constitutional identity which almost inevitably assigned to educated African and Coloured elites their role as a bastion of imperial loyalty in crisis.³³⁶

The above view shows that 'loyalty' did not come to an end after the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging in 1902 but persisted in to the First and even the the Second World War. Many who were in favour of supporting the Empire were African chiefs, drought-stricken labourers and Africans involved with the South African National Native Congress. As a reward for their loyalty, they expected citizenship,

³³⁵ A.Grundlingh, Fighting their Own War, p37

³³⁶ Bill Nasson, Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902. (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 1991), p32.

improved living conditions and franchise to be extended to them. For example, in 1917, Sir Richard Winfrey, secretary for Agriculture in the government of Lloyd George, had written to Sol Plaatje to the effect that

At the close of the war we shall do all in our power to help you regain that justice and freedom to which as loyal British subjects your people are justly entitled.³³⁷

The Black press carried a number of advertisements appealing to Blacks to volunteer for the South African Native Labour Contingent.³³⁸ This seems to have had a major impact in some regions such as the Northern Transvaal and Lesotho which were devastated by natural disasters. There were also a large number of Africans from Zululand and the Eastern Cape. The following extract by "Jingoes" expressing his motivation for being involved in such a war, when he first heard about the need for Africans to volunteer, is striking. It might not have been representative of the views shared by other Africans but it is important in that 74,000 Africans volunteered to fight in the First World War.³³⁹ He noted that

³³⁷ Quoted in Sol. T. Plaatje Mhudi, (Great Britain, Heinemann), p3.

³³⁸ See Brian Willan, 'The South African Native Labour Contingent, 1916-1918', Journal of African History xix, i (1978) pp61-86, printed in Great Britain.

³³⁹ The Weekly Mail, 19 to 25 February 1993. Reclaiming the lost warriors of SS Mendi.

I'm a pure coward!
 What am I waiting here for?
 My father fought against the Boers;
 his older brother was also there and, more
 to the point, so was his younger brother.
 Why am I putting these things off then? I must
 have been born a coward.³⁴⁰

"Jingoes" felt motivated to go out to recruit others. Some of his friends, however, showed no interest in going to the war because of death or work and other commitments. Mr Paulus Marabe, his home friend said,

You are crazy! You want to go to war before you're even married. I couldn't do that! Marry first, and then think about volunteering. If I were to die, I'd like to know I'd left a wife and children behind me.³⁴¹

Jingoes and other warriors who volunteered were informed of the Mendi disaster, on the 27 March 1917 when they were about to leave Cape Town, but the news did not affect them adversely as only seven of the volunteers disappeared in Cape Town.

The transport ship Mendi was owned by the Elder Dempster West African Mail Steamship Company and was a liner of 4,230 tons.³⁴² In November 1916, the ship Mendi had taken a portion of the Nigerian East African contingent from Lagos to Mombasa. On her return she put in at Cape Town to take on the last batch of the South African Native labour corps for service in France. She left Table Bay on January 16th 1917

³⁴⁰ John and Cassandra Perry, A Chief is a Chief by the People: The Autobiography of Stimela Jason Jingoes, (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1975), p73.

³⁴¹ Ibid, p74.

³⁴² AWC 97 Mendi Memorial Celebration 8. 2. 54-21. 4. 67.

with "894 people on board".³⁴³ A month later she arrived at Plymouth. On the 20th February she continued her fateful voyage across the English channel to Le Havre, when in a thick fog on the morning of the 21st February, she collided with the liner "Darro (11,000 tons)".³⁴⁴ The reports which covered the Mendi disaster are conflicting in terms of the actual number of people who died. For example, of the "882 on board the Mendi, a mere 267 were saved, while 615 lost their lives".³⁴⁵ As compared to the one which stated that after the collision, "Mendi disappeared in twenty minutes with a loss of 633 of the complement".³⁴⁶ The former figure is the correct one. An account of the inquest on four of the victims was published on February 24th, 1917. The evidence showed that the transport ship Mendi was so badly struck on the starboard side, near the foremast, that she sank.

News of the disaster was not announced for two weeks. The major reason being that General Louis Botha feared it would deter many Blacks from taking part in the war. Mostert noted that Louis Botha moved a motion of "sympathy for the bereaved and spontaneously, the entire white parliament rose to its feet in respect for the drowned warriors; the only occasion on which such a tribute to black example was ever

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ G.G 565/9/124/45, report of the Board of inquiry into the Mendi accident, 8 August 1917 (copy).

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ AWC 97.

paid there".³⁴⁷ The Cape Times, reported that the adoption of the motion "witnessed the unusual sight of an all-White parliament rising to pay respect to deceased Blacks".³⁴⁸

It is surprising that the commemoration of the Mendi disaster only took a formalised form in the 1940s. This, however, does not exclude the possibility that the celebration could have taken place much earlier. Archival sources started documenting the Mendi disaster from 1941 but it seems that there were serious organisational problems, or other factors because files from 1941 to 1951 are empty. The periods which became popular in the restoration of the Mendi disaster were the 1950s and 1960s. This was formalised at the annual conference of the African Ex-Servicemen League held in Bloemfontein on March 22-23, 1940. The conference came out with a number of resolutions which led to a situation whereby Mendi was celebrated annually in different parts of South Africa. Many of the resolutions reveal the bitterness and frustration which existed among African soldiers. They were,

- 1 This conference of the African Ex-Servicemen's League, assembled in the Bantu-Batho Hall, Kimberley, on March 22, 1940, desire to place on record its unswerving loyalty to His Majesty the King, and the Government of the Union of South Africa.
- 2 The conference deprecates the propaganda disseminated among the African people by the Nazi movement to undermine constituted authority in South Africa, and

³⁴⁷ Noel Mostert, Frontiers: The epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People, p605-606.

³⁴⁸ Cape Times 10 March 1917.

appeals to Africans to adhere to the warning issued by the Department of Native Affairs.

3 In view of the present unsettled state of the international situation, the conference respectively urges the Union Government to consider the advisability of amending the Defence Act of 1912.

4 The conference is unanimously of the opinion that the time has come for the formation of a National Service Corps for African men and women, such units to undergo military training without armaments, so as to be ready to meet any emergency that might arise.

5 After reviewing the conditions of service applicable to Union Africans during the Great War, which precluded their dependents from obtaining a separation allowance, the conference resolves that in the event of future active service by Africans their conditions of service should not be different from Europeans and Coloured units; that the period of engagement should be for the duration of the war and that in recognition of war service, the government should not discriminate between the races in issuing service medals.

6 The conference respectively requests the Department of Native Affairs to make representation to the Union government for the inclusion of Africans incapacitated as the result of war into the government's pension fund for disabled ex-servicemen.

7 The conference resolves that in future all funds collected for the Mendi Memorial or any other fund connected with the African ex-servicemen shall be invested with the Mendi Memorial Trust.

8 This conference deplores the unjustified attitude of the Union government for evading its moral obligation of not recognising the loyal service of the African in the Great War. The conference feels that the issue of service medals to Africans is a pledge which the government of this country has not fulfilled.

9 The conference wishes to express its grateful thanks and appreciation to the Kimberley branch of the National Council of African Women for its moral support and mutual co-operation with the ex-servicemen's

League. The conference therefore, appeals to all branches of the Council to co-operate with the members of the League in the future organization of the Mendi services of remembrance at all centres of the Union.³⁴⁹

The ex-servicemen's league was a national structure consisting of ex-soldiers who were in different parts of the country. The formation of such a structure meant that their interests and aspirations were articulated on a national level. The leadership consisted of S.M Bennett Ncwana, president, chief Charles N Mopeli, vice-president, C Doyle Modiakgotla, general secretary, J Lloyd Lobere, treasurer.³⁵⁰ Some Whites and chiefs of the different South African ethnic groups were represented in the top structure of the organisation.³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ AWC 97 P. W. D B130 vol, ppiii (pamphlet).

³⁵⁰ Ibid, piii.

³⁵¹ Patrons of the League consisted of General J.C Smuts, Col. C. F Stallard. Paramount chiefs of the Xhosa, Zulu, Pedi, Batlaping. The executive committee members were chief S. M Mankurwane, Mr M.R.C Taung, chief Walter Kumalo, Ladysmith, T.M Mapikela, M.R.C, Bloemfontein. Johnson Xabendini, Cape Town. George Sessing, Kimberley. Philip Sehorotse, Kimberley, Cecilia A. N Kuse, Kimberley. Moffat Mvinjelwa, Cape Town. Henry Majola, Queenstown, G.J Dubula, Port Elizabeth, Victor E Mvunyane, Durban, Morris Xiniwe, Springs, James Mapinda, Bloemfontein and Elijah Qamata. It is clear from the above evidence that the ex-servicemen's league had structures in some parts of the country. But, the ones reflected here show how the South African struggle has taken a predominantly urban form. Even the celebration of the Mendi disaster became an urban form of popular culture and the countryside received less consideration. There were however, men in the countryside who took part in the war. The other crucial aspect in the league's consideration is how it gave "traditional" leaders a place in their organisation. A similar pattern can also be found within the African National Congress at this particular time. General Smuts also received some respect within some circles of the league hence he was made one of their patrons. His name has also been given to some children in some African communities. The same applies

The Mendi celebrations became an important popular culture in many townships throughout South Africa and 21 February of every year became regarded as a "national day of the African peoples"³⁵² or "lest we forget".³⁵³ This became an important way in which those who died in the Mendi disaster were remembered. In his book, The Marabi Dance, one of Modikwe Dikobe's main characters is Martha. Her father had volunteered to join the Native Military Corps. Her mother's health was also declining because of heart failure, but in spite of this she made her mother very angry by refusing an arranged marriage according to their custom. Life was never easy for Martha as she had to wash clothes for the White people to make ends meet. When she heard of the death of her mother she was devastated. She noted,

How shall I live without a mother or a father? My father has gone to fight'. She covered her face at the thought of soldiers killing one another. She had seen pictures of soldiers and read about their killings. She had also sung at the Mendi Memorial Day: 'Ke bana bana ba tsetseng metse a matala. Bashoele bothle. Bashoetse Afrika. Bashoetse tokologo. -They crossed the blue sea. They died all. Died for Africa. Died for freedom.³⁵⁴

to the radical liberal British politician, Lloyd George as it was the case with the treasurer of the league, J. Lloyd Lobere.

³⁵² AWC 97 Mendi Scholarship Fund Constitution.

³⁵³ Cape Argus, 23 February 1961.

³⁵⁴ Modikwe Dikobe, The Marabi Dance, (London, Heinemann, 1973), p92.

Many people who went to the Mendi celebrations are familiar with these words. The Mendi song shares many of the words sung by Martha. The song was,

There they are, crossing the blue water
Amidst the dangers of the seas.
We remain here praying that they
manage to reach France.³⁵⁵

According to Van Niekerk, the song was "similar to Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika".³⁵⁶

What is important about the Mendi song is that it expresses the aspirations and hopes of many Africans. Though they went to the war, to "defend" the British Empire, this was an act of conditional service. They expected the British Empire to recognise the sacrifices they paid. To borrow Nasson's phrase that the educated African and Coloured elites were assigned their role as a "bastion of imperial loyalty in crisis".³⁵⁷ He further noted that

For an imperial patriotism quickened by wartime was an implicit answer to colonial pressures upon the ethics of 'improvement' and 'responsibility'. It allowed the edgy black elite an association with presumed beliefs and intentions of the winning side.³⁵⁸

According to the Mendi song, the men not only sacrificed their lives for the defence of the British Empire but for consideration of their immediate needs as well. Martha notes

³⁵⁵ The Weekly Mail, 19 to 25 February 1993.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Bill Nasson, Abraham Esau's War, p32.

³⁵⁸ Ibid, p40.

that they all, "died for Africa. Died for freedom".³⁵⁹ This song became an inspiration to the later generation of South African Youth who joined the armed struggle as led by the A.N.C and the P.A.C in the 1960s till the 1990s. The flooding of the armed formation in the 1960s and especially in the 1970s by the Youth meant that they were taking over from a 'tradition' that was well established. Modisane noted that, "As boys we were fired with the glory of war".³⁶⁰ For example, Sexwale noted that, "We went to the war to kill Hitler and Mussolini, though we didn't know them very well. We were told that Hitler would come down and take over South Africa and kill us all".³⁶¹

The Mendi celebrations became enmeshed with nationalist political ideology. Pampallis noted that the Mendi saga was "kept alive by the ANC's Mendi Memorial Club".³⁶² The A.N.C used the occasion to create an alternative oppositional memory as compared to the official histories which neglected this important legend. At the gatherings people were reminded of the sacrifices those soldiers made. Dying for the 'nation' became an important form of patriotism that was inculcated in participants at the celebrations. But some of the warriors, who were able to return from the war, were disappointed when they found segregation and the old South

³⁵⁹ Modikwe Dikobe, The Marabi Dance, p92.

³⁶⁰ Bloke Modisane, Blame me on History, (Cape Town, AD Donker Publisher, 1986), p78.

³⁶¹ Phillip Van Niekerk: Reclaiming the lost warriors of SS Mendi, The Weekly Mail 19 to 25 February 1993.

³⁶² John Pampallis, Foundations of the New South Africa (Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 1991), p105.

Africa they left behind still intact. Some tell stories of being kicked for walking on the pavements rather than in the streets. People like Jingoos joined the Industrial Commercial Union of Clements Kadalie in the 1920s and became an important leader in the union.

Though Grundlingh does not give the date or name of the place where these celebrations took place, he points out that the Department of Native Affairs was becoming hostile to the "hot left speeches by extremists".³⁶³ According to Roux "those who thus went with the Labour Corps were forced on their return to pay poll tax, not only for the current year, but also for the years of their absence from South Africa"³⁶⁴. This meant that some of the promises made before and during the war were never fulfilled. They had to go back to the overcrowded townships, carry passes and be subjected to continual police harassment in the townships during searches for illegal beer brewing.

Resolution number eight seems to have been one of those key components which exacerbated their frustrations in that the offer of fifty thousand pounds, which was voted by the "Imperial government for the issue of War Medals to all Africans who loyally served the British Empire in the Great War, was turned down by the Union government".³⁶⁵ This kind of treatment continued even after the Second World War. Mr Frank Sexwale, now 75, says, "when we got back it was worse.

³⁶³ Albert Grundlingh, Fighting their Own war, p140.

³⁶⁴ Edward Roux, Time Longer Than Rope (Wisconsin, Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p113.

³⁶⁵ Mendi P. W. D 164, B130 vol 8, p7.

We were treated the same way as before".³⁶⁶ In 1947, he was arrested in Johannesburg for not having a pass. He noted that, "They weren't interested when I said I had been a soldier".³⁶⁷

One of the resolutions at the ex-servicemen's league in 1940 was that the National Council of African Women should help them with the organisation of the Mendi celebrations throughout South Africa. The church in Langa came to be an important institution which provided the infrastructure for the celebrations in which individuals from the National Council of African Women were also involved. It is not very clear when the Mendi celebrations in Langa started, but I was able to find some scattered information for 1940 and 1941.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁶ P. Van Niekerk, 'Reclaiming the lost warriors of SS Mendi'.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ The information on the early Mendi celebrations in Langa is very scattered. It is therefore not easy to deal with the early dynamics of the celebrations. Archival sources are not useful either. The files from 1941 and 1951 are empty and it can therefore be assumed that the the celebrations did not take place during those years. This, perhaps is the major reason why the church came to be a dominant institution that took over the organising of the activities as the National Council for African Women was not very strong in the Western Cape being affected by conflicts over finances and leadership positions. In 1962, Mrs M Sesedi wrote to Rogers explaining the position of the Council by stating that, "The headquarters is desirous that we should bring to finality the long standing dispute that exists between several of our N. C. A. W branches". The main conflict was over the "shilling Drive Fund". It was further reported that the region had 5 branches but "Langa exists in dispute", Nyanga, Athlone, Stellenbosch (all lapsed) while the Simonstown one still exists. For this information see, AWC 105 National Council of African Women. Letter by Mrs M Sesedi writing to Rogers 15 November 1962. Also see

The Cape Province Interdenominational African Ministers Association organised most of the Mendi activities in Langa. The 1941 celebration took place on the 23rd of February. A number of Whites who were dubbed 'friends of the Natives' attended the celebration. One report included an "exceptionally important speaker-minister of Finance (Hofmeyr)".³⁶⁹ Other members of the White community included secretary for Native Affairs (Smit), Dist. Commissioner of Police, a military officer, Mrs Ballinger,

National Council of African Women, Coming of Age Conference, 1937-1958, booklet. Published SAIRR, Johannesburg, 1958. People who became associated with the Council in the Western Cape for a long time were Mrs Cecilia C Nkomo, Mrs R Manje and Mrs Malusi. It was an organisation that drew its support mainly from the educated sector within the community. With their motto 'Do unto others as you would they do unto you', they were able, to a certain extent, to live above the dehumanising overcrowded township conditions by teaching people the philosophy of 'ubuntu'. That is, that one is a human being because of other human beings. But, at times political events were far ahead of them as some women moved into the ANC Women's League and later FEDSAW. The N.C.A.W was the predecessor of the A.N.C Women's League. Some of the Congress's leadership had their wives involved in the Council. For example, Henrietta Litlhare Mandoro who married Rev Z. H Mahabane in 1904. When Rev Mahabane, left the A.N.C he became a president of the N.E.U.M., others included Mrs M. Matthews, Sobukwe who were involved with the A.N.C. at some stage. Some of the women travelled widely overseas and they brought with them ideas of struggles waged in different countries. For example, Mrs Charlotte Maxeke, who was made the first president of the Council in 1937, was reputed to be the "first African woman university graduate in South Africa". Coming of Age, p1. They went to America and Britain as a group of choristers but, when they found facilities for higher education, continued at the University of Wilberforce. It was reported of Mrs Maxeke that "she was instrumental in helping to introduce the mighty A.M.E Church into South Africa in the year 1896". [The Langa A.M.E. Church was established in 1939.] Coming of Age, p1.

³⁶⁹ Dr Jack Simons fieldworker's report English, January-December 1941. Volume 8. This, information is in the archives and manuscripts section, UCT.

Molteno, Malcoms and other Europeans.³⁷⁰ The report further noted that, "ministers attended in force and numbers prayed".³⁷¹ Mr Mvinjelwa delivered the main address on behalf of the community of Langa. In his address he said that "Mendi" derived from a word, "meaning a girl given in marriage by parents, and not expected to return home".³⁷² The speech was applauded on several occasions. He went further, stating how recruitment had taken place for participation in the Great War as it was called. Men who volunteered were not expected to return to the South African shores as the possibility of death was with them all the time. But his comparison with a girl in marriage can also mean an "arranged marriage" for many of the young men in Lesotho for example were persuaded into the army by their chiefs who played the role of recruiting officers on behalf of the Empire. This comparison with a girl in marriage, seems to have had much support as the girl was not "expected to return home (applause)".³⁷³ This also referred to conservative patriarchal forces such as arranged marriages. He further noted, "Allow me once more dear friends to pay solemn tribute to our dear comrades, heroes of the Mendi, who loyally, faithfully and courageously lost their lives in achieving service for this Native land and the British Empire".³⁷⁴

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid

³⁷² Ibid

³⁷³ Ibid

³⁷⁴ Ibid

The Mendi celebrations in Langa had greater support than other celebrations with a more ethnic emphasis such as the Fingo, Zulu, Xhosa and Moshoeshoe. According to Kondlo, Mendi celebrations attracted many people particularly because they had no tribal foundation.³⁷⁵ Mr Galela, when asked who went to the Mendi festival, responded by saying,

Everybody went there, even the Zulus, Basothos and Fingos.³⁷⁶

Many of the people who were in the leadership of the Mendi celebrations have passed away. Mr Mkaza noted that "the late Mr Nabe, Mr Mlambo, Mr Ntshinga, Mr Ngwevela, Mr Njobe, Mr Bhuti all passed away now".³⁷⁷

Some of the above individuals were A.N.C and later P.A.C members. The Mendi celebrations were used by the A.N.C as a form of alternative national symbol. This commitment to nationalism was different from that of the regime which emphasised the ethnic origin of the South African population. As popular politics has imposed the ideology of one nation, one South Africa, the other celebrations are looked down upon.

Newspaper coverage of the number of people who came to the Mendi celebrations varied. For example, in 1950, the Cape Times reported that "hundreds of Natives attended the Mendi

³⁷⁵ K. M Kondlo, "The Culture and Religion", p41.

³⁷⁶ Interview with Mr Edmund Galela 5 September 1993.

³⁷⁷ Interview with Mr S Mkaza 21 July 1993.

Memorial service at Langa yesterday".³⁷⁸ In 1955 the same paper reported that "2,000 Natives attended the service".³⁷⁹ Sometimes the number was about 1,000 and at times went to 5,000 people. This was because the whole celebration was not just a Langa matter but included other Africans from Nyanga, Guguletu and other Africans in the Western Cape.

According to Inglis, the commemoration of war memorials represents in people, a "collective tribute offered to both the living and the dead".³⁸⁰ The dead can be remembered in different ways. Willan notes that, "A monument was erected to members of the S.A.N.L.C who died in France at Arque-la-Batille, near Dieppe".³⁸¹ He further noted that, "Smaller memorials appeared in South Africa - one in front of the Town Hall in Umtata has inscribed on it the names of those Africans from the Transkei who died in France".³⁸² The place where the celebrations took place, the square opposite the Methodist church in Langa, has been renamed the Mendi Square. The street next to Moshesh has also been named Mendi. This according to Inglis, is to "give a meaning to the war".³⁸³ But, in South Africa, war memorials have excluded the Black majority as if they never served in many

³⁷⁸ Cape Times, 27 February 1950.

³⁷⁹ Cape Times, 22 February 1955.

³⁸⁰ K. S Inglis, 'The Homecoming: The war memorial in Cambridge: England', Journal of Contemporary History, vol 27. no 4, October (1992), p586.

³⁸¹ B. P Willan, 'South African Native Labour Contigent', Journal of African History xix, 1 (1978), pp66-86,85,

³⁸² Ibid, p85

³⁸³ K. S Inglis, "The Homecoming," p585.

wars which took place in South Africa. The annual Mendi celebrations should be seen as a struggle by the people to construct memories that were "oppositional"³⁸⁴ to the "official"³⁸⁵ memory.

In the 1950s, the Cape Town branch of the Mendi Memorial Scholarship Fund Committee was established with Rev. S.P. Lediga and Rev H Maya as secretaries. This committee worked closely with the Cape Province Interdenominational African Ministers Association. The Mendi scholarship fund was established with the following aims and objectives.

- (i) To assist African children to obtain higher education within the Union and abroad by means of scholarships and bursaries.
- (ii) To establish schools of arts and crafts for the training of African children.
- (iii) To encourage the establishment of dairy industries in tribal and reserved lands and other rural areas populated by African people.
- (iv) To encourage and assist medical services in rural areas and in municipal locations.
- (v) To assist and, wherever possible, promote child welfare societies, clinics and other social services among the African people, and
- (vi) To encourage the development of African culture and languages by means of literature and music.³⁸⁶

The above aims and objectives of the scholarship committee reflect the social and economic deprivations which existed in many African communities, but they also reflect the aspirations of the petty-bourgeoisie the African elite who

³⁸⁴ D.Thelen, 'New Promises?' 16-18 July 1992, University of the Witwatersrand, History Workshop, Monuments and memory, p2.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, p2.

³⁸⁶ AWC 97 Mendi Scholarship Fund constitution.

wanted pursuits such as dairy industries, literature, schools of arts and music. The only apparently successful clause is the one dealing with educational needs of African students. It reflects how parent and student support was won over by granting financial assistance to needy students. In 1954-1955, four students at Langa High School were awarded scholarships.³⁸⁷ In 1958, "10 students were assisted with scholarships worth five-hundred and seventy five pounds".³⁸⁸

It was further reported that there were more than "six times this number of applications for scholarships".³⁸⁹ One of Kondlo's informants, Mr Victor Nkomo, was "helped by this bursary to further his studies at the University college of Fort Hare in 1959".³⁹⁰ By 1961, it was reported that Mr Nkomo was in his final year and was given "£50".³⁹¹ The other Langa resident who received financial assistance from the Mendi scholarship was Miss Nomvula Ray Siqwana who was studying at the Jan Hofmeyer School of Social Work and was awarded a three year bursary for a "£120" later passing her course with distinction.³⁹² Even if the warriors who perished were men, the women were also served by the dead.

³⁸⁷ AWC 97 letter by Rev H Maya (general secretary) to Mr S. A Rogers.

³⁸⁸ The World, Saturday, 8 February 1958.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ K. M Kondlo, "The culture and religion ", p41.

³⁹¹ A. S Ngubeni, Hon secretary, writing to the manager, Native Administration Department, City Council of Cape Town.

³⁹² Ibid.

There were many students whose financial needs were met through the Mendi scholarship fund, so to a certain extent the fund was able to meet some of its objectives. This process contributed towards the creation of a small educated elite that maintained the 'loyalist consciousness'. For example, at the celebrations God save the King/Queen was always sung.³⁹³ This shows the legacy of British colonialism and also resistance of the people to sing the 'official' Boer anthem of 'Die Stem van Suid Afrika'. In his work on the South African war, Nasson noted that some blacks supported the British because of the existence of a climate of 'Boerophobia'. Some Boer areas in the interior were areas of "racial tyranny".³⁹⁴ Even if the Africans sang God Save the Queen, this does not mean that they willingly accepted imperial conquest. As missionary institutions were fertile grounds for the propagation of

³⁹³ The anthem goes like,
 God save our gracious Queen
 Long live our noble Queen,
 God save the Queen!
 Send her victorious,
 Happy and glorious
 Long the reign over us:
 God save the Queen

The choicest gifts in store
 On her be pleased to pour:
 Long may she reign!
 May she defend our laws,
 and ever give us cause to
 sing with heart and voice:
 God save the Queen!.

in Hymn for Today's Church (ed) Michael Baughen. (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1984), hymn no. 592. The hymn was also sung at the Moshoeshoe celebrations and some rugby teams when they had trophy presentations.

³⁹⁴ Bill Nasson, Abraham Esau's War, p32.

such songs, it can not therefore be concluded that people understood the implications of the words they sang. Perhaps we can be guided by Marks's observation that "ambiguity was the essence of survival".³⁹⁵ It is clear that Africans were not just replicas of the British imperial government, but selectively absorbed certain values such as the franchise and education which they thought would be useful in their respective villages. They also showed resistance against British colonial conquest over a number of decades.

The Nationalist Party government brought disastrous pressures which eventually led to the decline of the Mendi scholarship fund. The important component of this state intervention was the notorious Bantu Education Act which planted the seeds of crisis in Black Education. The first clause of the Mendi scholarship fund constitution stated "it wanted to assist African children to obtain higher education within the Union and abroad".³⁹⁶ They were able to assist some students as far as the first aspect is concerned, but in terms of sending students abroad, I have not seen any information related to that area. But, what is important, is that this would not be accepted by the regime as this would train Blacks for a part they were not expected to play in a White dominated society. By the 1960s the effects of the Act were being felt in Black schools. Even the amount of money which was collected for the scholarships started declining from the 1960s.

³⁹⁵ Shula Marks, "The Ambiguity of Dependence, John Dube of Natal", Journal of Southern African Studies vol 1 no. 2 April (1975)

³⁹⁶ AWC 97 Mendi Scholarship Fund Constitution.

On the 11th April 1961, the Bantu Commissioner Cape Peninsula wrote a letter to Mr Rogers telling him to stop collecting funds for the Mendi, "As the Mendi Memorial fund is not registered as a welfare organisation in terms of the Welfare Organisation Act, 1947 (no 40 of 1947) collections on behalf of the fund have been stopped as such collections are "illegal".³⁹⁷ By 1967, the fund was reported to be 'defunct'.³⁹⁸ The issue of registration might have been the official explanation why the Mendi scholarships had to be stopped but there are other explanations which can be given here. The major issue to be considered is found within the Mendi constitution itself. According to the scholarship fund constitution, the A.N.C, nominated two representatives, two came from SAFA (South African Football Association) and two from the ex-servicemen's league and were very hostile to the apartheid regime. The A.N.C was then banned and was waging an armed struggle against the regime.

The 1960s were a turning point in the political history of South Africa. The Sharpeville and Langa massacres revealed to the majority of South Africans, and to the world, the brutality of the authorities. Ndebele's phrase of "obscene exhibitionism"³⁹⁹ characterised the regime in its acts of

³⁹⁷ A letter by Bantu Commissioner, 1961, to Rogers.

³⁹⁸ Department of Bantu Administration and Development to the chief Bantu Affairs commission, Western Cape, AWC 97.

³⁹⁹ Njabulo Ndebele, "Guilt and Atonement: Unmasking History for the future", in New Nation writers' Conference, 13-19 December, 1991, p9.

public cruelty and terrible laws. This affected the way in which the passive, loyalist consciousness, that went to the extent of sacrificing black life for the 'defence' of a crumbling empire, was being done away with. South Africa being made a republic in 1961, simply exacerbated the situation. Before the Boer walkout, South Africa was still part of the Commonwealth of Nations but there was smouldering resentment within the empire because of Afrikaner nationalism. This 'divided' loyalty also had an adverse effect on the Mendi celebration which finally came to an end around 1967. The older generation is still very nostalgic about the days of the izikhumbuso saka Mendi (remembrance of Mendi). But in this atmosphere some form of social identity was being forged. The creation of the scholarship fund also shows how the memories of the dead, came to "serve the living".⁴⁰⁰

The sinking of the ship, Mendi, and the celebrations which followed as a remembrance of those warriors, became a terrain whereby mythologies were created. The response of Brigadier Johan Beyers, SADF spokesman, towards the Mendi disaster was,

It was a deed of such courage - 'These people from Africa drowning in the English channel, in the dark night, in the cold. . . . chanting their warrior songs as they went down.'⁴⁰¹

Another report stated that,

⁴⁰⁰ K.S Inglis, "The Homecoming: The war memorial movement", p585.

⁴⁰¹ Philip Van Nierkerk, 'Reclaiming the lost warriors'.

On the tilting, darkened and freezing decks, the black soldiers stripped, and naked, against the noise of the wind, crashing seas and cracking plates of the doomed ship, began stamping with their bare feet, the drill, celebrating their onrushing death with the war songs that Shaka had installed.⁴⁰²

Official reports stated that, "On board there was little panic. . . accounts of discipline and bravery aboard. . . . a military disaster remarkable of supreme courage in the face of death".⁴⁰³ The official perspective emphasises bravery, courage, discipline and even the denial of death when it comes because of 'patriotism'. The language of command and strict discipline that dominates military situations is evident in public places. An account by an African survivor gives a different perspective and this can be regarded as the voice of the 'ordinary' soldier and perhaps closer to the truth. He heard a

Terrific bang which shook the ship, putting lights out and had everybody scrambling around. There was great panic and confusion. . . . below there was a sea of darkness, but the men plunged into the rough, cold water, singing, praying and crying.⁴⁰⁴

The church organised many of the celebrations in Langa. The celebrations became a place in which the different churches in the township could have joint programmes. But the churches contributed towards the creation of mythologies.

⁴⁰² Noel Mostert, Frontiers: The epic of South Africa's creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa people, p605.

⁴⁰³ P. Van Niekerk, 'Reclaiming the lost warriors. . . '

⁴⁰⁴ Quoted in Albert Grundlingh, Fighting their Own war, p94.

For example, when Mendi was about to sink, Rev Isaac Wauchope Dyosha, one of the African chaplains, is alleged to have said in his address,

Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place now is exactly what you came here for. . . We are all going to die. . . . I, a Zulu, say here and now that you are all my brothers, Swazis, Mpondos, Basothos. . . let us die like warriors. . . we are the sons of Africa. . . raise your war cries, my brothers, for though we left our assegais back at the kraals, our voices are with our bodies.⁴⁰⁵

The singing of a hymn that became associated with the Mendi celebration should be seen within that context of the creation of mythologies. This hymn separated the Christian sacrifice from the 'secular' sacrifice. It placed more emphasis on the role played by Jesus Christ who died for the sins of the world. In other words, evangelism and the celebrations were also enmeshed. The sacrifice was different from the one the Mendi warriors paid. This legendary hymn says,

Ndikokele, O Jehova	Lead me Oh! Lord
Ndingumhambi Nkosi yam	I am a stranger my Lord
Ebutatakeni bam,	When I am losing hope
O msindisi	Oh ! my saviour
Nguwe o likaka lam.	You are my shield.
Ndifikile Yordane	I have arrived in Jordan
Susa Ukoyika kwam	Remove my fear
`Z`ndikape Ndiywele	Be with me until I cross
Yiba nguy` Umncedi wam,	Be my saviour
O msindisi	Oh ! saviour
Nguwe o litemba lam.	You are my only hope. ⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵ P. Van Niekerk, 'Reclaiming the lost warriors. . .'

⁴⁰⁶ File AWC 9. I want to thank Mr Thulani Giyose for having translated the hymn for me.

From the above evidence, it is clear how the church used occasions such as the Mendi festival to spread the message of conversion. This can be seen from the dominance of clerics in most of the programmes and the messages given. Prayer as ritual, became an important aspect of almost every social or cultural activity that took place in the township. Poets also emerged within the emotionally charged atmosphere and spoke better than many clerics. They were more aware of the material conditions brought about by the Mendi saga than the evangelising trend. A poem by Daniel P Marolen, on the Mendi saga was,

In many villages, mourning will be the food,
 For their young men, their brave ones
 They, the handsome of the land-
 Have gone to the land of never-never.
 They died-died ere they hurled an assegai.
 Alas! Alas! O, cruel, cruel sea!
 Alas! It has swallowed them up-gulp!
 Swallowed by the great-great one.
 Alas! What bereavement! Oh, what shock!
 The old ladies are sobbing,
 Old men are in utter confusion,
 Young ladies all in catastrophe,
 And young men are in sober sadness.
 O, o, o! the handsome of the land. . .
 O, o, mother! O, o father!
 O, bereavement, bereavement, bereavement!
 Who shall henceforth fend for us?
 Truly bereavement is witchcraft.⁴⁰⁷

Though it is difficult to detect any signs of conflict towards that form of Christian sacrifice, a conflict erupted

⁴⁰⁷ This poem by Daniel Marolen is different from the one by Rev W.Mears. The latter shows the relationship with the Christian sacrifice I have highlighted above. The poem by Marolen seems to be closer to historical truth. It is also clear from the poem that the families of the warriors of Mendi were struck dumb with disbelief at the break of the news, hence mourning "will be the food". It also shows the gender composition of the warriors. It was mainly composed of men. This shows how men are associated with defence, hence "who shall henceforth fend for us?".

in 1940 between Mr Ndibongo, a member of the ex-servicemen's League and the church. The conflict with the ministers was over money and he threatened to have "His own show".⁴⁰⁸ Mr Ndibongo did not get any support for his cause as members of the Vigilance Committee sided with the ministers.

Conclusion

Because of the nature of colonialism, many Blacks ended up fighting on behalf of their 'mother' country in wars which did not directly affect them. This was the case during the South African War, the First and the Second World War. Many fought with the expectation that their socio-economic conditions would change when the wars came to an end. The celebration of the Mendi disaster of 1917 was an indication of how war memories were kept alive within popular memory but at the same time, it was a reminder to many how they were betrayed by both the South African and British governments. As Van Niekerk has correctly noted their "courage has long been forgotten by official histories, but they live on as legends among their descendants".⁴⁰⁹ With the changed political atmosphere in South Africa, official perception of the Mendi saga has taken a different turn.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁸ Dr Jack Simons's field report 27.2.1941. Manuscripts and archives section, UCT.

⁴⁰⁹ P. Van Niekerk, 'Reclaiming the lost warriors of SS Mendi'.

⁴¹⁰ In February 1993, it was reported that, "The SADF is sending a band and honour guard to the memorial service to be held at Atteridgeville this Sunday, to mark the 76th anniversary of the disaster". A fax was sent to different newspapers which noted that, "on board there was little panic. . . accounts of discipline and bravery abound. . . a military disaster remarkable of

After both World Wars, it was clear how the Black soldiers were shocked by the situation they returned to. They returned to the overcrowded townships, had to pay poll tax and carry passes like any other African. They sacrificed their lives for a social and economic system that was sorely owned and in the hands of the minority Whites. If the men had listened to their wives, perhaps the humiliating situation might have been different. At a recruiting meeting in Pretoria some men noted that,

When we speak of joining the overseas contingent our women curse and spit at us, asking whether the government, for whom we propose to risk our lives, is not the one which sends the police to our houses at

supreme courage in face of death. We commemorate this courage every year". Atteridgeville is an African township outside Pretoria. As South Africa is going through a transition stage, the army will not remain unaffected. Some members within the SADF want to be seen to identify with the changes taking place in the country. Even if they state that they have been celebrating the Mendi saga for years, political expediency needs to be unmasked by historians. These are the ones who were sent out to track down and kill the "terrorists" during their cross border raids. Now, because they are negotiating for a new integrated defence system, they want to be seen to have buried the hatchet. It was further reported that, Wauchope is working on a monument in Soweto to honour the inspiration of the Mendi warriors and this would be celebrated every year. On the memorial would be inscribed the immortal words of the Reverend Isaac Wauchope Dyobhe, telling the men assembled on the deck of the sinking ship: "What is happening now is what we came here for. . . We are all going to die. . . I, Zulu, say here and now that you are all my brothers, Swazis, Mpondos, Basothos. . . let us die like warriors. . . we are the sons of Africa. . . raise your war cries, my brothers, for though we left our assegais back at the kraals, our voices are with our bodies". See P. Van Niekerk 'Reclaiming the lost warriors of SS Mendi'. The Weekly Mail, 19 to 25 February 1993.

night to pull us and our daughters out of bed and trample upon us.⁴¹¹

Service and loyalty to Empire and King remained a fundamental enduring legacy of British colonialism to an extent where people risked their lives defending the Empire. This was well expressed by Mr Bell Ntshinga, chairman of the Langa Vigilance Association when he said,

It is a sacrifice that Black S.A took to defend the Royal House of England, in order to leave a mark of appreciation so that our children shall not be disappointed when their history comes to be told.⁴¹²

The "children" who emerged out of different historical and material conditions, do not even appreciate the 'loyalist consciousness' of their grandfathers or fathers but see them as 'sell-outs' who allowed themselves to be manipulated by whites for a capitalist white controlled society. The history of the Mendi disaster and celebration is a history full of mythologies. The official perspective portrayed it in such a way that it would suit the establishment. While on the other hand, the church linked the Mendi disaster with the constructed Biblical doctrines of sacrifice. As the Mendi saga occupied a special place in the dominated communities, it was brought to an end by the historical changes taking place in South Africa. The celebration of this historical occasion came to an end in the 1960s when the authorities revealed themselves in the repressive conditions that were introduced, especially after the

⁴¹¹ Quoted in A.Grundlingh, Fighting their Own War, p70.

⁴¹² Dr Jack Simons's collection 1940-1941, Langa.

Sharpeville and Langa crisis and by the insistent paternalism that had dominated the earlier decades.

The Mendi celebration in Langa provided people with the space for sociability. At the celebration people had plenty to eat and drink. The memories of the dead came to serve the living with a festival and other materials such as bursaries to deserving African students. For example, Mr Mkaza noted thus, "You see without the slaughtering those days, at least nobody would feel they were in a celebration of that kind. People had to feel that they were celebrating. Without meat that's no celebration".⁴¹³

The study now turns to another chapter that deals with popular resistance in Langa. It is argued in this chapter that during and after the Second World War the number of Africans migrating to the cities was too massive for the state to handle. So, instead, draconian laws such as the pass laws and rent increases were intensified to deal with the rapid urbanisation. This, however, was not just accepted by the majority of the African people in Cape Town hence the rich resistance culture that has contributed to the social and political history of the city. The chapter also shows how the anti-pass campaigns were occasions where the urban proletariat could be radicalised and this became a threat to the apartheid state culminating in the banning of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress in 1960. The banning of those organisations was the beginning of the decline of apartheid as other new forms of

⁴¹³ Interview with Mr S.Mkaza, 21.07.1993.

resistance, particularly the armed struggle, were integrated as crucial components of the national liberation movement, making a more direct appeal to the youth to lay down their lives for freedom.

CHAPTER FIVE

Urban Politics and African Resistance

In the previous chapter we saw how the residents of the township embraced the Mendi festival as an important event in the lives of many Black people. This made memory a weapon in the struggle as the ruling class did not create space for Black history to be part of the official history. We also saw how the lives of men who were sent to toil as 'boys' in a 'White' man's war came to be the 'heroes' to the underclasses. Mendi also reminds us of soldiers who left their "spears at the kraals" but went into a foreign war. This chapter attempts to look at issues, such as rent and pass laws, which became central to African politics in the 1950s and 1960s. The chapter is divided into three sections, (i) Attempts to trace the relationship between the City Council of Cape Town and the community of Langa in handling rent related issues. (ii) Attempts to show how female African urbanisation, with its uneven demographic figure, contributed to some of the social violence. (iii) Aims to look at the pass laws, how they were implemented in trying to divide the African workforce and the resistance against passes which culminated in the Sharpeville\Langa massacre in 1960.

"We will judge him by his deeds"⁴¹⁴

In early February 1951, a delegation from the Langa Advisory Board met the Minister of Native Affairs,

⁴¹⁴ The Guardian February 1951

Senator Dr H. F Verwoerd to discuss rent-related issues. The delegation consisted of "Messrs J Ngwevela, S. Sifumba, J Malangabi, G Nongauza, W. Stuurman, J. P Mondliwa, J. Pama and Sam Kahn".⁴¹⁵ When Mr J Ngwevela made a press statement, he commented that, although the meeting had taken place, "you cannot judge a person by his words or his face, you judge him by his deeds".⁴¹⁶

On the 24th of April another deputation, from the Women's Vigilance Association of Langa, gathered on the parade while their leadership held talks with the Mayor of Cape Town about the rent crisis which was severely affecting the township.⁴¹⁷ The politics of rent in Langa goes back to the inception of the township in 1927. Though the focus of this chapter is the late 1940s and early 1960s, I think that a historical analysis will be useful in understanding the dynamics because struggles against rent increases are as old as the township itself.

When the residents of Ndabeni were forcibly removed to Langa in the 1920s, many resisted because of rent charges. It has been reported that rents at Langa were too high "14s per month for `single` men, compared with the 4s per month they had to pay at Ndabeni, unchanged since 1901".⁴¹⁸ The City Council based its rent increases on the type of labour used in building the houses at Langa. According to them, African

⁴¹⁵ Ibid

⁴¹⁶ Ibid

⁴¹⁷ The Cape Times, 24 April 1951.

⁴¹⁸ C. Saunders, 'From Ndabeni to Lange', in Studies, vol 1, p186.

labour which was "cheap" was not used during the construction of those buildings and therefore they had to charge an economic rate to those who occupied the houses. "The rent was calculated on an economic charge of 12%, 5% of which went to meet interest charges and the sinking fund, 6% for services"⁴¹⁹. The other view expressed was that Ndabeni rents were the lowest in the country, and the wages earned by Africans in Cape Town the highest, so they could afford the higher rents at Langa. Residents of Ndabeni were closer to their places of employment as it was four miles from Cape Town and closer to the industrial areas. This meant that the people could reduce their transport costs whereas moving to Langa which was 8 miles away from the city centre meant that most of the inhabitants had to spend more money on transport from the meagre wages they earned. Saunders makes the point that train fares to Langa were higher. "To begin with, a third class return cost 11d, almost double that to Ndabeni. The service to Langa was also, in the beginning, much less regular than that to Ndabeni".⁴²⁰ It can therefore be argued that these issues, according to City Council's view, justified their actions in increasing rents in Langa.

The economic boom that was experienced in South Africa during and after World War II led to many people moving from the rural areas to the cities in search of job opportunities to improve their living conditions. This, however, was not

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, p187

⁴²⁰ Ibid, p188.

an easy transition as many faced the difficulties of finding decent housing, the legacy of segregation and the pass laws. Many of those migrants were accommodated in the barracks and zones which were already overcrowded, while others sought accommodation in the squatter areas, which were also not safe because the state was not in favour of informal settlement.

Between 1945 and 1946, the City Council and the Langa Advisory Board were locked in disputes over the increase of rents. For example, the rent increase of 1946\7 shows the power the Council had over decision-making processes. Although, there were some members of Council who were interested in African welfare, their actions reveal White liberal paternalism. The views of the Advisory Board were only sought after when the decision over the increases had already been fixed. This astounded many residents as it was reported that because of the "shocking unhygienic conditions at the special and barrack quarters, rent be reduced".⁴²¹

The report went further, stating that the premises were "mainly insanitary by reason of their occupation, most of the dormitories being grossly overcrowded"⁴²². There were many incidents of overcrowding and overcharging. Another example, that stresses the importance of the issue under discussion, was when Advocate Molteno complained that "it

⁴²¹ BC 579 1947-48 Molteno Papers A24. 1100-A24. 1227.

⁴²² Ibid.

was wrong to let a house to four men and get £2.10\-- for it when a family occupied a similar house for £1.12.6d".⁴²³

The above statistics are very interesting in that when Council increased rents many 'ordinary' people preferred to share accommodation so as to be able to afford the rent charges. Therefore the situation of overcrowding worsened because of their need to survive the rent increases.

Langa had different housing schemes and therefore received different rent scales. According to the 1951 rent increases, the following eight classifications were highlighted. The rent for "barracks for single Natives is raised from 7s to 9s per month; quarters for single Natives, 10s. to 12s.6d; two roomed houses for married Natives, 15s.6d to 20s; additional two roomed houses for married Natives, 17s.6d to 23s; three roomed houses for married Natives 12s.6d to £1 10s; four roomed houses for married Natives, £1 10s to £2; additional three roomed houses for married Natives. £1 12s. 6d to £2 3s.3d., the eighth classification, additional quarters for single Natives at 12s.6d per month, is now styled "temporary wooden barracks for single Natives", and the rent becomes 8s."⁴²⁴

This increase of between 25 and 30 per cent contributed to the hostile relationship the City Council of Cape Town had with the community of Langa. By 1958 many residents were not prepared to pay rent as stipulated by Council. The Cape Times report stated that "passive resisters cause rent

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Cape Times, 13 March 1951.

problem at Langa". What is interesting according to the report is that the Native Langa court was "handling 60 cases a day".⁴²⁵

The above evidence shows how other forms of appeal, such as deputations and letters, did not work until such time that people resorted to passive resistance showing they were no longer willing to comply with Council's demands on an unequal basis. When the P.A.C called the anti-pass campaign in 1960, national and regional leadership concentrated on pass related issues as will be shown in the last part of this chapter. But what is important is that the offices which kept the rent records were destroyed by fire during the week of the riot. According to the manager of Native Administration, Mr S.A Rogers "the total of these outstanding rentals was R50 634".⁴²⁶

The evidence above shows how the residents of Langa embarked upon a number of strategies in dealing with the rent crisis. This reveals the unequal relationship between Council and the Langa community in that the "local state" had more powers in fixing rentals. Though the Langa Advisory Board and the Langa Vigilance Association were involved in representing the community on matters like these, their interests were often not taken into account, their appeals for affordable rates falling on deaf ears. The manner in which Council related to both the Langa Advisory Board and the Vigilance Association shows the unequal power relations between the

⁴²⁵ Cape Times, 29 April 1958.

⁴²⁶ Cape Times, 4 September 1961.

two. And because of Council's inability to deal justly with the cases, it was not surprising when the municipality's offices which housed rent records were destroyed during the 1960 riot. The offices were seen to contain their "exploitation", hence the destruction that took place. The section now turns to the uneven African female urbanization and its consequences in the context of Langa.

"Desirable and Undesirable African Women"

Labour migration has been a complicated process experienced by many Africans throughout Southern Africa. The discovery of minerals having transformed the political economy of the region, many migrants throughout Southern Africa were attracted to the mines because of the various prospects they offered. However, in some of these states, the colonial regimes used taxation measures to exert pressure in exporting labour to the mines but this was not the only reason why many Africans went. A large number of Mpondo became migrants only after the devastating rinderpest of the 1890s. According to Beinart, Mpondo "families used migrancy for the purposes of reinvestment into rural society; that, in some senses, it was a defence against poverty and the complete collapse of rural production"⁴²⁷. On the other hand with the Pedi, the pattern of migration also shows the internal dynamics within the polity, in that migration preceded the discovery of minerals. Delius makes the point that "During the 1850s and 1860s there was a significant

⁴²⁷ William Beinart, 'Joyini-Nkomo: Cattle Advances and the Origins of Migrancy from Pondoland', in JSAS vol. 5. 1978-1979, pp199-219, 219.

increase in the numbers migrating, and in the 1870s large numbers of Pedi responded to the demand for labour created by the opening of the diamond fields".⁴²⁸ During this period, it has been shown how many of the migrants brought back guns which were used to consolidate their polities against colonial intrusion. It has also been shown how the move to the mines was dominated by male migrants. According to some feminist scholars, capitalism and 'patriarchy' collaborated in the domination of women, in that wages which were earned gave men control over women. Bozzoli makes the point that in many pre-industrial African communities the penetration of merchant capital gave men the advantage over women. She argues that, "men possess greater physical mobility (by virtue of not being tied to the domestic domain) they are better able to respond to the demands of trade"⁴²⁹. Though this view has some truth in it, the situation of the twentieth century was different from that of the earlier period. After the decline of the reserve economies, young men and young women migrated to the cities for the same reasons. This was because of poverty and landlessness as many of this generation was denied access to cattle and land by elders. It seems to me that this social group faced the same pressures when they arrived in the city. But there were occasions in which some women came to the cities looking for their husbands who had deserted them

⁴²⁸ Peter Delius, Migrant Labour and the Pedi, 1840-80', in (ed) S Marks and A Atmore, Economy and Society in Pre-industrial South Africa, pp193-312, p193.

⁴²⁹ Belinda Bozzoli Marxism, 'Feminism and Southern African Studies', JSAS vol. 9 no 2, April 1983, pp139-171, p149.

and some who wanted to lead an independent life from their in-laws.

Many women who migrated to Cape Town in the 1940s and 1960s found that the situation did not meet their expectations. The urban segregatory laws, such as the Urban Areas Natives Act of 1923, the Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Coloured Labour Preference Policy of 1950, also affected them in the same way as it did the African men. Perhaps this point can be made clearer by quoting at length what the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 had to say, because it was the one major Act which controlled the entry, movement, employment and residential status of Africans in the cities. Even if it was amended in later years, it gave precedence to how the control had to take place. The report of the Stallard Commission of 1922 states thus:

The Native should only be allowed to enter the urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man, and should depart therefrom when he ceases so to minister⁴³⁰.

This Act wanted all the Natives to reside in the locations. Furthermore they had to have a document of identification. By 1930, women who wanted to come to the cities had first to get permission from the municipalities. The Act only gave permission to those who had to join their husbands, otherwise they had to get permission from the magistrates in

⁴³⁰ 'Report of the Stallard Commission of 1922' cited in Rodney Davenport *African Townsmen? South African Natives (Urban Areas) Legislation through the Years, African Affairs* vol68. no271. April (1969), pp95-109.

the rural areas who on a number of occasions refused them the permission. An example of this was unambiguously expressed by Mr S.A Rogers, the superintendent of Langa township, when he gave some women the following response,

"I have to advise you that you do not qualify for permanent residence within the proclaimed area of the Cape Peninsula in terms of the Government policy. The Bantu Affairs Commissioner at Cofimvaba advises that you have a home there to which your family can return"⁴³¹

The shortcoming in the law was that the Act was not enforceable because women did not carry passes. The government feared the resistance that this would be likely to cause following the "unrest" which emerged in the Free State in 1913 because of the pass issue. But the increasing urban migration by African women forced the state to act and the solution to the "problem" according to the state was to introduce passes for African women. This, however, was met with major resistance by women in industrial centres in South Africa, Langa township included.⁴³²

By 1952, a series of measures were devised to control their movement to the urban areas. This, according to Berger was a serious restriction on the rights of women for urban residence. She argues that, "in 1952 Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act (which applied uniformly throughout the

⁴³¹ Molteno Papers BC 579 Political and Social Memoranda African Urban Areas Legislation J1-J1. p35

⁴³² Resistance to the 1950 pass measures have been documented Cheryl Walker Women and Resistance in South Africa, pp123- 131. The Guardian, Langa (26.3.50, 6.4.50)

country) forbade any Africans, female or male, from remaining in town for more than seventy-two hours unless they came under one of the four categories defined by place of birth, length of urban residence, and length of time working for a single employer".⁴³³

Until 1955, the provision of Section 10 of the Natives Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 did not apply to African women in the Cape Peninsula. Many were prosecuted for contravening the provision of section 10(1)and(2) which made it an offence to employ any Native (male or female) who was not in possession of a permit to seek or take up employment in the Peninsula. A letter from the town clerk's office, whereby work permits were issued to Africans seeking employment in the area, succinctly articulated the situation by stating that,

About the middle of December 1954 the offices at Langa, and all the branch office in the City and suburbs, have literally been besieged by Native females clamouring for permits to remain in the area.⁴³⁴

Another view describing the brutality of those measures was expressed by Zodwa who was bussed to the rural areas,

"It was an unbelievable experience, we kept on thinking that it was not true. Was it a dream? We asked ourselves. I was very expectant and sitting in

⁴³³ Iris Berger, 'Never Far from Home: Family, community and working women. (A paper presented at the Women and Gender in Southern Africa conference: 3 January - 12 February 1991) Centre for African Studies, Africa Seminar, 1991, p8.

⁴³⁴ Molteno Papers BC 579. 'Political and Social Memoranda African Urban Areas Legislation' Ji-Ji. p35

the bus made my legs swell a lot. But what could we do? Some of us who had left our jobs decided to contact family and friends on arrival in Umtata and borrowed money for a return trip the very next day. Most of us were back in Cape Town in a matter of days. One just lived like a hare being chased around, hunted. Oh, not to talk about the fines. I must have paid over R2,000 in fines over the ten years or so of struggling with the pass problem"⁴³⁵

African women in Langa did not remain unaffected by the peculiarities of the Western Cape. The Cape region was to be made a preserve for the Coloured and Whites according to the 1950 Coloured Labour Preference Policy. The majority of African women worked as domestic servants while others worked in factories which were "dominated" by "Coloured" female labour. A small section of the educated group who were teachers, and nurses belonged to the National Council of African Women. There was also a group of women who were self-employed and brewed beer for sale, even if it was illegal and often were raided by the police. Amongst this group of women there existed another group of the "unemployed" who supplemented their family incomes and attempted to improve their financial position by selling homemade cakes, meat, fruit, vegetables and other refreshments at the 'single' quarters and the barracks.

African women did not have the same experience of urbanization. Though they shared racial oppression and economic exploitation, some women's urban experience was

⁴³⁵ Quoted in Mamphela Ramphele, A Bed Called Home: Life in the migrant labour Hostels of Cape Town, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1993), pp17-18.

very harsh, to such an extent that they were dehumanized by the conditions. The literature that exists on Langa township with the exception of Mamphela's recent work, does not even consider these ordinary women. This includes women who in government sources were referred to as the "undesirable".

This section attempts to give a historical explanation as to why prostitution became rife in Langa in the late 1940s and early 1960s. At the end of 1939 the number of women visiting the barracks, the 'single' quarters and the house in Jabavu street started increasing. These places were supposed to be exclusively for men. The explanation given by the women was that they went to the places because they were cooking and washing for the men. But in 1940, it was found out that there was sex for sale. One report stated that some men joined the women at the 'spinsters' quarters and remained there till the following morning. In the morning the women argued that they could not be expected to charge" 21/- (old tariff in Jabavu street) and the charge was "5/- which includes food".⁴³⁶

The "Jabavu" house was used by the women to conduct their business. A series of lectures on social welfare were conducted by Professor Batson from UCT were held and the residents of Langa welcomed them. Prostitution was reported as "a crying shame on Langa"⁴³⁷ After the Jabavu

⁴³⁶ Jack Simons collection of papers on Langa township and are on a micro-film under the section: sex-prostitution.

⁴³⁷ Ibid

activities were disrupted, prostitution shifted to the barracks and some houses in the township. The situation became even worse between 1967-8. On the 27th August 1967 the Cape Times reported that teenage prostitution was rife in Langa stating that, "teenage prostitutes have been found in the bachelor quarters ⁴³⁸." At the beginning of 1968 delegates from the Langa Advisory Board, National Council of African Women and the City Council's Health and Housing Committee resolved that women had to produce permits to visit the zones because of the issue of prostitution. On the 9th of December 1967 Mrs J.J Bakker, chairperson of the Langa Advisory Board reported that "there are six men to every woman at Langa ⁴³⁹ By the end of 1968, the figure increased by one percent; that is a ratio of "seven men to one woman and there were 22,000 men without women"⁴⁴⁰. The earlier statistics, particularly those taken in 1960, contradict the ones above by a difference of 3 percent. The commission of inquiry into the Langa shooting in 1960 stated that the population in the township "exceeded 25,000. Of these 19,549 were men, 17,920 of whom were housed under bachelor conditions. There were only 1,870 women and 3,685 children - the men therefore outnumbered the women by 10 to 1." ⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ Cape Times, 27 August 1967

⁴³⁹ Cape Times, 9 December 1967

⁴⁴⁰ Mr A.H. Worrall, Director of Bantu Administration reported this in the August Cape Times 1968.

⁴⁴¹ A Precise of the Reports of the commissions appointed to enquire into the events occurring on March 21 1960 at Sharpeville and Langa, SAIRR, p8

The above statistics are very important in understanding the social violence which took place in the township because of the uneven demographic balance. The number of fights, sexual harassments and "illegitimate" children which occurred in the barracks and fights between "township" residents over women can be attributed to the exploitative economic system in South Africa. For example, at the end of June 1966, a fight broke out between "township" residents and some "migrant" workers whereby two migrants were killed. This seems to have been a common occurrence but, at times like this, it was 'gang' activity which tried to separate the migrant worker from his wages. What later happened was that a group of 'home town' men went out to hunt the tsotsis (gang) and were carrying "kieries and sticks."⁴⁴² According to reports some of the township youth dressed like migrant workers so that they could enter the barracks. But at times the conflict was over women. Mr Gibert Fesi, a Langa resident frankly expressed the particular dynamics by stating that,

"Much of the trouble is caused by general antagonism towards the single men living in the bachelor quarters. They go out at night in search of women. They also get drunk, and fall an easy prey to these young out-of-works. A lot of people when they see a migrant labourer (or "amagoduka") attacked, don't mind because they feel he deserved it."⁴⁴³

The dominant ruling class wanted that type of housing scheme to be constructed for the African working class as they did

⁴⁴² Cape Times, 27 June 1966

⁴⁴³ Ibid

not want to encourage "the permanent settlement of Native families".⁴⁴⁴ in the Western Cape. The settled African residents, sat on the Advisory Board, at times showed a lack of understanding of the structural causes of such problems. They uttered statements such as the "evils in the men's hostels", "decline in morals" and complaints that their daughters were being enticed by migrant workers into their rooms.⁴⁴⁵ Major Berman of the City Council's Health and Housing Committee expressed the dominant class's attitudes towards the social and economic conditions of the workers when he said that,

"They are migratory labour- men without their families. We know that they need women, but we are not going to allow that".⁴⁴⁶

The above view, though supported by the state through the police force and the bureaucratic administration, was challenged by the ordinary people. Even if some were transported to the rural areas they returned to the city with the hope of avoiding starvation and rural poverty. But some people moved out of the barracks into squatter

⁴⁴⁴ AWC 139 Secretary-Bantu Administration and Development, A. L. Smuts writing to Secretary Native Affairs, Pretoria.

⁴⁴⁵ An article written by "Nyama Uku" (Langa) disputed the allegation but went further suggesting a different form of accommodation. He stated that "I would like to know where for us law abiding and long service (10 or 15 years with one boss) men is there any safe place where we can meet our girl friends and enjoy life. It is not true that girls who visit Langa come from broken homes. Wives and girls from honourable homes also visit the zones. The is only one method that can work-demolish these zones! Cape Times, 24 July 1962.

⁴⁴⁶ AWC 139 Secretary-Bantu Admin and Development.

settlements where they were able to establish 'alternative accommodation' to live with their families. We now turn to the pass campaign which was at the centre stage of the liberation movements. It was because of the pass laws that the Sharpeville\Langa massacres of 1960 took place.

Langa and the Pass Campaign

Pass laws and pass raids have featured prominently on Southern Africa's labour control system. The history of the pass laws goes back to the period of slavery in the Cape Colony when farmers gave their labourers a document of identification which controlled their movement from the rural areas and also within the region. More enforcement of the pass laws took place both at the diamond mines in Kimberley and at the gold fields in Johannesburg. Through this system, labour was subjected to compound or "location" life. Hidden forms of resistance against the pass laws took various forms. For example, passes were forged, people sang about the passes, showing their unpopularity, while others destroyed them. Some people went to the extent of buying these documents so that they could avoid being arrested or remain in the Cape Peninsula. It was a commonly held view that the passes were being made into another form of 'trade' which enriched clerks and other administrators in the township. Mrs Macozoma stated that,

People were arrested if they did not have passes. They would be fined. People used bribes, giving the police money instead of producing a pass. People also had to use bribery to sell goods like meat. This acceptance of bribes made the people very angry because different

police would come within a few minutes of each other and so people had to give something time and again.⁴⁴⁷

Research has shown how a corrupt system was likely to produce corruption in the community. According to Ntantala there were people who were willing to buy the "papers at a sum of 15-25 pounds a piece, though, for a woman with good looks, it may be much less 5-10 pounds if she is willing to add herself to the price".⁴⁴⁸ Open resistance against the pass laws also took place.

Many Black soldiers who fought in the Second World War had expected social and economic changes in their lives and some returned with injuries while others never saw South Africa again. But, the many who did return were disappointed that the promises made during the recruitment and after the war were never fulfilled. On their return to S.A they were thrown back into the squalid conditions of the townships and were forced to carry the pass books. A series of rallies were held in Cape Town around these issues. At the beginning of 1945 the Anti-Pass Committee which later became the United Anti-Pass Committee came to co-ordinate most of the campaigns against passes. In the middle of June 1945 an anti-pass delegation consisting of Mr R.V Selope Thema, Dr Y.M Dadoo, Messrs R.G Baloyi, S.M Moema, L Phillips, E. Mafethe, C Kadalie, J Busakwe, E. Elias, E.N

⁴⁴⁷ Interview with Mrs Constance Macozoma 5.09.93.

⁴⁴⁸ Phyllis Ntantala, 'The Widows of the Reserves' Africa South vol.2 no 3, April-June 1958. See also Wilson and Mafeje, Langa, pp9-13, Cape Times, 5 January 1961 whereby an interpreter charged 200 pound to 25 Africans for them to be in the Peninsula.

Duna, J Nkatlo, J Ngwenya, J. Ntshona, N. Kota, M Kotane, P. R Mosaka, D.W Bopape and Miss J Palmer addressed a rally on the parade before marching to the government offices.⁴⁴⁹ At the Parade, the chairman of the deputation MR R.V Selope Thema stated that, "We want to tell the world that in Smuts' own country there is no peace. There is no freedom for the Non-Europeans. We want to tell the world this, so that the world can tell Smuts to put his own house in order first"⁴⁵⁰, while Moses Kotane said that "freedom in South Africa means freedom for those with white skin".⁴⁵¹ After their return from the corridors of power, the struggle against passes did not come to an end. In 1946 at a rally held at Langa, passes still dominated the speeches of most of the speakers. An ex-soldier, who was not mentioned by name but simply referred to as a "Mosotho", described the squalid conditions and the social oppression which they returned to after the war. In other words, the freedom and democracy, which Hitler was threatening and for which they had been recruited to fight, was not extended to the Blacks. As he said, he had fought for "world freedom" and,

"Let these deceivers go to Johannesburg. Let them see my people. Free to work on the mines at 21/- a day. Free to live in slums and locations, amidst dirt, disease, hunger and crime".⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ The Guardian, 14th June 1945.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

At that gathering, the 'passes of slavery' were burned in order that the 'flame of freedom could be lit'. After the pass burning had taken place, a procession marched through the streets of Langa singing 'Mayibuye' (The freedom song of the people), carrying banners upon which were written,

"We demand equality, not white supremacy, and abolish the Pass Laws".⁴⁵³

Another big gathering was held at the beginning of March 1952 at Langa and was addressed by Mr Walter Sisulu, the secretary general of the A.N.C, Messrs T. Ngwenya, W Dungelo and Mr J. N Ngwevela. The Langa meetings show an increase in the number of people attending and this can be seen as the increasing 'popularisation' of the A.N.C. in the Western Cape. In 1958 another meeting called by the A.N.C Women's League was well attended because about "1,200 people"⁴⁵⁴ came, but the women protested against the authorities for refusing permits to "the thousands of women who wished to attend our meeting".⁴⁵⁵ Infact there was no free political activity as the superintendent of the location, Mr S.A Rogers was given powers by the government to control even the number of political meetings in the township and could ban any gathering he thought was a threat to "law and order". The women who wanted to come to the African National Congress Women's League were refused permission to come to Langa as Rogers did not give them the permits they needed. A permit was a piece of paper given to a

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁴ Cape Argus, 17 July 1958.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

particular individual by the superintendent allowing him or her to enter the township.

The culture of resistance against the pass laws became enriched by the involvement of Black women and some liberal White women who were sympathetic to their struggle. The Department of Bantu Administration from Pretoria started issuing passes to African women in the 1950s. Towards the end of the 1950s, the local papers reported that a team from Pretoria would be in Langa on the 15th, 17th and 18th December 1959 to issue out passes. After their arrival in Cape Town they proceeded to Nyanga East and it was reported that they "issued passes to 12,993 Women in the Peninsula".⁴⁵⁶ However, the imposition of passes on African women was marked by "demonstrations"⁴⁵⁷ and confrontations with the police. An example of this was at the Rondebosch Town Hall when the demonstrators carried placards reading,

`Let Mrs Mafekeng Stay` and `De Wet Nel-Keep
Your Passes`.⁴⁵⁸

Mrs Mafekeng was a member of the A.N.C Women's League who was deported to a rural area in the Northern Cape and later escaped into Lesotho. CATAPAW (Cape Association to Abolish Passes for African Women) organised many of the campaigns. The Association was composed of the "Black Sash, the South African Institute of Race Relations, the African National

⁴⁵⁶ Cape Argus, 11 December 1959.

⁴⁵⁷ Cape Argus, 7 December 1959.

⁴⁵⁸ Cape Times, 4 November 1959.

Congress, Women's League and other bodies".⁴⁵⁹ As some members of the Women's League belonged to the Langa Vigilance Association they held joint campaigns in the township. The passes were seen as restricting freedom of movement, one's freedom of living where one chooses and "one's freedom of selling one's labour to the best market".⁴⁶⁰ The Women resisted the imposition of the passes on them because of the humiliation that meant to the African men. They also had disastrous financial implications because the women furiously stated that it was a "drain on the small family budget".⁴⁶¹ They further stated that "economically, we waste a lot of money paying fines for our men".⁴⁶² From the above evidence it can be suggested that many working class women had some control over the finance of the households and this was a serious blow to them because of their husbands' continual imprisonment. One of my informants had this to say related to the pass issue:

I can remember one old lady, Mrs Silinga. She never carried a pass. They used to arrest her, release her and warn her. She told them she would never carry a pass and she never did till she passed away.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁹ Cape Argus, 8 December 1959.

⁴⁶⁰ AWC 128 Rackets in passes (Registration of Bantu). The memorandum was signed by Fannie Maphai, Mrs Dlova, Mrs Qalinge, Bella Dlikidla, Mrs Minah Myataza and Mrs Annie Silinga.

⁴⁶¹ AWC 128 (Memorandum), p4.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Interview with Mrs Mildred Ndzuzo 5.09.1993. See also the interview with Mrs Constance Macozoma.

Despite so many campaigns and struggles conducted in Langa by the A.N.C, CATAPAW and the Communist Party, it might be surprising to see the Pan Africanist Congress able to win support for the struggle against passes immediately after its formation. This section will attempt to answer some of the questions why the P.A.C was able to establish strong roots in Langa township.

When the P.A.C broke away from the A.N.C in 1959, claiming to be the true custodians of the 1949 Programme of Action of the A.N.C Youth League in articulating the aspirations of the African people, it was still seen as a faction group. The conflict within the A.N.C can be traced back to the banning of the Communist Party under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. In 1953 many radical Whites involved in the Congress of Democrats came to hold substantial influence within the A.N.C and this according to the P.A.C, meant that the A.N.C was losing its historic mission of liberating the African people because they wanted an African leadership. As a splinter political formation, many thought that the P.A.C was not going to survive the brutality of the state and particularly because the P.A.C was a small party with a minority following. But their following came from areas which had a large population of migrant workers such as Langa and Sharpeville. And this can be explained by the political economy of the Western Cape, the massive dispossessions, low wages and the unpopular Bantu Authorities in the rural areas during this period. All

these are crucial factors in explaining why the P.A.C had such an appeal.

After the Defiance Campaign of 1952, the A.N.C and the Communist party in the Western Cape region, had a grip on the urban population with their political education. This radicalisation of the urban population can be attributed to the post World War period with massive urbanisation and the insecurities of urban life many Blacks faced. But on the other hand, they faced the most difficult period as the state was arresting, deporting and placing most of its versatile regional leadership under house arrest. Some of those deported in 1959 included, amongst others, Elizabeth Mafekeng, who was banished to Vryburg and later escaped to Basutoland, Ben Baartman banished to Zululand, Charles Makholisa 'endorsed out' to Transkei, Mr Joe Morolong, regional secretary of the A.N.C "banished to Vryburg".⁴⁶⁴ Those banned included Johnson Ngwevela, Thomas Ngwenya, Walter David Mpanda, George Luana, Annie Silinga, Oscar Mpetha, president of the A.N.C and secretary of the Food and Canning Workers Union".⁴⁶⁵ It can therefore be argued that the A.N.C in the region was adversely affected by these state policies and that there was a leadership crisis. During this period the government was implementing its "social engineering" schemes which made the African population very angry and frustrated. As pointed out earlier, the government wanted to make the Western Cape a

⁴⁶⁴ Cape Times, 21 July 1959.

⁴⁶⁵ See Kingwill, Rosalie, 'The African National Congress in the Western Cape', (BA Hons, UCT, 1977), ch5 and the appendix, pp102-105.

preserve of the "Coloureds" and Whites, and many Africans were being endorsed out of Cape Town. Apart from this massive removal of the people, the residents of Langa were living under a threat of another forced removal as the government wanted to convert the township into a labour camp in which the chief form of housing would be the barracks and the zones. The other major factor was the labour bureau system that aimed at controlling the number of migrants who came to Cape Town. According to this system, those who needed employment in Cape Town had to apply to the superintendent of the township, S.A. Rogers, for work permits, and employers who needed labour had to come to Langa for their labour needs. This meant that labour was controlled in terms of access to housing, employment and the escalating rent charges. All these historical factors contributed to the anger that existed in the township and the conditions were conducive for a political formation to promise people an alternative situation.

It has been argued that the A.N.C's direct assault, was planned to begin on 31 March and was to consist of demonstrations rather than civil disobedience. "There was no declared intention to break the law".⁴⁶⁶ On the other hand, the P.A.C's appeal for its supporters not to carry passes and to present themselves for arrest, even if that was taking place within the framework of absolute non-violent campaign, was a clearly calculated effort to break the law.

⁴⁶⁶ Muriel Horrell, 'Days of Crisis in South Africa', (Johannesburg, 1960), p2, New Age 17 March 1960, cited in Lodge, 'The Cape Town Trobles', JSAS, p226.

At the A. N. C conference held in December 1958, members of the organisation prepared themselves for a long and bitter struggle against passes which they described as "the main pillar of our oppression and exploitation".⁴⁶⁷ According to their plans 31st March 1960 would be made an "Anti-Pass Day".⁴⁶⁸ This meant that demonstrations would take place throughout South Africa in opposition to the pass laws. The P.A.C also organised its supporters against passes but decided to start their campaign earlier, on 21 March 1960. The struggle against passes was the first phase in the struggle towards national liberation and the second phase would culminate in the granting of political freedom by 1963 argued the P.A.C. The A.N.C pointed out that they were not in favour of the 21st March. Their reply to the P.A.C was,

You are not organized well enough and your attempt will fail, and we want nothing to do with that failure because we ourselves are busy organizing a similar protest.⁴⁶⁹

And Duma Nokwe said that Congress would not support such "sensational actions that might not succeed".⁴⁷⁰ Despite the polemics between the two parties, ordinary members were more interested in the elimination of the pass laws than the ideological struggles in which the two formations were involved. For example, the P.A.C had 900 members in the

⁴⁶⁷ 'Pass Laws', SAIRR, p59.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ 'House of Assembly Debates 1960', vol 103 and 104, pp3881.

⁴⁷⁰ Mary Benson, South Africa: The Struggle for a Birthright, IDAF (International Defence Aid Fund for Southern Africa, 1985), p222.

region.⁴⁷¹ But during the big march to the centre of Cape Town, 30,000 demonstrators joined the march. This shows the unpopularity of the pass laws and the low wages which the majority of African workers were subjected to. Ntantala notes that the P.A.C was small and hardly known and that "the throngs that came to the meeting were not P.A.C members".⁴⁷² A similar pattern existed even in Sharpeville whereby many joined the march not because of their affiliation to the P.A.C but because of the demands which were pertinent to the struggle at that particular time.⁴⁷³

Sharpeville Crisis and Langa Massacre

The polemics which rocked the Orlando A.N.C branch did not leave the Western Cape unaffected. In March 1959, an Africanist 'faction' within the A.N.C Western Cape started advocating pure africanist ideas similar to those of the Transvaal group. This 'faction' was led by a labourer, Mr Christopher Mlohoti who became the chairman of the Western Cape P. A. C region.⁴⁷⁴ According to Kgosana branches were established in many areas in the Western Cape townships of Langa, the Langa Flats one being the largest, Nyanga West, Nyanga East, Windermere, and Crawford.⁴⁷⁵ The leadership of the P.A.C in the region consisted of Philip Kgosana, Cape

⁴⁷¹ Mr Philip Kgosana's address, UCT, 16 February 1993.

⁴⁷² P. Ntantala, A life's Mosaic, p157.

⁴⁷³ For more of this, see Ian Jeffrey, 'Cultural Trends and Community Formation in a South African Township: Sharpeville, 1943-1985', (MA, University of the Witwatersrand, 1991), pp170-173.

⁴⁷⁴ Cape Times, 14 June 1960.

⁴⁷⁵ Philip Kgosana writing to Tom Lodge, November 1975.

Regional Secretary, Shandida Elliot Magwentshu, Langa branch Secretary, Gasson Ndlovu, Vice chairman of the Western Cape region, and Mlamli Makwetu, the Langa flats branch secretary".⁴⁷⁶

The P.A.C in the Western Cape benefited from the services of two students from the University of Cape Town, Mr Nana Mahomo and Mr Philip Kgosana. The former also came from the Transvaal in 1957 to study at UCT and it has been argued that when the P.A.C was formed he "concentrated on building up leaders who moved into the 'zones', young men in their twenties".⁴⁷⁷ It has been said that Mr Mahomo understood the P.A.C policy much better than many who later took over the leadership. As an extra-parliamentary organisation, the P. A. C needed financial resources and Mahomo had to go to America before the anti-pass campaign to appeal for financial support.

Mr Philip Kgosana was born on the 12 October 1936. His father was a priest. Kgosana completed his secondary education at Lady Selbourne in the 1950s. As a high school student he states that he did not join any movement (largely because I was still young) but at weekends we used to attend public meetings called by the A.N.C".⁴⁷⁸ Mr Kgosana came to the University of Cape Town on a South African Institute of Race Relations scholarship covering only fees. But for subsistence he received an occasional five pounds from a

⁴⁷⁶ 'A precis of the Report of the Commissions appointed

⁴⁷⁷ Mary Benson, South Africa: The struggle, p221.

⁴⁷⁸ Philip Kgosana writing to the author 22 March 1993.

white woman from Pretoria East whom he never knew, but who was a contact made through his high school principal, Mr Bob Leshoai. The woman gave him her grandson's discarded clothes and shoes and Mr Leshoai gave him a jacket that he wore on the day the demonstrators went to the city centre. Kgosana experienced the 'Pass net' as he calls it in 1957 in Marabastad when he was arrested for a "nag -pass".⁴⁷⁹ after coming from a cinema without his pass. In Cape Town "I was arrested at Mowbray station while heading for UCT".⁴⁸⁰ Kgosana secured a shared room at Langa township for £1-3/- but it was going to be very difficult paying such a high rent (see the above section on rent increases). This was the beginning of his relationship with Patrick Duncan of the Liberal Party who wanted him to sell their weekly newspaper, Contact, which was never popular, to supplement his scholarship. He joined the P.A.C around April-May 1959. After failing his first year studies, Kgosana used his UCT study permit to be in Cape Town and this was a strategy he used as he gave in to the political struggle.

When the P.A.C national leadership, consisting of Robert M Sobukwe and Potlako Kitchener Leballo, came to Cape Town at the beginning of February 1960, the numbers of P.A.C membership started to increase. The combination of the two leaders seems to have had a big influence on the number of people who were interested in what the P.A.C was promising. But some were attracted by the messages delivered by both leaders For example, one informant said,

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

"we used to call amagoduka, amaqaba, guys from the countryside, but when R.M. Sobukwe came here, he said that was the first thing that must be wiped off".⁴⁸¹

Pogrund notes that Sobukwe had "far-reaching influence on people who came to listen to him".⁴⁸² According to his informant Mxolisi 'Ace' Mgxashe states, "we had been hearing rumours about this new organisation, and how outspoken its leaders were".⁴⁸³ As observed by Kinkead-Weekes describing the campaign preparations which were preceded by the visit in February of "its fiery Transvaal-based president Robert Sobukwe and Secretary Potlako Leballo"⁴⁸⁴. While about Sobukwe, Desmond Tutu said "his was an attractive and magnetic personality".⁴⁸⁵

Sobukwe attacked the regional rivalry that existed in the township and that was replaced by a broad inclusive and exclusive identity of Pan Africanism. Both leaders were articulate in terms of P.A.C policy and their charisma has been enshrined in popular memory in Langa township and this is the story being retold by the older generation that was there during that period. When Leballo addressed a P.A.C meeting at Kensington on 14 February 1960 it was reported that

⁴⁸¹ Interview with Mr S Mkaza 1991.

⁴⁸² Benjamin Pogrund, Sobukwe and Apartheid (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1990), p152.

⁴⁸³ Ibid, p 153.

⁴⁸⁴ Barry Kinkead-Weekes, 'Africans in Cape Town', pp385-6.

⁴⁸⁵ Desmond Tutu, Crying in the Wilderness, (London, Mowbray, 1986), p49.

"Everybody felt the electricity as Potlako Leballo, National Secretary climbed on to the platform and waved his pipe in the air. His powerful voice rang out in Sesotho: Ke Potlako wa ho Leballo u gu thweng oa bona lefatshe es glno le thopilwe ka badischaba' (This is Potlako of the Leballos, of whom it is said 'hold your shield lightly, your father's land has been looted by foreigners)".⁴⁸⁶

Another view of Leballo was succinctly articulated by Bolnick when he says that Leballo also "gained renown as a mesmerising orator who lived to dramatise, to command the centre of attention, to captivate listeners with impassioned stories".⁴⁸⁷ (Comments on the land issues will be made later).

On the 18th March 1960, both Mangaliso Sobukwe and Kgosana announced the P.A.C campaign against passes and the road leading to political independence. According to the leadership, the campaign was to be non-violent and the demonstrators would present themselves to a chosen or nearby police station demanding to be arrested because they refused to carry passes. The message that was given by Sobukwe was presented to the residents of Langa by Kgosana in the "positive action" message. The message was,

"In every city, town and village, the men must leave their passes at home on Monday, March 21, 1960. Under the local leadership of the Pan-Africanist Congress

⁴⁸⁶ Cited in Tom Lodge, 'Cape Town Troubles', p225.

⁴⁸⁷ Joel Bolnick, 'Potlako Leballo-the man who Hurried to meet his Destiny', The Journal of Modern African Studies, 29,3 (1991), pp412-442,413.

the men will move to the chosen police station and there surrender themselves. The leader will tell the police: 'We all do not have passes. We will not carry passes, millions of our people are arrested under the laws, so you had better arrest us all now. If you are stopped by the police on the way and demand passes, surrender and then (ask) for arrest. If one man is arrested for not having a pass, you all stop then and there. Tell the police you do not have passes either. Demand that they arrest you all'.⁴⁸⁸

On the eve of the day of the demonstration, Langa seems to have been in a very hopeful mood as the gatherings were well attended and lasted for hours. Two meetings were held, one in the morning at 10. am at the New Flats which was addressed by Ndlovu, Magwentshu, Shuba and Faka. The other at 2 O'clock at the Bunga square at Langa, addressed by Ndlovu and Kgosana. This was the largest gathering of the two as it was estimated that between "3,000 and 5000" people attended and it lasted till 7.p.m. It was at that gathering that the programme for the following morning was announced. The programme arranged that two groups, one under the leadership of Kgosana, Makwetu and Nxele, would meet at the New Flats for the 7 o'clock march while the second one would assemble under Ndlovu and Magwentshu at the Anglican church and join the other one towards the police station. Bunga Square has a very interesting history in the social history of Langa township. It was the centre of political gathering in the township. Most of the musical bands in the township also used to perform for public consumption at the square.

⁴⁸⁸ 'Commission's Report', p10.

The A.N.C made the square a popular gathering. Mrs Ngwevela remembers.

"Every Sunday we used to go to listen to the Congress, you know. It was in Bhunga where they used to hold their meetings in the field opposite the butchery of Mr Zuma. Eh. . . every Sunday we know after church at two there is a meeting".⁴⁸⁹

Bunga Square has now been renamed the Bunga Freedom square. According to Rude, places like the Bunga can be useful in changing the peasant's consciousness because it served as a "forum for debate and as a launching pad for popular agitation and revolt".⁴⁹⁰ The P.A.C also mobilized the peasant's 'inherent belief' "in his right to land, whether owned individually or in common ownership with others".⁴⁹¹ This can be linked to the mobilisation of some workers and peasants around the land issue with their slogan of 'Izwe Lethu' (The land is ours). The Bunga Square was also a forum where rival political organisations were being attacked. For example, a pamphlet which attacked the A.N.C was distributed at that gathering. It said,

"The A.N.C is no longer fighting for the African people. It wants to kill the people! How can we live if we may not buy food?? ", The A. N. C has been taken over by Communists. It is leading our people to disaster and Death!

⁴⁸⁹ Interview with Mrs S.Ngwevela 10 August 1991.

⁴⁹⁰ George Rude, Ideology and Popular Protest (New York, Pantheon Books, 1980), p35.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

Izwe Lethu !! i Afrika.⁴⁹²

"Inherent" and "derived" ideas were amalgamated to create a new popular ideology of Pan Africanism that emphasised the leadership of the African people in the struggle to overthrow White domination. After giving instructions to P.A.C followers, the township that night was characterised by a mood of excitement, hope, noise and 'agitation'. Kgosana noted that,

"We instructed our youth to toll all church bells and beat drums to wake people up at 12 midnight".⁴⁹³

A similar view was shared by Mr Mkaza who was involved in the "Task Force" when he says,

"We were messenger boys patrolling through the night".⁴⁹⁴

After the "messenger boys" had maintained the vigil, a new day had arrived and some men were on their way to work as usual. But they were surprised to be jeered at by women such as "Annie Silinga, Nellie Malindi and Dinah Mapille, all of them A.N.C members".⁴⁹⁵ On the morning of 21 March 1960 about "6,000"⁴⁹⁶ men marched to the Langa police

⁴⁹² AWC 146 pamphlet issued by the P.A.C. The title of the pamphlet was, "A.N.C boycott Hopeless". This was after the A.N.C called for a consumer boycott which was not successful in other regions and was quickly stopped. The P.A.C used that as an opportunity to attack the A.N.C.

⁴⁹³ Philip Kgosana, Lest we Forget, p103.

⁴⁹⁴ Interview with Mr S.Mkaza, 26 October 1991.

⁴⁹⁵ Phyllis Ntantala, A life's Mosaic, p157.

⁴⁹⁶ Clarence Makwetu, in Sheila Gastrow, Who is Who in South African Politics no3, pp145-49, p146 (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1992).

station demanding to be arrested for refusing to carry passes. The Langa police seem to have been paralysed as they did not know what to do with so many people who were deliberately offering themselves for arrest. The first meeting was reported to have been a failure "because the district commandant of police declined to arrest the leaders for failing to carry their reference books, and the march on the Langa police station was effectively stopped".⁴⁹⁷ The leadership addressed the marchers and spoke to the police. The morning demonstration was very peaceful without any violent confrontation. But at the same time, it was the discussion that the leadership had with the police that brought the Langa residents to the New Flats with the hope that popular demands would be met. According to Roux, the leadership responded to the failure of the first meeting by "calling a meeting for the same evening and represented that the purpose of this meeting was to receive an official answer to grievances, which, it was stated, the police had undertaken to give".⁴⁹⁸ Mr Galela an 80 year old remembers,

"No, I did not take part in that but on the day of that disaster when people were shot at, I got a shop here at the main barracks. One of my friends came to me in the afternoon on the 21st of March. He said that we must go to the flats. There we were going to get answers about passes. Alright, we went there. Instead

⁴⁹⁷ Cited in E. Roux, Time Longer than Rope, p408.

⁴⁹⁸ E. Roux, Time longer than Rope, p408-409.

of getting the answer, we got a hiding (laughs.),
 We were beaten with sticks and sten guns".⁴⁹⁹

The above view is held by many township resident that the P.A.C leadership was given a promise. The findings of the commission that looked into the Langa shooting do not support the 'claim' of the promise. In the afternoon the residents of Langa heard about the shooting which took place at Sharpeville where 67 peaceful demonstrators were killed and 186 injured. The police savagery in Sharpeville did not deter Africans in Cape Town as they waited for the "word from authority" at 6p.m. In the late afternoon a crowd of 3,000 started gathering at the New Flats. Captain Louw told Major Rheeder about a further meeting to be held at 6pm and consulted Mr Cuff, the chief magistrate at Wynberg who issued a banning order under the Riotous Assemblies Act and prohibited the proposed public meeting. This was signed at 3.30pm and at 4.30 a further banning order was issued by the Minister of Justice Mr F.C Erasmus. The police used a loudspeaker announcing the ban of the gathering in Xhosa and Sesotho but still this did not make any difference as the number of people rose from 3,000 to 10,000. These were people from Langa and neighbouring townships such as Nyanga East, West, Windermere etc. The meeting was opened with prayers from a Baptist minister. By 5.45pm the police convoy consisting of 53 men under Captain Louw, 22 Whites and 30 Africans under Lieutenant de Villiers arrived at the scene. The White police were armed with service revolvers

⁴⁹⁹ Interview with Mr Edmund Galela 5.09.1993.

and sten guns while the African police carried standard batons or riot sticks. They were met by a "mighty roar of Iswe lethu Afrika".⁵⁰⁰ General Louw gave the gathering an impossible order to disperse, "Gentlemen, this meeting is prohibited by law. I give you three minutes to disperse or else force will be used to disperse you".⁵⁰¹ When the people failed to do what they were ordered to do, they were baton charged and shot at. According to Roux, 2 men were killed and 49 injured.⁵⁰² Kgosana put the number at three and this was supported by Rogers in a memorandum to the town clerk that "three Bantu Victims . . . had been shot in the riot".⁵⁰³ These men were named Khashi, Makiwane and Tshuma. A fourth victim, Ncube, fell the following day".⁵⁰⁴

The treatment of the situation by the police created more tension in that the demonstrators fought to defend themselves as they were being attacked. The crowd attacked the police with a "barrage of stones, halfbricks, bottles, pieces of iron and other missiles".⁵⁰⁵ Rioting spread throughout the whole township as street lamps were broken down, telephone wires cut off, roads blocked, houses of the African policemen were looted of their furniture, other properties thrown into the streets and set on fire.

⁵⁰⁰ 'Commission's Report', p18.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² E.Roux, Time longer than Rope, p409.

⁵⁰³ Cited in B.Kinkead-Weekes, (Ph.d thesis, 'Africans in Cape Town'), p387.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid, p387.

⁵⁰⁵ 'Commission's Report', p22.

'Symbols' of oppression such as rent offices, the labour bureau depot, two classrooms at Langa High School and the public library were completely gutted. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church, The Order of Ethiopia, the Bantu Methodist and a tent belonging to the New Apostolic Church were damaged. Kgosana's response to the situation was that "it was merely an expression of anger from our people. Such destruction (sometimes uncalled for) does take place in a riot situation."⁵⁰⁶ Though this view has some truth in it, some of these places were destroyed because of some historical grievances the people had. For example, in terms of the churches Wilson and Mafeje argue that, "many of the younger generation consciously associate Christianity with white supremacy and see Christianity as a form of exploitation. They refer to the ministers as 'shrewd business men who live off the blood of the widows'".⁵⁰⁷ This is paradoxical in that two of the churches which were destroyed are classified 'African independent' churches and had broken away from the established 'mainline' churches. The formation of these churches is to be understood in the context of a colonial and apartheid church whose historical mission could not be clearly separated from the imperial forces and therefore most Africans established their churches where they could have control over those institutions. The Bantu Methodist church, the Merry Macs Jazz band and the Langa High School have a long history of

⁵⁰⁶ Philip Kgosana writing to the author, 1993.

⁵⁰⁷ Wilson, M and Mafeje, A, Langa, p102.

teaching people about 'negro' spirituals, songs which linked theology and the liberation of the oppressed people. Therefore, religion should be seen not as a homogenous entity because the oppressed and oppressor used it but, for various conflicting class interests. This point has been noted by other scholars. For example, Villa-Vicencio argues that religion is a "multifaceted, many-leveled, complex, and ambiguous reality".⁵⁰⁸ The labour bureau offices were the most hated places because of the nature of labour control measures in the 1950s. They were meant to control the flow of labour into Cape Town and this was linked to the policies which aimed at reducing the number of Africans. The same applies to the rent offices from which orders for all the increases seemed to be emerging. Even if the regional leadership did not sanction the activities carried out by the demonstrators, the brutality of the police led the masses to hit at the infrastructure which was seen as part of the establishment. 'Law and Order' was finally restored by the Defence Force. Most of the injured people were treated by doctors at Langa hospital that night of the 21st and morning of the 22nd and it was found that "two-thirds of the persons who received medical attention were suffering from head injuries".⁵⁰⁹ This was as a result of the beatings by the police.

The following morning the township was extremely tense and the people were shocked by the way in which the state

⁵⁰⁸ Charles Villa-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar: Church and State in Historical Perspective, (Cape Town, David Philip, 1986), introduction, p xv.

⁵⁰⁹ 'Commission's report', p25.

handled a peaceful gathering. The display of state power did not come to an end that evening because soldiers and police occupied the 'location', turning it into a war zone. Houses were invaded, property destroyed and leadership arrested. On the other hand, most of the African work force had withdrawn its labour and big and small firms were feeling the impact of the stay-at-home campaign that week. This included the docks, newspaper and milk deliveries, building sites, naval base, domestic workers, and places which depended on African labour were hard hit by the stay at home campaign. The call by Luthuli for a day of mourning for the victims of Langa and Sharpeville shootings made it no longer a P.A.C 'thing' but a national crisis which demanded a national solidarity. The ideological differences between the two organisations were almost buried as A.N.C comrades helped with the collection of food and aid leading towards the funeral. The funeral, the biggest ever in the history of Langa, with over 50,000 Africans attending was another expression of solidarity by a community that was under siege. Solidarity was also expressed by some progressive individuals from the "Coloured" and Indian community who collected food and attended the funeral. This was unlike many Coloured workers who went to work despite the fact that there was a call for stay-at-home campaign.

The leadership had to provide direction all the time as the police were urging workers to go to work. This strategy to break the stay-at home campaign did not work as more and more labour responded to the call. On Friday 25, Makwetu, Kgosana and other P.A.C leaders led a demonstration of

between 2,000 and 5,000 to Caledon Square police headquarters. P.A.C marshalls were in control but Kgosana was arrested. The marchers were still committed to the campaign of refusing to carry passes and the police chief, Colonel IBS Terblanche "indicated that he had no intention of making any arrests and that for the next month people would not have to show their passes in Cape Town. Kgosana was released later that day and the crowd dispersed".⁵¹⁰ The arrest of leadership did not come to an end nor did this deter the spirit of defiance as it was reported that on the 9th day 30,000 men marched to Cape Town demanding the release of their leaders, abolition of the pass laws and wage increases.⁵¹¹ This march to the City centre was a spontaneous popular response as people were ejected out of the townships by the police who forced them to go to work. The Cape Town march had many meanings. Firstly it demonstrated the unity of the oppressed people both the petty-bourgeoisie and the working class. The pass laws created common grievances among the African people irrespective of their class position.

This march was also an indication to those in positions of power, who were making all the discriminatory laws which aimed at excluding the Africans from the Western Cape, that an African presence had to be considered as an integral part of the history of Cape Town. This was not the work of 'communists' and 'agitators', as members of parliament wanted people to believe, but that the socio-economic

⁵¹⁰ Clarence Makwetu, in S Gastrow, Who is Who no.3, p146.

⁵¹¹ M.Wilson and A.Mafeje, Langa, p11.

conditions dictated why people responded to the 'incitements'. This ruling class arrogance was expressed in the parliamentary debates and has persisted to the present moment. For example, Mr Lawrence, a member of parliament for Salt River in the parliamentary debates said that the political organisation did not have any support but could bring people to their side by

"Intimidation and by misleading the masses and by emotional incitement, to which obviously the Bantu in his relative ignorance is more susceptible than other people who have already learnt self-control".⁵¹²

Conclusion

The residents of Langa were experiencing serious socio-economic pressures in the 1950s and 1960s. Rent increases, rising costs of living, crime rate, low wages and the harsh enforcement of the pass laws radicalised the people, including the migrant workers who were neglected by many political organisations because they were 'conservative'. This was a lack of understanding of the pressures migrant workers faced; not only were they exploited by big business, but they were even looked down upon by their own people, the 'urbanised' 'Bantu'. The early struggles against rent increases were characterised by deputations from the Vigilance Association and the Advisory Board, but still this did not yield any meaningful changes because the residents of the township remained divided and this gave the Council

⁵¹² 'Union of South Africa House of Assembly Debates', vols 103 and 104, 15th Jan-4 May (1960), pp3882.

an upperhand over decision-making powers. The P.A.C emerged in the Cape as an influential force in the early 1960s because of various factors which were central to the political economy of the Western Cape. One was the impression that the A.N.C in the region was 'crushed' because its prominent leadership was either deported or placed under house arrest and that their plan against passes was scheduled for a later date and some of its members joined the P.A.C. The ideological make up of the Western Cape such as the N.E.U.M, which was very hostile to the A.N.C Alliance and the fact that the A.N.C was bedevilled by ideological conflicts all added to political power shifting to the P.A.C.. The majority of the residents in the 'location' who were migrant workers and felt the harshness of the pass laws, low wages and lack of political representation, found in the P.A.C a political home because of its land claims and the millennial promises of political independence by 1963. But it is important to link the issue of migrant workers to the struggles which were taking place in the rural areas as well. Wilson and Mafeje noted that the "Pondoland rebellion was disturbing many of the Transkei workers".⁵¹³ George Rude's concepts of 'inherent' and 'derived' ideas are very useful in understanding why the P.A.C was able to appeal to migrant workers who still had fresh memories of dispossession as a result of the rehabilitation schemes taking place in the rural areas. According to Nasson the P.A.C's emphasis on "African emancipation, political, and cultural self-reliance for

⁵¹³ M.Wilson and A.Mafeje, Langa, p18.

Africans and especially the restoration of African land.⁵¹⁴ were some of the factors which shifted political loyalty to the PAC in Langa. An extract from Ntantala is very interesting on how the struggle for land was linked to the quest for national liberation indicating the amalgamation of the 'inherent' and 'derived' ideas but this took place when the demonstrators were in a court situation.

'Those to be charged would be called to the well of the court, before the magistrate-six or eight of them. The charge would be read out: Guilty or not guilty? 'Not guilty!' would be their response, and they would be remanded for some later date. Then they would turn round to go to the basement where they had been kept and where others were waiting. As soon as they left the well of the court, each would call out 'iZwe Lethu!', and from the basement came a thunderous response: 'Afrika!' 'Amandla!' Response: 'Ngawethu!'.⁵¹⁵

The struggle against passes was a victory for the African men and women who resisted them in various ways. The individual and group consciousness which preceded the national and collective struggles failed in that they could not make a major impact against the system of oppression and exploitation. The decolonisation of Africa in the 1960s was an added encouragement to the liberation movements in South Africa. On the 28th March the government tabled a law that led to the banning of the A.N.C and the P.A.C on the 30th March 1960. Both organisations 'broke-away' from the

⁵¹⁴ Bill Nasson, 'Political Ideologies in the Western Cape', in T Lodge\B Nasson, All Here, and Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s. (Cape Town, David Philip, 1991),

⁵¹⁵ Phyllis Ntantala, A life's Mosaic, p177.

'Gandhist' forms of political strategies and resorted to revolutionary armed struggle which made an impact on the young generation.

CONCLUSION

The community of Langa was created by layers of different forces and interests. Burke is correct when he says that "communities have to be constructed and reconstructed".⁵¹⁶ The experience of Ndabeni moulded the community of Langa in specific ways depending on the material conditions in which the people found themselves. The forced removal to Langa culminated in the construction of another experience based on different environmental factors with extensive layers of culture which developed at Ndabeni. As Bozzoli has highlighted the difficulties of applying the concept of 'community', it is therefore important to create a balance between the theoretical and practical implications of such a concept. She states that "community rest in its ability to conjure up images of supportiveness; of a place of kinship ties, of rest and rejuvenation; of cross-class cooperation".⁵¹⁷ The study has not only confined its focus to the abstract theoretical level but especially to how the people of Langa were able to forge such forms of identity during sport, festivals and political struggles. 'Community' is therefore used as an analytical tool to make sense of how people, who lived under enormous threat of the state with its regulations, were able to develop some kind of mutual supportiveness. This study also accommodates the struggles which took place in the township between urban and rural Blacks over resources such as houses, leisure facilities,

⁵¹⁶ Peter Burke, History and Social Theory (United Kingdom, Polity Press, 1992, p58.

⁵¹⁷ Belinda Bozzoli, (ed) Class, Community and Conflict (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1987), p5.

and accessibility to 'space'. The emergence of the township in the late 1920s and early 1930s came to constitute a 'distinct' community that differed from the one at Ndabeni because of the increased population and the housing infrastructure. But, the other major component of this study is the period during and after the Second World War leading to the 1970s.

The study attempted to explore areas of leisure activities such as sport and festivals, which have been dealt with in passing by other scholars. However, those scholars have shown a dismissive attitude towards festivals and sport as 'tribalistic' and as a form of escapism from the difficulties of township life respectively. This poverty of perception has been challenged by the findings of this study which argues that through sport one is in a better position to understand the relationship between sport and society. The 'experiences' of the urban Africans could clearly be captured through sport. It was also through sport that the struggles between social classes in Langa and the broader Cape Town could be brought into the open. The study also attempted to move away from the 'top down' approach that portrays the 'masses' of people in such a way that they are only seen in responsive terms to the initiatives of the state. This has been viewed in the light of Rathbone's view when he argues that the dominant approach in many academic circles

Tells us a great deal about the world the slave masters made but far too little about the dialectical relations between that world and the one the slaves made. ⁵¹⁸

Chapter one, which dealt with leisure, class formation and struggle, has been an initiative moving away from the 'top down' approach in order to see the dialectical relationships between the 'ruling' and the 'underclasses'. As popular culture can not strictly be confined to middle and working classes, different cultures influenced each other. This was the case with rugby and cricket which had middle class origins but later changed when they were in the hands of the working class.

The same is to be said about the 'ethnic' festivals. The categories which have been used to define these festivals are too narrow and racist and do not allow an intimate glimpse into the festivals beyond the ethnic stereotypes which have been created. A similar example was when the migrant workers on the Copperbelt engaged in their own forms of entertainment and saw in Mbeni dances a way of dealing with the hostile compound life. These activities were labelled tribalistic. But according to Matongo because of the widespread popularity of Mbeni and Kalela dances, by the 1930s and 1960s they had a profound impact on the urban masses.⁵¹⁹ In a society that was rapidly industrialising,

⁵¹⁸ R.Rathbone 'The People and Soweto' in JSAS 6, 1, 1979 131-132.

⁵¹⁹ Albert B. K Matongo, "Popular Culture in colonial society: Another look at Mbeni and Kalela dances on the Copperbelt, 1930- 1960", pp180-217, p180, in Samuel N Chipingu, Guardians in Their Time (London, Macmillan Press, 1992).

many of the people found some kind of security in those dances and it was impossible for the ruling classes to have control over them. The festivals in Langa had a similar impact on the migrant workers who did not consider them tribalistic, but rather a form of leisure. The above evidence therefore takes Marks's concerns much further when she notes that

We are beginning to understand the political economy of industrial South Africa, yet we have little knowledge of how, in this hostile environment, Africans survived as autonomous human beings with a culture of their own within the master's world; in the final analysis, these processes entailed the making of an African working class.⁵²⁰

Through this study, gender and power relations were explored in those festivals. What has also been important was the fact that participants in those festivals did not only remain confined to their narrow ethnic identities but were also part of the massive political and social movements which challenged relations of domination in the city. These were the migrants who played crucial roles during the pass campaigns.

The experience of the urban African has also been shaped by the involvement of the state which penetrated even into their private lives. The enforcement of the pass laws and the permit system gave Africans no privacy in their lives as the police could raid them in the early hours of the morning

⁵²⁰ S. Marks and R. Rathbone, (eds), Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa African class formation, culture and consciousness 1870-1930, (England, Longman, 1982), pp1-2.

demanding passes and 'specials'. The inherent conflict the dispossessed majority had against the state affected their attitude when they were invited to celebrate decades of colonial conquest during the Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Celebration, hence their outright objection towards taking part in such a festival.

1950 to 1960 was a period in South African history when the state intensified the implementation of the pass laws. Resistance against the pass laws took different forms as some were able to buy the necessary documents, forge them or exchange with a friend who remained in town when someone went to the rural areas. With the introduction of photographs this scheme became extremely difficult and dangerous. Bribery and corruption were common in the municipal offices but that type of struggle was futile as it concentrated on the individual rather than on the struggling masses. The anti-pass campaigns organised by the A.N.C, Communist Party and the P.A.C aimed at eradicating such forms of oppression and resulted in the Sharpeville and Langa shootings in 1960. When the marchers were requested to return to the townships while they were in the City centre, the state revealed its brutality like an angry swarm of bees that went on a rampage arresting and imprisoning leadership irrespective of political affiliation. The state declared the state of emergency and the banning of the A.N.C and the P.A.C and this was followed by an extreme form of repression which revealed the naked viciousness of the South African state. With the formation of the armed struggle, Langa township became a recruiting place for armed action. Poqo, the armed

wing of the P.A.C was formed in 1961 and constituted as APLA in 1962. Poqo attacked whites, policemen and suspected collaborators. According to court records Poqo received many of its recruits from Langa township. Oral evidence also show how some individuals from Langa jointed the MK's sabotage campaigns under the leadership of Dennis Goldberg at a dense bush in Mamre in 1962. At the Mamre gatherings, Goldberg spoke through an interpreter, Looksmart Solwandle and Albie Sachs, the lawyer, also gave lectures there. Both military formations, Poqo and MK received an influx of recruits in the aftermath of the 1976 student uprising.

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*Salila Sonke Mhla
Zafiki Indaba*

Roll of Honour

OF THE TROOPSHIP "MENDI." WHO WERE DROWNED AT
SEA ON THE 21st FEBRUARY, 1917.

No.	Name.	No.	Name.	No.	Name.
562	Daniel Magadi.	9117	Paraffn Makilitshi.	9186	Joseph Lesiba.
563	John Mshote.	9118	Daniel Mkonvama.	9187	Jack Motela.
564	William Gabaza.	9119	Chairlie Malemutle.	9188	Alfred Lekau.
1256	John Lekau.	9121	Frans Silwane.	9189	Frans Madume.
1791	John Lekhoto.	9122	Smith Segule.	9191	Thomas Monamatuga.
3021	Jim Makasha.	9124	Botha Madume.	9192	Jim Selani.
3274	Stephen Lucas Legwale.	9125	Abraham Mabururu.	9193	Mack Makwatedi.
3276	Isaac Wauchope.	9126	Charlie Mabila.	9194	Theophilus Modeba.
3703	Johannes Kgana.	9128	William Mohowe.	9195	Isaac Magoba.
3711	Kleinbooi Ntoro.	9129	Mack Mokhapo.	9197	Wolobile Samela.
5743	Lukase Nkhereanye.	9130	Charlie Ramoho.	9198	Bloro Makama.
5969	James Henry Kutshwayo.	9132	Moses Moshe.	9199	Jim Mbiyazwe.
7067	Makali Nokwelo.	9133	Thousand Matupu.	9202	Jabez Nquza.
7210	Peter Motobi.	9134	Jan Tokhae.	9203	Piet Dampi.
7229	Philip Voss.	9136	Charlie Maparana.	9204	David Modise.
7277	Peter Nkoane.	9137	Bossboy Shiletane.	9207	Charlie Nomvaba.
7587	Henry Bokleni.	9138	Willem Marole.	9210	Timotheus Sibalabala.
7601	Melville Mncedana.	9139	Frans Ntelte.	9211	Isaac Kgosi.
8010	John Gigima.	9140	Joseph Maake.	9212	Jack Nkunwana.
8020	Nodyiwana Pinyana.	9141	Jack Natedi.	9215	Thomas Danki.
8021	Mongameli Zitonga.	9142	Saucepan Maake.	9216	Fanwell Olibeng.
8022	Nzulu Ndlankuhle.	9143	Charles Makosana.	9236	Daniel Mutinjwa.
8329	Thomas Phohophedi.	9146	Change Karishi.	9237	George Masindi.
8356	Alison Magagamela.	9147	Jan Hasbane.	9238	Taweni Masina.
8876	Timothy Mangqe.	9148	Canteen Ngate.	9240	Jim Sibalela.
8879	Luvakuva Songca.	9149	Canteen Mahutu.	9241	Jim Dabani.
8891	Charlie Ntintili.	9151	Matthews Pisani.	9242	Silwanyana Mehlomane.
8892	Jim Jamangile.	9152	Frans Mkomazi.	9243	Mtiyedwa Mafiliba.
8893	Olifas Ndingi.	9154	Mac Kakele.	9244	Saluseni Jonas.
8900	Joseph Jantole.	9155	Pond Letebele.	9246	Jacob Tsamaya.
8907	Madela Pupuma.	9156	Amos Molabi.	9247	April Zulu.
8910	Robert Madosi.	9160	Jan Raskane.	9248	Sam Mandcas.
8911	Jim Aliveni.	9162	Jan Mangwana.	9249	Charlie Payipeli.
8912	Honono Ntozake.	9163	David Mulamu.	9251	David Pugiso.
8913	Willie Johnson.	9164	Jack Beta.	9252	Joel Muhlabu.
8967	Jan Makhohe.	9168	Fred Mukotile.	9253	Herman Mekgoe.
8990	Modise Ramakoko.	9170	Isaac Basilie.	9255	Jacobus Luputini.
8991	Josiah Moatse.	9171	Andries Mukopo.	9256	John Mkoni.
8992	Gerson Ramakhutle.	9173	William Masikela.	9259	Jackson Tube.
8993	Sampson Sibolayi.	9174	Jack No. 1 Madume.	9260	Jim Bhay.
8994	Nicodimus Ramoshiela.	9175	Radoma Pasile.	9261	Steven Fule.
8995	Koos Sitlaro.	9176	Jan Kashane.	9263	Jack Kleinbooi.
8996	Lukas Rampopo.	9177	Jacob Mohale.	9265	William Dano.
8997	Jacob Mangoloane.	9179	Tom Phiti.	9266	Molefi Silika.
8999	Geelbooi Sefako.	9181	Frank Takisi.	9267	Sitebe Molide.
9000	Abel Ramosole.	9183	Klaas Mogalobutha.	9268	Mosmiti Molife.
9001	Thijis Ramedekoane.	9185	Kleinbooi Madume.	9269	Linesa Molife.
				9270	Lubaro Msimango.
				9271	Titi Mabagwana.
				9272	Pindela Ngcobo.
				9275	Ntikimana Moloyi.
				9279	Jim Mzamani.
				9280	James Stunga.
				9283	Bernuel Nyati.
				9285	Samard Manunyane.
				9286	Karel Letau.
				9287	Aaron Mathlana.
				9288	Robert Makalima.
				9289	Willie Homelane.
				9290	Jack Kwikanye.
				9292	Henry Williams.
				9293	Jan Koopman.
				9294	James Bay.
				9295	Johannes Martinus.
				9296	Paul Petrus.
				9299	Soloman Vili Zondi.
				9319	Vincent Pansi Ngcobo.
				9321	Jack Gwabu.
				9333	Aaron Jili Mokgeleli.
				9357	Frans Matume.
				9358	Piet Matebula.
				9366	Edmund Mpafulane.
				9368	Elias Manyele.
				9370	Aaron Mokgosi.
				9371	Daniel Mafika.
				9373	Jim Mbombiya.
				9374	Henry Beko.
				9375	Arosi Zenzile.
				9376	James Radebe.
				9377	Dokoda Bikleni.
				9379	Mxonywa Bangani.
				9381	Gwavuma Mazaku.
				9382	Mzingele Mbuzi.
				9383	Mbalela Ntshetsha.
				9385	John Mtirara.
				9386	Robert Mlonyeni.
				9388	Tatani Madikizela.
				9389	Richard Ndamase.
				9390	Pansi Jongilanga.
				9392	Willie Siposa.
				9393	Mpini Mabane.
				9394	Mpotyana Mkezo.
				9397	Green Seodi.
				9398	Jonas Kokoto.
				9399	Frans Pokwane.
				9400	Josias Makwena.
				9401	Jim Morashe.
				9406	Sam Koluba.
				9407	Sly Nkakuleni.
				9408	Jack Madume.
				9411	Jameson Mashali.
				9412	Rice Sekakaile.
				9413	George Stephans.
				9415	Charlie Lebeko.
				9417	April Sepalela.
				9418	Simon Kaloto.
				9419	Mukale Munani.
				9420	Mackson Madume.
				9421	Charlie Napane.
				9425	Longone Kgupa.
				9426	Jack Mantsupi.
				9427	Jack Malebogo.
				9428	Jim Skip.
				9429	Mapipe Khoanamutsi.
				9430	Jim Murape.
				9432	Dick Masia.
				9433	Sampson Mapulane.
				9434	Soloman Tsule.

No.	Name.	No.	Name.	No.	Name.	No.	Name.
9436	William Ditsepo.	9661	Andries Matshelane.	9772	Squire Nodolo.	9910	Walter Ngesi.
9437	Simon Mpatu.	9664	Corporal Lesele.	9773	Richard Mahlentle.	9911	Andries Pitso.
9440	Change Mulabe.	9665	Nkeni Banana.	9775	William Mobitsela.	9913	Albert Nkomempunga Mbata.
9441	Jan Kakana.	9666	Snele Kopane.	9776	Frans Utuni.	9914	Dick Mqitsha Ntshangase.
9445	Jack Shikamba.	9667	Jacob Payo.	9779	Jan Sekwidi-	9915	Jim Tom Gilweni.
9446	Jan Magalele.	9668	Frederick Ramurumo.	9780	Geelbooi Dinoka.	9920	Style Setani.
9447	Captain Kozamula.	9669	John Mangise.	9781	Jucas Radzaka.	9922	July Mdunyelwa.
9518	Jonas Masinde.	9670	Petrus Mgoyoye.	9782	Transvaal Masilo.	9923	Kleinbooi Petela.
9529	Isaac Ndlovu.	9671	Jim Sefako.	9783	Petrus Moeata.	9924	Hezekiah Matshana.
9544	Stephen Maharo.	9677	Johannes Mzimane.	9784	Soloman Mgwena.	9926	Jantshi Uziningo.
9555	Willie Tshabana.	9780	Klaas Tshekusi.	9785	John Kuse.	9927	Jeremiah Masaleni.
9556	Zachariah Sigedehla.	9685	Charlie Gumeni.	9792	Russel Palmer Mcanyana.	9928	Henry Qqweta.
9557	Mreki Moloyi.	9686	John Kataza.	9793	Stephen Pikashila.	9931	Isaac Mbedla.
9558	Nongqayi Makatini.	9687	Jan Mpete.	9794	Mareyama Macambi.	9932	Hlanga Nkgas.
9560	Abraham Mtombeni.	9688	Kimberley Makeleni.	9795	James Ndeya.	9934	Mlungu Nxazonke.
9562	Jim Maaiaane.	9689	Manie Gcina.	9797	Kleinbooi Moloi.	9937	John Zatu.
9563	William Maphessa.	9690	John Booi.	9798	Richard Matjala.	9938	Thomas Ntsutswana.
9565	Jan Matjola.	9694	Jerry Rrwairwai.	9800	William Somgede.	9939	Gabayi Mtshatshana.
9567	Aldum Dengese.	9695	Isaac Jacobo.	9801	Charles Vutula.	9943	James Hendricks.
9575	Bullar Martinus Ntsieng.	9698	George Nawane.	9802	Joseph Butitje.	9944	Samuel Sebadi.
9576	Ephraim Mafadi.	9700	Jcseph Mongologa.	9803	Abrams Jackson.	9945	Sampson Moeng.
9578	John Kladi.	9702	Paul Tshomokse.	9805	Tom Somatshunga.	9946	David Likgoli.
9580	Koni Luhlongwana.	9706	Percy Tiya.	9806	Jaftha Matonsi.	9947	Sebolai Likgoli.
9590	Johannes Tamasinya.	9707	George Bade.	9816	George Sekonyela.	9950	Jacob Motaung.
9599	Ephraim Perike.	9708	Lucas Gabutloeloc.	9817	Jacobus Sibisi.	9951	Andries Molisananye.
9622	Verandah Myamana.	9709	William Mange.	9818	Karl Kale.	9953	Simon Pekula.
9623	Natal Kazimula.	9710	Jim Jonas.	9819	Titus Molelekoa.	9954	Jacob Gwatyuza.
9625	Picanin Resinali.	9711	Malgas Plaatjes.	9820	Kleinbooi Kgadile.	9956	Reuben Franci.
9626	Moskein Kazamula.	9714	Freddy Williams.	9822	Kimon Kolong.	9999	Sikaniso Mtolo.
9627	Jim Mkomazi.	9716	Picannin Ntabani.	9824	Philip Poko.	10002	Majuta Makoba.
9629	Whisky Mahlaba.	9717	Jan Pitso.	9825	Johannes Monoke.	10012	Joseph Mkhohla.
9630	Jim Tumberi.	9718	George Modisoatsile.	9826	Harry Maphoto.	10013	Jan Qakala.
9631	Frans Madzibana.	9721	John Mpoa.	9829	Geelbooi Lepero.	10016	Joel Badlana.
9632	Jan Msesenyane.	9724	Jackson Serewe.	9831	Willie Mijana.	10017	Mkokeli Bovi.
9634	Charles Nkwambene.	9728	Soloman Leggoli.	9833	George Ramkosi.	10018	John Dyushani.
9635	Ben Manzane.	9733	Jan Rampunye.	9834	Lazarus Pule.	10020	Simon Linganis.
9636	Konish Nyambana.	9736	Jim Mkumguri.	9835	Philip Monyako.	10021	Hamilton Kali.
9637	Jan Ngwanewa.	9739	Amcs Mositsi.	9838	Letsie Molthlakane.	10022	Parafin Quvalele.
9638	July Mudungazi.	9740	Kleinbooi Kgobosemang.	9839	Benjamin Makole.	10024	Johannes Nongwe.
9639	Konisars Nkomandi.	9741	Jan Mothei.	9848	Johnson Kepsiz.	10027	Dick Mandubule.
9640	Johannes Zingwana.	9742	Zachariah Tankobong.	9850	William Pasoane.	10363	Jan Malesela.
9641	Baleni Ndanise.	9743	Samuel Mokgwere.	9851	Alexander Pala.	10364	Jim Lesibana.
9643	Klaas Mahohoda.	9744	Abraham Suping.	9853	Marcus Matshe.	10365	Jack Madubanya.
9644	David Nafura.	9745	Billem Timpane.	9854	Jacob Tabudi.	10366	Lucas Maluse.
9646	Jerele Mazalemvula Mvele.	9746	Rabintoe Ramasi.	9857	Jacob Makwane.	10368	Jim Matsubane.
9647	Lemu Galimini Msiya.	9748	Namatshan Letebele.	9859	Samuel Ndiki.	10369	Daniel Lesiba.
9648	Edward Qaba.	9749	Enos Ngake.	9860	Charlie Tshenene.	10370	Frans Matsubane.
9649	Jeremiah Tywalana.	9751	Abel Matsang.	9862	Litye Ncotele.	10371	Simon Lesiba.
9650	Vimba Collis.	9753	Charlie Thebeagae.	9889	John Nkwenkwe.	10372	Jack Tshelana.
9651	Mnyeliso Mdyogolo.	9754	Annaniya Deatlaha.	9892	Anderson Soka.	10373	Charlie Lesitja.
9652	Gama Mnyeliso.	9755	William Sikawuleb.	9896	George Ramathodi.	10374	Jack Kepisa.
9653	Zilandana Ngqotoza.	9757	Albert Masade.	9897	Frans Makopans.	10375	Jack Maneka.
9654	Jamse Ngwane.	9758	Abram Tshulo.	9898	Johannes Makudu.	10377	Jack Moshimane.
9655	Meji Solani.	9760	Moses Matume.	9901	Johannes Mpee.	10378	Johannes Papetje.
9656	Smith Roadway.	9761	Michele Lithaba.	9902	Job Ramasita.	10379	Jack Shebeshebe.
9657	Thomas Plaatje.	9763	Stephen Legoabe.	9905	Helon Ketsbai.	10381	Charlie Maluse.
9658	John Menza.	9768	John Mcitshwa.	9907	Seth Sello.	10382	Frans Maluse.
9659	Lucas Letwatwa.	9770	Edward Mduna.	9908	Martinus Lesitja.	10383	Jacob Madimetja.
9660	Vellum Mohase.	9771	Durward Ngcenge.	9909	Cawood Qwebe.		

No.	Name.	No.	Name.
10384	Jan Lesiba.	11086	Hlongwana Mlando.
10431	Joseph Tshite.	11087	Sikonyana Zwane.
10433	Benjamin Mogorosi.	11088	Hlongwana Kula.
10434	Pinefas More.	11089	Sukwana Zwane.
10897	Gilmore Ratskogo.	11090	Hlongwana Mangaliso.
10896	Josiah Walter Koalane.	11091	Ngqakamatshe Tshange.
10899	Jan Modisane.	11092	Hlongwana Magaju.
10900	Paulus Pietersen.	11093	Hlongwana Magudlwana.
10908	Stephen Petula.	11094	Hlongwana Totwana.
10912	Charlie Sitole.	11096	Hlongwana Zambezi.
10928	Charlie Quzula.	11097	Zondo Nsulansula.
10929	Joe Vovela.	11098	Langeni Baleni.
10931	Willie Kazamula.	11099	Koza Mgingana.
10947	William Leshage.	11101	Hlatshwayo Mandwane.
10948	Kleinbook Sifaku.	11102	Kayisi Tshabalala.
10949	Jim Madume.	11103	Magida Zondo.
10950	John Tsase.	11105	Hlongwana Magwegwana.
10951	Frans Liwela.	11107	Mqobo Sitebe.
10953	Koos Mofokeng.	11108	Joniseni Mvula.
10954	Selepe Seathlane.	11109	Mswela Mtembu.
10957	Mpalakela Motsoahai.	11110	Hlongwana Tshotsha.
10958	Simon Mokhali.	11112	Magwala Kumalo.
10959	Edward Monahela.	11114	Mufakabi Zondo.
10960	Dovey Kholopane.	11115	Pukwana Zondo.
10962	Elijah Motehang.	11116	Mgqiki Sitole.
10963	Hendrick Mokatakisa.	11118	Ndukwana Mhlanga.
10964	Simeon Kabi.	11120	Zanempi Hlope.
10965	Klaas Mahloapitseng.	11121	Keve Mapalala.
11045	Lawrence Jubile.	11122	Zula Mbaso.
11046	Bob Phaladi.	11126	Fishi Hlatshwayo.
11047	Philemon Pulana.	11128	Pikiti Ndaba.
11048	Jan Kopane.	11129	Sam Swarts.
11049	Johannes Suping.	11130	Jan Swarts.
11051	Ben Sydney Nukula.	11131	Pieter Olijin.
11052	James Pambili.	11132	Willem Hendricks.
11053	George Nini.	11133	Dolf Paulus.
11054	Picannin Ngate.	11135	Martinus March.
11056	Abram Leboche.	11137	Piet Louw.
11055	Longone Mnyikinwa.	11138	Piet Eland.
11057	Jacob Marofula.	11140	Sam Mbikwa.
11058	William Nduna.	11141	Ishmael Lefi.
11059	Koos Ponyose.	11142	Josiah Sekoro.
11060	Jim Ndhului.	11143	Joseph Ramatea.
11061	Ben Elias Mgade.	11144	Lucas Kgatjane.
11062	Johannes Kakgokong.	11145	Tsusa Nephale.
11063	Jan Lesetja.	11146	Amandus Aupa Pasoane.
11064	Jan Rabatji.	11147	Samuel Ratilulu.
11065	Johannes Mambolo.	11149	Jack Muroa.
11066	Hosiah Mapheto.	11150	Piet Mangapela.
11067	Windvogel Mahaladi.	11151	Goodman Modikeng.
11068	Mashaya Zimuke.	11152	Michael Montso.
11069	Mac Mali.	11153	Phineas Tanoni.
11070	Windvogel Beyulea.	11154	Isaac Mahludi.
11071	Windvogel Captain Maseko.	11155	Jail Mlahleki.
11072	Jotama Mzono.	11157	Ben Sikwayo.
11075	Soloman Mdata.	11158	Edward Zinyusile.
11076	Michael Tladiyamutsi.	11161	Mtati Hlangweni.
11079	Sitini Maggisi.	11162	Isaac Pieters.
11085	Hlongwana Sigidi.	11163	Fred Abrahams.

No.	Name.	No.	Name.
11164	Andries Abraham.	11186	Picennin Matkala.
11165	July Tentata.	11187	Piet Ntopi.
11166	Piet Oliphant.	11188	Piet Etea.
11167	Julius Masoling.	11189	Philip Mcloi.
11168	Peter Tambu.	11190	Johannes Matlala.
11169	Freddy Bungane.	11191	Stephanus Sekote.
11170	Elijah Chesa.	11192	Johannes Lesoale.
11171	Francis Holoane.	11193	Titus Ramakalane.
11172	John Fidyoli.	11194	Andries Molife.
11173	Robinson Khaile.	11196	David Job Lephethe.
11174	Paul Tshikari.	11198	John Tyilo.
11176	Mali Kana.	11202	Theodore George Sikota.
11177	John Clout Nziba.	11203	July Sinqana.
11178	Walter Morolang.	11204	Billy Mgidi.
11179	Frans Rakau.	11205	Ebenczer Nyovane.
11180	Philemon Setlcko.	11206	Willie Gobizitwana.
11181	Kleinbooi Makatu.	11207	Alfred Mzayifana.
11182	Hermanus Skhabi.	11215	Ndabana Makaye.
11183	Elias Tlabure.	11216	John Gumede.
11184	Aaron Rampomane.	11240	Edmund Sibizo.
11185	Jack Jantji Makoe.	11477	John Lifa.

*My deep sympathy with the members of the South African
Labour Corps who made the Supreme Sacrifice in
the first German War, 1914—1918.*

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