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*‘Creative Destruction’: Early Modernist Planning in the South Durban Industrial Zone, South Africa**

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This article presents a contribution to recent efforts in South African geographical research to examine historical landscapes as an integration of concerns with the broader discourses of modernism with more established concerns about the production of racial discourse. It aims to show how the construction of the South Durban industrial zone, in the city of Durban, South Africa, was historically planned within an emerging modernist planning discourse. In the early twentieth century, modernist planners sought to design cities to promote industrial efficiency. The first of my three objectives is to demonstrate how South Durban was conceived of as a modernist industrial landscape as a result of the juxtaposition of the interests of industry, and the local and national state. The second aim is to outline how these interests used the technical planning tools of modernism, particularly zoning, to implement the vision of a modern industrial zone and to stamp out community resistance to these plans. The third objective is to show the outcome of the modernist planning process in South Durban. The article demonstrates that the vision of a planned industrial zone was, by the early 1970s, successfully implemented and became the home to 70 per cent of Durban’s industrial activity. The joint goals of early local and national state politicians, officials and industrialists were hereby fulfilled. The industrialisation process, however, had severe consequences for communities living in South Durban. There was, therefore, continued resistance from local communities to the land alienation and relocation programmes that were instituted to make way for industry. This evidence confirms that the modernist project, even in contexts of political inequality, was never complete. The article provides a historical context for the current controversial plans to ‘re-industrialise’ South Durban and the similarity of these proposals to earlier top-down processes of industrial modernisation.

Introduction

There is a strong tradition in South African urban research in which urban places and processes are explained as products of the political ideology of apartheid and where race is applied as the key explanatory variable. With the advent of the new democratic dispensation, this approach is being discarded. Geographers and planners in South Africa are instead turning their attention to a re-examination of the growth and development of South African cities through an engagement with international theoretical debates.¹ One of

* I would like to thank our reading group – Lisa Bornstein, Saroya Goga, Cathy Oelofse and Zarina Patel, as well as Jenny Robinson, Shirley Brooks and Phil Harrison for their valuable comments and suggestions for this paper.

1 S. Parnell and A. Mabin, ‘Rethinking Urban South Africa’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21, 1 (1995), pp. 39–62; S. Oldfield and J. Robinson, ‘South Africa in Transition: Opportunities for Engagement’, *South African Geographical Journal*, 82,1 (2000), pp. 1–2; C. M. Rogerson, ‘The Economic and Social Geography

these approaches is to examine South African historical landscapes as emerging modernist landscapes.² Through this work the key assumptions and critiques of modernism and modernist planning and the importance of the concept of 'organised modernism' have been outlined. The institutionalisation of modernist planning and the bureaucratic and administrative procedures put in place to implement its goals have been highlighted as being instrumental for producing modernist landscapes at various scales, for various purposes and at various stages in the evolution of modernist planning.³ In the urban context, modern architects and planners sought to design and create cities to promote industrial efficiency and cater for housing needs on a mass scale.⁴ This article aims to show how the construction of the South Durban industrial zone, in the city of Durban, South Africa, was historically conceived and planned within an emerging modernist planning discourse. In doing so, it discusses how the actions of the local state in Durban contributed to the emergence of modernist planning in South Africa. It therefore offers a historical geography of industrial modernity in South Durban that has radically transformed the landscapes and lives of people working and living in this area.⁵

In the early twentieth century, in the alluvial corridor south of Durban Bay, both the physical and social landscape represented a 'complex and unwieldy reality' of largely informal development. This area was a neglected, relatively undeveloped space on the periphery of the Old Borough of Durban focused on the node of Clairwood. This was due to its swampy, low-lying terrain that was susceptible to periodic flooding. From the late nineteenth century, predominantly ex-indentured Indian settlers, upon completion of their contracts, made a home for themselves around and south of Clairwood, utilising the alluvial soils to undertake market gardening and other small-scale productive activities. Lying in the proposed path of growth south of the Bay of Natal, the settlement presented an obstacle to future industrial growth in Durban and was therefore 'abstracted out' of the local authority's plans for a future industrial node for the city. This process was to have severe consequences for the communities living in South Durban.

Current economic and planning policies in post-apartheid South Africa have been instituted to promote reconstruction and development. Important among these are the national government's neo-liberal Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme and the related Spatial Development Initiatives (SDIs), which aim to situate South Africa within the global economy; and, at the local level, the implementation of Integrated

Footnote 1 *continued*

- of South Africa: Progress and Beyond', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 91, 4 (2000), pp. 335–346.
- 2 S. Brooks and P. Harrison, 'A Slice of Modernity: Planning for the Country and the City in Britain and Natal, 1900–1950', *South African Geographical Journal*, 80, 2 (1998), pp. 93–100.
- 3 D. Ley, 'Styles of the Times: Liberal and Neo-conservative Landscapes in Inner Vancouver, 1968–1986', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 13 (1987), pp. 40–56; J. Kenny, 'Portland's Comprehensive Plan as Text', in T. J. Barnes and J. S. Duncan (eds), *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London, Routledge, 1991), pp. 176–192; N. R. Fyfe, 'Contested Visions of a Modern City: Planning and Poetry in Postwar Glasgow', *Environment and Planning A*, 28 (1996), pp. 387–403; D. Bunn, 'Comparative Barbarism: Game Reserves, Sugar Plantations, and the Modernisation of the South African Landscape', in K. Darian-Smith, L. Gunner and S. Nuttall (eds), *Text, Theory, Space: Land, Literature and History in South Africa and Australia* (London and New York, Routledge, 1996), pp. 37–52; S. Watson, 'Spaces of the "Other": Planning for Cultural Diversity in Western Sydney', in *ibid.*, pp. 203–217. J. C. Scott, 'State Simplifications: Nature, Space and People', in P. Kaarsholm (ed), *From Post-Traditional to Post-Modern? Interpreting the Meaning of Modernity in Third World Urban Societies* (Roskilde, Occasional Paper No 14/1995, International Development Studies, Roskilde University, 1995), pp. 82–122.
- 4 B. Goodchild, 'Planning and the Modern/postmodern Debate', *Town Planning Review*, 61, 2 (1990), pp. 119–137.
- 5 The study employs a historiographic approach using primary documentary data, specifically the Mayor's Minute of Durban, local and national government (SARAH) estate records and reports, and the records of the Durban Chamber of Industry. Aerial photography from 1931, 1946, 1961, 1970 and 1981 (Scale: 1:10,000), provided additional data regarding the land-use change from residential to industrial.

Development Planning Frameworks involving large-scale urban reconstruction and development.⁶ It is instructive to interrogate critically the historical construction of modernist urban landscapes in the South African context in order that the undemocratic and inequitable practices embodied in these earlier planning projects are not repeated in contemporary reconstruction initiatives.

The South Durban industrial zone, extending south of the port, has recently been highlighted as a Spatial Development Zone with substantial economic potential.⁷ Today, this area is the largest industrial node in the Durban Metropolitan Area (DMA) and in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and the second largest industrial node in South Africa. The port of Durban is not only the largest in Africa, but is viewed as a key distribution node in the global economy linking the developed nations with the emerging Asian markets. As part of the SDI initiative and incorporated in the DMA's Inner City Plan, there are proposals to expand industrial activity in this area in relation to the port.⁸ These proposals have recently been evaluated via an extensive Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process initiated by the Durban Metropolitan Council.⁹ These plans to 're-industrialise' South Durban are currently much debated and the similarity of these proposals to the earlier top-down process of industrial modernisation to be outlined here has been highlighted by civic organisations resisting such developments.¹⁰ This research will provide a context for this debate.

This article has three objectives. The first is to demonstrate how the South Durban industrial zone was conceived and planned in the early twentieth century as a modernist industrial landscape as a result of the juxtaposition of the interests of industry, the Durban Town Council and the national state. The then Natal Manufacturer's Association (NMA) represented the interests of industry.¹¹ The national department of South African Railways and Harbours (SARAH) was responsible for the port, the related railways systems and the land adjacent to the port. The comprehensive vision of South Durban as an industrial zone, although constructed by the local authority in concert with business and industrial interests, was presented to, and accepted by, SARAH. This vision of an efficient port adjacent to, and serving, a well-planned industrial area became part of the national vision for the development of Durban harbour in particular, and part of a broader national interest in port development in South Africa. The vision of an industrial landscape in South Durban was a powerful motive that led to institutional changes and the promulgation of legislation at both the local and particularly the national level, to enable the vision to become a reality. It is proposed that it was through the combined action of the local and national state, prompted by industrial interests, that this vision served to lay the foundations for the emergence of the South Durban industrial zone and contributed to an emerging modernist planning discourse.

The second objective is to show how these interests used the technical planning tools of modernism to implement the vision of a modern industrial zone and to stamp out resistance to these plans. These tools consisted of plans and maps that were based on the concept of racial zoning. To give these techniques power, they had to become law and this

6 Rogerson, 'The Economic and Social Geography of South Africa'.

7 P. Jourdan, K. Gordham, D. Arkwright and G. de Beer, 'Spatial Development Initiatives (Development Corridors): Their Potential Contribution to Investment and Employment Creation' (unpublished paper, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Department of Transport and the DBSA, 1996).

8 Durban Metropolitan Council, *Towards an Inner City Development Framework Plan for Durban, North Central and South Central Local Councils* (Durban, Durban Metropolitan Council, 1998).

9 CSIR, *Durban South Basin Strategic Environment Assessment: Final Integrated Report* (Durban, CSIR, 1999).

10 Interview with D. D'Sa, representative of Wentworth Development Forum (WDF), Chairperson of South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, 20 February 2001.

11 The NMA was renamed the Natal Chamber of Industries (NCI) in the early 1920s.

was achieved by the institutionalisation of town planning as a function of the provincial and local state.

The third objective is to show the outcome of the modernist planning process in South Durban. As a result of the vision of a planned industrial zone, and the abstract blueprint plans in which they were embodied and formalised, the corridor extending south of Durban Bay had, by the early 1970s, become the home to 70 per cent of Durban's industrial activity. The goals of early local state politicians, officials and industrialists were hereby fulfilled, despite ongoing and increasing resistance from the local residential communities to the large-scale land alienation and relocation programmes that were instituted to make way for industry. Community resistance served mainly to protract planning processes rather than leading to any major revisions thereof.

Modernist Planning

It was when the process of industrialisation began to take root in colonial societies early in the twentieth century that local governments became particularly active in planning industrial growth and developing institutions based upon what could be termed early modernist planning discourse.¹² The utopian ideals of spatial ordering and control that arose in Britain and Europe in response to urban disorder emerging in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, were imported into colonial and post-colonial contexts. Although modernist ideology may have originated in nineteenth-century Britain and Europe, it has spread to all parts of the globe due to its promise of the delivery of material progress and modernisation. In South Africa, and in this case Durban, in a significantly different social and political environment, early ideas about modernist planning began to cohere, albeit in a fragmentary way, and be applied to conceptualise and order the emerging urban landscape. Goodchild classifies this type of town planning as the 'early modern' period of town planning in Britain, where planning interventions were still 'piecemeal' and sought to combat social disorder with municipal government acting as an agent of reform.¹³ Planning systems that evolved in South Africa were greatly influenced by British planning concepts with the functional 'town and country planning' tradition established in Britain by the early twentieth century. Legislation emphasised the functional role of planning as a process to regulate the use and development of land. The Town Planning Scheme and zoning were central to this process. The initial Town Planning Ordinance in Natal (10 of 1934) was partially modelled on the Transvaal town planning system. Town planning approaches used in Britain were investigated in order to provide a philosophical basis for the Transvaal Town Planning Ordinance (11 of 1931). The Natal Town Planning Ordinance was also influenced by the conceptual contribution of prominent public officials in Natal at the time, who had been educated in Britain. These public officials, whose domain of training was the physical structure of the city, e.g. planners, surveyors, engineers and architects, were aligned with a functionalist approach to town planning.¹⁴ These early ideas about modernist planning slowly became institutionalised and were applied to South African towns of the early twentieth century to order the emerging urban landscapes. Much has been written specifically on the design of certain applications of modernist planning that were conceived

12 D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1989); Goodchild, 'Planning and the Modern/postmodern Debate', pp. 119–137.

13 See Goodchild, 'Planning and the Modern/postmodern Debate', Table 1.

14 D. Scott, 'Urban Planning Styles: An Analysis of Planning Theory and its Application in Natal' (Masters thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1981); Thorrington-Smith, personal communication, Johannesburg, September, 1979.

of to control the rapidly urbanising black population; for example, Robinson's examination of the use of 'locations' as spatial strategies of control by the state.¹⁵

It is widely accepted that a modernist vision involves a commitment to rational, scientific centralised change through planning or 'organised modernism'. However, the degree to which the modern vision could be implemented depended upon the kind of state power, the resources available and the degree of resistance from civil society that existed under different political dispensations. One of the primary characteristics of organised modernism is its radical break with history and tradition. This follows from the assumption that all activities, values and patterns of human behaviour that are not based on scientific reasoning would need to be re-designed. Scientifically based economic and social plans that emerged in response to this assumption were considered to be superior. So too were those 'experts' – the planners, engineers and architects – with the scientific knowledge to devise and implement such plans objectively for the good of the 'public'.¹⁶ It was therefore in the first half of the nineteenth century that planning, as a discourse and set of practices, rose to prominence as a form of applied knowledge ideally suited to the goals of modernism. This authoritarian and utopian perspective was premised on the instrumentalist assumption that a change in the material or physical environment would improve human nature and the social environment. This necessitated interventions in all aspects of society and required the transformation of nature to suit the purposes of people. The comprehensive scale of such projects necessarily required the financial and administrative resources and power of the state – hence the notion of 'organised modernism'.

Physical planning, as a body of knowledge constructed to fulfil and implement the broader modernist visions of society, was comprehensive, functional and a blueprint in nature.¹⁷ With the given 'ends' of creating social and physical order and achieving economic efficiency, planning played a functional role, providing the 'means' in the form of comprehensive blueprints, as simple and clear images of the future. These relatively static master plans were based on crude social theories and sought to engineer society through the technical manipulation of the physical environment.¹⁸ There was a growing preoccupation, in the first half of the twentieth century, with the comprehensive treatment of issues such as housing, traffic, sewage and transport via the construction of the blueprint and an accompanying set of technical standards and land-use regulations. This type of planning, involving the 'scientific' management of society through physical means, led to the development of planning bureaucracies where planners and engineers assumed a functional role within local authorities. Purcell notes the emergence, by the 1950s and 1960s, of a powerful planning bureaucracy in Durban that was instrumental for laying out the framework for the future growth of the city.¹⁹

Modernist planning as a form of knowledge and control requires a narrowing of vision, 'which brings into very sharp focus certain limited aspects of an otherwise far more complex and unwieldy reality'.²⁰ This 'optic' makes phenomena in the centre of the vision 'more legible' and more amenable to 'measurement, calculation and manipulation'. The 'narrowing of vision' in relation to the urban landscape results in a comprehensive blueprint of a future reality. Modernist artist Paul Klee stated that artists, painters, sculptors and

15 J. Robinson, *The Power of Apartheid: State, Power and Space in South African Cities* (Oxford, Butterworth, 1996).

16 L. Sandercock, 'The Death of Modernist Planning: Radical Praxis for a Postmodern Age', in M. Douglass and J. Friedmann (eds), *Cities for Citizens* (Chichester, Wiley, 1998), pp. 163–184.

17 Scott, 'Urban Planning Styles'.

18 A. Faludi, *Planning Theory* (Oxford and New York, Pergamon Press, 1973).

19 J. F. H. Purcell, 'Durban, South Africa: Local Politics in a Plural Society' (PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1974).

20 J. C. Scott, 'State Simplifications: Nature, Space and People', p. 82.

architects 'do not show space, they create it'.²¹ Space was reconstructed in South Durban in this way through a process of abstraction and simplification, where only key elements, relevant to the local political, social and economic goals of the dominant whites, were included.

The chief tool of blueprint and comprehensive planning is zoning. This tool sifts out urban functions and relegates them to mutually exclusive spaces within the city.²² The static blueprint therefore presents a set of functional spaces, which will become 'filled up' with the appropriate activity in time as development proceeds. Attached to the blueprint are a host of conditions regulating not only land use, but also the actual details of the physical fabric of the landscape. These conditions serve further to order the construction of the built landscape according to a set of norms or standards stipulating plot sizes, building materials, building densities and other physical characteristics. It is assumed that through this process of regulating and ordering the physical landscape, an efficient 'physical form' will be created to fulfil the 'function' of an efficient economic system, i.e. industrial capitalism. The architects, planners and engineers responsible for designing the blueprints become 'doctors of space' who are creating abstract representations of space.²³ However, this creative process simultaneously embodies creation and destruction, as the creation of an abstract space 'asserts' as well as 'negates and denies'. Other realities and social spaces that exist 'behind' the map or plan are subjugated to the dominant view.²⁴ However, the imposition of abstract space is never complete and vestiges of other realities continually surface and persist.

Vernon argues that the western dualistic mode of conceptualising reality is 'map like', as opposite realms of experience are conceived of as being mutually exclusive.²⁵ Zoning is a mechanism used in planning for achieving exclusivity in each realm and creating urban areas as a set of static, discrete spaces added together rather than a 'fluid unity of transformations'.²⁶ The concept of urban zoning therefore precludes both mixed land use and the informal, unregulated occupation of space. The word 'slum' 'connotes a perception of something anomalous ... an affront to expectations of what is appropriate'.²⁷ This term came to be used in modernist planning discourse to describe those areas that should be removed from the planned formal city. The existing Indian and African residential areas in Durban in the early part of the twentieth century exhibited these 'illegal and inappropriate' characteristics, and it was these areas that became the object of re-zoning or slum clearance procedures in the name of rational planning.

The planning of urban space began in earnest in South Africa in the early twentieth century. Here, the mutually exclusive categories of 'formal' and 'informal' formed a broad categorisation within which municipal authorities set about modernising urban space by replacing informal forms of urban development, which were inappropriate and illegal, with formal functional zones, which were desirable and legal.²⁸ A growing network of segregatory and inhibitive legislation regulating housing, trade, transport and industry enabled this.²⁹

21 H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1991), p. 124.

22 J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974).

23 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 99. See also D. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London, Croom Helm, 1984).

25 J. Vernon, *The Garden and the Map: Schizophrenia in Twentieth Century Literature and Culture* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1973).

26 *Ibid.* See also Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

27 P. Marris, 'The Meaning of Slums', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 3 (1979), pp. 419–442, especially p. 425.

28 D. Scott, 'Communal Space Construction: The Rise and Fall of Clairwood and District' (PHD thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1995).

29 F. Cooper, *Struggle For the City: Migrant Labour, Capital and the State in Africa* (Beverly Hills, Sage, 1983).

The Shift of Industry to the South of Durban: the Juxtaposition of the Interests of Industry, and the Local and National State

The growth of the industrial area south of the port of Durban in the first half of the twentieth century was the product of the joint interests of industry, the NMA, the Durban Town Council and the national state department of SARA. However, before this, industry had begun to cluster and grow in and around the early town of Durban and the port. Prior to the First World War, the main function of Durban was that of a port and commercial centre. Its main activities were those of supplying the basic needs of food, clothing and shelter to the small white settler population, as well as processing of local products.³⁰ Durban began to assume a more industrial character by the 1920s, with industry beginning to gravitate towards the south of the town and the stimulation of port activities. The earliest industrial nodes to the south of Durban could be found at Congella, Isipingo, Wentworth, Merebank, Umbilo, Jacobs, the Bluff, Umbogintwini and Clairwood.³¹

The most significant industrial development in the pre-First World War years was the municipal reclamation and construction of Maydon Wharf, which became the first industrial zone in Durban, south west of the centre of town, followed shortly by Congella Industrial Estate.³² Industry had begun to take off and the President of the NMA at that time noted that 'so far as Natal is concerned I am sure you will all agree that it is one of the brightest stars in the South African firmament ... with its wonderful geographical situation and the developments that are taking place around the port, there is no question but that we can look with greatest hope and the greatest faith to the future'.³³

Development began to intensify around the margins of the port. Further reclamation of bay-side land occurred on the eastern shores of the Bay at Island View for fuel storage tanks. This area became integrated with the Point by the construction of the railway around the bay in 1932.³⁴ By 1930, with Maydon Wharf and Congella almost fully developed, there was a 'strong thrust towards the southern area ... because there were no significant alternatives to the north or west' and the alluvial flats to the south provided cheap flat land close to the harbour and town.³⁵ The stage was set for the expansion of industry to the south stimulated by the demand for industrial land.

It was the interests of white-owned industry, through the NMA, that prompted the Durban Town Council to acquire land for industry and obtain administrative control over the prospective flat and low-lying area that lay to the south of the port. The NMA was also responsible for drawing SARA into the industrial planning process as the land around the harbour logically fell within the proposed industrial zone. The NMA involved itself from its inception, not only in the general promotion of industrialisation in the province of Natal – including the location of industrial activities and the acquisition of land – but in policies relating to the housing of African labour in hostels adjacent to industry.³⁶ By the 1920s, the NMA had begun to be recognised by government as the 'mouthpiece of industry'. From this early stage, the interests of local industrialists tended to dominate the local authority, initially to boost the image of Durban as an industrial region and later to obtain cheap land, lower rates and infrastructural concessions to benefit industry.³⁷

30 M. Katzen, *Industry in Greater Durban* (Pietermaritzburg, Penrose Press, 1961); B. S. Young, 'The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region' (PhD thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1972).

31 Clairwood was known as Clairmont prior to 1911. See Young, 'The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region'; and see Figure 1.

32 Young, 'The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region'. See also Figure 1.

33 Natal Chamber of Industry, *The History of the Natal Chamber of Industry* (Durban, NCI, 1955), p. 29.

34 See Figure 1.

35 Young, 'The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region', p. 78.

36 Natal Chamber of Industries, *The History of the Natal Chamber of Industry*.

37 Scott, 'Construction of Communal Space'.

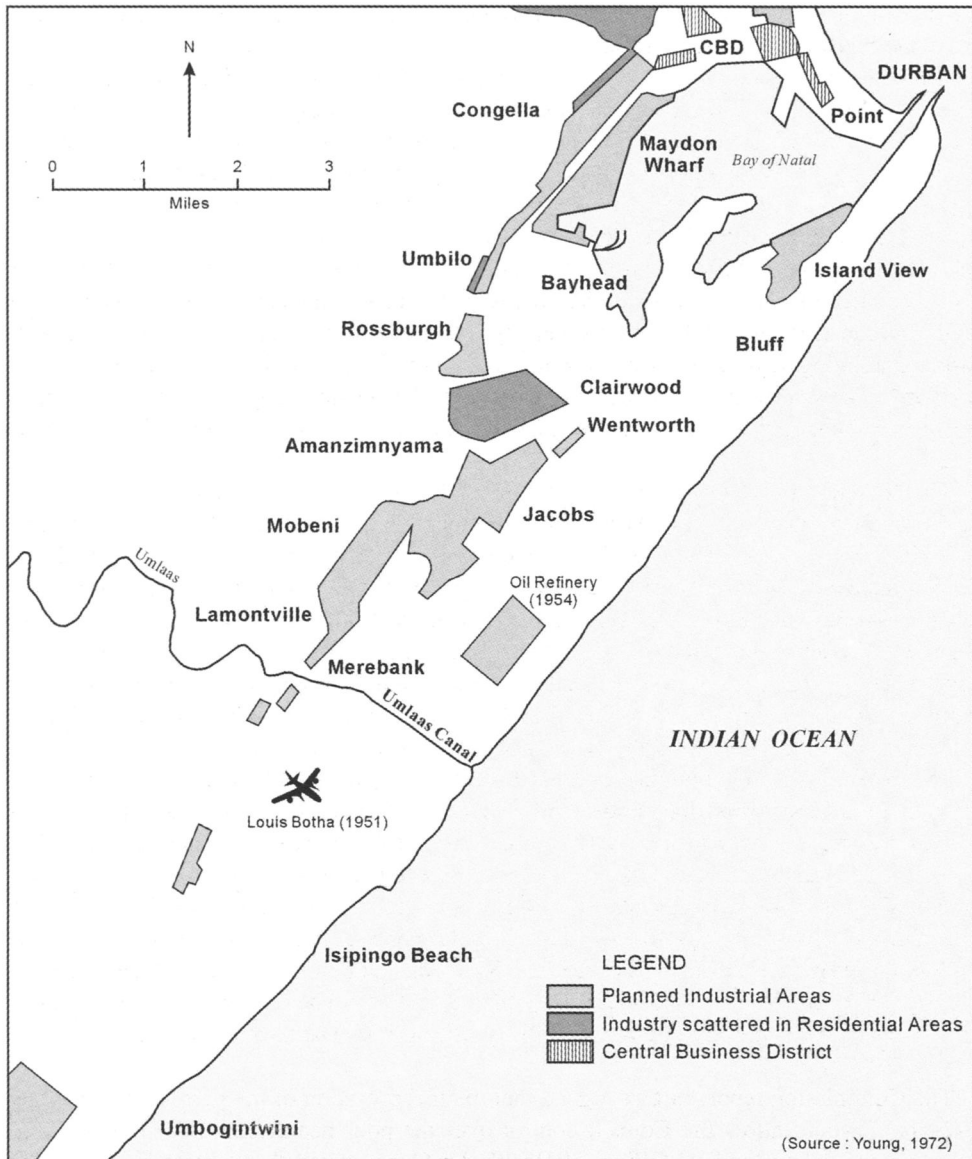


Figure 1. Early industrial and residential nodes in South Durban c1959.

The NCI in its Annual Report of 1926–1927 noted that no new industries had located in Durban in the period between 1922 and 1925, despite its locational advantages. The Chairman asked whether this was ‘... quite satisfactory in a territory that has such great possibilities as Durban and Natal generally?’³⁸ It was also noted therein that industrialists seeking suitable locations had ‘made their home elsewhere’.³⁹ The President emphasised that ‘the only drawback I can think of is the question of land and its price. Land is unquestionably dear and rates have to be paid on this dear land ... and I can only suggest

³⁸ NCI, 20th Annual Report, 1926–1927, p. 9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

that the Municipal Authorities should endeavour to find a way out of this situation if they desire Durban to develop industrially'.⁴⁰

Prompted by these admonitions, the Durban Town Council during the next decade systematically acquired what land it could outside the Borough in the corridor south of Durban Bay. In 1925, 194 acres had been purchased at Wentworth for both industrial and housing scheme development.⁴¹ With further prompting by the NCI, the Council had, by 1931, purchased a vast portion of the Woods Estate (425 acres) which lay across the Bayhead and along the southern corridor, which was also earmarked for both industrial and residential purposes.⁴² Subsequent to the acquisition of these two large-scale tracts of land, further acquisition on such a scale was impossible because Indians and whites had settled South Durban since the 1920s.⁴³ Low density, mixed residential and intensive small-scale market gardening had developed on state and privately owned land along the southern corridor.⁴⁴ The consolidation of the privately owned land into large portions for planned housing or industrial schemes would thus be difficult and well beyond the municipal budget.

The NCI was thus directly instrumental in initiating municipal land acquisition outside the Borough to the south of Durban and continued to pressure the Council for further industrial land throughout the 1930s. The next logical step was to obtain territorial and administrative control over these areas and incorporate them into the Borough. The Durban Town Council constituted the Borough Boundaries Commission. The report of this influential Commission stated that, 'for the furtherance of Durban's industrial policy ... it is not desirable that such an area be under separate municipal control'.⁴⁵ The Commission thus proposed the incorporation of the so-called 'Added Areas' to the south, west and north of Durban, into the Old Borough for industrial and residential purposes.⁴⁶

The reason for including the South Coast Junction as an 'Added Area' within the Borough boundaries was that, under town planning legislation, it was possible for the Council comprehensively to plan, develop and control this area over which it would then have legal jurisdiction. The interdependence of the productive work zone and surrounding residential areas was explicitly stated in the early vision of the South Durban industrial zone. The purchasing of large tracts of land had already been accomplished even before the redefinition of the administrative boundaries. Such was the confidence of the local authority and the NCI that the vision would become a reality. The increase in middle-class administrative intervention in early modernist planning was characteristic of the 'new phase of civic development'.⁴⁷

The Commission report further argued that the incorporation of the peripheral insanitary 'black belt' would allow the Council control over the poor health and housing conditions in these areas.⁴⁸ The Medical Officer of Health, Dr Gunn, stated that 'unless in the outside

40 NCI, 20th Annual Report, 1926–1927, p. 10.

41 L. Torr, 'Providing for the "Better Class Native": The Creation of Lamontville, 1923–1933', *South African Geographical Journal*, 69, 1 (1987), pp. 31–45.

42 The Durban Town Council completed the black township of Lamontville in 1934 on that portion of the Estate that was topographically unsuitable for industrial purposes. See Torr, 'Providing for the "Better Class Native"'. See Figure 1.

43 Other smaller acquisitions were: the Wentworth admiralty land at the 'Assegai Camp' (300 acres), the Naval Stores Depot at Amanzimnyama, and the land between Wentworth and Kings Rest in the Bluff area. See University of Natal, *Durban Housing Survey: a Study of Housing in a Multi-Racial Community* (Pietermaritzburg, Natal Regional Survey Report No 2, Department of Economics, Natal University Press, 1952).

44 See the 1931 aerial photography of the Department of Photogrammetry, Physical Environment, Durban Unicity.

45 Borough Boundaries Commission Report, Mayor's Minute, 1930–1931, p. 12.

46 Borough Boundaries Commission Report, Mayor's Minute, 1930–1931. See also Figure 2.

47 Goodchild, 'Planning and the Modern/postmodern debate', p. 127.

48 P. Maylam, 'The "Black Belt": African Squatters in Durban, 1935–1950', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 17, 3 (1983), pp. 413–428.

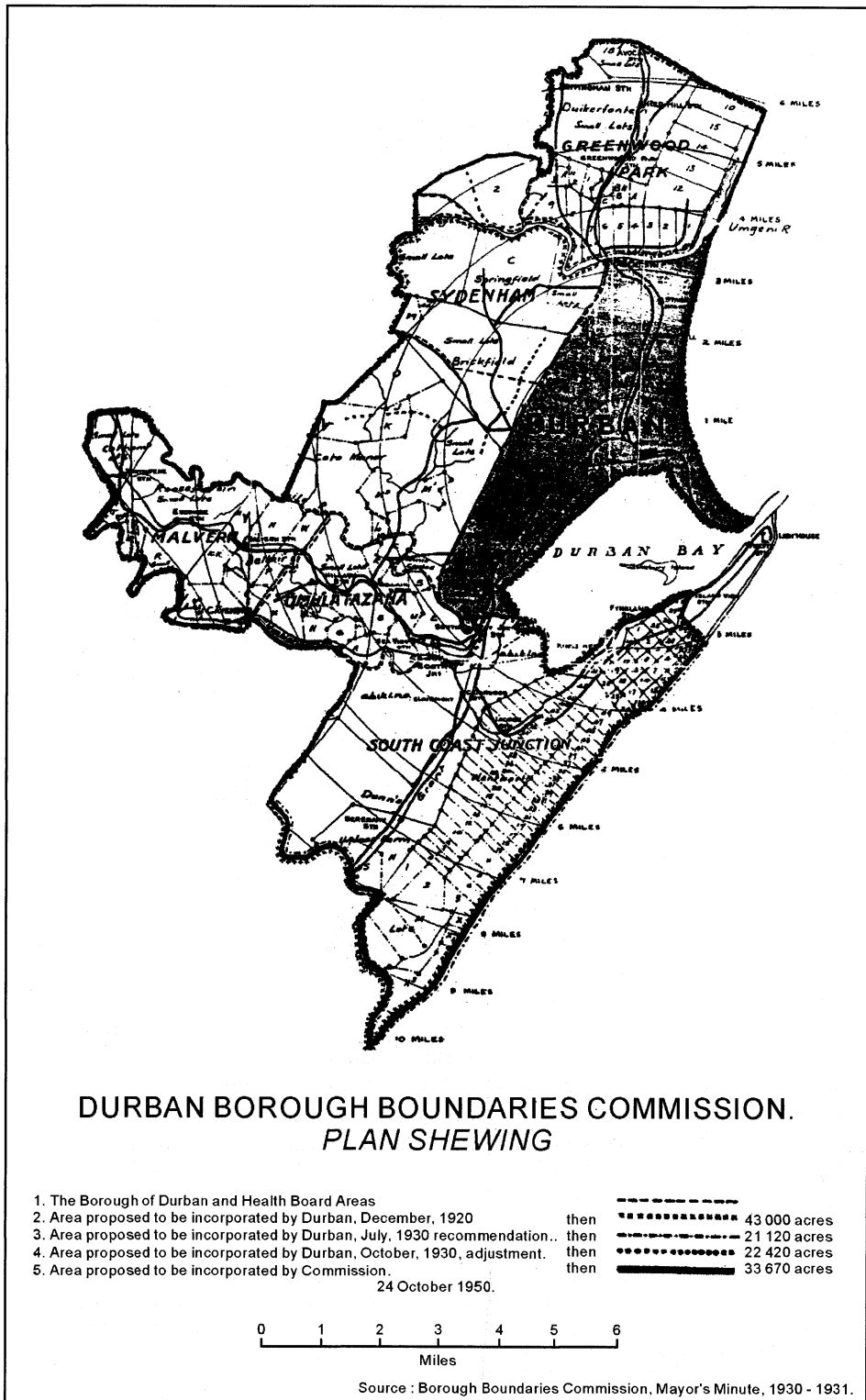


Figure 2. Map of Durban showing the Added Areas incorporated into Durban c 1932.

areas there is a parallel improvement in hygienic conditions, much of what the Borough does or will do will be negated'.⁴⁹ Shortly after incorporation, 'slum clearance', via the application of the Slums Act of 1934, proceeded specifically in areas that had been pinpointed by the Council as zones of future industrial expansion.⁵⁰

The acceptance of the recommendations of the Borough Boundaries Commission Report of 1930, as codified by its attached plan, greatly increased the physical size and population of Durban – with a reported additional 51,000 Indians, 21,000 Africans and 20,000 whites who now fell under municipal jurisdiction.⁵¹ Once the new boundaries were ratified, the Council could then commence with a further mapping of the contours of the city's future within this expanded spatial framework.

The date of incorporation was 31 August 1931 and, from this date, specific attention was devoted to the construction of a comprehensive blueprint plan for the industrial development of southern Durban in particular and, by extension, of greater Durban. The combined goals of future industrial growth and expansion; the institution of urban order and sanitary conditions; and the control of black urban informal settlement, began to crystallise in the 1930s. It was, however, the first of these three goals, i.e. to promote economic growth and create jobs via planned industrial development, which formed the stated rationale of the emerging blueprint plan for South Durban. The modernisation of South Durban along these lines necessitated the simplification and purification of space to exclude the informal housing and market gardening located on land leased from the state as well as on privately owned land. A long-term plan was needed to reconstruct the South Durban corridor and a range of strategies began to be formulated, in a fragmented and sometimes ad hoc manner, to provide the legislative, institutional and political mechanisms to bring this about.

After incorporation in 1931, the NCI urged 'the whole industrial policy of Durban be reviewed'. It was noted that 'the extent of suitable ground within the Old Borough of Durban is very small, but there are large areas at Clairwood and Jacobs, and further along the South Coast Line, which are eminently suited to industrial development'.⁵² Representations were made by the NCI to the local authority in December 1936 and a Special Committee was set up locally to investigate industrial development in the Bayhead area. This was the first logical area to target in the southward path of development, as it was a continuation of the existing industrial estates.⁵³ The Bayhead at this time was a state-owned undeveloped backwater where mangrove swamps were in abundance and considerable informal settlement had taken place for market gardening in the rich alluvial soils. A detailed scheme was drafted for the reclamation of the Bayhead as a continuation of the existing industrial zone, presenting it to the Minister of Railways and Harbours in 1936.⁵⁴ It was at this point that national interests related to port development were stimulated and SARAH became involved in the development of South Durban.

The Special Committee recommended that Durban's railway node expand into the southern area of Durban to relieve congestion in the central area; that additional wharfage be provided in the Bayhead; and that land to house African labourers adjacent to the factories be included in the provisions. Furthermore, it was suggested that the rivers flowing across the alluvial flats into the Bay become canalised, and a road across the

49 Mayor's Minute, 1930–1931, Borough Boundaries Commission Report, p. 8.

50 Young, 'The Industrial Geography of the Durban Region'. This Act was actively employed in other urban areas of the country in the same period. See S. Parnell, 'Racial Segregation in Johannesburg: The Slums Act, 1934–1939', *South African Geographical Journal*, 70, 2 (1988), pp. 112–126.

51 University of Natal, *Durban Housing Survey*.

52 NCI, 26th Annual Report, 1932–1933, p. 19.

53 See Figure 1.

54 Natal Chamber of Industry, *The History of the Natal Chamber of Industry*.

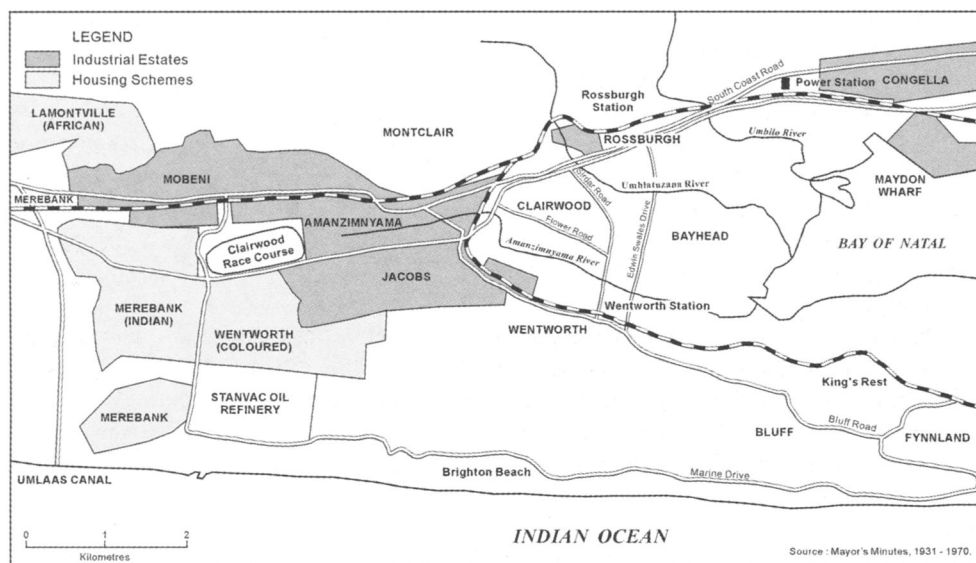


Figure 3. Industrial areas and housing schemes established in South Durban prior to 1950.

Bayhead to the Bluff is constructed to ‘enhance the value of the Bluff as a (white) residential area’.⁵⁵

A turning point in the creation of an industrial area south of the Bay came in 1938. The local authority officially ‘adopted the principle that the head of the Bay was to be regarded as the natural location of industrial development’ and declared the South Durban corridor a ‘productive zone’.⁵⁶ Thereafter, a sustained campaign by the NCI, urging the local authority to facilitate industrial expansion, continued into the 1940s, with ‘close and friendly co-operation’ between these bodies.⁵⁷

Since the Bayhead lands were state-owned land, the local authority pursued the policy of stimulating SARAH to develop this area. The Minister of Railways and Harbours appointed the Durban Harbour Development Committee, to which the Council and other interested parties submitted their visions of industrial growth. The term ‘Clairwood Industrial Area’ was used by the Council in its report to the Durban Bayhead Development Committee as a broad term referring to the low-lying land from the state-owned Bayhead as far as the Clairwood Race Course. It is significant that Clairwood itself was a well-established Indian residential area at that time.⁵⁸ This title implicitly assumed that Clairwood would be subsumed into the industrial zone.

The map accompanying the SARAH General Manager’s Annual Report of 1934 indicates that the Bayhead had, from an early stage, been earmarked for harbour expansion and industrial development.⁵⁹ The war, however, halted the progress of these early plans that were formalised in the recommendations of the Durban Bayhead Development Committee Report published in 1949.⁶⁰ The major recommendations of the Report were:

55 NCI, 29th Annual Report, 1936–1937, p. 12. See Figure 3.

56 Mayor’s Minute, 1938–1939, p. 18

57 NCI, 31st Annual Report, 1938–1939, p. 28. The Mayor of Durban in 1944, Mr. R. Ellis Brown, was himself a ‘distinguished industrialist’ and member of the Executive Committee of the NCI for some years.

58 D. Scott, ‘The Destruction of Clairwood: A Case Study in the Transformation of Communal Living Space’, in D. Smith (ed), *Urbanisation in Contemporary South Africa: The Apartheid City and beyond* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1992).

59 Mayor’s Minute, 1938–1939.

60 *Report of the Durban Bayhead Development Committee*, U. G. 32–49 (Pretoria, Government Printer, 1949).

the localisation of industry in Durban to the south of the Bay; the integration of railways, shipping and industry in this location; the creation of African and Indian housing schemes to the south in Lamontville and Merebank to provide sources of labour for industry; and the necessity of undertaking reclamation, dredging and canalisation to provide usable industrial land. While the national state wished to expand South African trade via the development of the nation's ports, the local state looked to the Bayhead as a potential source of flat industrial land to satisfy local industrial demands. The national report went further than stipulating the functions and zoning of state land at the Bayhead and included broader plans for modernising south Durban. This gave the Council's plans national legitimacy.

On acceptance by SARAH of the proposal to develop the Bayhead, vast reclamation works commenced in order to provide for the relocation of the railway marshalling yards from the central city to the Bayhead. These provisions were echoed later in the Moffat Report of 1958.⁶¹ The reclamation works gradually reduced the extent and changed the contours of Durban Bay with the original natural high water contour at the Bayhead becoming transformed into a geometrically ordered and permanent wharf side.

The proposals for the development of the Bay via reclamation at the Bayhead were met with considerable public and municipal opposition. Mayor Milne protested the curtailment of the Bay area, noting that the Moffat Report advised development that would 'cut the original water area of the Bay by half' and 'of the original eight square miles of water, a mere two and a half square miles would be left'.⁶² The Bayhead development and subsequent Moffat Report were stimulated by, and formed part of, the Council's industrialisation policy of 1938, which was based on the assumption that 'the long view is the correct view to take' and required long term and comprehensive planning.⁶³

The NCI played a crucial role in creating a vision of a planned industrial area south of Durban Bay. They achieved this by stimulating the local and, to some extent, the national authorities, to adopt an aggressive policy of industrialisation from the 1920s, and sustaining and encouraging the implementation of this policy up until the 1940s. It was from this period that the Durban City Council, with the aid of a growing bureaucracy, took over the initiative and energetically and persistently continued to apply this policy in spite of ongoing and increasing Indian opposition.

The Use of Technical Planning Tools in the Creation of the South Durban 'Productive Zone'

The combined interests of industry, the Durban Town (and later City) Council and the national port authorities had worked together to put in place the legal apparatus and to allocate large areas of public land as a basis for implementing their vision of an industrial zone. The actual creation and implementation of an industrial zone was, however, further dependent upon the application of technical mapping and planning tools to convert vision to reality. There were three stages in this process: the promotion of the institutionalisation of appropriate planning legislation; the conversion of the vision for industrialisation into a series of maps and plans; and finally the submission of racial zoning plans to national government.

61 *The First Interim Report of the Standing Committee for the Development of Durban Harbour* (Durban, South African Railways, Systems Manager's Office, Durban, November 1958).

62 *Daily News*, 15 March 1960, 19 July 1961.

63 *Mayor's Minute*, 1937–1938, p. 24.

The Promotion of the Institutionalisation of Planning Legislation

The Borough Engineer, reporting to the Borough Boundaries Commission of 1931, had an early vision of a comprehensive plan for the area to the south of Durban. He supported 'a strong central authority' that would be able to 'expedite the provision of essential services for the region', 'control the lay-out' of the industrial zone, and focus on its development 'as a whole'.⁶⁴ The Commission proposed that the Council's existing powers in town planning, under the Borough's Ordinance, be exercised 'with the least possible delay' in the creation of a comprehensive plan for the whole city.⁶⁵ To cope with the need for planning legislation to fulfil their goal of industrialisation, the Commission proposed the submission of draft town planning legislation to the Natal Provincial Council for consideration, to facilitate urban planning. This was the first step in providing a legitimising planning institution and discourse through which the vision could be achieved.

This concern led to the promulgation of the provincial Townships and Town Planning Ordinance (10 of 1934), which provided for the first comprehensive means of controlling and guiding urban development.⁶⁶ This legislation ushered in the modernist planning principles that were the basis of British 'Town and Country Planning'.⁶⁷ The 1934 Planning Ordinance is based on a functionalist philosophy of achieving efficiency and order via the manipulation of the physical fabric of the city in response to the problems created by industrial development.⁶⁸ The purpose of the Town Planning Scheme, as embodied in the 1934 legislation, is to ensure, via the zoning component of a blueprint plan, 'co-ordinated and harmonious development'. This was to be enacted in such a way as to tend effectively to promote health, safety, order, amenity, convenience and general welfare as well as efficiency and economy in the process of such development.⁶⁹ The 1934 Planning Ordinance therefore embodied the assumptions of modernist planning, i.e. that technical experts had the knowledge to plan comprehensively for the public good; that planning would ensure a functional city that would operate efficiently to promote industrial capitalist development; and that the blueprint or Planning Scheme would order and zone urban space comprehensively to control present and future development. This narrowly conceived functionalist legislation formed the backdrop against which the Council proceeded to plan for the reconstruction of southern Durban to accommodate the impending wave of industrial development.

Underlying these imperatives to achieve functional order, however, was the political imperative to 'dictate (and often restrict) the pattern of black urban settlement in urban environments'.⁷⁰ The political contest to define and construct the built environment in South Durban was a struggle on the part of the local authority to empty out and 'purify' space. This 'purification', in the context of a segregated and white local authority, meant not only the removal of blacks but also the replacement of urban disorder with order, i.e. the

64 Mayor's Minute, 1932–1933.

65 The Borough Ordinance, while not specifically a piece of town planning legislation, provided for the Council to purchase land in and outside its jurisdiction, expropriate land for public purposes, control land sub-division and prepare town planning schemes.

66 R. L. Faccio, 'The Development of Planning Controls in Britain and South Africa', *Planning and Building Development*, 14 (1975), pp. 33–39.

67 Brooks and Harrison, 'A Slice of Modernity'.

68 D. Scott, 'Urban Planning Styles'.

69 N. N. Patricious, 'Urban Planning – its Basic Aims', *Planning and Building Development*, 16 (1975), pp. 55–75. As a result of this philosophy, planning in KwaZulu-Natal has traditionally been the province of professionals whose domain is to intervene in the physical construction of the city; their concerns are essentially divorced from social issues. Furthermore, early planners in Natal enthusiastically applied the training that they had received in Britain and thus contributed to the formulation of such legislation. See Scott, 'Urban Planning Styles'.

70 A. S. Mabin and D. Smit, 'Reconstructing South Africa's Cities 1900–2000: A Prospectus (Or, a Cautionary Tale)', (unpublished paper, African Studies Seminar, University of the Witwatersrand, 18 May 1992), p. 13.

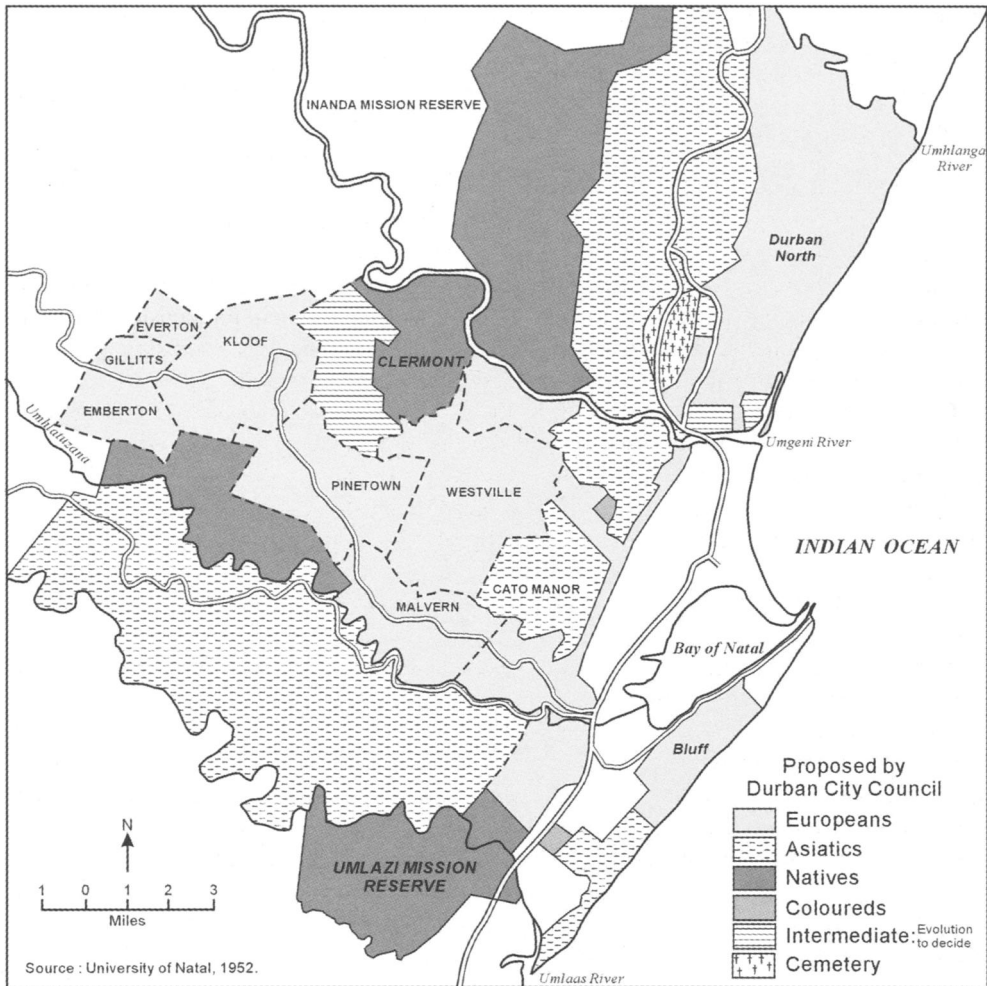


Figure 4. The 1944 Racial Zoning Plan of the DCC submitted to the Durban Post-war Development Committee.

eradication of informal settlements. The 1934 Slums Act was the tool used to achieve this purpose until appropriate planning legislation was put in place.

From Vision to Plan: the Mapping of South Durban

The second technical process necessary for the modernisation of South Durban was to convert the vision of the landscape of southern Durban into a series of maps or plans. These were the Borough Boundaries Map (1931), the Racial Zoning Plan to the Durban Post-war Development Committee (1944) and the map forming the basis of the Technical Sub-Committee Report on Racial Zoning of Durban (1951) in terms of the Group Areas Act.⁷¹

The map was employed by the Council as a technical tool to translate its policies for modernisation into concrete representations through a process of rational 'scientific' abstractions. Through this apolitical process of abstraction undertaken through modernist planning discourse, the 'spatial unintelligibility' of the existing landscape of South Durban

⁷¹ See Figures 2, 3 and 4.

became geometrically ordered according to a political and administrative logic of control and efficiency. 'Piecemeal' comprehensive plans, such as the South Durban plan, were later coordinated into a city-wide plan.⁷² By the 1950s, the scale of comprehensive planning had become national when a national blueprint plan for the restructuring of all South African cities became institutionalised.⁷³

The maps and plans that shaped the landscape of southern Durban were an instrument of power, presenting the white Council's values and interests in the guise of scientific disinterestedness.⁷⁴ The composition of these maps via cadastral and zoning conventions and symbols lent them the 'aureole of science'. Here reductionism becomes the tool in the service of the state, and power, in general, to reduce contradictions via the mediation of knowledge. This strategy is therefore one of 'mixing ideology and science' by passing from dogma to dogma and passing it off as science.⁷⁵

The aesthetic of modernism presents a geometric and visual order, which appears logical and symmetrical from 'above or outside' and exists in the abstract representation – far removed from the experience of those whose 'lived' space is the subject under scrutiny.⁷⁶ While the residents of southern Durban could be said to be 'insiders', relating to their environment experientially through their everyday activities, the Council essentially viewed this zone from the 'outside'. Thus, to residents, southern Durban had a 'sense of place', with colloquial place names and historically significant schools, community halls and burial grounds, while to the Council it constituted a physical container – something visualised and viewed from beyond it.⁷⁷ Vernon characterises the map as a 'frozen space' in which all aspects of experience that are not 'inert and measurable', are siphoned out.⁷⁸ Via this process of 'scientific' abstraction, the Council's priorities and political goals were 'written' into the static blueprint maps for the planning of southern Durban, and the resident Indian population of southern Durban was 'written' out.

The logic of these maps and plans was infused with modernist planning assumptions. They were comprehensive, functional blueprints to create and control the economic base of South Africa's second largest city. In Durban, as in other neo-colonial cities in the developing world, the administrative ordering of society – via planning institutions and discourse and growing bureaucracies – was raised to a far more ambitious level than in the developed world.

The Borough Boundaries Map (1931). In the early 1930s, the need for a map or plan to represent the vision of the local authority and industry to guide development in Durban gave rise to the Borough Boundaries map indicating the extent of Borough territory.⁷⁹ The visions of the Durban Town Council, embodied in the report accompanying the map, evolved and became explicitly ratified as a 'productive zone' by Council in 1938. These plans were formalised blueprints to guide development through time, and in so doing to construct a new physical landscape. The 1931 Borough Boundaries map acquired the force of law and, with later layers of planning embellishments and refinements, the early vision of an industrial zone became a reality within the next 40 years.

72 City of Durban, *Outline Plan of the City* (Durban, City Engineers Department, 1967).

73 Goodchild, 'Planning and the Modern/postmodern Debate'; B. Maharaj, 'The Group Areas Act in Durban: Central-Local State Relations' (PhD thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1992).

74 J. B. Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map', in T. J. Barnes and J. S. Duncan (eds), *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape* (London, Routledge, 1991), pp. 231–273.

75 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 106.

76 J. C. Scott, 'State Simplifications: Nature, Space and People', p. 104.

77 Scott, 'The Destruction of Clairwood', pp. 87–98.

78 Vernon, *The Garden and the Map*.

79 See Figure 2.

The 'productive zone' was to occupy the low-lying and flat alluvial valley stretching from south of the harbour to the Umlaas River. Flanking this zone were the predominantly white residential areas of Bluff and Wentworth to the east, with the black middle-class township of Lamontville to the south-west. An Indian village – Merebank – was planned by the Council and built at the southern end of the zone.⁸⁰ The zoning of South Durban as envisaged in the early 'productive zone' map, not only differentiated between specialist productive or work zones and zones for residential use, but also between residential zones on the basis of race. Attempts had been made at a national level to introduce 'class areas' in the 1920s. In 1923, a Class Areas Bill and Areas Reservation Bill, and in 1926 an Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill, were tabled in the South African parliament, specifically to confine Indian residence and trade to certain areas of Durban, in particular, and to South African cities, in general.⁸¹ These were deferred due to opposition from India.⁸²

Urban maps or plans were a tool for the appropriation of space in that they served the purpose of the local state and industry. Owing to their 'scientific' construction, those not schooled in technical mapping skills found these maps and plans impossible to challenge, especially when they became incorporated into law and became particularly powerful.⁸³ The notion that maps or plans represent an 'unbiased' scientific view of the world and mirror of reality, is a belief embedded in western scientific cartography.

Challenges to the reality embodied in the plans were initially framed within the technical rationale of the plans. An example of this is the challenge mounted against the Durban City Council's (DCC) attempt to re-zone the Clairwood residential area into an industrial zone, commencing in 1956 and continuing until the mid-1980s.⁸⁴ Initially, there was a complete lack of community resistance, via institutionalised channels of objection, to the designation of Clairwood as an industrial area. A lack of experience of complex town planning legislation and a lack of resources for legal aid resulted in weak 'public participation' in the planning process in the early stages.⁸⁵ However, by the late 1970s, the residents developed an increased understanding of legal procedures and the technicalities of re-zoning. Resistance politics at this stage was confined to challenging the technical issues, rather than the broader political issues.⁸⁶

By the 1980s, the political climate was one of mounting internal and external resistance to the South African state. The transparency of the maps of South Durban, representing a rationally planned space for economic growth and progress, became increasingly clouded by the critique of their goals by Indian opposition parties. The neutrality of the plans was contested and they were exposed as tools of racial zoning and social engineering.⁸⁷

The Racial Zoning Plan for the City submitted to the Durban Post-war Development Committee. Earlier plans and associated reports for South Durban had proposed the racial zoning of residential areas surrounding the industrial zone to provide labour for the

80 See Figure 3.

81 University of Natal, *Durban Housing Survey*.

82 Instead, the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 served informally to restrict Indian urban location. See Scott, 'The Destruction of Communal Space'.

83 Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map', pp. 231–273.

84 See J. Robinson, 'Urban Movements in South Africa: the Case of Clairwood, South Africa' (BA Honours thesis, Department of Geographical and Environmental Sciences, University of Natal, Durban, 1984).

85 *Ibid.*

86 Scott, 'The Destruction of Clairwood'. Purcell, 'Durban, South Africa: Local Politics in a Plural Society', identifies an increase in Indian access to municipal officials, which runs parallel to the increased penetration of bureaucratic procedures.

87 Scott, 'The Destruction of Clairwood'.

emerging industrial node of Durban. However, it was not until 1944 that the Durban City Valuator and Estates Manager submitted a Racial Zoning Plan to the Durban Post-war Development Committee for the whole of the city – the ‘Barnes Report’.⁸⁸

The Council argued that racial zoning would result in the housing of each race in a separate area whereby the interests of all would best be served. The map shows a zone open to all races extending south of the Bay – the industrial zone – with white, Indian and coloured residential zones surrounding it. Farther afield and inland lie an African residential zone in Lamontville and the Umlazi Mission Reserve.⁸⁹ The map also shows more broadly how the concept of racial zoning was extended to apply to the whole city designating the city a white ‘core’ and black ‘periphery’.

In the 1940s, the DCC was faced, at the local level, with a rapidly growing Indian population; the rapid growth of Indian and African shack settlements on the periphery; and the problem of insanitary living conditions in large areas of the city.⁹⁰ Although not explicitly stated, the racial zoning plans aimed at producing an efficiently planned and functional city were also aimed at solving the social problems facing the Council. Thus, the modernist industrial plans for southern Durban that were drawn up within the framework of racial zoning for the whole city, had both an economic and social dimension.

The Apartheid Racial Zoning Map in terms of the Group Areas Act. The 1944 Barnes Report provided an explicit outline of the concept of racial zoning applied to the whole city. The Report later formed the basis of the first apartheid map contained in the Technical Sub-Committee Report on Racial Zoning of Durban (1951), required in terms of the Group Areas Act.⁹¹

The final revised scheme adopted by the Council in 1952 reveals the maintenance of the ‘segmented colonial city’, preserving the interests of the dominant white group with regard to access to land and facilities and the decentralisation of blacks to the periphery. The segregated apartheid city model⁹² thus had its origins in the original mapping of the South Durban industrial zone but represented a more authoritarian and comprehensive form of social engineering and organised modernism.

Industrial Expansion and Resistance

By the middle of the twentieth century, the infrastructural and legislative framework was in place for the emergence of a modern industrial landscape in southern Durban. Development began to take place rapidly as planned. Parallel to this process were the ongoing and relentless efforts of the residential communities to resist industrial modernisation.

After the incorporation of the South Coast Junction into the Borough of Durban in 1931, the southern Durban corridor was termed and designated a ‘working zone’ by the DCC, and the piecemeal development of infrastructure commenced. The major works involved:

88 *Programme of Post-War Development: Report of a Special Committee, chaired by A L Barnes* (Durban, City of Durban, 1943). This plan formed the basis of the Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Committee’s 1944 detailed recommendations. See ‘The Ninth Interim Report of the Post-War Works and Reconstruction Committee regarding Provincial and Town Planning, Notice No. 23’, *Natal Provincial Gazette*, 19 January 1945. See also Figure 4.

89 University of Natal, *Durban Housing Survey*, and see Figure 4.

90 Maylam, ‘The “Black Belt”’.

91 The Technical Sub-Committee expanded on the principles of racial zoning and noted that they had ‘derived very great assistance’ from the Barnes Report of 1943. This report provides an extensive and detailed exposition of both the principle of racial zoning and the mechanism for it. See University of Natal, *Durban Housing Survey*, pp. 418–442. See also Figure 5.

92 R. J. Davies, *Of Cities and Societies: A Geographer’s Viewpoint* (Inaugural Lecture Series, Cape Town, University of Cape Town, 1976).

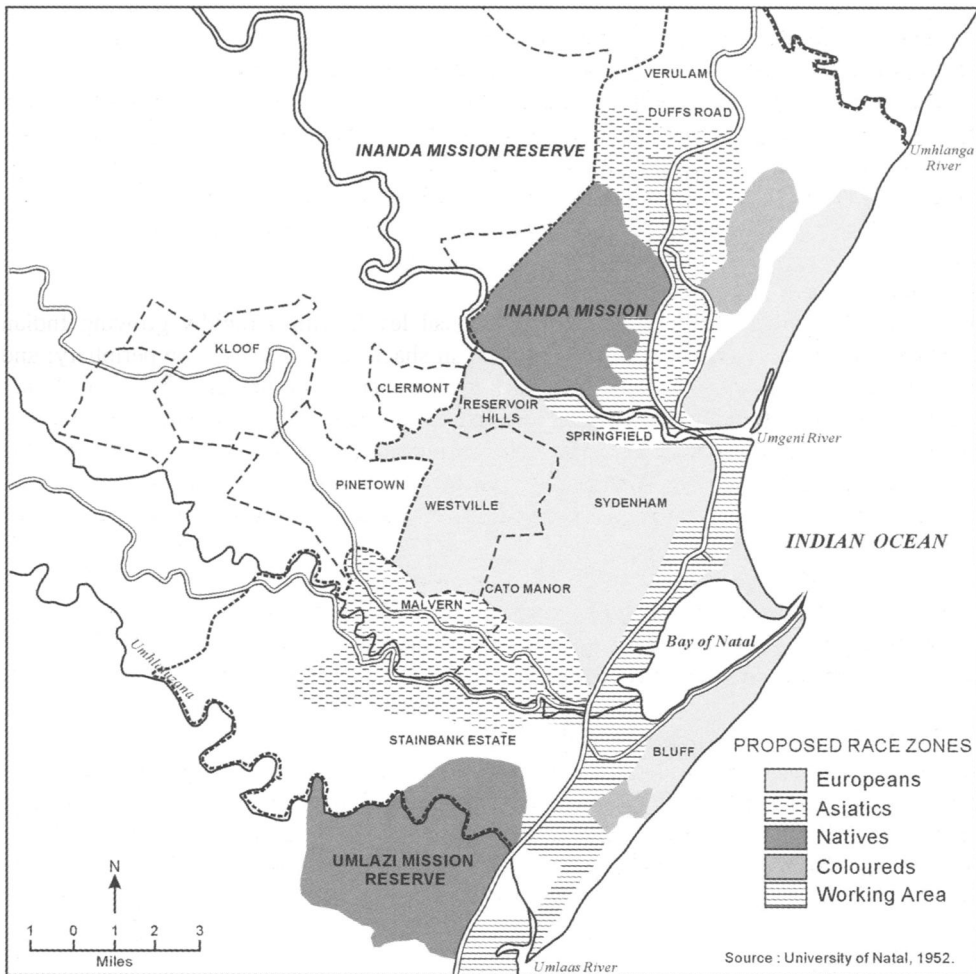


Figure 5. The 1951 Racial Zoning Plan of the Post-war Works and Reconstruction Committee submitted to the National Post-war Commission.

upgrading and extending the road system; providing waterborne sewerage to the whole of southern Durban; levelling and reclaiming large tracts of council-owned land for industrial development; providing stormwater drainage, particularly to the low-lying areas that were susceptible to flooding; canalising of rivers; and providing completely serviced sites for the housing scheme areas and new residential suburbs in the area.⁹³ These major projects were undertaken over four decades, providing the infrastructural framework within which industrial development could occur.

Of central importance to the planning of the industrial zone, and parallel to these initiatives, was the plan to provide adjacent labour reservoirs. The Durban Town Council therefore initiated and planned the Merebank–Wentworth Housing Scheme in 1939, amidst much opposition from Indian political parties.⁹⁴ The Council housing scheme was the first formal residential zone built specifically to provide labour for the ‘productive zone’. This

⁹³ Mayor’s Minute, 1930–1970; Scott, ‘The Destruction of Clairwood’

⁹⁴ See D. M. Bagwandeem, ‘The Question of Indian Penetration in the Durban Area and Indian Politics: 1940–1946’ (PhD thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1983).

scheme, which was implemented from 1948, was the creation of a racial residential zone and was thus a forerunner of the application of the Group Areas Act in Durban. Indian resistance was voiced against the expropriation of Indian land and the replacement of a settled Indian community with a 'planned racial zone' – or 'Indian village'.⁹⁵

The wave of industrial growth south of Durban Bay proceeded as planned, interrupted only by the war, based on the vision of industrialisation that was embodied in the plans constructed by the Council and facilitated by the provision of physical infrastructure. Industries were increasingly attracted to southern Durban, resulting in the expansion of older industrial nodes and the growth of new industrial estates. The southward extension of industry proceeded from the older established areas of Maydon Wharf and Congella to the development of the newer industrial estates of Amanzimnyama and Mobeni from 1948.

In the post-war period after 1945, rapid industrial growth occurred. The planned 'garden' industrial estate of Mobeni was by far the most significant development and, along with the adjacent Amanzimnyama Estate, began to attract industries.⁹⁶ The industrial penetration of the Indian residential area of Clairwood commenced by the late 1950s, resulting in a slow process of urban decay. Furthermore, permission was granted in 1954 to Stanvac for the building of a very large oil refinery at Wentworth, immediately adjacent to the planned townships of Merebank and Wentworth, contributing to the industrial character of this area.⁹⁷

Industrial growth continued within the parameters laid out in the original plans and, by 1970, the original plan of a modern 'productive zone' had come to fruition with plans to extend southwards. However, this process of industrial expansion was not without obstacles. There were many instances of resistance to every facet and stage of the industrialisation process.

The longest and most successful campaign of resistance was the opposition to the re-zoning of Clairwood via the application of town planning regulations.⁹⁸ This was organised by the Clairwood and District Residents and Ratepayers Association (CDRRA) and lasted for nearly three decades. As illustrated earlier, the strategies of the CDRRA were initially to 'object' to the re-zoning proposals through legal, institutionalised channels.⁹⁹ Besides lack of experience and resources, resistance was constrained due to the increasingly repressive and coercive political climate.¹⁰⁰ The 1950s and 1960s represent a period of low political resistance in South Africa to urban issues. Despite this, in the 1960s, a number of protest meetings against the industrialisation of Clairwood and District were held with attendance figures ranging from 500 to 3,000 people.¹⁰¹

A deputation from the CDRRA met with the Provincial Administrator, in an attempt to 'bypass' the unsympathetic local power structures. The issue under discussion was the

95 *Ibid.*

96 See Figures 1 and 3.

97 Mayor's Minute, 1953–1954. See Figure 3.

98 J. Robinson, 'Urban Movements in South Africa'.

99 Interview with Mr Jacobs, CDRRA official, 20 May 1986.

100 With the ascendancy of the Nationalist Party from 1948 and the promulgation of the Group Areas Act and other discriminatory legislation, Indian resistance was increasingly suppressed. The 1949 race riots in Durban, in which 142 people died, inspired the South African Indian Congress and the African National Congress to join forces in 1952 and set about a mass campaign against discriminatory legislation. In June 1955, the 'Freedom Charter' was adopted with 320 of the 2,884 delegates Indian. However, before this 'people's movement' could gain mass support, 140 people, of whom 20 were Indian, were arrested for treason. At the same time, the Sharpeville riots, with the loss of 67 lives, led to severe reprisals from the government and the banning of all public meetings. See B. Pachai, 'Aliens in the Political Hierarchy', in B. Pachai (ed), *South African Indians: The Evolution of a Minority* (Washington, University Press of America, 1979), pp. 1–68.

101 People involved in the mass meetings in Clairwood are reported to having been questioned by the Security Police as a warning that their actions were against the national government. See Purcell, 'Durban, South Africa: Local Politics in a Plural Society'.

relocation of residents either for the development of non-residential developments or the removal of tenants from state land. The result of these meetings was the provincial policy that no removals should occur without the provision of alternative accommodation.¹⁰² The municipal authority was thus constrained in its wholesale relocation of Indian residents until accommodation could be provided.

These politically neutral strategies over technical issues served to delay and modify the DCC's policy to industrialise Clairwood. In the late 1970s the CDRRA shifted its opposition from resistance against the technical issues of removal and re-zoning, to a full-scale protest against the policy of industrialisation.¹⁰³ A 'Help Save Clairwood' campaign was initiated and, by the early 1980s, the CDRRA gained support from NGOs and organisations in opposition to the structures of authority in the wider social system.¹⁰⁴ The heightened conflict over the future use of Clairwood had become a metropolitan issue. The technical assistance and moral support from these groups strengthened the position of the CDRRA, giving it greater confidence to politicise the conflict. It was at this stage of the campaign that self-conscious and explicit use began to be made of the historical and symbolic meaning of Clairwood as a communal space, as a tool in the strategy of resistance and as an alternative rationality to that of industrial modernity. Furthermore, the community – by virtue of the fact that its forefathers had actively created a vast number of social, cultural, educational and religious institutions – laid claim to the area.¹⁰⁵ The notion of a 'self-built community' and the use value as opposed to the exchange value of the space, was embedded in this argument.¹⁰⁶ This widespread public opposition forced the DCC to set up a 'joint planning committee' with CDRRA to plan the future of the area.¹⁰⁷ The national Minister of Community Development was drawn into the problem and, by May 1986, the Council withdrew its application for industrial zoning and formulated a 'concept plan' to upgrade the area.¹⁰⁸

Alongside the strategy to re-zone Clairwood as an industrial area, the municipal authority located non-residential public facilities in this residential area. Resistance to this covert strategy of industrialisation was widespread, an example being the proposal in 1963 to locate an abattoir in Clairwood. There was a public outcry over both the manner in which the expropriations of private land in Clairwood for the building of a proposed abattoir were undertaken, as well as the inadequate compensation received. Presuming that the powers to acquire land for industrial and other non-residential purposes would be forthcoming, the City Valuator and Estates Manager had directed officials to commence purchasing land for the abattoir without stating the future use of the land.¹⁰⁹ The CDRRA protested that 'the Kinmont Master Plan'¹¹⁰ was behind the attempts by the DCC to acquire land in Clairwood without furnishing reasons for its purpose.¹¹¹ The CDRRA accused the DCC of playing

102 *Ibid.*, p. 320.

103 See detailed account of this process in Robinson, 'Urban Movements in South Africa'.

104 Namely from Diakonia, the Durban Housing Action Committee (DHAC), the Natal Indian Congress, and the Built Environment Support Group (BESG) of the University of Natal, Durban.

105 Personal communications from CDRRA leaders, P.K. Jacobs, I. Maharaj and K. Govender, Clairwood, September 1988.

106 Interview with P. K. Jacobs, 20 May 1986.

107 See P. K. Jacob, 'A Brief History of the People's Struggle for Land Rights' (unpublished Memorandum submitted to the Clairwood Conference, 29 May 1983).

108 *Natal Mercury*, 10 March 1986; *Daily News*, 19 March 1987.

109 CED (City Estates Department), File J 31/106/G/1, 8/6/1963, Minutes of the Sub-Committee re Special Works.

110 Kinmont was the City Engineer at this time.

111 A letter from CDRRA to the City Valuator and Estates Manager argued that 'when the buyer is a public body and a piece-meal approach is being made, which would ultimately affect the character of the whole area, then it is reasonable and just that the intentions of the City Council with regard to the current investigations be made known'. See *Natal Mercury*, 11 November 1963.

'Estate Agent', alleging that they were buying land from the present owners and re-selling it to industrialists at a tremendous profit.¹¹²

Despite protest from the CDRRA, the expropriation and purchase of a further 148 acres in Clairwood, commenced early in 1967, resulting in the removal of a large number of residential families. Although deciding not to erect a new abattoir, the DCC stated its intention to utilise the acquired land for municipal purposes and to continue acquiring property by 'mutual agreement'.¹¹³ The poor condition of these properties, which became empty lots, contributed to the decline of the area.¹¹⁴ The effect of this strategy to expropriate land for state development schemes or to purchase land by 'mutual agreement' on a large scale was that it engendered insecurity, anxiety and outrage amongst the Clairwood Indian community. The veiled goals of the DCC were sharply criticised by the CDRRA as being 'always shrouded in mystery'.¹¹⁵ The Natal Indian Organisation (NIO)¹¹⁶ interpreted these actions as part of the larger national plan of segregation. This climate of insecurity led the SCIDIFA Trust to sell the SCIDIFA sports ground.¹¹⁷

In those cases where the Council owned the land, the eviction of lessees – 'tenants-at-will' – who had established shacks on these lands, was a relatively easy process for the Council officials since there was little resistance to such removals. An example is the 1940s removals for the construction of the Amanzimnyama Industrial Estate. The major problem for the municipal authority was the lack of alternative accommodation for the displaced shack populations. In those cases where infrastructural developments necessitated the expropriation of privately owned Indian land, resistance was much more vociferous and the actions of the Council challenged through the media, passive resistance campaigns and the courts.¹¹⁸

While the development and extension of the remaining properties of Clairwood was frozen, the DCC allowed a variety of light industries, such as scrap car dealers, and container storage facilities into the area on temporary permits.¹¹⁹ This significantly contributed to the blighted and degraded character of Clairwood.¹²⁰ CDRRA vehemently rejected the City Engineer's Report on Clairwood that condemned 73 per cent of the zone as 'a slum'.¹²¹ The residents stated that it was the freezing of development, the levying of industrial rates and the decades of insecurity that prevented Indians from developing and maintaining their properties.

While the explicit *de jure* attempt on the part of the local authority to industrialise Clairwood had failed, the *de facto* situation was one of facilitating and allowing industrialisation to take place in other ways. The undertaking of a phased, large-scale programme of

112 CED, File 31/106/G/1, 16/4/1964, CDRRA to Indian and Coloured Affairs Advisory Committee.

113 CED, File 31/106/G/4, 9/8/1971, Town Clerk to Provincial Secretary.

114 Besides allowing an overgrowth of vegetation, the municipal authority turned a blind eye to the incidence of dumping of waste materials and illegal industrial usage of these lots over time.

115 S. Gopaul of CDRRA in *The Leader*, 25 September 1964.

116 The NIO noted that the DCC's decisions with regard to expropriation had caused 'considerable uneasiness amongst thousands of Indians ... and appeared to have all the ramifications of the Group Areas Act which has dehousing hundreds of Indians'. See CED, File J31/106/G/1, 22/10/1964, NIO to Town Clerk.

117 The SCIDIFA Trust is a private community sporting organisation. The Trust was forced to sell 'because of the DCC move to convert a Special Residential Area into an industrial complex ... and the (sporting) Clubs which had been using the ground were moving into the ... Housing Schemes at Merebank and Chatsworth'. See Scott, 'Communal Space Construction'; *Natal Mercury*, 28 January 1967.

118 Bagwandeem, 'The Question of Indian Penetration in the Durban Area'; B. Juggernath, *Autobiography and History of Merebank*, (Arcot Place, Merebank, n.d.).

119 Interview with P. K. Jacobs, representative of Clairwood Residents and Ratepayers Association, Clairwood, 20 May 1986.

120 City of Durban, *Report on Clairwood* (Durban, City Engineer's Department, February 1982); see City of Durban, *Clairwood Redevelopment Project* (Durban, City Engineer's Department, April 1988).

121 *Natal Mercury*, 21 June 1965.

removals and slum clearance of dwellings of predominantly Indian residents to make way for the implementation of infrastructural projects, facilitated industrialisation. Examples of the larger of these projects were: the development of the Amanzimnyama Industrial Estate, the Merebank–Wentworth Housing Scheme, the development of a Bulk Sales Market for fresh produce¹²² and an abattoir,¹²³ the building of the Southern Freeway and the canalisation of rivers, alongside many other smaller projects. Of these, the building of the Housing Scheme, commencing in 1948, elicited an ongoing protest via a range of resistance strategies from Merebank residents whose properties were expropriated to make way for the scheme, and from those who became residents once the Scheme building programme had commenced.¹²⁴ In the early twentieth century, resistance was chiefly located in the north of the zone and began to move south as industrialisation and the related processes of land alienation and infrastructural development progressed southwards. An example of this is the issue of industrial location within a residential Scheme. In 1964 the Anglo-American Corporation negotiated with the Council to purchase land along the Umlaas Canal for a large paper factory. The land was originally zoned as open space within the Merebank Housing Scheme, and the Merebank Residents Association (MRA) strongly protested at the change in use due to the loss of land under the Scheme and the possible pollution hazard.¹²⁵

These examples illustrate some of the many objections of residents in opposition to the process of industrial modernisation. The phased removal of a vast number of residents to accommodate industrial development was undertaken through an administrative process by the City Estates branch of the Durban Corporation from the early 1960s until the late 1970s.¹²⁶ The end result of this process of land-use change in Clairwood is revealed in the 1988 ‘Survey of Clairwood’. By this date, the major land-uses were residential (37.8 per cent); vacant land (28.3 per cent); industrial and commercial (25.2 per cent); and mixed uses (7.5 per cent).¹²⁷ 30,000 to 40,000 people had left the area, either voluntarily or by force. By 1970, Clairwood’s population had dwindled from an estimated 50,000 in the early 1960s to a mere 6,000.¹²⁸

The process of industrialisation consisted of a myriad small piecemeal projects carried out systematically over a period of nearly 40 years within the broader comprehensive vision of a modern industrialised South Durban. Parallel to this process, sometimes delaying it, at other times halting it, but always protesting against it, were the ongoing attempts of ordinary – mostly poor – people, to maintain their communities, their properties and their living environments. Although not being able to change the vision of South Durban as an industrial area, ‘vestiges of other realities’ remain as a result of community resistance and serve as a marker of the previous social and physical landscape and the alternative rationality underpinning it. It is the collective memory and historical experiences of communities in opposing industrial modernity that have remained, forming the foundation of present-day efforts to resist and oppose current proposals to re-industrialise South Durban.¹²⁹

122 Mayor’s Minute, 1960–1961. 73 properties were served with expropriation notices. See City Engineer’s Department, Survey Section, 1/5/1973, Town Clerk to City Estates Manager.

123 Mayor’s Minute, 1959–1960.

124 Juggernath, *Autobiography and history of Merebank*.

125 Purcell, ‘Durban, South Africa: Local Politics in a Plural Society’; Interview with B. Juggernath, Arcot Place, Merebank, October 1987.

126 Interviews with D. Hanson, Ex-City Estates Inspector, CED (November 1987–October 1988). The building of the large-scale apartheid public housing projects of Chatsworth and Phoenix facilitated removals to house those relocated in terms of the Group Areas Act. See Scott, ‘Communal Space Construction’, and D. Bailey, ‘The Origin of Phoenix, 1957–1976’ (Masters thesis, University of Natal, Durban, 1987).

127 City of Durban, *Clairwood Redevelopment Project*, pp. 8–9.

128 Scott, ‘The Destruction of Clairwood’.

129 D. Scott, ‘Environmental Identity and Social Transformation: Experiences from South Durban’ (unpublished paper, Seminar Series, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, May 2001).

Conclusion

From the early 1920s, Durban's municipal authority systematically and persistently implemented the policy of industrialising South Durban. This strategy was prompted by the NMA and later ratified by the Borough Boundaries Commission of 1931. In order to obtain territorial control over southern Durban, the municipal authority initiated the Borough Boundaries Commission. The report of this Commission became a powerful policy document envisaging the southern area as the industrial heart of the city – a 'productive zone' – surrounded by residential areas to provide labour for the expanding industrial core.

The application of modernist planning ideology by the local and national state to create an industrial landscape in South Durban is an example of the administrative ordering of society and nature 'raised to a far more comprehensive and ambitious level'.¹³⁰ The ideology of 'organised modernism' could be implemented because the instrument of the state could be applied without restraint due to the undemocratic nature of civil society. Black subject groups without the franchise could do little to resist the plans imposed on them via the 'scientific' and 'rational' policies and technical instruments of physical planning. The joining of utopian plans of social engineering to anti-democratic tendencies of the state led to the violation and destruction of an existing way of life and community in South Durban and the traumatic uprooting and removal of large numbers of people. The environmental racism inherent in the planning and relocation of black communities immediately adjacent to heavy industry constituted a further social injustice.

The Durban municipality adopted an abstracting and utilitarian logic of physical planning and, through its officials, applied it to the South Durban area in order to create the much-needed industrial zone for the city. Through the discourse of planning, and backed by national legislation, the municipal authority developed the capacity to transform the largely informal and mixed-use southern corridor so that it eventually closely resembled the plans that were developed through the planning process. The transformation of the vision into plans and maps with legal status, served to shape and control the growth of an industrial landscape. The blueprint plans were functional in providing an efficient framework within which an industrial landscape could emerge. These efforts further stimulated plans at the national level for the comprehensive planning of the port of Durban, and contributed to the broader institutionalisation of planning discourse at a national scale.

While it could be said that 'a map without a utopia is not worth having', a modernist utopia implemented exclusively by the state is dangerous as it detaches through reductionism and abstraction the 'pure' form – the map – from its 'impure' content – the ordinary people on the ground.¹³¹ The construction of a modernist industrial landscape in South Durban had the effect of displacing thousands of people who did not fit in with the intentions of the blueprint plan for the zone. This process, however, did not go unopposed, and residents mounted an ongoing and relentless campaign of resistance at every stage of the industrialisation process. The only successful resistance campaign was that waged by Clairwood residents against the industrialisation of Clairwood. This was the only instance where the municipal authority was forced to modify its blueprint for industrialisation. The area nevertheless assumed an industrial character due to purposive neglect by the municipal authority. In general, community resistance was unable, in the repressive political climate of apartheid, to thwart the modernising project of the municipal authority. The experiences of this process nevertheless live on in the community memory and local history, providing a framework for current attempts to resist a second round of industrialisation in the South Durban area.

130 Scott, 'State Simplifications: Nature, Space and People', p. 108.

131 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*.

Decades later, the South Durban industrial zone continues to have an impact on adjacent residential communities through the poorly managed outcomes of the industrial processes that have multiplied in the interim. It will be instructive to witness in what manner the current metropolitan authority engages with the process of the 're-industrialisation' of South Durban, both in overcoming the limitations posed by the landscapes inherited from earlier modernist planning, and in addressing the demands of the global economy and balancing this with the future needs in this region so as to prevent a repetition of such 'creative destruction'.

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⁴⁸ **The "Black Belt": African Squatters in Durban 1935-1950**

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