CHAPTER 12

"A NICE LITTLE HOUSE DOWN MASHU WAY"? STATE VIOLENCE, PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THE POLITICS OF A SHANTYTOWN REBELLION, 1959-1960

Shackland Social Ties

The population of Mkhumbane had emerged in a period which saw many fundamental and dramatic changes in African life in the city. The rapid expansion of local economic activity, declining African rural production and changes in the nature of White agriculture had led to a growth in the African population of Durban.

Integral to the nature of the migratory labour system were the close social bonds within kinship affiliations which now extended from countryside to city and between migrants and specific rural areas. These bonds developed partly through the geographically uneven character of rural decline and transformation and through the increasing dependence of rural Africans on urban wage employment. In the industrializing cities, the bonds of kinship and those other bonds which sustained regional, age-group and even ethnic commonality and unity became increasingly important.[1]

In many ways the utility of such social bonds would increase with the emergence very creation of a permanently urbanized African working class.[2] Nevertheless, with the development of an Mkhumbane shack population asserting the right to remain permanently in the city, the force of many such long-established links became muted against the nature of household struggle in the city itself. By the late 1950s, from within the crises over personal relations came a degree of political militancy that was to transform the nature of shackland struggle.

Among shack dwellers relations between rural areas and the city would often act as socially constraining forces. In seeking legitimacy, S S Bhengu, the leader of the Bantu National Congress, announced that the organization had the support of many hundred of chiefs from all over Natal and Zululand.[3] During the Defiance Campaign, the municipality, which had always maintained close contact with the Zulu paramountcy and rural chiefs, gained the support of many chiefs who called on Africans in the city to desist from militant action.[4] Newly installed as chief, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi seeks and gains from clan members living in the city money for his "feet": a car valued at just over one thousand pounds.[5] In the campaigns and shack struggles of

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1. P Mayer, (ed), Black villagers in an Industrial Society, (Cape Town, 1980).
2. Cooper, Struggle, p 37.
3. The Guardian, 27 June 1952.
4. MNAD; Managers' file; Chief Superintendent-Manager, MNAD, n.d.
5. Ilanga lase Natal, 31 July 1954.

the 1950s, many rural chiefs came to Durban, stayed in the male barracks and locations, and attempted to influence political activity. During the Defiance Campaign many chiefs were against mass struggle.[6] However, by the late 1950s, many chiefs, themselves now being increasingly more politicized through the Territorial Authorities legislation, almost certainly influenced by Luthuli's mass support in Durban appeared to have journeyed to Durban.[7] As Stanford Mtolo recalls,

> The chiefs came to Durban to look and see what was happening. Everyone was talking about Congress then and we were in the farms- the reserves. But they came to Durban and spoke to people and they supported us and so we were lucky because we knew we had their backing.[8]

The relations between city and countryside also sustained an important degree of support between those remaining in the countryside and those in the cities. In 1953 many people who had been involved in a "faction fight" in the Greytown area entered Mkhumbane. Municipal inspectors failed to expel these immigrants: "except for an old man and a youth, investigation has revealed that the family heads concerned were working in Durban."[9]

Affiliation to the region of origin remained strong. Among an African proletariat who "looked at politics through soccer coloured eyes", even the three main soccer teams in the Durban area gained their players and supporters from people coming from very different rural areas.[10] As with all beerhalls in the city, the drinking area at the Cato Manor beerhall was designated with different benches and sitting areas being exclusive to persons coming from a particular magisterial or chiefly district. Such groupings not only served to enhance general commonality between persons of a particular area but performed the role of an informal labour bureau. As Charles Ndlovu recalls: "if you heard that Dusty Smith needed so many people or that there were so many ships in the harbour today, they you tell this to your people."[11] Among the weekend visitors to the shantytowns were many togt labourers: the 'nyati' migrants, many of whom would come from the northern districts of Zululand. A strong undercurrent of the frequent, drunken battles between 'nyati' and shack residents was the competition between migrants and permanent African city labour for employment.[12] The role of such support groupings gained increasing importance during the social upheavals of the later 1950s. As Charles Khumalo remembers: " a lot of the people in Mkhumbane were having too many troubles. So they

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6. MNAD; Managers file, 'Chiefs in Durban', 1959-1964. I am grateful to Mr D McCullouch for allowing access to this documentation.
7. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 10 June 1983.
8. Ibid.
9. Ilanga lase Natal, 12 January 1952.
10. Ibid, 15 April 1953.
11. Interview with Mr C Ndlovu, 29 November 1983.
12. Interview with Mr S Selby, 19 August 1980.

must stay together. This is why Draaihoek is like it [was]. Stick together and then you can know that that person is your brother."[13]

Kinship ties were often indistinguishable from ties of regional commonality and sustained similar influences in the shantytowns. It was often the case that new entrants to the city would only arrive once male relatives had secured full wage employment. Shabalala's sister came to live with him in Mkhumbane "when I was working with the Railways and had rooms at Ridge View."[14] Kunene came to live in Mkhumbane "when my brother got me a place to work - at the same place as he was induna."[15] Shack residents were often called upon to support elderly or other residents who moved into the settlement. Matiwane's recently widowed sister "came down to Mkhumbane and I had to help her find something to do. She got a job with the mama who was married to our brother."[16]

Within these kinship relations, paternal authority in the countryside could often exercise a considerable degree of power in upholding values which often assumed a moderating dimension. Kunene came to Durban in the 1940s "with my wife staying on the farm." He soon however acquired a "girlfriend" with whom he lived in a shack in Mkhumbane: "when they find out my father sends my brother to talk to me." Not only was the institution of marriage regarded highly, "but when you do not send money home and you become a swank."[17] Similarly, the use of alcohol was frowned upon. When Thomas Ndlovu was fired for drunkenness, his brothers, already resident in Mkhumbane "come and give it to me."[18]

In many ways the influences which such notions extered with the ties of kinship would provoke the growth of forms of urban struggles which had, by the early 1950s, been rarely understood by the shackland working-class. A resident of Mkhumbane who, during the later 1940s, belonged to one of the independent African trade unions and was later to become "a volunteer for SACTU", recalls,

> Lots of people would come to SACTU through their fathers. Their fathers' voice had spoken. 'How can you live like this. Look at you. What do you eat? No! We can see you are just drinking. How do you think you look to the maidens here? All you can do is sleep. Do you see this? [a plucked chicken] This is you.' These were people who would come to SACTU. Instead of sending photographs of themselves in the city all dressed up smartly and pretending to be happy back to the city they came to SACTU . They knew those photographs were all rubbish.[19]

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13. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 19 July 1985.
14. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 28 July 1985.
15. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 26 July 1985.
16. Interview with Mr T Matiwane, 21 April 1982.
17. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 26 July 1985.
18. Interview with Mr T Ndlovu, 14 January 1986.
19. When meeting with Mr F T R Dlamini, ex-ANC (Natal) Executive Committee member and SACTU official during 1986, Mr Dlamini was accompanied by an associate who was either a member or an official of SACTU in Durban. Notes of the interview do not record this informant's name. Mr Dlamini was assassinated the following day and all attempts to trace his associate have failed. The informant's reference to photographs relates to the way in which African men in the city would pay have studio shots of themselves in smart clothes against lavish scenic backgrounds to send to relatives in the rural areas. See Ilanga lase Natal, 15 September 1956 and also A Fugard, Sizwe Bansi is Dead, (Johannesburg, 1975).

Such reflections on the development of unionization working-class consciousness are significant. Here was paternal authority invoking a respect for hard work, sobriety and personal dignity in ways that, would often see the growth of working-class strategies of struggle not previously embraced.[20]

Interleaved with the social bonds that linked countryside and city and the ties of kinship were the bonds which drew residents of particular shantytown settlements together. Beneath the all too obvious common affinity to "Mkhumbane our home" was a sense of unity within localized shack settlements. Such affinities often assumed a greater importance than the ties of kinship and region.

Shack areas acquired names derived from the way in which settlements developed. The first people to settle in the New Clare and Benoni areas came from New Clare and Benoni on the Witwatersrand. All the shack dwellers in the Jeepcoat area initially paid their rents to the Indian landowner who first developed shacks there: the "man always was to be seen in a jeepcoat." The Newtown area was first occupied by persons from demolished shack areas on the Bluff. Other areas assumed the name of a shack leader. The area into which persons led by Mathonsi, one of the first shack leaders became known as Mathonsi.

Strong kinship relations bound residents together. There was a defensive, tightly knit and often introspective sense of commonality. Whilst desiring to control the authority of the municipality and sounding a warning of an impending police raid were ingrained with residents' behaviour, unity within shack settlements embodied far more. Walking unlit streets at night was hazardous, so drinking parties of men from an area would visit various shebeens together "to let everyone get home safely."[21] The commonality was however never merely social, but was imbued in residents' perspectives by the very nature of shack life.

Rooms in a shack cluster were separated by thin walls, perhaps made for corrugated iron, wooden planks, flattened drums or wattle and daub. These walls provided little privacy. Arguments or more violent disputes "reached everybody's ears and the next moment you walk out the next morning and everybody knows."[22]

Conflict was often endemic to such shack clusters. As Joshua Mzimela recalls:

> When there was a party in one room someone would pick up a spoon and bang to the music on the walls. Then your neighbours start banging on the wall also, but to tell you to stop. Then you shout back and tell them to bang in tune to the nice music."[23]

Apart from time rumpus, conflict could easily develop out of routine chores: As Charles Khumalo remembers,

> To make your room your own and to make it pretty, you can stick pieces of newspaper and magazines on the wall. Wallpaper! This you stick to the walls with a mixture of mealie meal

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20. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985 and interview with Mr S Selby, 12 August 1980.

21. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.

22. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

23. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 123 May 1985.

> and water. If you do this then it is a bit quiter, but then the cockroaches come and start eating the wallpaper. So no trouble, you must spray the room. And then there are shouts from next door. 'Take your cockroaches away. Those are your ones. This I know.' Then you must spray all over the kill your own animals!"[24]

Reasons residents would strive for a measure of privacy within housing structures and shack settlements which defied most attempts to escape from the vicissitudes of shack life. As Charles Khumalo recalls, "when you moved into your house, you would see where the other people had their things. If the bed was in this place, then you put you bed in the other corner otherwise the noise of love goes everywhere."[25]

The failure of attempts to sustain a level of personal privacy merely confirms the close inter-dependence which existed within shantytown clusters and specific shack areas. Shack rooms would often be left unlocked "so that we could come from school, get something to eat and then do the washing, while my mother was away. If she was in town then we had to go to auntie next door."[26] Doors could be left open and, as Mrs Phewa remembers, washing left outside because "we always knew who was not living there. And if I was away then someone would always shout at anyone who they did not know who came looking around. In this way nobody could steal."[27]

Such a settlement provided not only the structures of defence and social unity but also support. When unemployed "the first place you went" was to "your mayor" or the local shebeen queen, licensed trader or other entrepreneur. When a resident organized a stokvel, others from the same area would be expected to participate: "then if you wanted a stokvel there was trouble if they did not go and spend the same amount of money or more."[28]

The social ties which developed between particular rural areas and the shacklands, and through kinship links were important. There were also close social bonds between residents of particular shack areas. Apart from the Draaihoek area where, through the dominance of Mpondo women, the relationship between countryside and city and kinship became intertwined with the growth of a localized shack community, the need to sustain a day-to-day unity among shack settlements assumed primary importance over those bonds which drew shack residents to the countryside.

A Very Personal Crisis

In the shacklands personal bonds were powerful; but also vulnerable to changes in shack life and to the

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24. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.
25. Ibid.
26. Interview with Ms M Mtandi, 30 November 1986.
27. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.
28. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

attempts by state and capital to transform the nature of African life in the city.[29] With the shortage of hostel and barrack accommodation, peoples' preference for shack life or such persons' illegal status in the city, the shantytowns provided a home for many single women, many with young children, and men. In addition a substantial number of male homosexuals lived in the shack settlement known to residents as the 'Place of Darkness'.

The majority of shack residents lived within nuclear families. In the shantytowns the ideology of the nuclear-family was dominant. Ministers of religion operating in the area extolled the virtues of a settled nuclear family life.[30] Even among the shebeen queens, it was rare for 'mama' to live singly.[31] The virtues of the nuclear-family were also apparent in the 'Place of Darkness'. Mrs Phewa, a close associate of many living in this area, remembers that

> On Saturdays men in this place would get married. One dresses up in a long dress, stockings, high heels ..., and 'she' marries the man and they live together like man and wife. And I would teach the 'women' to do make up, sewing and cooking. Then they let it be known that the 'woman' is having children - 'she' puts a pillow on the stomach. Then the child dies and there is a funeral, with a baby doll in a little coffin to be buried.[32]

Despite the influence of the ideology of nuclear relationships, the nuclear-family structure in the shantytown was both skewered by and essentially founded upon two particular features of life in the area.

During the period, African women were unable to secure any substantial access to formal employment and were to remain dependent upon incomes derived from petty commodity production, and those small earnings which could be gained through casual washing or other forms of domestic labour. Apart from such earnings, women were dependent upon wages earned by formally employed men. Furthermore, the legal status of African women in the city was largely based upon their either being dependent relatives or the spouse of men entitled to permanent city residence. With the main burden of household duties falling on shack women, African women in the shantytowns would constantly struggle both for and from within nuclear household structures.[33]

Furthermore, approximately half of the nuclear couples resident in the shantytown were not formally married under either customary of Christian rites. As Colin Shum recalls,

> An issue which used to shock many municipal officials was that, I would say about half the married families living in Cato Manor were not married at all. They were literally shacking

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29. This aspect of the history of African struggle during the later 1950s has been given scant attention in recent works, which prefer to focus more directly on more overtly class and political issues and organizations.

30. Interview with Father St George, 10 September 1985.

31. Edwards, "Shebeen Queens".

32. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

33. This issue is not mentioned in Walker, Women.

> up. Otherwise they were just the same as the married blokes - children and everything. But they were not married. And this was to cause many problems later on.[34]

As Kunene recalls, these relationships were very much a part of that process which saw individual men and women becoming increasingly settled in the city:

> When you leave the farm your father says 'No town women. They are dirty, you must leave them alone. But when you are here, it is not like on the mines where men love each other. This is Durban and there are lots of women. So you build a shack in Mkhumbane, buy all the pots and pans and things for her and after work you do not stay in the compound, but go straight to Mkhumbane.[35]

While many such relations were to become permanent, there was an element of flexibility in them. Often the men were already married, with their wives remaining in the rural areas.[36] The tendency of women to seek the attention of more wealthy or secure men seems to have led some men to refer to the position of unmarried nuclear relationships with the word "flatirt", which must surely be an attempt to convey the meanings of both 'flatter' and 'flirt'.[37]

By the late 1950s, tensions within nuclear relations became increasingly more evident. These tensions were primarily not solely due to the difficulties which either partner experienced in aligning personal needs, the expenses required for household maintenance and increasing material impoverishment. Whilst deeply rooted in the material conditions of everyday life, conflict became increasingly focussed around the issue of power and gender relations within the shacklands, and residents' responses to the efforts of the state and capital to alter the fundamental basis of African life.

Women gained a degree of authority through their household activities. This influence was increased through womens' central role within the shantytown community. This status went not only to shebeen queens and other women involved in legal trading ventures, but also to teachers, social workers and petty traders.[38]

Nevertheless, the shacklands was still very much a male dominated society. The key leadership grouping almost entirely comprised men. For even the shebeen queens, who would often be associated with the main shack leaders, their standing within the leadership element was ambiguous, with the establishment of a shebeen being dependent upon the sanction and continued support of local shacklords and leaders. For shebeen queens, continued prosperity was closely related to loyalty and subservience to local shack leaders who would be "touched" with free drink and other services, platonic and sexual.[39] Even those popular jokes which

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34. Interview with Mr C N Shum, 20 June 1986. See also interview with Mr R F Drew, 17 December 1980.
35. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.
36. MRR; file 323, vol 1; memorandum on the legal status of African married women in Durban, 1959.
37. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.
38. Ibid.
39. Edwards, "Shebeen Queens".

"told of how if a man's wife moved during love then the man would send her back to her parents for teaching and demand a cow as a fine: these were the old people not used to the new ways of the city" reflected less on the changing times than on the rigidity of established notions of power and gender relations.[40] Such a situation was probably inevitable. Shack life was centrally based around those wages earned by an almost exclusively male working class in a city where, with a history of migratory labour patterns and the then still very recent dramatic changes in male-female ratios, proletarian culture was still male-oriented.[41]

The position was resented by many women in the shantytowns. Through various womens' associations and the ANCWL they were relatively well organized. By the late 1950s, women began to grow increasingly "impatient" with the failure of "our men to see what was happening to us. We did not think they really were interested. This was when Kwa Muhle wanted to give us passes and take us to [Kwa Mashu]."[42]

A somewhat prescient indication of the nature of womens' future struggles occurred in December 1955. Led by the ANCWL a "large deputation " of women, many of whom lived in Mkhumbane, marched to the municipal Native Administration Department to protest against municipal attempts to issue letters of privilege to African women. As municipal officials refused to discuss the issue, the women marched to the nearby Victoria Street beerhall. The women referred to themselves as "the untouchables": both scorned by their men and determined to resist any attempt to compel women to carry passes. Those drinking in the beerhall fled and councillor Nicholson, stated that the issue of letters of privileged would be "dropped."[43] Letters of privilege were to be abandoned, passes issued, and women forced to register as work-seekers with the local labour bureaus.

With the impending removals to Kwa Mashu, it became evident that all adult male residents of the Mkhumbane shantytowns who qualified for permanent urban residence were eligible for relocation to the 'married' section of Kwa Mashu. However, all such persons desiring to live in this section of the township had to be legally married under either Christian or customary rites.

While the municipality was to both encourage and later compel unmarried couples living in the shantytowns to marry, it still remained possible for men to choose single male hostel accommodation and thus desert their partners.[44] For women partners the problem was compounded by the fact that many men pursuing extramarital relationships in the shantytowns were also married to women who lived outside the city. Such men could elect to bring their wives to the city and disregard the future of their shantytown partner.[45]

Furthermore, it was clear that all forms of unlicensed entrepreneurship would be prohibited in Kwa Mashu. This threatened to destroy a crucial basis of household life among the shantytown-dwellers. Charles

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40. Interview with Mr M O D Kunene, 5 May 1985.

41. M Friedman, "Gender, geography and urban forms: a case study of Durban", (MA thesis, UND, 1987).

42. Interview with Mr T Phewa, 28 April 1985.

43. Ilanga lase Natal, 17 December 1955.

44. MRR; file 323, vol 1; B Huntley, African women and Kwa Mashu, June 1959.

45. Interview with Mr C D S Mbutho, 21 April 1982.

Khumalo recalls that his "wife started brewing in the late 1950s. Now in [Kwa] Mashu all that must stop. So we had to come and live here but not get the money we used to make and then pay for these houses. It was too much."[46] The restrictions on petty commodity activity in the new residential area thus caused increasing problems for the nuclear household and posed a threat to the status and influence of women.

The status of women was directly threatened by municipal attempts to compel African women in the city to and carry a form of pass. During the early 1950s such attempts had been resisted and the municipality, fearing widespread militancy, had backed down and let the matter rest. However, with the removals to Kwa Mashu the municipality again endeavoured to exercise administrative control over African women. For African women in the shantytowns such controls threatened the basis of their, residential life in the city. With the introduction of passes womens' security in the city would not be solely dependant upon women living in nuclear relationships with men having permanent city residential rights. African women correctly saw that the new pass laws could result in women being endorsed out of the city irrespective of their domestic arrangements, with men having the right to live in the city.[47] Women saw that pass laws could threaten the weak security offered by nuclear-family life.

Such attempts to restructure African city life produced complex dilemmas for African couples living in the shacklands. During the late 1950s, there was a spate of marriages in Mkhumbane. Thomas Shabalala recalls how

> You had to get married otherwise Kwa Muhle would not let you go to Kwa Mashu. Every Saturday all you could see were people getting married quickly. Then they hold up this paper which says that they are now married and say 'This is my house. I am there.'[48]

Many attempted to resist removal to Kwa Mashu by saying that they were not married. Municipal officials would then, without any vested authority, "marry people". 'S B' Bourquin remembers:

> I recall one instance which I personally witnessed but there were many like it. Some person said that he and his woman friend would not go to Kwa Mashu because they were not married. By this time of course all their belongings were already on the truck which was waiting to go to Kwa Mashu. So, in this case Mr Peter Cooke ...solved the issue quickly. 'Give me your hand' and then to the woman 'give me your hand' which he placed on top of the man's hand. Then he firmly placed his hand over both their's and said 'Now you are *married get on the truck!' It happened often.*"[49]

These reluctant spouses were resettled in temporary accommodation in Kwa Mashu and given one month to formalize their marriage. If still recalcitrant, the municipality would relocate the male to a hostel and endeavour to expel the woman from Durban.[50]

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46. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.

47. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

48. Interview with Mr T Shabalala, 31 June 1985. See also Edwards, Sibisi. Sibisi was one of these marriage officers.

49. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 8 September 1980.

50. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, African women and pass laws, August 1958.

Attempts to alter the basis of personal relationships which had developed in the shantytown often ended tragically. In many cases, women, either having been rejected by their male partner or having lived alone in the shantytowns, committed suicide, perhaps by dousing themselves with paraffin and setting themselves alight.[51] There were clashes between women over "the same boyfriend", clashes between "farm wives who had heard about Kwa Mashu and came to collect their man and go with him to the location", and cases of men being stabbed to death after fighting "with his girlfriend's ex-boyfriend."[52] In Shumville a man assaulted his "girlfriend" who ran to the Mkhumbane river and drowned "when the boyfriend persisted in beating her up."[53]

During the late 1950s the authority of the ever-present izisangoma in Mkhumbane increased dramatically. In July 1958 hundreds of izisangoma gathered in the Two Sticks settlement to celebrate, in a somewhat macabre fashion, their rising status. The women slaughtered three cattle in praise of the goddess "Unomkhumbulwane". A fully-trained school teacher and school principal left the profession and "has opted to become an izisangoma."[54] Men and women would seek advice from the women spirit mediums on why their partners or children were "bewitched."[55]

Along with the increasing power of the spirit mediums came a series of new developments in the shacklands. In an unprecedented fashion, during the later 1950s many men and women were being stabbed, beheaded or otherwise killed in what were clearly ritual murders.[56] There were reported cases of "mad" women wandering the streets.[57] A women claimed to have given birth to a "pig", and inside the animal was a baby girl.[58] Men would roam the shacklands "telling everyone that he was the new Messiah."[59]

Rumours abounded. It was said that Kwa Mashu was deliberately built on a "swamp" so that when fully settled the land would subside taking all residents to their deaths.[60] Similarly the "serpents" living in the Kwa Mashu area would "eat us."[61] Rumours provided solace: a "crocodile [submarine] had been seen off the Durban coast ... Some Africans who had gone for military training have landed. They are liberation fighters."[62] Amidst the uncertainties of the period, the sufferings of children became enveloped in rumour. Superstition

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51. Ilanga lase Natal, 1 September 1956, 19 January 1957, 3 May 1958 and 21 July 1958.
52. Ibid, 12 July 1958.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid, 24 July 1958.
55. Ibid, 12 July 1958.
56. Ibid.
57. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.
58. Ilanga lase Natal, 15 September 1956.
59. Ibid, 1 September 1956 and interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985.
60. New Age, 27 February 1958.
61. Interview with Mr C Khumalo, 7 July 1985 and KCAV; interview with Mr B Mnqadi, 11 August 1980.
62. Ilanga lase Natal, 7 September 1958.

came to the aid of those seeking reasons for the collapse of domestic life. Children were dying or went missing because a rabid pet "baboon" had escaped and was prowling the streets of Mkhumbane, when children saw the animal they died immediately. The animal had been "sighted" five times.[63]

Children were suffered from the domestic upheavals of the late 1950s. In 1957 it was estimated that over a third of all children living in the Mkhumbane area were illegitimate.[64] Women evicted from the shack settlement and separated from their male partner who had been relocated to Kwa Mashu, would queue outside the Grey Street Women's Hostel with their children looking for accommodation. Others wandered the streets destitute, with many having abandoned their children. One African woman was reported to have encouraged her one daughter to fatally stab her younger sister.[65] Other couples, unable to afford upbringing cost in the township also abandoned children. After the Raincoat shack settlement, which adjoined the Mkhumbane area, was cleared, municipal inspectors found many abandoned "babies."[66]

It was during the period of social upheaval in the shantytowns and the impending removal to Kwa Mashu that many male residents became increasingly critical of women. Having, in most cases, acquired the legal right to remain in the city, but faced with the difficulty of sustaining the nuclear-family in either Mkhumbane or Kwa Mashu, men's was directed to those very women partners who had, along with their menfolk, struggled for the very right to remain permanently in the city.

This revealed both the dominant masculine ideology of the shantytowns and, often, a misogynist attitude: "why should we have been bothered with those women, they were nothing."[67] African women in the city became referred to as "Durban Dust" which men should leave well alone. African men in Durban should recognize the attributes of rural women who would be more suitable as "city wives".[68] Paternal advice from the countryside acquired a new logic amongst the permanently urbanized men in Durban. Various persons, including Joseph Mazibuko writing to Ilanga lase Natal, suggested that when African women whom African city men "keep" request money, "simply chase her away or rather go back to your compound or barracks. These women do not love you but your pay packets."[69]

A glimpse at the nature of this male consciousness is provided by the way in which various persons commented on the various African beauty competitions which thrived during the later years of the 1950s. It is interesting that such competitions developed and became a popular element of male consciousness in the city at precisely the time when relations between African men and women were undergoing dramatic changes. It was suggested that organizers of these competitions should offer greater prize money, select competitors as opposed

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63. Ibid, 7 June 1958.
64. Ibid, 18 May 1957.
65. Ibid, 27 April 1957.
66. Ibid, 5 July 1958.
67. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1982.
68. Ilanga lase Natal, 23 February 1957.
69. Ibid.

to allowing anyone to enter, and ensure that competitors both live in Durban and be "unmarried". Beauty queens could be better viewed if they wore bathing costumes and not long dresses.[70] Sexism, parochialism and male assertiveness were reflected in another comment: a writer to Ilanga lase Natal criticized "our beauties" saying that "[t]here is nothing as annoying [sic] as a pregnant woman especially if you have not planned a future with her."[71]

Increasing reflections of such an attitude became more and more evident within local society. "Trained beauticians" offered their services to help women "who want to be nice to be looked at."[72] Adverts in popular newspapers showed new styles in hair and clothes fashion, with 'Reckitts Blue' being promoted as the way of preventing womens' clothes from looking "dull."[73]

Such indications of a rising male chauvinism were often the result of changing conditions in the labour market. During the 1950s representative bodies of local industry and commerce were publically expressing the belief that economic growth, rising wages and productivity could only be secured through the stabilization of an African working class. The residential township of Kwa Mashu was developed to create such a working-class. Having been requested to raise wages so that their African employees could afford the costs of township life, many employers attempted to compel many permanently urbanized workers to revert to being migrant labourers. This was clearly stated by one employer: "send your families away and stay in the compound provided by the Company for bachelors."[74] Employers were supported in this by the local Native Commissioner.

By the late 1950s many Mkhumbane residents began to leave the area and settle in the new fast-growing shack settlements such as Malakazi. Either for relocation to Kwa Mashu or unable to pay the increased living costs in Kwa Mashu, many African shack families moved from Mkhumbane to other areas. As New Age reported: "For some time the Native Commissioner had been trying to get these workers to break down their shacks ..., remove their families and remain in the area as migrant workers."[75]

For many men the position was difficult. For example a man who had been working in Durban since 1943 tried unsuccessfully to obtain accommodation for himself and his family. As he was only earning £2.9.11 per week "he was told that accommodation was available but that he was not earning enough."[76] The dilemma for women was just as great. One woman, Mrs Tenjwayo, expressed her frustration in a way which reveals clearly those images of respectability, decency and a desire for permanent city housing:

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70. Ibid, 14 September 1957.
71. Ibid, 27 April 1957.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid, 21 August 1957.
74. New Age, 27 February 1958.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.

> She and her husband had worked hard when they first arrived in the area [in 1943] and had built their home, and endeavoured to give their children some education so that they could earn a better wage than her husband and lead a better life than she and her husband had to lead.[77]

For men and women living in the shantytowns, the nuclear family household was the basis of security in the city. By the late 1950s, with the attempts of both the state and capital to restructure African life in the city, personal relations between men and woman in the shacklands were riddled with conflict. Such processes threatened the very basis of the admittedly tenous household security which shack dwellers had struggled to maintain in the shantytowns. This conflict within the domestic household between men and women was to lead to the increasing politicization of the residents of Mkhumbane.

The ANC and new organizational power in Mkhumbane

The removals to Kwa Mashu began in mid-1958. For a short while the removals were not opposed by residents.[78] However, in August 1958, the municipality endeavoured to destroy the shack settlement of Thusini, which lay outside the Emergency Camp, and relocate all residents eligible to remain in the city. In this area, which was home of many who had lived there for years, resistance was peaceful but effective. Many residents simply moved and re-erected their shacks. Others sought the legal assistance of Rowley Arenstein and gained an interdict preventing the municipality from demolishing their shacks.[79]

The impending removals had produced confusion among many residents. Negotiation was out of the question. Despondent about gaining any relief from the municipality only 600 people attended a meeting held in the Emergency Camp during late 1958 when municipal officials simply explained that all removals would continue.[80] By November 1958, the municipality had obtained the legal power to ignore any attempts to halt shack demolition and resettlement programmes through residents gaining court interdicts.[81]

Unable to offer any coherent strategy, the CMWDB became rent with internal bickering. This led to the formation of the Cato Manor Protest Committee, led by a number of ANC "stalwarts", who, for a while, ousted the chairman of the Board, the sometime ANC supporter Isaac Zwane.[82] Each side in the dispute accused the other of "kowtowing" to the municipality.[83] Even Luthuli was unable to offer any clear strategy,

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77. Ibid.
78. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 5 September 1980 and Maasdorp and Humphreys From Shantytown to Township, p 62.
79. Interview with Mr R Arenstein, 13 November 1985.
80. Bourquin papers; file 5; minutes of the public meeting held at Cato Manor, 21 September 1958.
81. Government Gazette, proclamation 268 of 1958, 7 November 1958.
82. Interview with Ms R Shabane, 18 November 1986.
83. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, memorandum on the Cato Manor disturbances of June 1959.

simply suggesting that residents resist relocation and thereby compel the municipality to consider forced removal.[84] Luthuli saw in forced removals a possible stimulus towards the politicization of the shacklands, leading to a growth in ANC support.

The struggle with the municipality changed dramatically early in 1959 when the municipality attempted to clear the Draaihoek, or, as it later became known, the Mnyasana, shack settlement.[85] While being a part of Mkhumbane, the area was however outside the Emergency Camp. Social conditions at Draaihoek had always been pitiful. Throughout the 1950s there had been numerous requests from municipal officials and the CMWDB for the area to be incorporated into the Emergency Camp and provided with ablution and sanitation facilities. These requests had been rejected by the municipality on financial grounds.[86]

The Draaihoek area was home to a large number of Mpondo women. Having been "screened" by municipal pass inspectors, most were declared illegal residents.[87] The illicit beer-brewing and other entrepreneurial activities of these women constituted not only the basis of their own livelihood, but the key nexus for various Mpondo social networks and associations in the city. These associations attempted to sustain links between Mpondo male workers in both the city, the surrounding sugar cane plantations and the countryside. Furthermore, by 1958 a strong ANCWL branch had already been established in the Draaihoek area.[88] Marginalized, politically active and desperate to remain in the city but having neither the opportunity nor the means to gain housing in Kwa Mashu, the women of Draaihoek took to the streets. Accompanied by many other women from Mkhumbane, they surrounded the offices of the municipal Native Administration Department and demanded to see the Director, Bourquin.

Having been informed that Bourquin was otherwise indisposed, the women sat in front of the Kwa Muhle offices for the next two days. As with the resistance to shack demolitions in the Cato Manor Farm area during the later 1940s when the CPSA provided material support, so the ANC provided food, blankets and basic assistance.[89] After eventually obtaining an interview with Bourquin the women responded to official insistence that shack demolitions would continue, by physically attacking Bourquin. They also refused to accept the venue suggested by municipal officials for further talks.[90] Officials had suggested that a further meeting be convened at the 'Thokoza' womens' hostel, which symbolised the destruction of family life.[91]

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84. Luthuli, Let My People Go, p 56.

85. Bourquin papers; B Huntley, memorandum on shack demolitions and removals, January 1960.

86. MNAD; H2/ CM, vol 6; City and Water Engineer- Manager, MNAD, 4 August 1957.

87. PNAB slide archive.

88. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

89. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, memorandum relative to the events arising out of the clearance of shacks at Mnyasana, 4 March 1959.

90. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 5 September 1980.

91. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, memorandum relative to the events arising out of the clearance of shacks at Mnyasana, 4 March 1959.

When finally meeting Durban's mayor, women maintained that as a result of removals "every house has been destroyed and we have nowhere to stay. Children are being left in the open, and one's things have been ruined."[92] However it was not just the means of removals which annoyed women, but the policy itself. Stressing the respectable nature of shack-residents' lives, a woman from Draaihoek told the mayor "We have a grievance. The Director [municipal Bantu Administration Department] is killing us and our children. We lived here for a long time. We kept ourselves decently and gave no trouble. ... We have nowhere to go."[93] The women of Draaihoek began to re-erect their homes. The municipality, believing the situation to be "highly inflammable", called a temporary halt to all removals.[94]

With the struggles of the women of Draaihoek a series of important developments occurred in the shacklands. These changes were to have an enormous effect on political activity in Mkhumbane, as well as increasing the membership of the ANC and SACTU in the shantytowns. As Curnick Ndlovu, then a SACTU organizer living in Mkhumbane, remembers, "from that time onwards things moved very fast."[95]

Even by this late stage many of the residents appeared to be oblivious of municipal plans for destroying shack society. Dorothy Nyembe confirms this:

> There were people in Cato Manor who would not listen to us. When we say they are going into a location they do not believe us. They would not say anything. They did not know what was going on. It is not nice to say this but amongst my people in Mkhumbane some were very stupid.[96]

As the problems of day-to-day life increased and personal relations became more strained, the ability to gain a full understanding of the impending destruction of Mkhumbane and the broader political issues at stake became more difficult for shack-dwellers. During the course of the meeting between Mkhumbane women and the mayor, Gertrude Kweyama, a leading ANCWL member reflected many residents' ignorance of municipal policy:

> I do not believe that there is any document in Pretoria saying what must be done in Cato Manor, other than a directive that we must pay £1 per month. Our agreement with the Government is that as long as we pay £1 and behave ourselves we shall stay for ever in Cato Manor.[97]

With the struggles of the Draaihoek women, came a dramatic increase in womens' support for the ANCWL organization in the shantytowns. As Dorothy Nyembe recalls, women did not necessarily become members but

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92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. Personal communication with Mr Curnick Ndlovu.

96. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

97. Interview with Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984 and MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin, memorandum relative to to the events arising out of the clearance of shacks at Mnyasana, 4 March 1959.

'followed us.'[98] Womens' politics became centred around meetings in various shack settlements and larger mass meetings which were usually held either at 'Nene Hall' in Two Sticks or on the sportsfields near the beerhall. Organized by the Womens' League, such meetings attracted increasing support.

Shebeen queens, most of whom had either deliberately avoided or been disinterested in what one shebeen queen refers to as "this thing with politics", gravitated towards the womens' League. In these meetings shebeen queens expressed the desire to "burn the beerhall down and kill all of our men who drank u-Bokweni.'[99] Many women spoke of their desire "to carry on living with their men", while other women ' wanted to prove to Kwa Muhle that we were proper people. They should not throw us into the locations. What we were doing in Mkhumbane was good. Not too much drink and we were listening to the law.'[100] Others called for the transformation of shack society. Mrs Phewa remembers that many women wanted "Kwa Muhle to put a location there in Mkhumbane. Take the tsotsis and all this drink away and let proper people live in peace. That was all we wanted".[101] Yet within potentially contradictory desires for increased illicit trading profit, various kinds of permanent residence in Mkhumbane and a concern over the need to sustain a respectable lifestyle lay the roots of a basic unity amongst the increasingly more militant shantytown women.

Unity was gained through womens' rejection of municipal power. Women became outraged by the municipality's attempts to destroy the shack settlements and convince shack-residents of the benefits of a future life in Kwa Mashu. Through pamphlets and public statements, the municipality maintained that Kwa Mashu "opens the road to progress and a happy home life.'[102] To women it was clear that the municipality was "not wanting to listen to us.'[103] Having rejected shack-dwellers' demands for property rights in the city the municipality was attempting to convince them that the non-freehold housing in Kwa Mashu would offer Africans that respectable city life for which many yearned.

ANC leaflets expressed peoples' desires to challenge the power of the municipality.[104] The pamphlets revealed an increasing awareness of the inter-connections between African employment, wages, housing and the destruction of shantytown society. A pamphlet distributed by the "women of Cato Manor" maintained that,

> Here women is the problems [sic]. It is Bourquin and his stooges who are wanting to kill us of Mkhumbane! Why must we move to the location!? That is where they will lock us up. That place is the Bantustan that will be giving us nothing but wants us to pay for this.We the women know this Bourquin who takes our money in beer and gives us houses. It is this devil

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98. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

99. Informant to remain anonymous.

100. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1982.

101. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

102. MNAD; H/Gen, vol 2; pamphlet, n.d. This pamphlet was distributed in Mkhumbane during late 1959 and 1959.

103. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

104. Document in authors' possession.

> who will not listen to us when we say we want this land in Mkhumbane for us. It is him that makes our men stand for passes. It is him who hates the women. It is him that takes our children away. This man says we must be the slaves from the location! We the women must stop this Satan.[105]

The precise origins of this handwritten pamphlet are unknown. It is significant in that it reveals a sense of the ambiguities in womens' understanding of the period than do other pamphlets distributed by the ANCWL. ANCWL flyers would often proclaim "abolish all pass laws! Stop the racists!" and "join the Congress!".[106]

For many Mkhumbane women the issue was not the rejection of pass laws in their entirety, nor absolute questioning of the need for improved housing facilities. Having accepted the limited gains which appeared to have been secured through new pass laws which offered the prospects of permanent city residence, women became increasingly aware of and embittered with the very means whereby such legislative powers were being utilized to restructure family life in ways not of their own choosing. A growing awareness of the purpose of the destruction of shantytowns and removals to Kwa Mashu became moulded into a desire to cripple municipal power.

Women's unity in the shacklands was built through their common criticism of African men. As Constance Matiwane remembers, for many women the very dominant male proletarian culture was seen as "weaknesses that we could see in our men. They did not seem to be as worried about Kwa Mashu as us. Things were the same to them, and they would just leave us out in the cold. This was the time when we had to teach."[107] Out of concern for the maintenance of nuclear family structures, problems of meeting household budgets, or the desire to profit from the illicit sale of liquor to men, came vociferous criticism of African men in Mkhumbane. Although reflecting different interests, such antagonisms were, seemingly, always couched in terms which emphasized a respect for mens' importance within the shacklands but womens' desires to "educate our men in what was wrong."[108]

From these two unifying features within womens' discussions during the later 1950s came a desire to initiate a boycott of all municipal beerhalls and those municipal-owned trading facilities operated by Africans within beerhall facilities.[109] Such a boycott would serve the interests of shebeen queens, traders and other less established petty entrepreneurs in Mkhumbane, restrict workers' ability to "drink money before they can come home and feed us and their children" and break the financial basis of municipal power over urban Africans. Mkhumbane could thus be saved. Mabel Dlamini reflects on the thinking:

> If we do not give money to Kwa Muhle then they cannot bring us here to Kwa Mashu. This is the whole thing. Then we can all stay in Cato Manor. All the money can come to us and

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105. Ibid.

106. Ibid.

107. Interview with Mrs C Matiwane, 23 April 1982.

108. Interview with Mrs T Phewa, 7 July 1985.

109. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

> nothing to u-Bokweni. It was through this thing that [Kwa] Mashu can be stopped. If we can stop our men from drinking u-Bokweni. This was the thing to chase men from the beerhalls. Chase! ... we can beat them. We can. ... and hit them. We must get them out.[110]

The notion of a boycott of municipal beerhalls had a long history in Mkhumbane. From the beerhall boycotts of the later 1940s through the 1950s various shack residents had always been calling for such action.[111] From the early 1950s many leading members of the ANC in Durban many had pushed for a boycott of all municipal facilities. Nevertheless, the specific call early in 1959 for a boycott of amenities in municipal beerhalls and eating houses came from women's associations and meetings in the Mkhumbane shantytowns.

The ANC responded rapidly and eagerly to this suggested strategy. The ANC was conscious of its failure to effectively organize in Mkhumbane or develop any coherent policy towards future African residence in Mkhumbane. But there were many local leaders who were deeply sympathetic towards the plight of the shantytown residents. Francis Dlamini remembers:

> We in the Congress had wanted Mkhumbane for a long time. But when the removals came we knew that we were very, very sorry for them. It was really too late by this time. But these people were strong. When people started to stay away from the beerhalls we nearly won, you know that? It was close! Bourquin even came to us [the ANC] and asked us to stop it. It was that close. This was all started by those people in Cato Manor.[112]

From 1959 the relationship between the ANC and SACTU became highly ambiguous as increasing numbers of shantytown residents came to both the ANC and SACTU.

During the earlier 1950s the ANC had failed to gain any substantial membership or even widespread support from the shantytown residents. Prior to 1959 the only really strong foothold which the ANC had acquired in Mkhumbane had been as a result of the ANCWL. Yet by the late 1950s, the ANC had successfully reigned the authority of the ANCWL in ways which gave to the ANC provincial executive increasing control over policy and strategy. However, although control seemed assured, membership levels and support for the ANC seemed to be dropping throughout the country.[113]

The relationship between the residents of Mkhumbane and the ANC and SACTU is probably one of the ironies in the history of African politics in Durban. During the late 1950s, the ANC desired to increase organizational membership, assist in the further politicization of Africans in Durban and gain a disciplined support base which could be relied on to rally around the major campaigns which the ANC desired to initiate. Yet the ANC leadership of the later 1950s seems to have been at a loss to plan further large-scale campaigns. Here in the suggested boycott strategy lay the possible means to further increase mass politicization amongst Africans in Mkhumbane and elsewhere in the city. A boycott of municipal facilities might not only assist the

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110. Interview with Mrs M Dlamini, 2 February 1982.

111. Interview with Ms D Nyembe, 10 July 1986.

112. Personal communication with Mr F T R Dlamini.

113. B Turok, "South Africa: the search for a strategy", Socialist Register, (London, 1973), p 333.

Mkhumbane residents, but it also represented an attack on one of the foundations of urban apartheid. Local issues and broad political mobilisation could be inter-linked. The ANC began planning for a boycott which they hoped to initiate in June 1959 as part of a wider protests.[114]

But the boycott was initiated by Mkhumbane residents, some of whom had previously rejected the ANC's leadership and principles; or their preference for focussing on wider political issues in ways which were often not completely in alignment with proletarian aspirations. Furthermore many who supported the boycott had no desire to become involved in politics, but desired an exclusivity of trade within Mkhumbane. The idea of a boycott occurring in 1959 did not attract any adverse comment from within the shantytowns. The NIC was not using the ANC as the means to further the future of Indian traders and transport-owners who could gain from such a boycott. Furthermore, although responsibility for planning the boycott had been assumed by the ANC, this was accepted without question. The reasons for this change in attitude are complex.

By late 1958 the failure of the CMWDB was evident. Residents even commented harshly on many of the supposed ANC supporters who were members of the CMWDB. Local leaders could not be relied on.[115] But there was more involved. During the early months of 1959 many shack residents became members of the ANC. With the collapse of local leadership, the immediacy of the threat to shack life, and for men, probably womens' harsh comments on the nature of mens' interest in defending the shantytowns, came an interest in wider political issues. Virtually by default the ANC had succeeded in politicizing shantytown residents into supporting in the ANC.

Responding to the increased level of support from within Mkhumbane, during the early part of 1959 the ANC was to be remarkably successful in forming many branch committees in Mkhumbane along the lines set out in the 'M' plan. In some places these new organizational structures even extended to demarcations within specific shack settlements.[116] Here was the basis of a political structure for long desired by the ANC. In these structures residents found a new political home and an enthusiasm for wider political issues which could relate specifically to their own residential aspirations and that belief in social levelling and fierce independence which for long had frustrated the ANC leadership in Durban. For example in Nkosi Road, there was a local residents' branch of the ANC. A resident recalls,

> Nkosi Road was our branch. We were all volunteers. All of us were in the Congress fold. When we meet every Saturday afternoon we are there to talk about our liberation, which means all of us. This is what being in Congress was for. You must speak to be heard. And all of us came to the meetings and told what we felt. It was the first time this had happened.[117]

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114. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 12 June 1983.

115. Ibid.

116. Informant to remain anonymous.

117. Ibid.

Residents responded to calls made by the leaders of the ANC in Durban.[118] From 1959 the ANC managed to gain increased organizational support which gave branches greater responsibility.

With this increasing support the ANC planned the municipal boycott as part of an organized and disciplined campaign of resistance that was to commence in June 1959. During the early part of 1959 the municipality became aware of planned campaign. However, by June 1959 the relationship between the shantytown residents and the ANC, and the increasing conflict between Mkhumbane residents and the municipality had altered in ways which mitigated against organized resistance.[119] The ANC and SACTU were to gain much from the degree to which the personal crises which residents of the shacklands experienced over the prospect of removal to Kwa Mashu, but these organizations were never ever in a position to prevent the destruction of Mkhumbane.

The end of Mkhumbane

Towards the end of May 1959 the municipality became increasingly concerned with health and sanitation conditions in the Cato Manor Emergency Camp. Aside from a general decline in health conditions caused by municipal neglect, a growing number of children were dying from dysentery, and a typhoid epidemic was sweeping through the shacklands.[120] Refusing to spend municipal funds in the area and having been refused government funding to improve shack life until removals could be restarted,[121] the municipality directed their frustration against illicit liquor brewing activities.

Municipal workers moved into the Emergency Camp and first started clearing all the piles of refuse which had accumulated through the absence of any proper municipal refuse removal service. Residents often assisted in the burning of rubbish.[122] However squads of municipal workers accompanied by 'blackjacks' soon swooped down on illicit liquor activities.

Hopes for a disciplined boycott of municipal services and amenities was out of the question. To shackland residents it again appeared as if the municipality was blaming shantytown residents for those very conditions of appalling residential life which had been exacerbated by the municipality and using a concern for health conditions as a pretext to destroy the shacklands own internal economy. One woman maintained that "the Europeans have taken our beer and made their own. We dare not drink our beer because we are arrested in our own homes". Others noted that their livelihoods were being destroyed though municipal raiding.[123] In this situation the initiative was assumed by shebeen queens.

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118. Interview with Mr A Nene, 29 January 1984.
119. Personal communication with Mr Curnick Ndlovu.
120. MRR; file 323, vol 1; S Bourquin ; memorandum on the Cato Manor disturbances of June 1959.
121. MNAD; H2/Gen, vol 2; Secretary for Native Affairs- Town Clerk, 4 August 1958.
122. Interview with Mr S Bourquin, 5 September 1980.
123. Daily News, 18 June 1959.

On the 17 June 1959 a large group of shebeen queens invaded the Cato Manor beerhalls, chased out the male drinkers and proceeded to destroy property. Later that same day a much larger group of women formed outside the beerhall and nearby bus stop warning any men who tried to enter that they would be "dealt with". A police baton charge failed to disperse the women who left the area later that same night on their own accord.[124]

By midday the following day the beerhall had again been surrounded by women. In spite of a strong police presence the women refused to disperse and rejected the call of the now discredited chairman of the CMWDB, Isaac Zwane for the women to elect a deputation to discuss the issue with municipal officials.[125]

From within this group were Dorothy Nyembe, other ANCWL members and many ANCWL members. Nyembe, Ruth Shabane and Forence Mkhize managed to organize a core group of women who then proceeded to march to the Victoria Street beerhall and then later to beerhalls as far afield as Mobeni. A participant recalls:

> Everywhere we went, we would tell the men not ever again to go near the beerhalls or to drink u-Bokweni. This was the drink of Satan. All this drinking must stop. We must stop Kwa Muhle from taking us to Kwa Mashu. We knew what was killing us, it is Kwa Muhle and how they wanted to put us apart.[126]

From within an environment created by shebeen queen revolt came feelings which asserted very different values. During the course of a later mass meeting addressed by municipal officials, women complained about the destruction of family life, the ways in which influx control and the pass laws threatened family life, and their desire to live peacefully with the municipality. And yet here was the contradiction. For many women a desire to sustain a new working-class life lay uneasily with their own need for material security that was dependent upon illicit liquor brewing. Many women admitted to being involved in the production and sale of liquor and explained that this was a means of work and provided for family needs.[127]

Confronted by police cordons, shooting, and municipal raiding residents quickly called for the "liberation of Mkhumbane".[128] Roadblocks consisting of oildrums, which had previously been used for the distillation of illicit liquor, and piles of waste matter were placed in Booth Road at the entrance to the Emergency Camp. All vehicles coming into the Mkhumbane area were stopped, searched and sometimes set alight.[129] Crowds of women, accompanied by male shack residents, burnt the municipal offices and the municipal 'Blackjack' security guards' barracks in the Emergency Camp, destroyed the premises of private

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124. MRR; file 323, vol 1; W E Drew, memorandum, June 1959.

125. Natal Mercury, 19 June 1959.

126. Informant to remain anonymous.

127. Natal Mercury, 19 June 1959.

128. Interview with Mr J Mzimela, 19 May 1985.

129. Daily News, 19 June 1959.

welfare organizations; and looted and torched Indian and African-owned trading premises.[130] Amidst shouts of "Afrika! Afrika!" crowds celebrated the collapse of burning buildings. On the evening of the 18 June the electricity lines into the Emergency Camp were cut by shack residents. Later that same night many men launched a series of assaults on the beerhall, these were repulsed by police gunfire.

But liberation was never complete. By the morning workers were queuing for the few buses still willing to operate in the area, and the police presence was ever more evident.[131] The municipality closed beerhalls and police patrolled the streets of the city. The beerhalls were soon open, although attracting few patrons and large numbers of women picketers.[132] Many women and ANC leaders in the city were arrested.

The beer boycott had spread throughout the city and there seemed to be the possibility of a city-wide insurrection. African men and women were marching around city streets, the Mobeni beerhall was deserted and the large Victoria Street beerhall had sold only half a gallon of beer in one day.[133] Residents of Clermont began boycotting the municipal bus services. Recently settled residents of Kwa Mashu protested about municipal rentals and other charges levied in the township.[134] Over twenty thousand people attended the 'Freedom Day' rally organized by the Congress Alliance and held in Durban on the 27 June 1959.[135] Indeed it was from June 1959 that both the ANC and SACTU began to gain an increasing number of supporters. When joining the ANC, workers would be encouraged to join SACTU which formed both general workers' unions and then later industrial unions for their new membership.

Stanford Mtolo remembers:

> It was from the boycott of u-Bokweni that Congress got power. It was then that the ANC was in the driving seat. We knew we could do anything. The women ... then the men of Mkhumbane had shown us what they were ready for. That is when Congress really became alive. You should have seen it, Lakhani Chambers was alight![136]

This politicization would continue throughout the early 1960s despite the banning of the ANC.

However by later 1959 the fate of Mkhumbane had finally been settled. Although the residents and ex-residents of Mkhumbane were to actively participate in city-wide political struggles during the early 1960s, Mkhumbane had never been liberated, let alone secured for permanent African ownership. Conflict between the municipality, the police and, after the declaration of a State of Emergency, the military and shack residents would continue, with nine liquor raiding policemen being killed in Mkhumbane in early 1960. Soon after the

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130. Natal Mercury, 19 June 1959.

131. Ibid, 20 June 1959.

132. Bourquin papers, S Bourquin, memorandum on Cato Manor disturbances in June 1959.

133. Magistrate's court archives; Regina vs E Zondi and others.

134. Natal Mercury, 22 June 1959.

135. New Age, 28 July 1959.

136. Interview with Mr S S L Mtolo, 12 June 1984.

beerhall riots of June 1959 removals to Kwa Mashu re-commenced. From crises in domestic life had come a particular level of politicization that whilst not having the ability to secure future life in Mkhumbane, would remain with those who would be granted the right to live in Kwa Mashu.