

The creation of a first African township in Natal: Lamontville

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Introduction

Evidence from the various records of South African history reflects a pattern of continuous resilience and resistance by Africans against the invasion and domination of their territory by the white foreigners. Recorded developments date back from the occupation of the Cape by Jan Van Riebeck (1652) resulting in the territorial confrontations (frontier wars) with amaXhosa clans to the expeditions of the Great Trek by the Boers, which led to battles with African kingdoms such as the Basutho under King Moshoeshoe and the baPedi under King Sekhukhune in the North. Along the east battles were fought between the British colonial army and the amaMpondo kingdom under King Ngqika and in Northern Natal against the Zulu kingdom, particularly under kings Dingane and Cetshwayo resulting in the demise of the kingdom in 1879.

At the turn of the 20th century the above epochs have been transformed into a new pattern of struggle by the defeated and newly urbanized African formations to resist and mobilize in pursuit of favourable social, political and economic conditions. The events also demonstrate various systematic suppressive and exploitative measures by the white ruling regime to curb any possible leverage of these African aspirations.

It is against the above background that the history of Lamontville emerges as a contributing catalyst of African resistance and mobilization against white domination and exploitation to secure socio-economic and political opportunities to secure a decent living in the modern dispensation. The history on the origin of the township helps highlight the efforts of Africans from various persuasions to unite and confront white minority domination, particularly in Durban.

Durban in the Early Twentieth Century

At the turn of the 20th century Durban's economy centered on the harbour. One feature of the city's economy was its acceleration during war-time. The city's commerce and industry grew considerably during the South African War (1899-1902) as new employment opportunities were created, particularly in transport and industrial sectors. The First World War (1914-1918) provided further stimulus especially in the engineering industry which was required to serve the growing volume of war-time shipping industry (1)

With the population of Durban rising and the African population increasing from 14 000 in 1900 to 28 000 by 1921 (2) against the Whites, the all-white Municipal Council was confronted with the responsibility of administering the African urban populace. In his analysis of Durban's population in

terms of the various forms of space, Maylam refers to the physical space as the most crucial part in this period when there were vast areas of unoccupied space within the city's perimeters. There was also very little administrative control of this space by the authorities. The increasing number of Africans entering the city, therefore experienced minimal control into their daily lives, with the task of administering them strangely under the responsibility of an 'Abattoir Committee' (3). Even the central state of union impinged very less than the local state upon African peoples' lives. Provisions such as those recommending the building of segregated townships and the creation of Native Advisory Boards in other towns such as the Cape, Johannesburg and Bloemfontein were ignored by the Durban municipality until the 1920s.

Taking advantage of the open space was a large number of Africans in their various categories of rickshaw-pullers, shack dwellers, factory workers, teachers, clerks, petty entrepreneurs and artists. The African section was predominantly male whose majority fell into the main employment as togt workers or day casual laborers, rickshaw-pullers and monthly contract workers. One form of accommodation available for Africans was that which housed single migrant workers. Most of these people lived in barracks run by the municipality (4). Other African city dwellers were crammed in the backyards, sheds and other forms of informal accommodation.

The absence of formal administrative control of space in Durban extended the freedom of movement to the casual workers, who were able to enjoy relative freedom from the tight discipline and control that characterized the workplace. Because they worked on a daily basis the sanction of dismissal did not bind them; and because of their link with neighbouring farming communities they were less dependent on wage labour than fully employed workers such as the miners. Open space abundance also paved the way for exploitation by unemployed Africans who earned their living from informal and illicit trade This group from the informal sector flourished with traders from rural traders entering Durban to hawk fowls, sticks and assegais, eggs, dagga, herbs and skins (5). Women would also bring large quantities of brewed beer from the country to sell in town.

The mainstream of informal and illicit business activity conducted by Africans in the city was the production and sale of liquor. In the first few years of 20th century the informal sector was allowed to operate with few restrictions. While some of the beer was brought in from the countryside much of it was produced in town- in kitchens, backrooms, open dusty yards or any shanty or open space (6). By the 1920s the main source of this liquor were the shebeens in Mayville, Greenwood Park, Sydenham and other peri-urban areas.

The social relations between the white regime and the African urban population in Durban were to a large extent affected by the production and sale of beer by Africans. The period was characterized by the emergent African culture which was beer drinking and brewing for sale. Paul La Hausse states that the struggles between Durban's white authorities and the African population over the production of the 'traditional, bitter pink brew' were central in the transformation of social relations between 1902 and 1936 (7). The gist of this situation, however lay in the conflict between the cheap African labour and white capital. La Hausse points out that the presence of Africans in urban areas posed particular problems for white capital in South Africa. However after the discovery of gold and diamonds had

generated an industrial revolution in the late nineteenth century it became increasingly clear that the African worker force would have to be produced not only in the reserves but also under urban conditions(8). Swanson concurs that in Durban there was the apparent and inescapable fact that 'the increasing number of Africans ...comprised of people whose majority were at work there, were useful there and were needed there' (8).He concludes, further that Durban's three populations, Whites, Africans and Indians would continue to grow increasingly dependent on each other in a kind of exclusive symbiosis (9).

By the turn of the 20th century Durban was already confronted with a dilemma to which Swanson refers to as 'The meeting of East (Indians) and West(Europeans)' in Africa (10).It was a dilemma for which her leaders saw no solutions in terms of a common society because, as he asserts there was no common society. (11)Civilization and town life according to these leaders meant cleanliness and order , Eurocentric family life...the conduct of business in the only they had recognized it (12).All these values, therefore they felt, were threatened by an influx of strangers , a non-European influx , which seemed uncontrolled and fostered conditions opposite to their own kind. Durban, according to Swanson faced the paradox of being a civilizing influence without the means or the political and philosophies to carry it through (13).

Despite the enforcement of migrancy, which provided African workers with workers with temporary work in the city, the growing permanence in Durban after 1900 impelled local capital to extend provision of social services for Africans. Social facilities such as health and welfare services had to be created. White property owners, however fearing the minimization of their profit, resisted subsidizing African social services. In the light of these contradictions, the provision for social services tended to be thrown back upon the Africans in town. Revenue from fines and worker registration would be used to generate finance for these services.

The 'Durban System' and the Municipal Beer Monopoly

The political implications of inadequate housing and social services for a growing population of urban Africans became clear. The white authorities were constantly confronted with attempts to establish repressive conditions to deal with African popular classes, particularly the workers, who constantly resisted the reduction of living standards (14).In the light of this quagmire the local state in 1908 devised a system through which the revenue derived from the municipal beer halls was to be channeled into a Native Administration fund (15).The proceeds from this fund were to defray the expenses of African Administration and were to be utilized to for the building of locations, schools and hospitals and for furthering African welfare (16).To enable the process to succeed the council implemented a monopoly on the production of African beer and the result was the implementation of the Native Beer Act in 1908.In terms of the Act legal consumption of African beer was confined to the supply of Durban municipal beer halls.

Upon the municipal beer monopoly rested the elaboration of what became known as the 'Durban System'. Through the monopoly the council as able to create in 1916 and a bureaucracy of clerks and

administrators. The system subsequently succeeded to finance an apparatus of registrations, passes and influx control including an impressive revenue from the monopoly (17). So successful was the Durban System that when the Natives (urban Areas) Act of 1923 was passed, it provided the basis for municipal financing for African administration on the system. Torr states that the system attempted to some extent to resolve the council's dilemma on where the responsibility for the African administration rested by ensuring that the African worker subsidized his own reproduction (18). Henson's critical view is that the system was able to expand the detailed control over African employment, provide the municipal compound as the most effective form of accommodation and deny family to African workers as well as to expand the bureaucracy of the local state (19). He argues that it sought to maintain the subordination of the African workers in the cities and the cheap labour system against their rising demands (20)

While the primary attitude of the local stage was against the advancement of the black working class another crucial aspect that contributed to the creation of the Durban System was the influx of African women and petty trading in the city (21). The growth of petty trading in the town tended to consolidate working class communities outside the barracks and provided African workers with liquor supply, thus loosening the general control over workers after work. Since these two issues were closely linked as the women were traditionally the brewers in African society, the attacks on both were aimed at averting the formation of a permanent working class within the areas desired by the white capitalists. The local state was, moreover involved in decisive measures to curb the informal sector or even to eliminate it entirely. These strong measures were part of a cleansing drive resulting in the eventual achievement of a beer monopoly. It was alleged that there were about seventy beer sellers in Durban in 1904 earning one pound per day, considerably more than the highest wages paid to African workers (22). This, the authorities felt, would defeat the of preventing permanent residence against them. It also posed as a potential competition to white business.

In response to the police reports on wide spreading petty trade the Council formulated regulations which strengthened the hand of white commerce. The workers accommodated in the new Point barracks were not allowed to cook their own food and catering to tog workers was handed out to tender. In 1909 the municipality converted an old barrack into an eating house and granted a contract to a white filthy business operator's caterer. Racist media reportage was also used to further frustrate African and Indian petty traders as 'causing one to catch his breath until their reeking areas are passed' (23). Such attacks on petty trading were reinforced to perpetuate the thrust of white bourgeoisie against the permanence and urban rights of the black working and the end of the black bourgeoisie. This antagonistic and racist attitude extended to the white working class explicitly implied that there was no position at all for African petty traders in the city. There was a general view that African traders were to become extremely filthy and that their activities a menace to the health of the white neighbourhood (24)

Since any expansion of petty trading threatened the municipal eating houses and competed with white commercial interests, the Natal state embarked on measures to increase pressure on petty traders as the first step to eliminating African trading. The Stamps and Licenses Act was passed in 1905 to impose a five pounds license fee on all African eating houses and the municipality expanded its own catering

establishment. These measures increased revenue for the municipality and siphoned off from the African workers as a whole the means for their repression and administrative control. The fact that African women could also only make an existence in town on the basis of liquor brewing was also a component of official thought and strongly resisted.

On the issue whether the municipality should monopolise beer brewing there the divisions within the ruling class over the precise form of control on liquor supply. The delay in the implementation of the beer monopoly was also caused by conflict between the municipal and colonial officials, the liquor brewers and other interest groups. The missionaries, teetotal groups and sections of the black petty bourgeoisie, argued for complete prohibition, while the municipality argued for a municipal beer monopoly. In 1908 the Durban city Council promulgated by-laws which marked a victory for the municipality. In terms of these regulations African women were not allowed to sell or supply beer which was only to be manufactured and sold at municipal premises at Victoria and Bell Streets. Any contravention would result in a fine or imprisonment with or without hard labour for six months (25).

Hemson argues that the above development was not a service to the African labourers, but a public service for property owners (26). The local appropriation and distribution of food in the form of municipal eating houses and drink through the municipal beer monopoly favoured the property owners in that the massive reproductive source of African labour would also be the buyers of the end product without any opportunity of benefitting profits from its sales. In this manner the production and distribution of food and beer, which was a major source of livelihood for the entire African labour force will reduce the latter to a state of dependency and continue to make the African worker vulnerable to cheap labour. It would, furthermore afford the local state capacity of control of the source of revenue for a vastly expanded state bureaucracy from the total wages of African urban workers.

The Durban System marked a considerable advance in the development of the capitalist state in its municipal and national formations and succeeded in lowering the cost for the domination and control of the mass of workers by the white property owners. While the tough regulations were transparently an attempt by the white bourgeoisie to place the burden of the costs for barracks and social control directly on the shoulders of the workers, the beer monopoly was a revenue-generating goldmine and paid for a politically skilled bureaucracy in addition to other services the white bourgeoisie (27). The extent of African worker consciousness during the 1920s was displayed in increasing opposition to the Durban System. In his argument Paul La Hausse states that the institution was not the outcome of a carefully planned strategy. Rather it was the specific form in which the subordination of Africans was realized (28). He points out, further that the municipal monopoly on beer production undermined the livelihood of a growing section of African beer traders who were reaping large profits from beer sales (28).

Much as the Durban System became the best model for African Administration in South Africa it also became the worst abhorred system by the majority of Africans in Natal and Durban in particular. The Native Beer Act effectively prohibited Africans from selling beer and granted municipalities to make and possess beer which was sold in canteens open only to African men over the age of fifteen. African, who were the traditional brewers of beer were completely excluded. The Act thus illegalized the emergence

of a petty middle class of African women. It stripped them of the right to consumption and delineated a drinking domain exclusive only to males.

What was also significant about the Durban System was its neglect of descent accommodation for Africans. Rationalising about the establishment of Baumannville, an African location of about one hundred cottages in 1916, the mayor of Durban claimed that location would teach Africans habits of cleanliness and give stimulus of productivity and good order (29). This vision however, as La Hausse maintained, was in stark contrast to the 'living hell' of backyards, sheds, stables other forms of informal accommodation where the majority of Africans lived. Privately licensed barracks as well as many unlicensed ones provided living quarters for both 'respectable and irrespectable' elements (30). Teachers and clerks lived with called ricksha pullers and women brewers who remained permanent in the city. It was in these areas where the rouge groups called *amalaita*, lived, drank illicit beer and smoked dagga (30). Raids by policemen on all male barracks as well as rickshaw sheds revealed the extent to which unemployed women made a living from beer brewing.

The recognition of the growing permanence of Africans in the town and fears that if these people were not efficiently housed in a controlled environment they could be unruly and dangerous to the white neighbourhood necessitated prompt action to the authorities. Using revenue from the beer monopoly, had by 1916 established a sub-economic housing scheme, erecting cottages on Eastern Vlei for married Christians (31). The revenue was also able to extend the women's hostel which had been established in 1911 (32). After 1918, however, accelerated migration of Africans to Durban resulted in a large increase of a permanent African population which by 1921 had risen to 2011 (33) The cause of this exodus was an escalating poverty which was affecting many Africans largely due to the continued dependency on wage income for economic subsistence.

The Durban System and the Housing Debate in the Early 1920s

When the 1908 Native Beer Act was established the intentions were to extract revenue from the Native Administration Fund, and were to be utilized for the building locations, hospitals and as Torr phrased it, supposedly for the furthering African welfare (34). The funds were, however less rigorously applied to finance housing than they were to subsidise a system an elaborate system of control and administration of the African population (35). According to Torr all that was achieved in the sphere of housing was the building of the Depot Road (later Somtsewu) barracks in 1913 and cottages for married Africans at the Married Quarters (later Bauhmannville) in 1915/16 (36). The Act required that municipalities should establish separate Native Revenue Accounts, derived through fines fees, rents and beer hall sales.

The guiding principles for the provision of housing for African workers in terms of the local authorities were that it had to be cheap and it had constitute a means of regulating and controlling the labour force. At the bottom of the housing issue was, however the financial implication. Neither the government – the Durban Corporation nor employers were willing to spend money on African housing. Torr rejects the debate on finances as misconstrued on the ground that in effect municipal locations and hostels were paid for from the proceeds of the Native Revenue Account (37). However the prevailing

conditions were such that even the considerable beer profits were insufficient to finance a comprehensive programme of municipal housing for Africans.

The exploitation of the 'African self-sustained' administrative machinery and the neglect of housing and other welfare services were to foment unprecedented opposition by Africans to the Durban System.

Durban and the Native (Urban Areas) Act 1923

In 1921 the Native Affairs Commission noted the rapid growth of industrial and the failure of local authorities to provide housing for African workers. In 1923 the Select Committee on Native Affairs recommended the Durban System as the most effective system of ejecting 'undesirables' from urban centres through strict registration procedures and restriction on the supply of beer to Africans. The result was the establishment of the Native (Urban Areas) Act in 1923 which was modelled on the basis of the Durban System. The Act set up a Native Revenue Account into which monies extracted from Africans would be paid.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The process towards its establishment was facilitated the ideology of segregation which emerged in the first quarter of the 20th century as a kind of panacea for South Africa's race problem.⁽⁴¹⁾ The Act defined urban blacks as 'temporary sojourners' welcome only insofar as they ministered the wants of the white population. It segregated urban residential space and created 'influx controls' to reduced access to cities by blacks ⁽⁴²⁾. It laid down the basis for segregation by empowering local authorities to establish African locations or villages in separate areas, and to create a native Advisory Board for extent each location ⁽⁴³⁾. In this manner the Act endorsed to a limited the provision of housing for the permanently urbanized labour force. The Durban authorities appeared to disregard the new provisions and continued to administer the city according to their original system. During the first half of the 1920s the idea of establishing a village was not seriously entertained. However with increased influx of Africans into the city, particularly in response to the increasing growth in the manufacturing industries, coupled with the escalating militancy during the 1920 and the rapidly rising demands for housing and services the authorities were forced back to the drawing board over regulation and control in the sphere of housing. There was debate over the mechanisms of controlling the urban labour force as well as the control of the regulations with regard to its housing. The arguments centered around the strategies of direct or indirect control of labour.⁽⁴⁴⁾ The two schools of thought which Hemson referred to as the segregationists could not reach consensus over a settled proletariat, or a migrant labour force⁽⁴⁵⁾. One school, the segregationists supported the idea for an anti-urban settlement for the Africans and favoured migrancy. They held the view that a separate village should be established only for African workers, 'whose services are required for the business and welfare of the town' ⁽⁴⁷⁾ and where they would have complete and absolute control⁽⁴⁸⁾. The expressionists on the other hand supported a scheme which would encourage permanent African urbanization on the ground that it would enable them to manipulate the African aspirations and in the process control and suppress their convictions.

As far as the local authorities were concerned housing had to be regulated but owing to the financial implications involved as well as the discord over a settled proletariat or a migrant labour force, no resolution was met in this respect .

African Opposition to the Durban System

The nature and effect of the Durban System reflects remarkable inconstancy with, particularly the social and economic aspirations of the Africans in respect of the advancements of their needs as both residents and workers in the city of Durban. It projects itself as the source and conduit of the African plight, suffering and frustration despite the availability of open space and the prosperity of opportunities for his advancement. Louise Torr maintains that the concerted boycotts in the late 1920s and the demands made at the subsequent mass meetings reflected a perception and consciousness of the exploitation inherent in the 'Durban System' and its beer monopoly (49). Swanson notes that hostility to the municipal beer system flowed from the African awareness that it exploited them to fund the social controls imposed upon them in urban areas (50)

Early formal expressions of popular resistance to the monopolization of African beer production emanated from the ranks of the Women's Christian Temperance Alliance (WCTU) in 1914 (51). The women led by Mrs Ncamu, in a petition signed by four thousand women protested that families in the countryside were living in 'grievous conditions because husbands and sons working in Durban were spending their wages on beer and failed to provide financial support to their families(52). Couched in terms of contemporary dominant mission ideology and articulated by predominantly Christian women, the petition represented a dignified and realistic approach to the destruction of the beer monopoly on African family welfare. The connections drawn between the municipal beer monopoly and the undermining of the Africans' means of subsistence represented the most progressive element of this protest. Between 1915 and 1918 there were various calls for the dismantling of the beer monopoly. In 1915 a meeting of Africans from mission reserves connected to the American Zulu mission was held in Durban where protest was directed at increasing drunkenness, especially the youth (53). At the meeting the concern by many women that wages were not reaching home was also expressed. There were also protests at the Annual Missionary Conference in which the monopoly was linked to impoverishment (54). The Durban's local 'elite also expressed their opposition. Skweleti Nyongwana, editor of iLanga Lase Natal and a member of the Durban Native Council (DNC), suggested in 1916 that the municipal brewery should be transformed into a company in which Africans could buy shares (55) His argument was that if Africans could share in sales of their beer it could prioritise their profits into the building of their own houses(56)

Despite the early criticism of the Durban system, the city authorities were unmoved. It was only in the 1920s that tensions within the Durban's petty bourgeoisie and workers began to foment against the system in terms of volatile militancy. By 1924 it was noted that a permanent town African was emerging and that distinct social categories were identified within the African population.

The vigilance of law-enforcement agencies was the strength on which the beer monopoly rested. The enforcement agencies, were in favour of the midnight blitzes, generating enormous black resentment against police invasion of privacy and sexual harassment of women(57). Household goods were destroyed or appropriated with abandon: doors were broken down, furniture smashed, floors dug up, vessels seized and liquor confiscated. In spite of these horrendous experiences beer drinking in the countryside as amongst working class communities in town and evasive tactics in the countryside were somewhat easier than in urban surroundings. For instance beer could hastily be hidden in the bushes or spilled on the ground to destroy evidence in court (58). In January 1929 the brewing and drinking of beer in the reserves was totally prohibited and the production and consumption of beer left to the discretion of a white occupier to grant permission (59). Coming at a time when trade was becoming the basis of income and in the year when the World Depression was beginning to inject its effects, these extended restrictions led the basis for an alliance against beer restrictions between rural and urban blacks.

Helen Bradford argues that if liquor legislation in town and the countryside affected men and women differently (60). It was after all, she maintains, women who brewed-sometimes under threat of physical violence from their men-folk, and it was also women who were the main victims beer related raids. She refers to the extended restrictions of the new Liquor Act of 1929 as the spark which ignited the women's protests. (61) La Hausse concurs in his assertion that the demand by African women that beer-brewing be instituted as a 'national right', precisely because it provided a crucial supplement to starvation wages, was to characterize the period 1929-30. (62)

The protests by women were restricted to northern and midland Natal towns where. However, as these were the institutions which barred women, competed with female brewers, siphoned male earnings into oppressive structures and underlay, particularly vicious enforcement of beer restrictions, they became the symbols around which a broad alliance of women was constructed (63)

When the marches escalated throughout Natal, state officials were convinced that much as it was the new legislation that triggered the outbreak of the marches, there was also a hidden 'black hand' which was based in Durban, was politically motivated and was undoubtedly male. They were referring to the ICU yase Natal and its leader Champion. The spirit of resistance had however been fomented. In 1925 the Natal Native Congress under J.T. Gumede resolved to boycott the Durban corporation beer centres in protest against a one pound levy imposed in terms of the Native Taxation Development Act (64). By 1927 there was a popular contention by Africans that if it was criminal for Africans to brew beer, then it was equally criminal for the local state to do so. (65)

It was the ICU yase Natal which fuelled the atmosphere of militancy in the marches against beer halls throughout Natal. After it ceded from the parent union in 1928, it deliberately recruited female beer-sellers in an attempt to combat waning finances and membership. At a meeting in which was dominated by migrant males in June 1929 Champion steered a resolution to boycott of the beer halls on the ground that their funds had become exhausted through buying beer without any benefits except to build compounds and barracks (66). Champion's speeches and written protests directed at the beer monopoly were to essential ingredients of the popular discourse. In one such protests he stated that the ICU yase

Natal objected to African people 'being taught by European to drink kaffir beer', and 'obtaining money from the Natives who will not resist such a temptation' (67). On May 5th an Anti-Kaffir Beer Manufacturing League (AKBML) was formed initially to mobilize against the Sydenham beer hall but subsequently resolved to boycott all Durban beerhalls calling general sympathy to go throughout the town. Its stated aim was to protest against the manufacturing of beer by the by the local authority for the purpose of obtaining monies from the poorly paid Africans without complying with the legal requirements of the Native Areas (Urban Areas) Act of 1923.(68) Once again the connection between beer and inadequate housing was made. The uniform picketing of Durban's beerhalls precipitated the destruction of all stocks of beer Native Affairs Department.

In the context of seething frustration amongst migrant dock workers over their living conditions, the ICU yase Natal in 1929 skilfully channelled the ferment into a boycott of beerhalls. In June, at a meeting dominated by migrant males, a resolution was adopted to boycott all beerhalls on the ground that their funds had become exhausted through buying beer not knowing what they would derive from it except to built compounds and barracks which were full of bad laws and disagreeable control. (69) In the widely-simmering campaign that ensued, political radicalism was complemented by cultural assertions of a distinctly military flavor. Flag-flying parades of columns of four would be headed by a brass band, followed by the ICU's all-male "Red Coated brigade". Behind them would be members of the ICU's Auxiliary armed with sjamoks, while the rear was brought by the stick-carrying male rank and file(70). Canteens were stoned, thousand-strong pickets clashed with the police, and on 17 June about 2000 whites attempted to confront a contingent of about 6000 blacks. It was at this bloody and fatal confrontation that female military prowess was pronounced. At the forefront was one "Ma-Dlamini" who stood before the forces ...in military attire". (71)

The conflict which left 120 people injured and 6 men precipitated a temporary ban on ICU meetings. The boycotts, however continued with an aggravated spirit for the following eighteen months. Moreover, more coherent organizational muscle was provided to back up earlier ICU speeches urging rural Africans to brew in defiance of the police. (72) Secret meetings were held in the by the boycott organizers while the Durban migrants from every part of the countryside acted as secret agents throughout Natal. Simultaneously women began to come to the fore as an overt political force to which Champion even delegated the task of keeping the boycott going.

The Liberal Perspective on an African Village during the Mid and Late 1920s

Liberal organizations were at the forefront of the move to establish a village for African families. At the helm of this campaign was the Joint Council for European and Natives (JCEN), a body of Africans and liberal whites that shared common interests. This body shared reformist ideals and it exercised increasing pressure on the Durban Council to establish a village for Africans along the lines provided by the African Urban Areas Act. Since the tendency of the emerging educated African class focused on education as a means for a better family life out of misery of shacks and barracks, the JCEN was able to support the creation of an African village along the segregationist ideal. For instance Rev. J.L. Dube

supported the view that an African village should be under the control of the Council's officials, 'in a well-supervised, segregated area outside the city boundaries, as transport was provided to convey Africans to and from their workplace during the day (73)).He considered this arrangement as an alternative to migrancy, where Africans, being human beings like white people, wished to enjoy home life while they were working (74).

The Joint Council was convinced that migrancy was not conducive to labour productivity. It argued that since married African migrant workers were obliged to live apart from their wives and families they often failed to return to work on Monday mornings after retiring to families over the weekends. The Joint Council also maintained that there was a considerable wastage of money, time and energy in commuting between the urban workplace and the rural family environment and was of the view that money could be better spent within the city and it could therefore serve as an advantage if the local Council made better provision for accommodating those Africans by the establishment of a native village(75).A long held view by the liberal the white bourgeoisie was that housing and community facilities were if workers were to become satisfied, virtuous and solid citizens, capable and willing to perform their effectively. Conversely, slums, overcrowding and signs of a moral degeneration and vice of the industrial city were not conducive to a respectable working-class citizenry. Housing, therefore served as a powerful support for bourgeoisie hegemony (76).The Joint Council noted that one of the features of the peri-urban district was its lack of its organic character. It had no centre, no community buildings or activities. It was advised that the new village should be planned comprehensively, on practical and sightly lines, with provision for future needs such a recreation grounds, assembly halls, school markets, churches, shops and restaurant.

In her conclusion on the liberal ideology for a Native village, Torr refers to Harvey's argument that not only is labour dominated in the workplace but in the living space as well and that its standards of living and quality of life are defined through the creation of a built environment, which conforms to the requirements of commodity production and capital accumulation(77).In this way the African village was conceived as an area where a class with bourgeoisie consumption tastes was to be promoted.

Reverend Archibald Lamont and the establishment of Lamontville

When Rev. Archibald Lamont assumed leadership of the Durban Municipal Council in 1929 the social and political tensions between Africans and the White authorities had reached unparalleled proportions. By the end of the 1920s African worker resistance had assumed heightened intensity ;under Champion the ICU had gained enormous support ;In 1927 dock-workers joined resistance to the arrest of Africans for tax offences; in 1927 concerted boycotts of the beerhalls ensued and were sustained for eighteen months, successfully co-ordinated by the Anti-Kaffir Beer Manufacturing League; the demands made at a mass meeting of 500 workers on 16 June at Cartwright Flats reflected a perception inherent in the 'Durban System' and its beer monopoly and violence between the white vigilantes and the boycotters followed this display of worker resistance became bloody and leaving six Africans and two white dead and 108 other persons injured (78).By his term of office the policy of amelioration on the part of the

Council had proved inevitable and the only process left seemed to have been the formulation of a comprehensive and implementation of liberal policies that would best address status quo. As a liberal Lamont appeared to have been the best candidate for this challenge. His qualities are best reflected in his personal background.

The Rev. Archibald Lamont, held the mayoralty of Durban for three years in succession (1929-1931) and at the time of his death was the member Greyville in the Natal Provincial Council (79) Born in Bute, Scotland in 1894, in graduated at Glasgow University with a Master of Arts with honours and a Bachelor of Divinity. He studied at the Free Church of Scotland where he was sent to Singapore where in his seven years of service he distinguished himself as cleric editor, educationist and social reformer.

Rev Lamont came to South Africa in 1912 after experiencing two families tragedies, the death of his wife in 1920 followed by that his of son in a railway smash. From the church service in country he entered in 1928. He was Mayor of Durban in 1929, 1930 and 1931. Always a Labour supporter and a keen educationist his work his other works included "The Heights of Hell", "South Africa in Wars" and "A widow in China"(80)

The above background of Rev. Lamont reveals a person of progressive character and as a Labour supporter and liberal he seemed to have understood the challenges facing the Durban Council with regard to the management of African workers and the black 'elite, particularly at the most volatile period of the city's history. Untainted by the typical white paternalistic tendency on the administration of Africans he appeared realistic in views on African leadership. This was demonstrated by his comment on the banishment of Champion after the 1929 beerhall uprisings:

"Mr. A.W. George Champions is born leader. I know him very well as a law abiding citizen, a worker. There are many Durban who did not understand his mind, especially among the authorities, but he was trusted by the bulk of Africans in Durban. His restriction by the Durban authorities distracts from the justice of British law."(81).

Rev. Lamont did not personally initiate the creation of an African village but he can be credited for the facilitation and the implementation of an ideology that had been debated in the Durban Council on a number of its sessions in the 1920s, a matter that had been gazzetted in the central state in terms of the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 and ultimately for promptly responding to the pressure of the 1929 African anger expressed in the form of the beerhall uprisings and against the Durban System in general. Rev. Lamont was able to ratify the local state's difficulties in meeting the rapidly rising Africans' demands for housing in the 1920s.

Rev. Lamont's was successful in addressing the Council immediate challenges in line with state policy. The state response to African worker militancy was characterized by dual reaction: On the one hand, a policy of ameliorations was recommended, and the authorities sought to gain

the support of the African bourgeoisie.(82) The de Waal Commission that was appointed to investigate vindicated the Durban System of African administration and the beer, from which the finances accrued. De Waal, however castigated the Durban Municipality for having been the negligent of all the major industrial towns in providing housing and welfare facilities for the African working class. He concluded that a residential African township was imperative for “the better class native”(83). Hemson view s de Waal’s endorsement of ameliorating the social conditions of Africans a means of gaining social and political control (83).This amelioration, Torr alludes, was to be secured through the provision of housing facilities for the middle class African families and the establishment of a Native Advisory Board(84).It was indeed during Rev. Lamont’s tenure of office in 1930 that the Council created this advisory board as a gesture of goodwill while a beginning was made with the establishment of a village. Orr however argues that the ‘goodwill’ Advisory Board was in fact an attempt to co-opt and incorporate the petty bourgeoisie leadership in the hope of diffusing the militancy breaking the boycott (85, p35 thesis).The provision of the aspirant bourgeoisie depended on the revenue of the Native Revenue Account and it was in their interest to secure the termination of the boycott. La Hausse notes that by June1930, “African n Durban opposition had become imbued with a more clearly defined class content. By this time almost all members of the Natal Native Congress were exempted an of the promise of a native village for a group of educated African Christians which was inclusive of some leaders of the ICU yase Natal, as well as rank a file, prompted process of internal stratification amongst blacks in Durban (86 ibid).The co-option of these groupings, meant that the working class had temporarily lost its leadership, as the African petty bourgeoisie was focusing on the Council’s liberal reforms. The pragmatic leadership character of Rev. Lamont is reflected his Mayoral Minutes of 1930, 1931 and 1932.

In 1930 the 1930 Mayor’s minutes Lamont commended the Council for having achieved considerable progress in meeting the legitimate requests and requirements of the Zulu population of Durban. The report counted on the inauguration of the Native Administration (NAC) to deal exclusively with matters relating to the Africans and the appointment of a Native Advisory Board (NAB} consisting of four Town Councilors and ten Zulu representative. The functions of the NAB were, however purely advisory. Torr concludes that the representatives were relatively useless for articulating or solving the demands of the popular masses, hence they were referred to as the ‘instruments of the oppressor’ (87).

It was during the Rev. Lamont’s that relaxed social policies on African administration were implemented. This included the provision of free bioscope entertainment at the various African barracks and institutions such as the African Women Hostels in Grey Street; indoor games; the provision of more tennis courts and the construction of more football grounds (88)

In his 1930 report Rev. Lamont enthused that the most interesting and the most spectacular of his year of office had been the purchase of 220 of Clairwood Estate, a large portion of which would be utilized to establish a 'Native village' on 'thoroughly and up to date lines' (89). He stated that he considered the deal as a 'great philanthropic understanding of his Council.

In his conciliatory approach in the relations between Africans and Whites in the city, Lamont in his 1930 report recommended the services of a qualified medical officer to be extended to be extended to the establishment of a free 'Native Dispensary' for the benefit of Africans. In addition to the provision of bathing booths and lavatory accommodation for Africans at the beach, he proposed for the formation of a 'Native Life Saving Club' consisting of trained African life savers. (90) In response to the economic question affecting the African population, Lamont appointed a Native Economic Commission study the economic conditions affecting the Africans with the view to improving them (91)

Rev, Lamont emphasised in his 1931 report that the most important considerations before his Council were to deal with the establishment of a 'Native village' and the investigation into the social and economic conditions of Africans in Durban by the Economic Commission (92). His administration was, through the NAC was able to work collectively with the various African sporting clubs, leading to the establishment of a Bantu Grounds Association with the powers to direct African sporting matters along improved lines (92).

It was in his report of 1932 that Rev. Lamont clearly spelt out the practical preparations for the creation of the new 'Native village' (93). The acquisition of the village, however as Torr demonstrates deals more with the deliberations and negotiations regarding the purchase and control of the village various parties rather than with only Rev. Lamont and his Council. The parties involved included Council, the local central and central governments, The private (Wood's) estate and the official bodies such as the South Coast Junction Area Local Administration and Health Board (SCJA LAHB). These deliberations involved the price of the land space, land demarcation and control.

Plans to purchase land for the purpose of establishing a 'native village' existed side by side the need to acquire land for industrial purposes. Torr adds that the use of valuable land was never contemplated (94 *Lamontville@248*). Rather the Council sought land that was not suitable either for industrial purposes or for white residential areas (95). In 1931 the Durban City acquired Wood's Estate to the south of Durban (later Mobeni) for industrial purposes. Of this land, 425 acres was unsuitable for industry because of its steep terrain, was set aside for the creation of the 'native township'. This decision was supported by two advantages. First the position of the township did not impinge on the interests of white property owners and secondly the location of labour close to industry served the interests of the industrialists (96). Above all as Torr concludes, Native Revenue Account underpinned the cost of land redundant

for industrial purposes, while the council fulfilled its obligations to provide land for African housing in terms of the 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act (97). The price of Wood's was two hundred and twenty pounds.

As it has been indicated above, although Rev. Lamont did not personally initiate the creation of the new 'native village' his leadership as Mayor of Durban during this period facilitated the process towards its creation. His council as Torr elaborates was characterized liberal-reformist policies in Durban in the years 1929-30, when a solution was sought to rapid African urbanization and increasing militancy, by engaging the support of the African bourgeoisie. (98) It was for this reason that some African members of the NAB felt it was appropriate that the new township, Lamont Village, popularly known as Lamontville be named after him. It was none other than A.W.G. Champion, who at the graveside during the funeral of Rev. Lamont made this proposal in 1932.

The creation of the township and its spatial expansion, 1932-1961

Lamontville was constructed over a period of about thirty years. Both the government and the local state were involved in financing African housing. Whilst the local state accepted loans for housing from government during the 1930s and 1940s, it directed the building and labour processes in Lamontville. In 1948, however the central state took over from the local state the collection of rentals from the township.

During the period of the Second World War (1939-1945) there was further economic upswing which resulted in massive urban migration and the consequent problem of accommodation leading to enormous shacks in the peri-urban areas. The serious challenges during this period were the escalating building costs, an increasing shortage and labour coupled with a growing reluctance by the municipalities to incur further losses on subsidized African housing (99)

The development occurred in four phases beginning with the completion of the first one 100 cottages between 1932 and 1934 (the Old Location) followed by the other three sections, New Look (1937-1939) with 380 cottages, 1 500 (1948-53) flatted houses and flats and 900 houses in the letting-selling schemes of Gijima and Nylon. As the township expanded there was difficulty in explaining the layout of the township as no names or symbols were given the council to different areas which were also constructed with different structures. Then names for the areas were thus created by the residents themselves and they were given according to popular interpretations. The original area, Old Location, became known as 'Ngxabano,' referring to dispute or quarrel a reference over the semi-detached gardens. The area, New Look became known as such simply because buildings differed in structure from those of Old Location. The flatted houses built in the 1950 for high density accommodation, became known as

'Ezinkawini', meaning 'monkeys' which implied that the occupants of the double-storey blocks were regarded as tree-climbers.'Izitezi' (stairs)referred to the few flats that were erected at the same time. The area known as Gijima (to run) was part of the extension scheme in the spatial expansion of the township and as it was remote from transport facilities the occupants had to work in the mornings. According to Torr's findings this area, which was for years without transport and street lights, and farthest from the administrative offices, harboured criminal elements and the occupants were constantly on the run which attributed the name to these characteristics (100). Also, tenants who were transgressors of the law, committing misdemeanors such as illicit brewing, were sometimes 'banished', to Gijima. 'The last phase of development in the 1950s was called 'Nylon', nicknamed 'Ezigwilinini', (place of the rich). Compared to the other three phases this area appeared somewhat eloquent in that its houses were more colourfully-painted and the occupants qualified for a homeownership scheme (101). The mockery in the name refers to the inference that the ownership scheme, based only on leasehold rights, was as transparent as Nylon material, which was new to Durban at that time. Other residents from the township also ridiculed 'Nylon' occupants in that they owned only the bricks of the houses and not the actual land. (102)

Administration of Lamontville

As it was the original intention of the white in creating a 'native village', the main objectives of both the local and central state were twofold: First to adopt a policy of amelioration in order to co-opt the African bourgeoisie in the hope of defusing the militancy and breaking the boycott. On the other it was to control African migrancy in the cities. The Lamontville case was not an exception. Lamontville was under the direct administration of a white superintendent who was appointed by the municipality. Control and repression of political activity were central to the administration of the township and the duties of the Lamontville superintendent typified those prescribed for all township superintendents. (103) His basic responsibilities for 'maintenance and order' included the selection of tenants, the allocation of houses and trading rights, and the surveillance of the affairs of tenants. He was responsible for the policing of the township-he could search for liquor, make arrests and expel unauthorized persons. The superintendent had 'the power to enter houses at any hour of the night, to search the house for liquor, strangers and to demand the production of passes. (104) These superintendents were men of little or modest education and social standing. Evidence to the Broome Commission revealed that not one of the superintendents in Durban held university qualifications. There was also a memorandum from the Combined Locations Advisory Board to the Broome Commission which noted that powers that were given to the location Superintendents did not fit in with their educational training nor in many cases social standing(105).The Members of the Board these

superintendents were promoted from the ranks of writing passes and sales of liquor. Their powers and random operations created resentment in the township. The African bourgeoisie regarded them as a class of men unqualified to supervise the affairs of civilised and educated Africans. (106) The most dreaded action of these white officials was their interference in Africans' domestic affairs. They had the tendency of allying themselves with the illiterate sections of the population against the educated few thereby coursing a rift of classes within the residents of the same neighbourhood. There were also numerous reports of bias and victimization levelled against these officials regarding the allocation of housing and the administering and policing of Lamontville.

Coupled with administrative problems were serious objections to the structural quality of Lamontville in its early years. These problems included the topographical challenges and the complicated measures that emerged to deal with them. The absence guttering and storm water drainage caused soil erosion within a few weeks of the opening the township (107). By 1936 there were reports that due to the lack of proper drainage there was a tendency for some houses to be undermined, while others silt up and were constantly being buried in sand and were badly cracked and that in wet weather, water ran into cottages (108). As result families who were required to move from the proclaimed areas of the city were reluctant to occupy cottages in Lamontville.

The lack of essential facilities such transport and trading stores added to the problems that confronted the first residents. With the proximity of nine miles from the central city the area was too remote from city and transport was scarce and expensive. Although there was a railway station, the Lamont Station situated near the township residents experienced difficulty in affording the train fare. Some had to use push bikes in order to save on transport. When trading stores were later established they inflated their prices because of the lack of competition. Women were also prohibited by the township regulations from trading and adding to the transport costs many were prevented from engaging in informal sector activities such washing and sewing to augment household incomes (109). There was also insufficient to enable them cultivate vegetable gardens. As a result of these unfavourable experiences in the township many Africans preferred renting shacks from the Indian landlords at cheaper prices than in Lamontville.

Community Structures in Early Lamontville

The first officially recognized structure was the already established Native Administrative Board (NAB). The Lamontville NAB was inaugurated in June 1936. Since membership was not elected but appointed from the petty African bourgeoisie class a conflict of interests between the NAB

representatives and the residents ensued from the early stages of the township. La Hausse points out that the underlying reason for the establishment of the ANB was to fracture an alliance between a section of the Durban's African 'elite, permanent town dweller bourgeoisie, migrant workers and marginalized elements of the African population(110)). Torr affirms this contention in her statement that the aspirations of the petty bourgeoisie were articulated through the Native Administrative Boards and activities of traders and other petty entrepreneurs (111). The white reformers hoped that differential treatment in access to the township and by the NBA would serve to co-opt those members of this class who perceived themselves as separate from the ranks of the African workers. There was indeed evidence of this intention when in the 1930s members of the working class expressed increase resentment to the NAB as the representative's demonstrated contamination and personal interests. Members of the Lamontville NAB were particularly concerned with securing trading rights for themselves or members of their class. Tensions between the residents and the NAB members and their resulted in the formation of two opposing factions Isikhumba and Imbokodo Ebomvu (Hide or skin and Red Grinding Stone) parties in the 1940s. These parties represented narrow interests of the NAB members and the NAB failed to address the grievances of the residents as it was split into the support of both parties. A new class consciousness emerged from a different dimension as it manifested itself within the African community. Isikhumba on the one hand was regarded as the party of the educated while on the other hand Imbokodo was perceived as the party of the illiterate.

Conflicts between the two rival parties in Lamontville centered on the competition to monopolise trading rights within the townships. In the 1950 Isikhumba enjoyed the monopoly of these rights and resisted the efforts of Imbokodo against sharing the same opportunities. When trading store belonging to one Mr Ntuli, in the Gijima area suffered a continuous shortage in stock, Ntuli, an isikhumba member struck a deal with the Indian traders who provided the residents' needs on an informal sector basis and in whose pay he was. In his ploy Ntuli prevented Imbokodo from taking over the trading rights.

The tensions between Isikhunba and Imbokodo were exacerbated by the interferences of the superintendents, izinduna and the security corps in the political affairs of the township (112).

first draft

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