Please Note: The following is Chapter 3 of my draft manuscript, *Apartheid Remains*. Please do not circulate this beyond the Wish Seminar, with thanks.

Warning – it is long, and I probably should cut it; I beg your indulgence and suggest that you read and skim as you see fit, in relation to your interests. I offer some thoughts and pointers on reading. I’d be interested in how you read my attempt at ‘conjuring a Black Benjamin’ – by reading the images I begin with in relation to Benjamin and Black Marxist thought (James in particular) – this is in the opening pages. The compound ‘progressive segregation’ is meant to attempt to hold together these seemingly contradictory terms, both of which were in fact part of early 20th century biopolitical expertise, whether in the emerging fields of public health or planning. I take a digression in the section on Progressive Segregation to engage Tim Mitchell, because I would like to take on his argument by suggesting that progressive segregation is an anarchic process that produces ongoing struggle – this is what I intend by my neologism ‘biopolitical struggle’ (class struggle in the terrain of biopolitics, through biopolitical discourse). I pick this up in the following chapter to show how biopolitical struggle is raced and gendered, and why Black feminist critique is key to grasping its actual histories and geographies.

In the section ‘Will to Territory – Not-seeing like a Mayor’ I work through City Hall records and find that the local state knows very little on the ground (a theme mirrored by in movement in exile in Part II of the book) – this part can be skimmed to get an idea of what I’m looking at. One new argument I bring to our understanding of these processes, I believe, is that what appears to be anarchic state practice is in fact a boon to capital eyeing the southern reaches of Durban, flatlands in a city of hills prime for industrial expansion. That’s what the ‘wish images’ that begin this chapter conceal, the hunger of racial capital. And so an incipient local ‘developmental state’ (which Bill Freund has written on) is perfectly compatible with racial segregation – and the timing of this is uncanny enough to suggest that the capitalist developmental state might always rely on racial sorting of people and places.

This argument continues through a series of official commissions – the Borough Boundaries Commission in the section titled ‘Fantasies of a Biopolitical City’ (where we see the city turning a blind eye to industrial effluents but not gaining clarity on biopolitical territoriality), the Carnegie Commission in the section on ‘Poor Whites and Standards of Living’ (which was not particularly concerned with Durban but which nonetheless enters city discourse, and yet state practice remains chaotic and coercive (we see this in the next section on the ‘ABCs of segregation’ and finally the Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission during World War II imagines a much more coercive remaking of space, but again without the kind of careful data that would make this exercise biopolitical in the strict sense; instead, official discourse turns to visual means to convince its imagined audience of the virtues of biopolitical sovereignty (or necropolitics, AM’s neologism.) I might need to make more of this, since so much of this book is about the power of the visual, both in attempting to conceal the workings of racial capitalist power and in portraying its illegitimacy so vividly. The Barnes Report, the final report of the Post-War Commission, becomes the textual justification for massive removals, the harbinger of apartheid’s forced removals and of racist spatial planning. This is the arc of the chapter’s argument.

I would appreciate knowing any section that you find intolerable. I include the Table of Contents, and will contextualize this material further when we meet. Many thanks! Sharad.
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Ruinous Foundations of Progressive Segregation: The Birth of Biopolitical Struggle (1920s-1950s)

Infrastructure Dreams, 1923-1952

Congella Reclamation, Undated. Credits: Local History Museum, Durban

Filling Marshes and Mobeni, 1940. Credits: Local History Museum, Durban
The development of the forces of production shattered the wish symbols of the previous century, even before the monuments representing them had collapsed. In the nineteenth century, this development worked to emancipate the forms of construction from art...A start is made with architecture as engineered construction. Then comes the reproduction of nature as photography. The creation of fantasy prepares to become practical as commercial art. Literature submits to montage...All these products are on the point of entering the market as commodities. But they linger on the threshold. From this epoch derive the arcades and intérieurs, the exhibition halls and panoramas. They are residues of a dream world. The realization of the dream elements, in the course of waking up, is the paradigm of dialectical thinking...Every epoch, in fact, not only dreams the one to follow but, in dreaming precipitates its awakening. It bears its end within itself and unfolds it – as Hegel already noticed – by cunning. With the destabilizing of the market economy, we begin to recognize the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled.  

– Walter Benjamin, 1935

Something appeared to take durable form in the three decades between the Urban Areas Act of 1923 and the construction of apartheid’s racial townships in 1952: the infrastructural foundations of an industrial landscape forged in the ruins of Indian market gardens. We saw in the previous chapter how Indianness in Durban was literally rooted in space through a subaltern city adjacent to the putatively white city, a product of slow and deliberate transformation of nature and space. But before delving into the historical conjuncture of the industrialization of South Durban, I begin with artifacts that give this spatial formation the appearance of durability. These photographs allow us to “linger on the threshold” of the capitalist transformation of space. As wish images, they are comparative and speculative,
even sci-fi. Their panoramic gaze splays the veins of infrastructure to display accomplishments of engineering invisible to the human eye.

The photographs also allow us to think in relation to other space-times, including the parallel emergence of fascist Europe. In this line of thought, Walter Benjamin is not an abstract theorist but a proximal figure ruminating over the spectacular ruins of nineteenth century Paris on the wrecked shores of Vichy France. Might Benjamin’s thought have resonated more widely, if only it were possible? The point of this past-perfect subjunctive, of thinking with what might have been, is to ‘do theory’ through insights that parallel and resonate with historical process, as science fiction resonates with the absurdity of the real.²

This proximal Benjamin helps us see these photographs as dialectical wish images of capitalist landscapes that foretell their eventual obsolescence. While Benjamin may not have seen this tendency to obsolescence as central also to state racism, he took his life in the face of a dreadful incomprehension of an official racism for which he was an abstract enemy. Rather than attempting to revive a radical Jewish Benjamin who never was, this Durban Diary points to a Black Benjamin who never was either, but who might yet help clarify the disastrous interplay of state racism and ruination, and not just in Durban.

As white supremacies ricocheted and mirrored each other at the turn of the century, drawing lessons across the globe, participants in communist internationalism and Black radicalism sought to piece together socio-spatially disconnected critiques of racial capitalism.³ Conjuring a Black Benjamin is only possible through the encounter carefully and critically diagnosed in Cedric Robinson’s (1983, 2000) classic text, which poses ‘Black Marxism’ not as an addition to an existing tradition of Marxism but as its anterior in theory and struggle, and as a necessary way beyond the Eurocentric confines of European radical thought.⁴ Indeed, this possibility was real in the first decades of the 20th century, when racial capitalist states
violently suppressed interracial and revolutionary forms of solidarity, whether of the
International Workers of the World or ‘the Wobblies’ in the United States or the Industrial
Workers of Africa in Johannesburg, both in the 1910s, or the efforts of former Wobblies in
the 1920s or the International and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) formed in Cape Town
in 1927, and in many moments since.5

These experiments in bringing communist and Black radical traditions together
proved to be precious and fleeting, and they had to contend with the racial discourse of
Marxist internationalism in official Cominterm policy. The Fourth World Congress of the
Communist International in 1922 set out “the world Negro movement” as emanating from
the United States, “the center of Negro culture and the crystallization of Negro protest,”
with Africa positioned contrapuntally as “reservoir of human labor for the further
development of Capitalism.”6 The second ‘proximal theorist’ I bring to bear on this chapter
reformulated his thought at this moment precisely to refuse this Cominterm spatial ideology
shared by Stalin’s Trotskyist opponents, and he is also a key exemplar of Robinson’s ‘Black
Marxism.’

The Trinidadian Marxist Cedric Lionel Robert (CLR) James slowly shifted his
conception of Marxist praxis in this period and during his years in the United States, from
1938 to 1956. As his archivist Anna Grimshaw notes, the first shift in James’ thought of this
time came in the wake of Stalin’s betrayal of communist internationalism in his 1924
pronouncement on “Socialism in One Country,” and the subsequent suppression of
proletarian movements across France, Germany and Spain.7 The second shift followed his
meeting with the exiled Trotsky in 1939, and it hinged on their differences on ‘the Negro
Question.’ More specifically, as Paul Buhle puts it, Trotsky’s defense of the vanguard party
that sought to teach a ‘proper politics’ to insurgent Black workers, was fundamentally at
odds with James’ explorations of the cultural politics of Black radicalism, whether in cricket, calypso, Black American churches, the Cotton Club, in his readings of Shakespeare or his dramatic re-interpretation of the Haitian Revolution.⁸

James’ intuition was that interracial and internationalist worker movements had prompted forces of counter-revolution in the form of deepening statist planning and industrialization, on both sides of the Iron Curtain. This is something that Benjamin alone could not consider. Moreover, for James, Black radical critique could no longer be reduced to ‘the Negro Question’ but rather had implications for the fate of humanity and, in the nuclear age to come, for life itself. In a key text written with comrades Raya Dunayevskaya and Grace Lee Boggs of the ‘Johnston-Forrest Tendency,’ James expresses this radical skepticism about ‘total planning’ and industrialization without making any reference to the dominant Cold War ideology of capitalist and communist ‘worlds’ (2004, 165):

All previous distinctions, politics and economics, war and peace, agitation and propaganda, party and mass, the individual and society, national, civil and imperialist war, single country and one world, immediate needs and ultimate solutions - all these it is impossible to keep separate any longer. Total planning is inseparable from permanent crisis, the world struggle for the minds of men from the world tendency to the complete mechanization of men…The war over productivity is fought in terms of philosophy, a way of life. When men question not the fruits of toil but the toil itself, then philosophy in Marx’s sense of human activity has become actual.⁹

In our post-Cold War age of permanent crisis, James’ generalization of Black radical critique as necessary for a Marxist philosophy adequate to the 1940s takes us back in a different way to ruined hopes of planned industrial transformation in the photographs above. So might we now think with a Black Benjamin in Durban, smoking Durban Poison, extending our
imaginative and critical possibilities about the three decades from the 1920s to the 1950s as not just centered on the making of South Africa's racial welfare state but also of distinctively twentieth century ruins that are impossible to avoid in the twenty first.

*   *   *

We might consider the photographs above in their own time as drawing authority from a British tradition of generating facts for efficient administration, as Bernard Cohn famously argued. Cohn’s influential work was concerned with what he called ‘investigative modalities’ of fact generation that were sometimes general, as in historiographic, observational and museological practice, and sometimes specific to particular administrative uses, like the census and the survey. What Cohn did not attend to were the ways in which facts decay and fall into disrepute, as the fact of living in a progressive landscape has for residents living with the ruinous debris of industrialization.

In Natal as elsewhere in the world, photography of the feats of industrialization had developed a grammar evident in images of dams, highways, pipes, and other infrastructural marvels of midcentury modernity. Documentary films drew on these conventions to celebrate industrialization across cinemas of the latter twenty century, persisting to the 1970s in various parts of the world, including, incidentally, the Indian Government newsreels of my childhood.

The photography of Bernard and Hilla Becher and their students are a commentary on the end of this tradition, as they catalogue ‘industrial typologies,’ matrices of nearly-identically photographed water towers, gas tanks and other industrial forms. The Becher’s photographic practice immediately index colonial ethnology, a dialectical gesture that points to the interplay of mastery and ruination in the feats of capitalism and colonialism alike. After the industrial disasters of Chernobyl and Bhopal, their neat photo-matrices become
graveyards of typological form, legible alongside the brutal intimacies of life in the oilfields of the Niger Delta in Michael Watts and Ed Kashi’s (2010) photobook, or with Edward Burtinski’s magisterial panoramas of commodity detritus. These works return us to Benjamin on photography, on the ways in which the still life of documentary photography is perfectly suited to reproducing *ad infinitum* the debris of imperialism, in a smoldering mountain of critique.  

To return to the images of South Durban, we might think of them as quintessential industrial photography premised on an observational modality for which progress appears imminent and providential. Occasionally, this genre of infrastructural photography shows people, as diminutive figures in ‘Congella Reclamation.’ Sometimes, the images show human settlements, as ‘Filling Marshes’ does with Merebank and Wentworth in the distance. Jeremy Foster notes on early 20th century photography from the South African Railways and Harbours, that scenes from the railway carriage window envisioned the *veldt* as immense, emptied of people, and legible by linking older notions of exploration with bourgeois interiority and an emerging national space as the train moved through an imagined ‘white man’s country.’ The industrial images I begin this chapter with do not have as clear an implicit spectator, nor do they announce whiteness as boldly. Nor can we be sure that these images were ever convincing evidence of an industrious nation. They lie as seemingly innocuous images in the Local History Museum.

What these images do not foretell is that which is painfully apparent today: the unjust juxtaposition of polluting industry and neighborhood in Merebank and Wentworth, as seen here in a path leading through the flats in Wentworth down to the refinery.
In the turbulent decades in which this contradictory landscape of industry and housing was built, the differential valuation of people and landscape was justified through another investigative modality, the race zoning map that prefigured the model of the ideal apartheid city. Spatial diagrams and maps became important visual tools as South African progressivism entered a strongly segregationist mode, and as the Durban City Council became a harbinger of apartheid planning.

Photographs, maps and images remind us that hegemony is simultaneously spatial and temporal, aesthetic and discursive, indexical and referential.14 The turn to the visual, as we will see, reveals the limits of the state’s knowledge of conditions on the ground. As I demonstrate in this chapter, the Council’s turn to visual tools was an attempt to deal with constant contradiction and ambiguity. Hence, the Durban Housing Survey brought these changing maps together in 1951 as transparencies to be read on top of each other in a
palimpsestic form that mirrored an unstable city looking for stability through the fetish of racial segregation. In other words, our Black Benjamin would be pleasantly surprised.

What we know with certainty is that industrial infrastructure is never just *there*, obvious and inert, captured for posterity in the mute frames of photography. As we wait with Benjamin and James, these wish images force us to “linger at the threshold” of industrialization and segregation to consider the post-apocalyptic promise of capitalist development, while you can have it. Braced for irony, we descend into the black box of ‘progressive segregation’ in the three decades between the legalization of urban segregation in 1923 and, following the Group Areas Act of 1950, state construction of racialized townships in 1952. The main argument is that while racial biopolitics is consistently undermined, it makes space for multiple forms of biopolitical struggle.

**Progressive Segregation and Biopolitical Struggle, 1920s-1940s**

“Capital…relies on labour, right! But you had intertwined with this, the practice of racism initiated by successive governments. Take 1922, the Mineworkers Strike, where they wanted to get African workers. The [white] mineworkers union conducts a strike against the Smuts-Botha regime, to actually attack this. Then, Smuts loses out, mines were closed…he even loses the election. Botha is out, [as is] the coalition government. One of the things they pass immediately, in 1924, was the Industrial Conciliation Act. It was then revamped in 1937 building into it racial clauses, segregating, making sure that trade unions were divided into racial compartments, with whites in control of the trade unions. African labour unions were not allowed to form. So what you have now was that instead of accommodating a Black worker into skilled positions in the labour market, you had them constantly closing because of
pressure from white workers. There was accommodation by the ruling class always to ensure voting support from the white worker, and they must not alienate him. Successive governments, whether it was Smuts or Botha [complied]. So when the Nats come to power, it becomes more pronounced. They now tighten all the gaps, if there were gaps, and they firm this, so you had racism built into labour relations, residential segregation; as for accommodating Blacks into any sphere, they were to be third class.”

– Billy Nair\(^{16}\)

1925 Hertzog initiates legislation to solve the poor white problem. Let me repeat and emphasise, to solve the poor white problem…not so much to help the economy of this country, and in terms of that legislation he sets tariffs for those industries, and especially the textile industry, that will employ whites…So it went on year after year so that by the end of the thirties they could say the poor white problem has been solved…Hertzog also brought in the Wage Act in terms of which a commission was formed to ensure that no white person received below a certain minimum wage because he or she had to maintain standards according to which whites were supposed to live in South Africa and they made four fifths of the population live below those standards unprotected by the Wage Act.

– Govan Mbeki\(^{17}\)

The nature of [social] influences changed greatly during the thirty years before 1954; the Coloured people became much more fully recognized as a special people with their own value and needs.

– Ruby Yates, 1960\(^{18}\)

These are varied renditions of the conjuncture I call ‘progressive segregation.’ Nair and Mbeki, ageing militants interviewed in 2010 and 1996 respectively, look back after apartheid
at the three decade period that preceded it. For both, the mid-1920s was a turning point in the consolidation of racial capitalism by harnessing an ideology of liberal, biopolitical government concerned mainly with working-class white migrants to the infrastructure of segregation. Progressive segregation was the price, or payoff, for what former school principal Ruby Yates calls Coloureds becoming “a special people with their own value and needs.” Each thinker poses these dynamics as part of much wider tectonic shifts in the decades before apartheid; but how wide, exactly?

In an ambitious argument, Timothy Mitchell argues that South Africa at the turn of the century was “a laboratory for the development of the self-governing state” and more precisely a site of innovation of expertise to limit democratic forces within an emboldened imperial frame. In the aftermath of war, architects of what was to be a ‘white man’s country’ included Boer-commando-turned-British-imperial-statesman Jan Smuts, who, Mitchell argues, defined the ‘self’ in ‘self government’ in such a circumscribed way as to fundamentally undermine ideas of ‘self-determination’ to come. One of the virtues of this argument is that it puts a key problematic of postcoloniality – the foundational undermining of the popular-democratic goals of anti-colonial nationalist movements and their successor societies – far before the end of colonialism.

However, it is important to distinguish this will to undermine democratic impulses from the capacity to do so in various contexts. Ideas of ‘self-determination’ may have been undermined in several contexts, but they have been continually renewed in others. In the South African iteration of these dynamics, Mitchell assumes an abstract logic rather than a contradictory, struggled, or open-dialectical process. Indeed, he overstates the case that the mineworkers struggles referred to by Billy Nair above launched segregation; Nair himself refused this abstract determinism, and wagered torture, imprisonment and banning for his
commitment to struggle. In this vein, I offer an alternative view, of the contradictory term ‘progressive segregation’ as a protracted and anarchic process, sowing more contradiction and strife.

Another of Mitchell’s audaciously ambitious arguments is that the brewing storm of “non-European claims was solved by the doctrine of ‘separate development’” and that “even after the adjective was dropped, the term ‘development’ would always mean ‘separate development.’” A central conceptual problem with this argument is that it retains a notion of history as made, even ‘solved’ by great white men, and of anticolonial struggle as undermined by conceptual work in one grand geopolitical-ideological sweep. This view is antithetical to a Gramscian open Marxism and also to the Black Marxist tradition exemplified by C.L.R. James and Frantz Fanon, both of whom saw the praxis (not just the idea) of ‘self-determination’ as always bendable to revolutionary ends. 19 James’ dialectical method in *The Black Jacobins* is particularly important here for its attention to both the failure of particular struggles and their re-composition, precisely through the enduring sense of *that which should have been*, the hope contained in the past-perfect subjunctive.

These shortcomings aside, I suggest two ways to use Mitchell’s insights. First, Mitchell’s rendition of the compromised ‘self’ might help explain the origins not just of South African Apartheid but of a much wider postcolonial betrayal of popular politics, and a multiplication of apartheid-like enclaves in a planet of walls. Second, Mitchell’s argument can be read through a spatiotemporal dialectical method, to determine how popular politics is undermined in specific places to emerge in new form in another place and time.

* * *

As I have argued, the specter that haunted the new Union of South Africa of 1910 was the possibility of inter-racial working-class solidarity. 20 Both Nair and Mitchell are right
that in response to the upsurge of Black worker militancy on the Rand in 1917-20 the state turned to a segregationist liberalism, even while the term ‘segregation’ remained anathema to many in the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{21} Hence, the Durban Town Council of the early 1920s explicitly denied that its aim was “to segregate any section or class entirely” wherever “any section has property or interests.”\textsuperscript{22} As the city turned to incorporate its unruly peripheries, however, official discourse made an about turn to make a virtue of segregation.

The central argument of this chapter is that despite the local state’s ‘will to territory,’ biopolitical territoriality was implausible for various reasons. And yet, City Hall’s fitful experiments in biopolitical territoriality had lasting effects in keeping the Black majority in a perpetual state of insecurity, and, crucially, in making space for particular fractions of industrial capital to occupy space. Rather than containing popular struggle decisively, progressive segregation set the conditions for a new kind of popular politics, a modality of class struggle that I call ‘biopolitical struggle.’\textsuperscript{23} Tracing this dialectic and its remains is the task of this chapter and the next.

* * *

In approaching state knowledge, I read the annual \textit{Mayor’s Minutes} and three key state commissions to diagnose when and how the Town Council and its 1935 successor Durban City Council (henceforth, ‘the Borough,’ ‘the Council,’ ‘City Hall,’ ‘the City’ or ‘Durban’) saw fit to respond to perennial problems of poverty, housing, health and work, and to crises provoked by the Great Depression and the aftermath of World War II, and when it did not. The prose of officialdom reproduces racial fantasies of populations to be policed, reformed, or banned from a port city on the verge of massive industrial expansion.

In the next section, I read the \textit{Mayor’s Minutes} to show how the City’s ‘will to territory’ in the decade before Durban’s major growth spurt was premised on not knowing
ground realities. As the decades rolled on, concerted ways of ‘not-seeing’ enabled the making of a violently segregationist and developmental local state. The following section turns to the Borough Boundaries Commission of 1931, elaborated in 1934, to show how the Council imagined its newly acquired peripheries, and what to do with them. Not-seeing like a Mayor allowed an incitement to biopolitical discourse in the fantasy of a white city, but also in drawing attention to the degradations of racial capitalism. The subsequent section on the Carnegie Commission on the Poor White Question, commissioned in 1929 and published from 1932, shows how the City internalized the ‘poor white question’ in its urban strategy, in segregated housing and labour markets. This next section turns to the deepening in the 1930s of what I call ‘biopolitics by decree,’ a police form of biopolitical government that was a boon to a local developmental state habituated to coercive racial segregation and industrialization. The penultimate section turns to the Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, to show how planning during World War II provided an ideal opportunity to further entrench the vision of industrial capital in South Durban. The turn to the visual in the City’s debates with this commission, through a series of maps and planning diagrams, perpetuated proliferating spatial ambiguities and an aesthetics of biopower unconcerned with popular consent.

My main argument is that from the 1920s through the war years of the 1940s and after, Durban’s strategy of ‘progressive segregation’ created the spatial basis for what would become urban apartheid at a national scale, and that the visual conveyed not a clarification of knowledge but its converse, and a deepening terrain of biopolitical struggle.
**Will to Territory: Not-seeing Like a Mayor in the 1920s**

Territoriality is built on the sovereign right to space, a will to territory that in Durban was forged through a colonial land grab bolstered by the ideology of a putatively white city reliant on Black labor and subjection. The tools of Trans-Atlantic Progressivism had given this sovereign right a particular sheen, while also making possible the use of biopolitical expertise not just to ban but to incorporate people and places in a productive form of capitalist territoriality. As Bill Freund argues crisply, City Hall became expert in the purchase, sale and lease of land, particularly to attract industry with the capacity to absorb Durban’s labor, and particularly in the industrialization of land south of the harbor pictured at the beginning of this chapter.\(^{24}\) Importantly, the Borough had begun to see the incorporation of ‘peri-Durban’ as central to its industrial strategy as early as 1913, and by 1919 it was clearly focused on future “industrial districts of South Coast Junction, Merebank, Jacobs and Wentworth.”\(^{25}\) However, sovereignty over space does not guarantee that people, place, capital, state and resources cohere in a process of capitalist industrialization, which is why a dialectical understanding of biopolitics becomes necessary.

Unlike Foucault’s concept and its presumptions of a broadly-consensual circulation of scientific knowledge about populations and territories, the *Mayor’s Minutes* of the 1920s project a fantasy of biopolitical regulation of proletarian life on the *black belt* on the verge of incorporation. This fantasy of a white city was shaped by fear and suspicion of the stranger, in which what was at stake was not ‘seeing like a state,’ but precisely the converse, a concerted statecraft of not-seeing.

Consider the variance in how City Hall saw Coloureds, counted among Asiatics in the 1921 Borough Census, and simultaneously as Europeans in matters of public health.\(^{26}\) The Department of Health estimated a massive decline in the Coloured population from
4,760 to 1,881 between 1923 and 1926, and at the moment of incorporation of its peripheries in 1932, the City counted no Coloureds at all.27

While Coloureds were not yet a governmental abstraction, Africans were seen in order to be expelled from urban residence through discourses of contagion. With no knowledge about African forms of life, the Mayor’s Minutes repeat colonial frustration with “the mode of living of Natives in the meaner quarters where so much demoralisation takes place.”28 Contrasting this distanced anxiety, the Mayor announces “a bold policy in connection with the housing of the people.”29 White people of modest means, untainted by moral and medical contamination, are the implied subjects of socially-acceptable housing in an emerging biopolitical fantasy of a white city. Between repression of “Natives in the meaner quarters” and “housing of the people” lies the borderland of South Durban that emerges through the period of this chapter, where Indians and Coloureds struggle over the means of life.

In the 1920s, the City saw these and other peripheries as still unruly and wild. In a shift to something that seems more like Foucault’s biopolitical governmentality, the Public Health Committees Ordinance of 1923 called for committees to enable ‘sanitary control’ in various areas in South Durban.30 In today’s parlance, this legislation ‘responsibilized’ white property holders as vanguards of incorporation, as long as their actions accorded with the economic rationality of the state.31 Stephen Sparks’ research shows how South Durban in the 1920s witnessed heightened debate over the use of public health knowledge by the city and by civic groups who routinely conflated ideas of public health, crime and moral deprivation in making the case for incorporation; but when Indians organized similar committees they found, as Sparks puts it aptly, that they were not the ‘public’ presumed in ‘public health.’32
But Indians could imagine civic engagement because of what I call a local tradition of Indian progressivism (Chapter 2).

There are hints, in the 1924 Minutes, of the City’s hopes for stronger territorial mastery, in considering ‘an Indian residential area’ or ‘a native village’ so that “the hordes of Natives living indiscriminately on the outskirts could be better supervised and controlled,” no decisive steps for the while. Instead, the City turns to public infrastructure, to roads and footpaths, storm-water drainage and sewerage, tramways, ocean beach works, and to draining “low-lying, swampy areas on either end of the Borough” where malaria is “unduly prevalent,” as was noted of the concentration camps (Chapter 1). Blind to the praxis of subalterns who had transformed this inhospitable landscape into ‘Indian gardens,’ the City was building the infrastructural basis for potential biopolitical territoriality.

What is clear is that this territorial fantasy was capitalist, if not brazenly white. Industrial capital staked claim to productive potential of South Durban early on through the Natal Manufacturers Association (NMA) of 1905 and its successor Natal Chamber of Industries (NCI) of 1923. The NMA advocated in 1913 for the development of Congella as an industrial area, and this area along the port became Durban’s first industrial area by 1930, Maydon Wharf, the ‘Chief Industrial Area’ on Map X (Chapter 2). In 1925, the NCI pressured the Council to purchase 194 acres at Wentworth in 1925 for housing and industrial development, and an additional 425 acres of the Woods Estate in 1931, to form the industrial areas of Jacobs and Mobeni. The further incorporation of the ‘Added Areas’ was an invitation to capital to reclaim the swamps and mangroves of Bayhead in the photographs from the 1940s I begin this chapter with. But as Map X shows, the ‘Alluvial Flats’ were occupied by Indian ‘market gardens’ decades hence, a small indicator of the contradiction between territorial ambitions and ground realities.
Unmarked, whiteness pervades the mid-1920s Minutes on indigent relief and on housing “within the reach of the poor man’s pocket” in white working-class Umbilo. The Mayor appealed for more (white) poor relief on the grounds that charitable organizations were overstretched in subsidizing low wages paid by the South African Railways under the Union Government’s white labor policy. Nascent in this vision is a biopolitical argument for the central government to take on the responsibility of providing living wages for white workers to stabilize relations between capital and white nationhood.

The Minutes also begin to frame concern for white working-class men’s living wages in the language of “scientific planning with foresight,” with the specter of interracial labor organizing on the recent horizon. Ideas of scientific planning and the ‘city beautiful’ were drawn into the racial imagination of a white city, for which Durban’s peripheries were a problem waiting for relief of “unsightly and insanitary conditions” so that both town and its future suburbs might become “a city of beauty, freedom and health.” Whiteness and capital were central to this aesthetic discourse, and, once again, the Borough encouraged (white) committees “to develop further the artistic and aesthetic amenities” including uniform balconies and verandahs, controls on shops and outbuildings in residential areas, discouragement of overhead wires, and tree planting. Importantly, Indian merchants investing in Art Deco façades in town were not valorized for their efforts at beautification through Euro-American norms.

Indians continued to be cast in the Mayor’s Minutes as vectors of “unhygienic, insanitary, ugly features” in urban life, apparently visible in “dilapidated tin huts, with neither ventilation nor light, and regardless of air, space or sanitary conditions.” The narrowing of deprivation to the housing question had been a persisting theme in Victorian biopolitics, as Engels and other critics had long argued. Durban’s repetition of these dynamics shows how
the racial state sorted its approach to housing further, to begin to advocate for the white working-class in ways that might be considered biopolitical if one ignored its concerted practice of not-seeing the lives of others.

*   *   *

While Indians became ‘settlers’ in their own eyes, they faced intense animosity, crystallized in two pieces of legislation: the failed Class Areas Bill of 1923, and the Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill of 1925, which focused on segregation and limits to land ownership. By 1926, the Mayor refers with open vitriol to “the evil of the Asiatic in our midst” in need of repatriation. Durban Indians appealed to the colonial Government of India, and the latter sent representatives to the first Round Table Conference in Cape Town in 1926, which centered on the Indian question in Durban. Representation from “the white community” for residential segregation was made openly on the grounds of “colour prejudice” bolstered by the aesthetics of the “insanitary mode of living of the poorer classes of Indians.”

The delegation from India used the Public Health Act of 1919 to argue for improvement in Indian sanitation and housing, effectively turning biopolitical expertise against its racist presumptions. The non-statutory Cape Town Agreement of 1927 proposed both voluntary repatriation to India as well as to raise the ‘standard of living’ of Indians who remained in South Africa to conform to ‘Western’ standards. While the Natal Provincial Council was loath to finance all that this would entail, the Cape Town Agreement forced the Areas Reservation Bill to be revoked, and it broadened discursive space for the consideration of Black ‘standards of living.’ In effect, it showed that biopolitics is a matter of struggle.

In practice, Durban ignored the Cape Town Agreement, focusingconcertedly on biopolitical intervention as pertinent only to ‘European standards of living.’ With no hint of
irony, the Mayor’s Minutes caution that “it is obviously illogical to preach the principles of either physical or moral well-being to people living under conditions which militate against those principles.” What is evident here is aphasia: it does not strike the Mayor that this very illogic is wielded indiscriminately on Black people’s lives.

The Mayor’s Minutes of the late 1920s follow a shifting of biopolitical discourse from epidemiological control to ‘scientific area planning.’ The City increasingly wields this language for coercive ends, for instance in posing areas under Black occupation in Cato Manor, Springfield and Wentworth as sites for ‘town planning layouts’ and ‘garden suburbs,’ premised on dispossession, though without any clarity about how it means to such ends. The 1927 Minute presents a desire to plan and house people in relation to industrial transformation along the harbor, and “with its logical implication, the industrial expansion of Durban.” What it does not say is that this would require destroying the very Indian commons that made this space habitable and productive in the first place. This contradictory imagination of securing populations, territory and capital by making people’s actual forms of habitation and livelihood more insecure continues to be at the heart of South Durban as a landscape that has never forged popular consent to the biopolitical transformation of space.

As I have suggested, Indians could imagine fighting to become insiders in a Progressivist transformation of the city, while Africans remained banned from the means of political representation. Yet, the state began in the 1920s to create a narrow space of exception. The 1923 Natives (Urban Areas) Act sorted Africans by those who had to comply with residential segregation and pass laws, from those who were exempt; and local authorities could compel ‘unexempt’ Africans to live in single-sex ‘native hostels,’ rent in ‘native locations,’ or build homes on leasehold tenure in ‘native villages.’
Minutes of the late 1920s show some concern for “facilities for progressive Natives” in the “erection of a Native Village…at Wentworth,” upgraded two years later to a ‘Native Township’ under “a comprehensive scheme under which the Natives might have some voice in the government of the township.” The idea of racially-segregated biopolitical territoriality, later given the name Apartheid, was entering the realm of possibility.

In the 1920s, and throughout the early 20th century, ‘the Indian question’ remained a thorn in the side of this racist fantasy. The Thornton Commission of 1928 criticized Durban for its neglect of Indian housing promised under the Cape Town Agreement, it mobilized significant public finance for public housing and for independent home ownership for Indians, and it pressed the City, if it needed pressing at all, to incorporate its peripheries to bring them under municipal control. However, official discourse remained uncertain that incorporation would alleviate the crisis of Indian housing. The Health and Housing Committee recommended exempting freehold land in Cato Manor from legislated limits to Indian property ownership. Yet, this Committee also tellingly complained that “the Indian community is not inclined to cooperate with the Council.” While the racial state attempted to partition the ‘progressive’ possibilities of biopolitics, its use of the sovereign exception was never acceptable from the perspective of Black subjects fighting historical neglect and social domination. Indians were unique in Black Durban as they had found the means to express voice in such matters.

The Health and Housing Committee also met a deputation who claimed to represent “all sections of the Coloured community” including Malays, Mauritians and St Helenians, petitioning for Coloured housing in town and work for Coloured artisans. What I suggest is that some urban residents may have held hope in racial governmentalization as Coloured, noting official concern for the white working class and also the communal
organization of Indians. The Chairman of this committee also reported on a public meeting of “the Coloured community” in which people spoke of “extensive overcrowding, and it appeared to him that this section of the population was being exploited by a certain type of Indian landlord.” The anti-semitic trope of the rapacious Indian landlord was expedient to racially divide those who might have found common political cause.

* * *

Two processes converge in 1929 in telling ways. While claiming to provide limited housing for Coloureds, and while protecting white Durban from Indian home ownership, the Mayor’s Minute begins to speak of African presence through the language of segregation:

During the year it was evident that many Natives…were found to be residing on unauthorised premises, and the council decided that by a process of proclamation, portions of the affected centres could be treated on the segregation principle. It is expected that by making it difficult for unlawful residence to be permitted, there would in time be a wholesome population living under conditions of satisfactory housing. A step in the direction of clearing the area was taken.”

This openness to forced segregation was new, and it followed “serious attacks and rioting” after “a Native boycott of a Municipal Eating House” and “encounters with the Police.” In other words, it was a product of struggle.

The second process was the City’s strong commitment to industrialization. The Mayor pledged “to dispose of land at a sacrifice” to attract manufacturing capital that might generate employment. Bill Freund argues that this is the period in which the developmental role of the city became evident, as in the City’s purchase of the former Woods Estate, for its invaluable flatlands that would become the Jacobs and Mobeni industrial areas, key to
employment today. Indeed, the Mayor invokes the developmental vision of the city in explaining the sale of public land in Wentworth to a Belgian textile manufacturer in 1929.

We might pause to consider whether the parallel emergence of a developmental state and segregation was mere coincidence, or whether there is an elective affinity between these formations. Consider that the idea of the developmental state says little about proximities of industry and residence, or of who bears the brunt of industrial waste, even though all developmental states have to attend to such questions. As one Councilor noted candidly, “the Government’s reclaimed land at Congella and the flatlands at Jacobs and Wentworth, and also the Corporation’s estate on the Eastern Vlei will attract factories and industries but not necessarily European residents.” This Councilor might have underestimated the willingness of working-class whites to reside in industrial South Durban, but he did point to the possibility of including Black residence in the plan for an industrial area precisely because their will was of no consequence.

‘Progressive segregation’ was an emerging racial structure of thinking that shaped the way in which the City sought to incorporate its peripheries, neutralizing potential threats by any developmental or segregationist means necessary. Emboldened by the export of gold that every country in the world in at time of the Great Depression wanted, the dreams of a racial El-Dorado at home appeared to become a reality, and the incorporation of Durban’s peripheries a site for imagining a biopolitical city to come.

**Fantasies of a Biopolitical City: The Durban Borough Boundaries Commission, 1930**

While the late 1920s saw the emergence of a segregationist developmental state in Durban, the *Durban Borough Boundaries Commission* of 1930 was the most coherent expression of the racial fantasy that stood in for “not-seeing like a Mayor.” As we saw in a key passage from
this text (Chapter 2), the City’s manifesto of incorporation crystallizes the imagined danger to the white city posed by a ‘European’ underclass cohabiting with people of color, a matter central to the commission we turn to in the next section. What is important about the Boundaries Commission is that as a work of geo-graphy, or Earth-writing, it fantasizes a white city to come and lays out the contradictions of this spatial abstraction at a crucial moment.

The moment is what Carl Nightingale (2012, 3) aptly calls “segregation mania.” As both concept and social technology for the coercive movement of people, ‘segregation’ spread quickly from its 1890s origins in colonial Hong Kong and Bombay, through shipping along with the plague across the Indian Ocean, prompting a “planetwide surge of racist city splitting practices largely under the guise of urban public health reform” across Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. The Boundaries Commission is fragment in this fin-de-siècle geo-history of segregation, as the term became thinkable alongside emergent ground realities beyond race. This simple fact is both obvious in the archives and it is a sign of the racial state’s concerted ignorance of the actual subaltern world of interaction and mutuality that it sought desperately to repress.

Against fears of subaltern mutuality beyond race, the Boundaries Commission is a fantasy text of racial-biopolitical territorial mastery, combining elements of the British colonial gazette, an artifact of a fading documentary state, with the new expertise of town planning. The text begins, appropriately enough, with an account of Durban’s long ambitions, since 1914, of territorial expansion. The narrative shifts quickly to a representation of a dual city, one planned and putatively white juxtaposed with another with sub-standard infrastructure provided by Indians and inhabited by a mixed Black population. Infrastructural differentiation is key to this split city: “the attractive modern suburb of Durban North, with its neatly-laid-out plots, its artistically designed dwellings served with
Durban light and water, and its smooth winding roads” contrasts sharply with “the Indian area known as Paruck’s Barracks, where over five hundred people, mostly non-Europeans, live in a most constricted space, for the most part under grossly dirty and insanitary conditions in very wretched wood and iron buildings.” While there is some recognition of motley, proletarian rural-urban life, what is important in this sweeping dichotomization juxtaposes unmarked-white space with unruly, peri-urban Indian space.

Since this the latter is precisely the periphery that must be repressed, the *Boundaries Commission* details the means and costs, but also the aesthetic and epidemiological risks of incorporation. Whether in threats to water systems, “improper receptacles” in personal sanitation, or widespread tuberculosis and typhoid, incorporation is colonialism redux, the ‘white man’s burden.’ The Commission recounts breathlessly on the aesthetics of the heart of darkness that is Durban’s black belt:

At Mayville, beyond the ridge near the brickfields, the Commission visited a valley largely occupied by non-Europeans. Over an area of about one square mile it is fairly thickly populated, and in different parts of the valley are to be found numerous facilities of non-Europeans living under very insanitary conditions. Many of the dwellings are of ancient and defective construction, and of wood and iron. The family water supply is invariably derived from a shallow well or water hole, generally improperly covered so that surface contamination is unavoidable. Some form of earth closet is usually to be found. Those inspected were filthy internally, and, as is apparently common with this class of inhabitant, the pail was a rusty paraffin tin. In several instances the disposal site was a piece of disturbed ground in the immediate vicinity of the dwelling. The immediate surroundings of the dwellings inspected were
equally filthy, and in several instances adjacent gardens or *mielie* [maize] patches were found to be strewn with patches of human refuse.\(^7^2\)

What Warwick Anderson called ‘excremental colonialism’ is familiar from contemporaneous settler colonialisms, but with local preoccupations.\(^7^3\) Recall ‘wood and iron’ construction in descriptions of the concentration camps, in the spread of Indian homes in neglected and peripheral spaces, and in the first Hindu temples (Chapters 1 and 2). For residents, ‘wood and iron’ stood for cheap cost, easy assembly and disassembly, and a kind of pride in auto-construction under conditions of temporariness. From the perspective of power, however, ‘wood and iron’ signified insignificance and easy removal.\(^7^4\)

What is striking is that the very next section, on ‘trade effluents,’ portrays the southern periphery as “an important industrial area which promises to expand in the future,” but admits that “industrial development brings problems all its own,” problems of effluent disposal which have confounded the South Coast Junction Health Board, and which led the Chief Inspector of Factories to argue that “there is a general question of sanitation, which becomes more pressing as the areas gradually became industrialized.”\(^7^5\) These passages are remarkable for showing how, as Foucault would have it, the incitement to discourse is fundamentally uncontrollable, and that biopolitical expertise at its inception held the possibility of exposing the predatory aspects of industrial capital. Indeed, the text continues to disclose the problem of environmental contagion and the inattention of the offenders, manufacturing capital, and particularly sugar mills unwilling to properly dispose the noxious dunder produced by refining. Multiple forms of contagion conceal and reveal competing social interests, and the long-term problem of disposal of industrial wastes in a “general question of sanitation.” This is where the *Boundaries Commission* employs a ‘biopolitical caesura’ to bracket and exempt capital from official critique.\(^7^6\)
The *Boundaries Commission* goes farther still by exposing the contradiction between contagion and segregation directly, while ignoring the consequences. The Medical Officer of Health attests that “the whole of the Durban and peri-Durban area constitutes one hygienic unit, the health of the community being at the mercy of the weakest part hygienically.” Reference is made to Johannesburg Town Clerk and Victorian Progressive *par excellence* Lionel Curtis who had argued for Johannesburg’s boundary extension in 1901 for “reasons of unity in sanitary matters.” However, on bringing “the coming industrial area” in South Durban under the control of City Hall, the *Commission* is silent on who will have to bear the brunt of industrial pollution, the thorn in the side of hygienic unity.

Responding to various critiques, including Indian deputations vehemently against segregation, the *Boundaries Commission* draws on colonial comparisons on the merits of municipal unification under liberal government. Against those who argued that incorporation would result in “dumping of Durban’s Indian and Native population” in white areas, it argues that incorporation would provide more effectively control of migrant labor, implying that it would keep Black people ‘migrants.’ Responding to a classic liberal critique, on financial viability, it shifts registers to the biopolitical, to argue that “municipal government [of a ‘greater Durban’] is not just a matter of commercial bargaining…[but] rather a question of human welfare – a question also of human life.” Presciently, the *Commission* poses tighter regulation of movement and integrated municipal government as a response to the potential critique that incorporation might simply create new *black belts*, as critics of the housing question had long argued. In other words, the *Boundaries Commission* proposes the abstraction of an integrated biopolitical city constituted through economic interdependence in shipping, services and amenities, a unified “centre for business, amusement and intellectual life, and it projects this abstraction into a policy future.”
The story of incorporation of peri-Durban can be sifted with a fine toothed comb through the Boundaries Commission, as it reports on various areas that resisted incorporation, like “predominantly rural,” unmarked-white Westville and Pinetown which were allowed not to incorporate as they posed no public health threat, to the Bluff ridges extending around Wentworth and Jacobs, which had to be incorporated as they “abut an area marked for rapid industrial expansion” and where “adjoining ridges must be marked for rapid residential expansion in growing interdependence with it.”

There is a silence on the question of who is to bear the brunt of effluents, a silence that remains palpable in the residential-industrial patchwork landscape of Merebank and Wentworth today.

On Indian market gardeners, the Commission recommends differential rates for agricultural holdings, and commends the Council’s policy of support to owner-occupiers as a bulwark against peri-urban rack-renting to tenant farmers. These problems were, the Commission argues, due to the absence of “comprehensive town planning” that incorporation could usher. When representatives from the Natal Indian Congress and other organizations endorsed incorporation but with an extension of the municipal franchise to Indians, the Commission blandly reports that “the Council considered that the question was outside the scope of the enquiry.” With the question of representation limited to technical concerns, the City turned to new forms of spatial authority to present its newfound expertise and to limit popular demands in the same stroke.

The Boundaries Commission includes the foundational cadastral map of Durban’s Added Areas. The city center is shaded, as map’s focus is on peri-urban property, with names of prominent farms like Dunn’s Grant in South Durban and only a generic indication of ‘small lots.’ What we see is that much of South Durban including Wentworth was parcelled in
neat rectangular lots, in contrast to the large irregular lots at the bottom of the map which would become Indian Merebank. [Note – I may cut this unlovely map]

Durban Borough Boundaries Commission Plan

The starkness of this ‘plan,’ its property demarcations and arcs radiating from the central train station, contrasts sharply with Victorian city maps that paralleled nineteenth century initiatives of social reform in Manchester and London. Patrick Joyce argues that the Ordnance Surveys in Victorian Britain brought together civilian and military cartography in the “‘liberalism’ of state space…understood in terms of the sheer plenitude of the information provided," a mass of knowledge which acted as “a positive invitation to interpretation” for both the governing and the governed. A new kind of map produced through this liberal governmentality was the ‘social map’ innovated between 1835 and 1855
to show various aspects of living standards, and stretching from medical to moral aspects of “the health of the city.” What is striking in contrast to this metropolitan expectation is that Durban’s incorporation was founded on the idea of improving health and sanitation, yet the founding map of the *Boundaries Commission* does not need to convince anyone. Rather, it demonstrates simply and powerfully that the only form of land use that matters is that recorded by the cadaster.

The spatial abstractions projected by the *Borough Boundaries Commission* did little to clarify state practice or to produce consent over an integrated vision of biopolitical territoriality. Indeed, the local state knew very little about who its citizen-subjects were, let alone who they ought to be and how they ought to live. However, the notion of ‘standards of living’ did make discursive space for some Indian and Coloured elites to engage this ambiguity to project communal visions for ‘improvement’ under ongoing conditions of subjection, humiliation and degradation of Black life. The state’s territorial ambitions were also fundamentally shaped by an emboldened set of attempts to protect white life, which turns us to the second key commission and its influence on state practice in Durban.

*Poor Whites’ and ‘Standards of Living’: The Carnegie Commission, 1933*

The *Mayor’s Minutes* of the late 1920s increasingly press for national government support for white workmen’s family wages and housing, particularly as the South African Railways had committed in 1925 to provide permanent jobs for the advancement of ‘the unskilled white man.’ These concerns were clarified, amplified and centralized through the enormously influential *Carnegie Commission of Investigation on the Poor White Question in South Africa*, commissioned in 1929 and published in five volumes over 1932-3. Tiffany Willoughby-Herard (2015) argues that the *Carnegie Commission* produced white vulnerability and
antiblackness within global processes of white nationalism, segregationist philanthropy, and
scientific racism. She argues that these broader circuits, and lessons from U.S.
historiography, should make it more difficult to think of ‘poor whites’ in equivalence with
Black suffering.

But official discourse reveals fear of claims for equivalence precisely as tools for the
fight against antiblackness, whether in interracial labor unionism or in attempts to broaden
the discourse of ‘standards of living’ to Black people. While Durban remained largely out of
its purview, the Carnegie Commission provided authoritative means to further the fantasy of a
white city in a specific way: through what I call the infrastructuralization of racially
segmented labour markets that would make it harder to forge antiracist class solidarities.

The Carnegie Commission frames ‘the poor white question’ as a broad and
multidimensional problem: a racial problem whose terms were set, as Willoughby-Herard
(2015) rightly argues, by the production of the ‘Negro’ as a problem so presciently diagnosed
by W.E.B. DuBois. What was distinctive about the Carnegie Commission was the way in which
they portrayed white degeneration and vulnerability as exacerbated by capitalism. Hence,
E.G. Malherbe, author of the volume on education, argued that a ‘pathological situation’ had
been accentuated by general economic depression.91 Similarly, the Psychological Report argues
that job reservations are necessary but insufficient to rehabilitate ‘the poor white.’92
Malherbe’s discussion of ‘poor whites’ brought into view an underlying hope of
reconciliation of ‘white races’ through the rehabilitation of white migrants from the
impoverished countryside to South African cities, in marked contrast to Africans increasingly
banned from the means of urban life:

The poor white is not a class apart in the “caste” sense of class…It is circumstances
which have in course of time selected traits in him which have marked him for
deterioration and impoverishment…[T]he Poor White Problem is essentially an agrarian question…British and Boer were caught in the same economic maelstrom which takes no count of the very arbitrary distinctions of nationality. Statistically speaking we call a Poor White an impoverished white person of rural origin.93

The invocation of ‘caste’ emerges from US registers, but in South Africa it is a marker of difference from Indians as purveyors of caste. The reassurance of a common whiteness, and prevention of its degeneration, hinge, however, on the remedial potential of education.94 But this reassurance was far from plausible. Hence, a brochure written in English and Afrikaans from a ‘liberal’ perspective suggests with alarm that ‘poor whites’ who could not maintain “a standard of living commensurate with the standards of ordinary decency and morality” run the risk of sinking to “the standard of the native.”95 The author calls instead for tightening racial barriers to semi-skilled artisanal labor through apprenticeships, with lasting effects for working-class Black people like the artisans of Wentworth.96 What we see here is a shift away from the social reproduction of labor in ‘standards of living,’ to the defense of a racially-segmented labor regimes.

There is only fleeting reference to Durban within “the rural exodus” studied by the Carnegie Commission, although commissioners visited the environs of Pietermaritzburg, and little to no scholarly reflection on the effects of the poor-white question in Durban.97 While ‘poor white’ discourse resonated with debates in Durban about ‘standards of living,’ the Council’s approach to its racial populations in the 1930s remained haphazard and ad-hoc, although it did consider Wentworth among other places for “housing for people of limited income,” racially unmarked and therefore white.98 Indeed, the Carnegie Commission notes in passing, with consternation, the “competition of non-Europeans” named ‘Asiatics’ and ‘Coloureds’ who “have almost entirely been drawn into the modern industrial system” since
“they have not tribal reserves.”

As we have seen, the fear of competition, with its antisemitic undertones, was commonplace in official discourse with respect to Indians, and the Council could draw on it without endorsing Afrikaans-speaking ‘poor white’ migration to an allegedly English Durban.

City Hall would not commit to support preferential labor or housing to ‘poor whites’ because of its Anglocentric racism against the hapless Afrikaners, recent descendants of those who had suffered war and concentration camps only a three decades earlier. However, there were glimmers of hope in public discourse that poverty relief might have wider effects. Hence, the Presidential Address to the 1933-4 Provincial Conference of the Colonial Born and Settlers’ Indian Association treaded carefully around the Government’s White Labour Policy, objecting to its effects in “the displacement of Indian and other non-European labour” alongside differentiation in taxation, housing, and parliamentary and municipal franchise. This conference also considered Government of India support for Indian ‘re-emigration’ to colonies like British Guiana. Some South African Indians were, it appears, considering quite dire options.

Turning back to the view from City Hall, the Mayor’s Minutes of the 1930s detail prosaic matters of infrastructure including, in South Durban, resurfacing and tarring Marine Drive, reclaiming Fynnlands beach, connecting Merebank Beach Road to the school, and employing ‘Indian Relief Gangs’ for weed and grass cutting, trimming and drain-clearing across newly incorporated areas. Much of this infrastructural labor is literally subterranean, in the macadamising of Sirdar Road, the hardening of Wentworth Road, drainage of lower Clairwood, and surfacing of the Umlaas River Bridge. While the infrastructure is not just for white use, the categories of labor in relief work are ‘fit,’ ‘semi-fit,’ ‘Coloured’ and ‘Indian,’ with the largest numbers in ‘semi-fit’ and ‘Indian.’ The broader effects of the Carnegie
Commission were to help normalize racialized labor into the work of infrastructural change, so that a putatively English city could deploy ‘semi-fit’ workers, ‘poor whites’ by another name, to retrofit the newly incorporated periphery.

* * *

In South Durban, infrastructural change meant industrialization and the power of manufacturing capital. In 1937, the Council’s Special Committee on industrialization recommended expansion south of the bay, extending from Maydon Wharf and Congella, along reclaimed land at Bayhead and further south along the South Coast Road through the market-gardens of Clairwood and Jacobs. This committee recommended integrating industry, railways and shipping, linked to planned African and Indian housing schemes in Lamontville and Merebank. By 1938, City Hall appears to have forged what would be a lasting alliance with the Natal Chamber of Industries, declaring South Durban a “productive zone;” Mayor Ellis Brown, himself a “distinguished industrialist” formerly on the Executive Committee of the NCI symbolized this emboldened hegemony.

By this point, it was clear that City Hall had internalized the interests of industrial capital through its increasing facility with buying, selling and leasing land. While the central government controlled the port and railways, the Council continued to acquire land and make it available for industry. The new expertise of ‘town planning’ had become instrumental to this task, as South African town planning shifted focus after the 1923 Native (Urban Areas) Act to technical matters of segregation and industrialization, with town plans largely concerned with the layout and efficiency of new infrastructure. Shifting ruling-class power from mining capital to the Pact Alliance of agricultural and manufacturing capital brought in a period of import-substitution industrialization which allowed town planning to play this facilitative role in industrialization.
By the end of the 1930s, the Pact government cemented its alliance with the urban white working class through state investment in suburbanization and public transport. Urban planners found opportunities in the making of a new object, the planned industrial town. Vanderbijlpark, the South African Iron and Steel Corporation’s (ISCOR) new steel town, concretized post-war ISI planning, and it was also a testing ground for bridging rational spatial organization and ethnic spatial engineering. A light engineering zone was located as a ‘buffer’ between black and white residence, for instance. Lessons from Vanderbijlpark would inform planned towns like Sasolburg, Richard’s Bay and Saldanha, and industrial decentralization in rural areas north and south of Durban in the 1940s.

Writing in a parallel time, Antonio Gramsci calls ‘Fordism’ the particular regional hegemony that had emerged around the Ford plant in Dearborn, Michigan, articulating work-discipline on the factory floor with the raced and gendered social reproduction of labor in communities surrounding the plant, upheld by an ideology he called ‘Americanism’ and a mix of consent and police force. But consent might not be ideological, but rather written into the production of space, and this is why infrastructural change remains important.

What the archives document is massive if uneven infrastructural overhaul in South Durban at this time. Roads and beaches in the white working-class residential areas of the Bluff were upgraded in the late 1930s, while Indian areas remained neglected. The Southern Sewage Works, authorized in 1938 and built between 1959 and 1969 in the middle of Merebank would become the main sewage treatment plant for a massive sewage system across industrial and residential areas. The swampy alluvial flats of the South Durban basin were drained, the Umzinto, Umhlatazana and Umlaas Rivers canalized, and the Amanzimnyama and Mobeni estates ‘cleansed’ of shackdwellers, leveled, and engineered for industrial use in order for an ordered industrial geography to emerge by the 1950s.
Biopolitics by Decree: Policing the ABC’s of Segregation in the 1930s

The Council’s racial sorting of populations in the 1930s remained a far cry from a coherent project of biopolitical government. The Mayor’s Minutes repeat the certainties of contagion talk on ‘sanitary inspection,’ ‘abatement of nuisances,’ ‘sewerage,’ ‘anti-mosquito sanitation,’ ‘infectious disease,’ and so on, and with an increasing emphasis on ‘housing and slum clearance,’ ‘nuisances,’ and closing orders through Public Health by-laws; but with some attention to maternity, child welfare, nursing homes and Indian midwives. These nuances show that while the City used biopolitical expertise, this was not a consensual form of biopolitical governmentality built on reliable and comprehensive statistical information about people and resources used to transform social and spatial practice.

Rather, the Council’s commitment was to what I call a police form of biopolitical government through dispossession, destruction, and surveillance. By ‘police,’ I mean Jacques Donzelot’s productive conception of policing “the quality of the population and the strength of the nation,” with the caveat that in the postcolony this racial nationalism was perfectly suited to repression. More precisely, the Council forged a police form of biopolitical government with repressive and non-repressive moment as it sought to incorporate the productivity of ‘poor white’ discourse in liberal intervention in working-class life, while engaging in a much more coercive project with respect to Black Durbanites.

As South Africa slipped into the Second World War, did the Council become more committed to slum clearance, as Susan Parnell and Owen Crankshaw argue of Johannesburg, and, if so, to what extent such an imperative aimed at placating the white working class in a project of racial-capitalist industrialization? Indeed, Bill Freund’s careful account portrays the Council as having a long-term vision that became sharper as its alliance with capital became
stronger, or as the historian of South Durban, Diane Scott sees it, as modernist tools of planning became more refined. Both these perspectives invest the Council with a degree of informed agency that, I suggest, the historical record cannot sustain.

City Hall’s attempts at territorial mastery remained differentiated and arbitrary, with the long-term interests of capital in mind, but no will to limit state caprice. Rather, the archives beg the question of whether knowledge mattered at all to City Hall, or whether one ought rather read the Minutes for the ways in which the local state partitioned its disregard in a slow and monotonous form of social domination that its Indian subjects called ‘de-facto segregation.’

When white landlords were threatened with expropriation, new possibilities emerged from this seeming anarchy. In 1937, two white landlords in the Bell Street Area of the Point near the harbor mouth entered into a protracted debate with the City’s Public Health (Slums) Committee over whether an entire block has to be designated a ‘slum,’ what constitutes ‘nuisance,’ whether it is a product of construction or of misuse by tenants, and who is to be held responsible for ‘rehousing’ tenants.\(^{117}\) When the Medical Officer of Health pushed one landlord on his “scheme for improving or for developing that area,” the landlord responded impatiently on this “harping on the word ‘scheme.’ I have no scheme; demolition is not a scheme.”\(^ {118}\)

After an elaborate passing of the buck, the representative of the Indian tenants asked the Public Health Department to “take a certain amount of blame” for ‘slum conditions,’ to which the Medical Officer of Health deftly argues that “the Public Health Department lacks the authority to tackle it in a radical way,” but also that “unless private owners are threatened with the loss of their property, the loss of their land, then nothing is done. For the first time
this power has come to the Council to take this land and develop it in the public interest.”

In the subsequent meeting, he elaborates on this ‘radical’ possibility:

[T]he Slums Act to our reading makes it possible for the Municipality to take over the Slum not only from the point of view of slum clearance as such but from the point of view of replanning… A new ordinance could well be brought out… whereby an area can be expropriated by the Municipality, all the buildings raised to the ground and the whole area replanned for roads, sewerage, etc. and then sold back to the original owners plus the cost of that development if they so desired.”

‘Replanning’ could be much more ambitious than the eradication of slums, uplift of the white poor, or the infrastructuralization of racialized labor. Needless to say, ‘replanning’ was not considered in relation to the dire realities of African residence, for instance in the Merebank Native Men’s Hostel built to house people evicted from the Bell Street Togt Barracks on the Point. Rather, the City sited this hostel with care, noting “land set aside for industrial sites…as the City Council has definitely decided on its policy” of industrializing South Durban; and as reassurance, “a portion of the industrial land [might] be utilized for recreation grounds for the Natives and at the same time act as a buffer to the housing scheme.”

* * *

_Slums, schemes, hostels, buffers, and so on_ were becoming familiar terms, an ABC of segregation which had emerged in an aleatory manner rather than as clear and distinct objects of spatial control. What I refuse here are two shibboleths of South African radical scholarship. First, the dominant view from Marxist social history, following the work of Martin Legassick and Charles Van Onselen, poses a process of elaboration of spatial form from the nineteenth century mining compound to the mid-twentieth century apartheid...
township as a system of ‘total control,’ using the language of Irving Goffman. Second, revisionist Foucauldian accounts, principally by Deborah Posel, Aletta Norval and Jennifer Robinson, argue that orthodox Marxists have underplayed the importance of power, discourse, spatiality and statecraft. Rather than the apartheid state as either a “grand plan implemented by a large and well co-ordinated repressive state bureaucracy” or a “a haphazard, conflict-ridden and historically contingent outcome of a disorganized state,” Robinson (1996, 28) poses “an ongoing tension between these views.” I would alter this to a dialectical tension that does not presume a ‘logic’ of power, in Marxist or Foucaultian terms, but which attends to the arbitrary violence of the ABCs of segregation.

When the military eyed the lands south of the bay for encampment during World War II, City Hall sought ways to use conditions of wartime for its own experiments in spatial change. Learning of military plans to convert the Merebank hostel site into a Native Battalion Camp, the Town Clerk deftly made the case for the military to build their camp using the Council’s plans, for the Council to procure after the war; citing the proliferation of “hutments occupied by homeless families” on the Durban beachfront after the last World War, the Town Clerk argued that this would “preclude the possibility of Natives, Indians and Coloureds crowding into the vacant hutments at the termination of hostilities and thereby creating a new slum area within the City.” The possibility of ‘new slums,’ the very reason for incorporation of the peripheries, was a potent scare technique to get the military to do what the City had been trying to do for decades.

By 1943, many of the camps procured by the Department of Defence appeared “surplus to military requirements” and the City suggested that they might be repurposed for civilian residence. The City saw these ‘temporary camps’ as unsuitable for white working-class families, but suited to “single Natives employed on Corporation works,” “gangs
continuously employed in the area and in the development of the Merebank-Wentworth Housing Scheme” and “Natives employed by private enterprise in the Merebank and Jacobs Areas.” The extract concludes that this proposal to house Africans is “a temporary measure designed to meet the exigencies of war-time” and that the eventual use of South Durban would most certainly be industrial.

This was the context in which the City Council first suggested the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme in a 1939 appeal for central government finance, as a ‘comprehensive scheme’ over 1285 acres to be acquired through the Housing Act from Indian and European owners, “for the elimination of slums and the improvement of housing accommodations for all members of the community, Europeans, Natives, Coloureds and Indians.” The lion’s share of 82% of the acquired land was to be for Indian housing, with 18% allocated for Coloured housing, an indicator of what would later be seen as a serious underestimate of people who would be classified Coloured. This scheme would be revived in the debates over the commission on post-war planning, as we will see in the next section.

* * *

In the interim, the City used ‘nuisances’ as justification for widespread demolition, primarily of Indian buildings. The list of “premises scheduled for demolition” names white owners; larger Indian trusts like Trustees R.K. Khan and E.M. Paruk Hospital and Dispensary Trust; several Indians like Paraman 43559, Subban 126595, Soobbadoo, Sadhu Chenchanna, Bhikka Gangaram, M.A. Karim, Seetalowa Khateroo, Bugwantee, Lekhraj, Vesram Jivraj, Singarach Tamiah, Jeachi 7293/729, Mangam Erakiah, Kannamah, Marimuthu 1132/1902, Pavady 3114/1935, R. Moonsamy 7739/1937, Sewsunker 56947/37750/41795, Bee Sundhai 3350/1911, Mugana 12334/9120, Packhara 40121,
Noyna 70505, and “Muniamma, 95014 and 5 others;” and very few Africans, Sibhoze 9716/9717 and Kuzwayo Damgoza Nhlangoti. Their premises apparently shared ‘defects and other conditions of nuisance,’ including:

- premises in a partly-finished state
- linings open-jointed and incomplete
- inferior construction
- exterior woodwork and verandah brickwork in disrepair
- roof, gutters, framing and door/unlined and unceiled
- wood floors in disrepair
- window woodwork in disrepair
- detached room in advanced decay
- inadequate light and ventilation
- premises dirty
- premises filthy
- brick pail privy in general disrepair
- wood and iron privy of inferior construction and in general disrepair
- no bathing facilities
- detached kitchen and bathroom constructed of scrap iron, in general disrepair and totally unsuitable
- drainage from bath defective
- premises filthy and bug-infested
- premises bug, roach and rodent infested and ridden with white ants
- laundry business on this property disconnected from dwellings
The list is notable for its arbitrariness. Walter Benjamin calls it “the accumulation of facts in the fascist sense,” the dull work of bureaucratic power in rubber-stamping state violence.130 There is no reference to nuisance law or to principles for determining ‘defects and other conditions of nuisance;’ yet, a month later the Medical Officer of Health proclaims that “having given the owners and/or representatives an opportunity of adducing their reasons why their premises should not be declared slums, the City Council is now satisfied that such nuisances do exist [to] most effectively be dealt with under the Slums Act.”131 Registered owners were given two weeks to provide a list of occupiers, title deeds of the property, and details of mortgage bonds.132 With the onus to disprove the designation ‘slum’ devolved to owners, it is fair to presume that for most, this was next to impossible.

* * *

Some Indians in South Durban did attempt a long and arduous fight against the declaration of Merebank and surrounding areas as slums, to be redeveloped into a scheme for sale or lease to already-existing residents. Billy Juggernath narrates the formation of the Merebank Indian Ratapayers Association (MIRA, later just MRA) in 1933, soon after incorporation, when it became clear that the Corporation had reneged on extending basic amenities that were the rationale for incorporation in the first place.133 Juggernath and others suspected that the City’s negligence was a precondition for eviction.134 Interestingly, the northern boundary of the area declared a slum in 1938 was adjusted from Collingwood Road to Hime Lane, and the area “released from the slum” was “approved as Industrial Area as a result of agitation by white industrialists.”135 This boundary in today’s Hime Street Flats remains a place of residential suffering alongside Wentworth today.

Juggernath recalls a slowing down of the City’s ability to transform space when the World War was largely in Europe, but that when it’s center of gravity shifted to the Pacific,
‘post-war planning’ created new opportunities.\textsuperscript{136} There is some insight here; despite press reports that the City had declared Merebank a slum in 1940, the trail of letters between the City Medical Officer of Health and the Town Clerk confirmed that no premises had been declared a slum.\textsuperscript{137} That same year, the Corporation resolved “to acquire land in Wentworth, Merebank and Umgeni North which have been declared slum areas with the object of building economic and sub-economic building schemes.”\textsuperscript{138}

When, in 1942, the Minister of the Interior approved the City’s plan to convert the ‘Merebank Slum Area’ into a ‘Coloured and Indian Housing Scheme,’ this came a shock to the MIRA, not just because “the entire area was already sub-divided into approved building plots owned by Indians and a sprinkling few by whites and Coloureds” but also because “we foresaw that the contemplated scheme will be the beginning of the segregatory policy of the government.”\textsuperscript{139} The Natal Indian Congress and Natal Indian Association had objected to the scheme a year earlier; at a 1941 hearing, they argued “that segregation was the ulterior motive.”\textsuperscript{140} In 1942, the Central Housing Board’s recommendation was that expropriation ought to be a final resort if owners were not prepared to sell at market value, to which the Natal Indian Association protested that this was “nothing less than segregation.”\textsuperscript{141} What is key here is the opposition from Indian organizations that refused segregation insistently.

In July 1942, the Durban Expropriation Joint Council wrote to the Minister of Public Health that “the Merebank Indian Ratepayers Association had challenged the accuracy of the statistics submitted in regard to the racial ownership of the land in question.”\textsuperscript{142} The ratepayers had called the City’s bluff in its charade of biopolitical governmentality without reliable statistical information. After a long jostling of letters, the official line was that the Merebank/Wentworth scheme would be referred to yet another
commission, the *Natal Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission*, to which we turn next.\(^{143}\)

**Powers of the Visual: The Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, 1943-4**

The Second World War brought to center stage the dangers of biopolitical sovereignty, or the articulation of biopolitical methods of extending vitality with the sovereign right to administer mass death to the enemy in defense of society, whether in Auschwitz, Dachau, Dresden, Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Achille Mbembe (2013) renames this death drive of biopolitical sovereignty ‘necropolitics.’ The South African state in wartime turned to a slower form of violence through reconstruction by eviction under the pretext of post-war planning.\(^{144}\) Under continuing conditions of not-knowing, I will argue that official discourse turned to the powers of the visual for its authority.

In 1942, the South African government under Jan Smuts turned to the non-statutory commission of enquiry on ‘post-war reconstruction.’ The Fifth Report of the Social and Economic Planning Council, published in 1945, drew on British commissions of this type, but its recommendations of central authority over ‘planning’ were resisted by the provinces, and particularly by Natal. The Administrator of Natal, Heaton Nicolls carried the project to the provincial level in the *Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission* which sat between 1943 and 1944 to consider how to apply the principles of planning to Durban. In turn, City Hall mobilized its own resources to use this authority to project the City’s imagination of Durban of the future.\(^{145}\)

On the eve of this commission, the City saw ‘reconstruction’ as not an alibi for slum clearance, but as a “Post-War Development Programme.”\(^{146}\) The keyword ‘development’ is
significant, as it carries wider ambiguities of late-colonial reform and welfare. To explore what ‘planning’ and ‘development’ implied, the City and Water Engineer’s Department prepared an elaborate document on Post War Development, in a comparative European frame, no less. This text poses key examples of ‘progressive development’ in the inter-war years in the Soviet Union, Germany and Italy, all through “bloodshed…and great suffering” in contrast to the democratic path pursued by the Allies where “unemployment is solved through a system of social security and complete freedom for every individual brought out as a result of war.” As if to highlight the City’s racial amnesia, the report emphasizes that “potential development opportunities” ought not to be restricted by “unemployment and Poor White problems.” The report sets out its aim as the use of public works to resolve white unemployment, as hinted at in the Boundaries Commission and at the centre of the Carnegie Commission.

The report likens Durban to an outstretched hand, the gap between the thumb and index finger likened to Durban harbor, the fingers “primarily European in character” interspersed by “Asiatic settlement,” and the thumb, South Durban, “racially fluid.” With this organic racial representation, it protests against “the baseless accusation of ‘racial segregation,’” clarifying the City’s interest in “volitional zoning,” the idea that people “will gather in groups of like origin and outlook” as they apparently do in American Chinatowns, Italian quarters or Swiss Cantons. In heated discussion, the Deputy City Engineer clarifies, “I would not like to live beside a Native…It is not a question of segregation, but provision for volitional zoning,” plain and simple. The report senses that African urbanism cannot be forcibly curtailed, and that “the final result must be the ability of the Native to form local communities of self-contained and largely self-sustained type,” in “transition zones,” separated and in perpetual limbo.
The discussions of the *Post-War Commission* provide a glimpse into the ethnography of state practice that would soon be lost in the archives of the apartheid state. The *Commission* begins with what it is to be done, if it is not to recommend outright segregation. Mayor Ellis-Brown presses the *Commission* “to just look very far ahead, almost visionary,” and Councillor Barns of the City’s Committee on Post-war Development, soon to be author of the Barns Report continues in the language of visionaries and visualization. Senator Shepstone, grandson of Theophilus Shepstone, architect of indirect rule in Natal, adds that any question of the future must rest on the problem of the ‘de-tribalised Native,’ of urban Africans desiring the amenities of modern life, and after some discussion of Indian presence, he argues for ‘economic segregation’ as opposed to just ‘domiciliary segregation.’

When the representatives of the Council are asked squarely whether they can ‘envision’ a city “split up into three sections, Europeans, Natives and Indians,” Shepstone suggests, “it all depends on where you are going to divide those three parts.” When Barns defends ‘rehabilitation’ rather than “entire segregation” of Indians, his interlocutors argue that “the poor type of Indian is only too glad to avail himself of a nice little house, and yet the cultivated class of Indian is against segregation, and I would like you to know how the poor type of Indian is being exploited by the rich type of Indian.” The stock figure of the exploitative Indian landlord is set within a fear of multiplying “little segregated islands in an ocean of Europeans.”

Shepstone focuses on the fundamental contradiction: how is the City to deal with Black urbanization and the need for labor in Durban’s industrialization? The ensuing dialogue between representatives of the City and the *Commission* swirl around a set of maps, and the Chairman approvingly requests that they be seen in relation to “the ultimate division of the racial groups in Durban.” Fears of ‘racial islands’ and the hope of a ‘permanent
solution’ recurs through the minutes, as does the idea of self-government for Indians and Africans in ‘townships.’ However, the discussion of ‘planning’ turns on the difficulty and expense needed to transform a city of hills “on proper Engineering lines.”

In a telling exchange, a representative of the Commission proposes that “machinery could be devised whereby the whole planning, within and without the Durban area, could be more or less fixed…I have in mind the picture of a map [with] zoning for the different races;” he asks the representatives of the City whether such a fixed representative of areas “fixed for Asiatics, Natives, Coloureds and Europeans” would aid planning. The answer is a resounding yes, as “zoning for residential areas on a racial basis” takes the rhetorical place of ‘segregation.’

The consequent discussion through race zoning maps lasts several years. Two maps below show the Council’s recommendations in 1944, the Commission proposition in 1951, after the election of the Nationalist Party, and a compromise map of 1952. The Council’ 1944 map allocates large areas for Asiatic and Native, but not Coloured residence, turning multi-ethnic Cato Manor into an Asiatic area. The Commission’s 1951 response removes this ‘racial island’ altogether, with a continuous geography of racial areas ‘buffered’ by ‘working areas.’ This map includes a large Coloured area in Durban North, a sign of recognition that there was a significant population to be housed; it also consolidates Indian areas in existing white working-class areas along the Old Main Line from Malvern to Pinetown, a recommendation that would have been politically costly for the Council.

The 1952 plan is a compromise, in which the City Council has accepted the eviction of Cato Manor, particularly after the anti-Indian pogrom of 1949 and its aftermath of massive temporary displacement of Indians. The Council also retains some space for middle-class Coloured and Indian presence in exchange for not disturbing the white working-class
suburbs along the Old Main Line. The sequence of maps clarifies how working-class Indians and Coloureds are imagined to share space with an oil refinery in what would become Merebank and Wentworth, clearly visible on the third map.

Credits: Mina Moshkeri, LSE Design Unit, 2012 (Redrawn from the 1952 Durban Housing Survey)

When the Durban Housing Survey brought together these competing maps in a volume authored by liberal professors observing the transition to apartheid with dispassion, it was significant that the maps were presented as transparencies that were meant to be read one on top of the other in a palimpsestic process that mirrored an unstable city looking for stability
through the fetish of separation.\textsuperscript{165} The base topographic map in asserts itself in \textit{Commission} discussions at various moments, as in an exclamation that “this [map] has the virtue of river boundaries which is of great value indeed;” or in the debate about whether Indian elites should have sea views, in which case an ‘Indian corridor’ might make sense, particularly if it leads to the industrial area in South Durban.\textsuperscript{166} On other occasions, the topographic map recedes, as in the general distrust and denial of the transformed landscape of the Indian commons (Chapter 2).

* * *

How do we understand this turn to the visual in the proceedings of the \textit{Post-War Commission}? How did the authority of maps produce an abstract representation of Durban? And did the spatial abstraction become archetypal for urban apartheid in general? Dianne Scott, the historian of South Durban, has built a corpus of research on the violence of this abstraction.\textsuperscript{167} In a perceptive analysis of maps, plans and what she calls ‘modernist planning,’ Scott argues that the deepening power of national and city government as well as of industrial capital was enabled by “the comprehensive vision of South Durban as an industrial zone.”\textsuperscript{168} I suggest that this concedes too much to a city government which in fact knew very little. We ought rather ask how limited power/knowledge is concealed by the authority of maps.

The use of maps – their construction, interpretation, cross-referencing, overlay, and transformation – assumes cartographic discourse that defines the possible. Cartographic discourse includes referential aspects of maps but also symbolic characteristics which can be a powerful force in portraying maps as authoritative ‘social facts’ in and of themselves.\textsuperscript{169} The violent arbitrariness of maps was of course central to the colonization of Africa, and to several of its postcolonial legacies.
Consider again how the *Boundaries Commission* map portrays parts of South Durban in neat rectangular lots, in contrast to others parts in ‘small lots’ held by Indian worker-peasants. What cartographic discourse produced this truth about space? What ambiguities of land tenure are rendered in fixed and firm boundaries while others are deemed unknowable? What do we make of the removal of adornment from maps of Durban from this point onwards, and why do these tools of white supremacy not proclaim their ideological intentions in the manner of older imperial maps?

Rather than their references or symbols, we might take a cue from an image reproduced in the Apartheid Museum and in a recent edition on planning in South Africa, in which group of suited men, presumably white and official, are engrossed in discussion over a race zoning map labeled ‘Native Townships,’ while on a bus. One man points to the map, as the others study its contents. The backdrop of the bus signals that this is a map in use in the very process of determining its use in the racial zoning of the city.¹⁷⁰

The image of a map in practice points to that which its users take for granted. What is assumed is what Thongchai Winichakul in a different context calls “the assumed geo-body” in the map, which connects a notion of collective life to the territory of the nation, or in this case of the city.¹⁷¹ The assumed geo-body of the photograph of a map that these men in suits are so engrossed in is the enduring fantasy of the white city, fortified by decades of circulation of ideas of contagion, threatened by the pervasive necessity of black labor and by the inconvenience of Indian presence in the city, and consistently belied, from bedrooms to courtrooms, its contradictions persisting right into our present.¹⁷²

Rather than taking the city’s vision at face value as evidence of an increasingly resolute developmental state, I suggest an increasing realization that the idea of a white city was an impossible fantasy. The obsessive turn to slum clearance as an instrument to
rationalize and order space, and to clear space for industrial capital, was in fact a delusional attempt to inhabit a fantasy that bore no resemblance to reality. In this fog of not-knowing, ‘racial zoning’ emerged as a ‘solution’ only for those who need the consolations of an ostensibly neutral expert view on Durban’s future.

* * *

Much of what was debated within the Post-War Commission was literally unreal. When the Commissioners press the City on its population estimates, the latter concedes that data on Africans is arbitrary. But there is no evidence of data collection about anyone at all. Elsewhere, officials concede that they do not actually know the scale of rehousing that evictions would produce. A representative of City Hall suggests that the housing schemes of the future will have to stretch far outside the city: both a literal stretch of the imagination and a portentous one.173

At other times, the Commission is obviously ideological. When it turns to zoning ‘offensive trades,’ it portrays the southern part of the bay as the obvious area for polluting industry; and when it turns to the regulation of pollution, the focus is on Indian laundries and furniture workshops, not on sugar mills and other corporate polluters.174 The Commission clarifies that in “Durban of the future” the interests of industrial capital are secure in “the large industrial area which I visualise absorbing the head of the Bay, and taking in all the presently owned Indian property on the Clairwood Flats, and sweeping down and also taking in the Lamont Estate…following along the main South Coast road.”175

While the Council complains that it cannot both ‘de-house’ people and provide housing “on a scientific basis” on the scale necessary, it prides its proposed Wentworth-Merebank scheme of 3,200 houses; but as the discussion ensues, it is clear that without any data, it has grossly underestimated actual needs. When the discussion turns to lodgers in
Indian homes, the *Commission* proposes that lodgers are “married children, the brother’s widow and so on,” but this presumption was fundamentally overturned when a larger than expected racially-mixed population emerged out of the evictions of Indian homes across the city in the decades to come, in what would be seen as the crisis of Coloured housing. The *Commission* recognizes that the obvious lack of data necessitates a comprehensive survey, which would become the *Durban Housing Survey*.

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I began this section by suggesting that the horrors of the Second World War dramatized the dangers of biopolitical sovereignty. But war-time planning turned these dangers into an opportunity for racial capitalism, and the power of the visual was key to the sovereign right to distinguish differentiated rights to vitality in the absence of statistical data on vital matters. Capital took active part in this process of aesthetic differentiation prior to apartheid. The Chamber of Commerce met the *Commission* to impress upon it the importance of considering the aesthetic and material aspects of urban redevelopment. They commended the *Commission* for its “fanlike development” of racially-demarcated areas to prevent “racial islands” and offered to “visualize” the main industrial area in South Durban, with the adjacent Bluff as a “European workers area” and the military camp turned into “Coloured housing.” The Chamber of Commerce also raised the question of whether “it not be better to have, in these areas, some form of Local Government where these people can decide for themselves more or less how they would have their affairs conducted.” The aesthetics of planning allowed some deliberation about limited self-government within the shell of racial liberalism.

In a remarkable memorandum, Town Clerk McIntyre responds by distinguishing Durban from wider British presumptions, rehearsing its extension of municipal franchise to
white men and women over twenty-one, who are nationals and who meet a set of property qualifications as well as “Coloured and other non-European men” under the same criteria “who are not Natives” nor “descendants in the male line of Natives of countries which have not hitherto possessed elective representative institutions founded on the Parliamentary franchise,” in other words not Indians either. In attempting to balance racism and an allegedly ‘Teutonic’ legacy of ‘responsible self government,’ the Town Clerk repeats arguments about limits to democracy in ‘white men’s countries’:

The City Council concedes that the maxim that there should be “no taxation without representation” is a proper and equitable general principle of democratic government: and it acknowledges the ethical rightness of the third principle of the Atlantic Charter respecting “the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live.” But the Council accepts also the view expressed by Field Marshal Smuts…that although this country subscribes to the Atlantic Charter, its principles cannot be applied at once ‘en bloc’ in this country but must be “carefully worked out on the basis of the special situations, racial, economic and cultural, which exist in such profoundly complex and varied societies as those of India or on the African Continent or elsewhere.”

While invoking Smuts, the Town Clerk is cognizant of the specter of universal suffrage as reason for a segregated form of development under white tutelage. Given, in his view, a fundamental dissimilarity in all aspects of life between “non-European and the European peoples of the Durban Area,” he argues that a single elected body is impossible for an undefined duration in which “the Westernization of the Non-European peoples may develop to a greater extent than it has so far achieved.” He then concedes that if the Council’s proposals for racial zoning were to go through, there would be a possibility for “a
measure of local autonomy within…zones.” What is on offer is a vision of differentiated sovereignty cloaked as autonomy without franchise, in segregated zones that institutionalize the political exclusion of Africans and ‘Non-European women.’

* * *

The Council was desperate for the Post-War Commission to endorse its proposed Merebank-Wentworth Scheme for Indians and Coloureds. Since it did not own the area of the proposed scheme, and as of late 1943, could not expropriate numerous small owners, it requested the Commission for stronger control over the processes of acquisition and subdivision in the redevelopment to come.

The City Engineer shows the Commissioners detailed plans of layouts for plots, with considerations for traffic, proximity to industry, open spaces, an area on higher ground for well-off Indians, and for a university which would never come to be. The Commission does not note that it presumes residents in nearby Clairwood would have to be expropriated to make way for industry, while those dispossessed through the Slums Act in Merebank could be re-housed in the a scheme adjacent to industry. Rather, it deliberates about whether the housing scheme would create a Coloured ‘racial island,’ a disruption in its racial aesthetics. An expert from Cape Town allays these fears by arguing that “there has never been any difficulty between Europeans and Coloureds, such as you have now between Europeans and Indians.”

Councilor Barns reassures the Commission that the City’s vision with respect to Indians and Africans is “of radial development…which will extend for a considerable number of miles where they are going to be employed and catered for.” Once more, an aesthetic ideology, comes to the rescue. While a ‘racial island,’ Barnes concedes, residents of
the Merebank-Wentworth scheme would be “in proximity to the place that would absorb them in employment.” The Estates Manager picks up this line of argument that since South Durban has become the main industrial area, “we must try and surround that with places where these people employed can live close to their employment,” so that “the lowest paid labourer” is always close at hand.

The ensuing discussion presses for secrecy at the moment of expropriation, to prevent the ‘unfair’ inflation of land prices and to allow the expropriated a ‘fair market price’ with some ‘margin.’ In other words, eviction had to be recalibrated to the idea of a progressive city upholding economic liberalism. The Mayor refuses the possibility of compulsion, and the City Treasurer clarifies that transfer of properties would be facilitated gradually through racial limits to the sale of property.

The Commission calls back Senator Shepstone to questions him on “radial development” and “some form of participation in local government.” In this second testimony to the Commission, Shepstone argues strongly that “it is impossible to have segregation industrially and commercially” and the only real alternative is a positive development policy with respect to industry and agriculture. Echoing a position radicalized in the analysis of communist party political economist Harold Wolpe, Shepstone argues that the dominant view about Africans presumes a ‘family anchorage’ in the reserves which has been quite substantially eroded, with a large population “absolutely detribalized.” In other words, African exclusion was the social and political tinderbox that could bring down the entire exercise in post-war planning.

* * *

In October 1944, the Commission published its Ninth Interim Report, known informally as the Barnes Report, the key text for racial planning in Durban. The Barnes Report has a
fascinating dual structure. Part I is a general statement on the application of British ideas of planning in South Africa; problems of public health, rack-renting and black belts on the urban periphery; and the importance of a “technical, professional and scientific town planning body” in the service of “a strong and virile European civilisation in South Africa.” In other words, ‘planning’ would save white supremacy by biopolitical means. Part II attempts to reconcile racism and liberalism through ideas of ‘ethnology’ and ‘inter-racial relationship.’ The text argues that ‘racial adjustment’ in Durban must accord with other parts of Southern Africa and that planning might thereby limit ‘residential juxtaposition’ between ‘Europeans’ and others, and between ‘Asiatics’ and ‘Africans.’ This racial view is then made consistent with the tenets of liberalism in this remarkable passage:

[Y]our Commission believes that the population of Natal cannot be divided into economic watertight compartments based on racial lines – that is to say, if economic prosperity is to be established for the whole community, then, in its view, the laws of economics must be allowed as free play between the different racial groups as they are between individuals in each group. A European master who pays his Native servant a wage some part of which finds its way back to a European bank through European channels of commerce or industry demonstrates that economics are not divisible on racial lines. This process of economic inter-relationship might be traced further through all the more complex activities and phases of an intricate economic order based broadly on a Western form of civilisation. In other words, liberalism would not be compatible with what Shepstone had called ‘economic segregation.’ Yet, the master-servant parable at the center of this formulation ensures that the movement of wages, interest and profit is not racially ‘divisible’ because ‘economic order’ is firmly in ‘European’ or ‘Western’ hands. What is presumed is that
capitalism and white supremacy are foundationally intertwined: an admission that capitalism is always racial capitalism.

The *Barnes Report* goes on to argue that Africans must remain subject to employment and residential discrimination “with the European as trustee,” that Coloureds will diverge towards either “European standards or…Native habits,” and that Indians “of the labouring, peasant and employee class” are tolerably useful, but “the Indian of the more affluent classes is a menace to European civilisation in Natal” and must be spatially segregated.¹⁹⁷ Barnes articulates the racial truth that had been circulated since the dawn of the twentieth century in Durban: the Indian bourgeoisie is the class is most threatening to the fantasy of the white city, and which provides the strongest justification for racial segregation.

The City Council responded well to the *Barnes Report*, as it proved expedient to its plans to re-house people expropriated by the industrialization of South Durban. The Merebank-Wentworth Housing Scheme was to be built quickly, pending discussions with the Admiralty on Assegai Camp, and the South African Railways and Harbours on its plans for a new aerodrome. The *Barnes Report* provided the air of expertise akin to consultancy knowledge in our time, to expropriate areas “occupied intensively” by Indians and other Black Durbanites who rented backyard accommodation from them.¹⁹⁸

* * *

Undeterred by the presence of ‘Indian squatters,’ the British Admiralty and the Union Ministry of Defense had acquired a share of the proposed Merebank-Wentworth Housing Scheme site during wartime, for an Admiralty Training Depot, Transit Camp and Hospital over 250 acres.¹⁹⁹ The Admiralty’s H.M.S. Assegai operated in Wentworth from October 1942 to May 1944 as a training and transit camp and drafting office for the Eastern and Mediterranean Fleets of the Royal Navy. References to H.M.S. Assegai appear in
memoires of veterans who spent time in Natal. There is an innocence to this sepia-tinted photograph at the Local History Museum labelled “Payday,” in which young men in shorts casually assemble on a rugged hillside that would later become the much loved neighborhood of Assegai in Wentworth (Map X).

“HMS Assegai Payday,” n.d. (ca 1943) [LHM]

With the war’s end in sight, the Government began a long process of negotiation with the Council culminating in formal lease agreement with the British Admiralty and the Union Government under which ‘Wentworth Camp’ could be used only for military purposes, and at the end of which the City could acquire land and buildings at a reasonable price. This remarkable document shows how confident the Durban City Council was in securing its interests from federal and imperial governments.

When the Defense Ministry sought to house “wives and families” of ex-volunteers in the transit camp, after reassuring the government that military families would be at some remove from the housing scheme, the Council countered with a proposal for housing for “Indians of better means” near the Ack-Ack Training Station on the ridge. Ack-Ack, named for the sound of an anti-aircraft gun, continues to be a micro-neighborhood in
Wentworth today near the police station, considered a relatively better part of the township (Map X). The government secured areas of Wentworth Naval Camp north of Hime Lane as “zoned and treated...for European occupation.” When the Admiralty vacated the premises in December 1945, the Union Government took over the naval hospital in Wentworth and converted it into a specialized hospital for tuberculosis for Europeans, with “86 modern flats for ex-volunteers in employment.”

In a remarkably revealing discussion, the Minister of Public Health proposed a major shift in the government’s approach from playing “catch up with ill-health” to “combining preventative measures with curative methods” through ‘health centres’ and an ‘Institute for Hygiene;’ what is most surprising is that this was to be located in and around Clairwood around “housing schemes of various racial creeds” and “in the midst of an industrial area.” Assegai camp was suggested as one possible site for this institute, but this was also mooted as ‘non-European’ health workers would have to pass through the white part of Wentworth on a daily basis. This appeal to South Durban as a particularly good site for this kind of expertise in vitality was extremely prescient, as this was exactly what would happen after the war through the work of a set of progressive experts in what would become the field of ‘social medicine’ (Chapter 4).

* * *

Stuck within a file on the Merebank Native Hostel is a 1945 petition from a group of African men, Philemon Ncongo, Philemon Radebe, Mkunjili Kumalo, Michael Nzimande and Simon Dhlamini, representing 180 families who had built homes on private land south of Merebank, who relied on employment in the area, and who faced eviction by the Department of Transport’s plan to build a new aerodrome on the site. “[G]iven notice to leave this ground immediately,” they had nowhere to go, as “municipal locations are filled to
capacity.” There was no response from the Town Clerk. They appear to have met similar deaf ears from the Municipal Native Administration Department and the Native Commissioner. Archived among letters that need no response, there is no ambiguity about who, still, did not count.207

**Conclusion: Impossible fantasies of segregation**

The industrialization of South Durban was built on the fin-de-siècle alliance of corporate capital and the state which ruled the roost since the nineteenth century minerals boom, to which Durban harbor was crucially linked. Capital found its representatives and claims to the potential industrial landscape on the flatlands south of the port early on through the Natal Manufacturers Association and Natal Chamber of Industries. The Slums Act of 1934 gave local authorities new powers to demolish and re-plan existing housing, to clear dredge land for industrialization along Maydon Wharf and south of the bay, and to deal with the black belt once and for all.208 This is what the images I began this chapter with so powerfully conceal through the dull routines of infrastructural photography.

As South Durban was slowly transformed from a peri-urban landscape of part-time framers into an industrial landscape, the visual presence of industrial capital became increasingly central. But what remains forgotten in the historiography of infrastructural change are the labors of primitive accumulation involved in creating a capitalist landscape, as Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker powerfully remind us.209 An older resident of Merebank pointed to the cut in the hillside where the Umlaas Canal reaches the ocean and said his father had dug it out with his hands. There is no name for the recognition consequent on making a productive landscape. The Black Marxist tradition has tried to connect this submerged history of capitalism with the inseparability of anti-racist and
proletarian will. The Black Benjamin I have conjured holds up this gestural inversion of power to the nascent ruins of the present, to question what is assumed in an argument about ‘racial Fordism’ if not the submerged revolutionary potential of Black labor. Or to put it differently, Walter Benjamin and CLR James would have exchanged a few words about this.

African exclusion was institutionalized in this period as the tools of planning were employed to try to keep Africans in the countryside through Regional and ‘Betterment’ planning. While attacking Black informal housing, the state did invest in limited spaces for Black middle-class life in the city such as Durban’s Lamontville ‘African village’ and Baumanville; Lamontville and Chesterville were funded by the ‘Durban System’ of municipal self-financing, but this far from met the massive need for decent housing for Africans living in shacks, reported at 27,000 by 1948. The ambiguous and contradictory nature of state intervention in the means of life made no mistake that African lives were expendable. As we will see in the next chapter, this does not mean that Black critique was extinguished.

From the moment of incorporation of the ‘black belt’ to the Barnes Report’s call for racial planning, there are three key points I have sought to make. First, the Mayor’s Minutes and the Boundaries Commission show that the Council knew very little on the ground, and that in the absence of social scientific knowledge, its fantasy of biopolitical territoriality took on a more coercive, police form. Indeed, this is probably the cases in most instances of biopolitics, which is why I suggest that biopolitics is haunted by the power rather than the truth of distanced transformation of people and environs in the interests of vitality.

Second, from pressure from India behind the Cape Town Agreement to the Carnegie Foundation’s interest in the ‘poor white problem,’ external social forces interacted with regional and local dynamics to push the Council to take seriously that it had to intervene in matters of Black vitality. However, the City was constantly irked by the presence
of an Indian middle class with its own mimetic tradition of progressivism and its own efforts at improving Indian ‘standards of living.’ In response, official discourse sought to vilify Indian habitation and to paint the Indian poor as in need of rescue from exploitative elites.

Third, wartime exigencies provided the means for the City to step out of an aleatory approach to the ABCs of segregation towards a more concerted project that I call progressive segregation. The Postwar Commission seemed to offer the tools for racial planning, as it turned to the aesthetics of maps and visualization to project a fantasy of biopolitical territoriality despite an absence of expert knowledge, let alone consent to its implementation. Before the Nationalist Party came to power and ushered in a policy of urban apartheid, the city could imagine a form of biopolitical sovereignty that could use planning to sort places and populations to try to forcibly create a city in the image of its impossible racial fantasy. This biopolitical ideology was hegemonic in the Gramscian sense, in that it sought the consent of the white working class, while attempting to police the Black majority. The virtue of Grasmeci’s concept is that it highlights how a police form of biopolitical government with little for the consent of the majority of Durbanites might also have been a boon to capital, and to a local developmental state. But the possibility of hegemony was also in a sense constantly confounded by what Breckenridge calls the enduring legacy of ‘power without knowledge.’ The next chapter picks up on the ways in which most Black people sought to live despite the coercive imposition of this fantasy, how some residents across race dissented within the terrain of biopolitical discourse, and why a Black materialist feminist perspective is indispensible to truly grasp what I call biopolitical struggle.
NOTES

1 (Benjamin 2002/1935) 44. The Arendt edition translates “by cunning” as “as a ruse,” which is more suggestive of the attraction of a mirage that might in fact be true this once.

2 Thanks for Geeta Patel for pressing me on the past perfect subjunctive, or the subjunctive mood in Hindi, for the possibilities of thinking with futures imagined in the past, June 20, 2012. This is slightly different to what Rabinow proposes through his elaboration of subjacent theory, and it might push Geoff Eley’s history of the social in new directions. There is also an inspiration from Carolyn Steedman’s brilliant meditation, Landscape for a Good Woman, and the milieu in Michigan in which I was forced to read it. Would that this were a conversation with Fernando Coronil.

3 Color line book, Kate Baldwin, etc

4 I could not say this without having gained in all ways from the praxis of Ruth Wilson Gilmore.

5 (Johanningsmeier 2004); the key text on the ICU is still (Bradford 1987).


7 I paraphrase Anna Grimshaw’s argument in (James 1992) p.7.

8 See Buhle’s introduction in (James, Dunayevskaya and Boggs 1986)

9 (James, Dunayevskaya and Boggs 1986, 113-4)

10 (Cohen 1996), 4.

11 (Cohen 1996), 5.

12 Cite Benjamin’s photography essays


14 Gramscian geographies for the first; whatisface for the second, Chari 2004 for the last.

15 Again, thanks to Geeta Patal for insight and inspiration here and possibly henceforth, June 20, 2012.

16 Billy Nair, author interview


19 also Gary Wilder’s Freedom Time…

20 Helen Bradford; see also van der Walt

21 Legassick and Hirson cited in (Couzens 1982)

22 DAR, 3DBN Mayor’s Minutes, 1922, 20.

23 Stuart Hall for the language of modalities of class (and therefore, also class struggle.)

24 Freund writes that “Durban itself became a large-scale, effective speculator in property, organising the lease and sale of property in such a way as to profit while creating jobs and building up the economic weight of the city.” (Freund 2002), 14.


26 DAR, 3DBN Mayor’s Minutes notes the 1921 Borough Census population figures - Europeans at 46,113, Natives at 29,011, and Indians & Other Asians (Including Coloured, Mauritians, St Helena, &c.) at 18,391 – however, “For Public Health statistics, the “Coloured” population is included in the “European,” the estimated number in Durban being reckoned about 4,200,” (p.4)

27 Durban Housing Survey, p.19, 35

28 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1923, 11.

29 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1923, 19.

30 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1924, 5.

31 This is Sparks’ perceptive observation; Sparks, “Playing at Public Health,” 6. As elsewhere in these chapters, profound thanks to Stephen for letting me “step on his toes.”

32 Sparks, “Playing at Public Health,” 4-6.

33 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1924, 4, 24. The Minutes go on to report dissatisfaction with the press for reporting on ‘passive resistance’ to the ‘dipping’ of Africans for Typhus prevention, which the Council maintains should rather be called ‘cleansing’; again, the imperative here is not ‘biopolitical’ but rather of a more humiliating form of domination in which subjects are not enlisted in their own vitality, nor enumerated and regulated as a population.

34 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1924, 19-23.
35 (D. Scott 1994) 239
36 (D. Scott 1994), 241; Freund 2004: 15
37 (Scott 2003), 245, citing the Natal Chamber of Industries, 26th Annual Report, 1932-1933, 19.
38 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1925, 10; the quote is from DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1926, 5. Thanks to Monique Marks for spreading her ‘Umbilo Pride.’
39 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1926, 17. This argument parallels that made by Legassick and Wolpe on the relations between migrant labour and the emergence of apartheid. CitE5
40 The parallels with cities of the North Atlantic is appropriate here, as cities like London had similar histories of voluntary organizations as the standard bearers of poor relief/
41 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1926, 6.
42 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1926, 7. See Asher Ghertner’s work on the transformation of these Victorian discourses in ‘nuisance’ law in twenty-first century New Delhi.
43 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1926, 7.
44 Smuts’ Union Government had prepared the Class Areas Bill of 1923 for the compulsory restriction of trading and residence of ‘classes’ in particular Class Areas in the coastal belt. The national government was concerned with Indian segregation in the 1920s, and Indian nationalists continued to mount a response. Scott 1994: 62; Vahed and Desai on Monty Naicker etc
45 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1926, 12-13.
47 Scott 62-3, 82. A study by liberal economists from the University of Natal in 1952 argues of this event that both Union and colonial Indian “governments reaffirmed their recognition of the right of the Union to use all just and legitimate means to maintain Western standards of life” and that the South African “Union Government recognised that Indians who are prepared to conform to Western standards of life should do so.” The racial presumption is that whites conform to ‘standards of living’ as a whole, despite class differentiation, and that Indians, but not others, may do so through individual effort. (University of Natal 1952, University of Natal 1952)
48 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1927, 9.
49 “The problem is one of scientific area planning in the suburbs, housing, and the rigid observance of public health regulations.” DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1927, 4.
50 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1927, 5. The idea of the ‘garden suburb’ had emerged from the compromises of Ebenezer Howard’s ‘garden city’ ideal of rural-urban anarchist cooperativism, a hoped-for alternative to capitalist urbanism that instead transformed into the middle-class commuter suburb. Howard, Bader, Hall.
51 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1927, 6
52 (Crankshaw 2005) 367-8. Sue Parnell and Owen Crankshaw argue with respect to Johannesburg that this provision of class differentiated housing for Africans only became a priority in the 1940s, and that the Urban Areas Act of 1923 was implemented slowly in this regard, with the main focus on the eviction of ‘slums.’ This was certainly the case in Durban as well, though it is the Borough’s initiative in thinking about securing black populations in the city that is of particular interest in 1927-8, and once again Durban was an innovator in making racial geographies.
53 DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1927, 29; DAR, 3DBN 1.3.3.1.1 Health and Housing Committee 1927-9, ‘Special Committee re Housing,’ 19 July 1929, p.2.
54 Tim Couzens work on black diasporic networks and imagined solidarities is crucial for tracing the ways in which some Africans could participate in their refashioning as ‘New Africans,’ in parallel to the ‘New Negro’ of the 1920s US, but this is beyond the scope of my study (Couzens 1982)
55 Scott 65
56 ‘Housing of Indians,’ Memo by Town Clerk, 12 Sept 1928. DAR, 3DBN 1.3.3.1.1 Health and Housing Committee (32 1927-9). Cato Manor would become Durban’s iconic multi-ethnic ‘slum,’ and the site of the major anti-Indian pogrom of 1949.
57 ‘Meeting on Visit of Central Housing Board’ (ND, estimated late 1928), in 3DBN 1.3.3.1.1 Health and Housing Committee (32 1927-9)
58 ‘Housing of Coloured Community’ (ND, estimated late 1928), in 3DBN 1.3.3.1.1 Health and Housing Committee (32 1927-9).
‘Special Meeting Re Housing,’ 31 October 1928, p.2, in 3DBN 1.3.3.1.1 Health and Housing Committee (32 1927-9)

Jon Soske’s dissertation on anti-semetism applied to Indians

DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1929, 16.

DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1929, 16-17.

DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1929, 12.

(Freund 2002), 15.

DAR, 3DBN 4.1.2.1268, ‘Sale of Land for Manufacture,’ 1929.


(Nightingale 2012) 3, 16.

note Breckenridge on the documentary state.


Borough Boundaries Commission, 8-9

Basil Davidson, Warwick Anderson etc

Borough Boundaries Commission, 13. ‘mealie’ is vernacular for corn.

Warwick Anderson

Thanks to Prema Chari for pushing me on the strange recurrence of ‘wood and iron’ construction and what it signifies.

Borough Boundaries Commission, 15

cite F/A on biopolitical caesura?

Borough Boundaries Commission, 19

Borough Boundaries Commission, 19

The Kenya Commmission argues against multiple municipalities governing a common social and economic region. Borough Boundaries Commission, 24-5

Borough Boundaries Commission, 28, 30.

Borough Boundaries Commission, 30.

Borough Boundaries Commission, 36.

Borough Boundaries Commission, 25

Borough Boundaries Commission, 36-7.

Borough Boundaries Commission, 46-7.

Borough Boundaries Commission, 48, 54-5.

Borough Boundaries Commission, 55-6.

(Joyce 2002) 100.

(Joyce 2002) 101-2.

DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1927, 10-11; (Grosskopf 1933), 195. Grosskpf (1933: 195) estimates 95% of ‘white labourers’ in 1926 as Afrikaners from rural areas, many of whom were quickly promoted to train conductors.

(Malherbe 1932) 3-4.

(Wilcocks 1932), 177.

(Malherbe 1932) 6.

(Malherbe 1932) 7. Volume IV on health similarly concludes that “no evidence has been found during the investigation to show that either epidemic or endemic disease, underfeeding or ill-feeding, or the climate of South Africa so deleteriously affects the physique or nutrition of the well-to-do sections of the European population as to bring about their poverty. The primary causes which have resulted in the Poor White Problem have not been physical. But poverty and ignorance lead to malnutrition and so weaken the poor white’s resistance to disease, lessen his physical efficiency and thus accentuate the problem.” (Murray 1932) 127. Ann Stoler has argued exhaustively, this desire for a proper education was never secure, but rather provided a cipher for the expression of broader tensions in colonial capitalism; for instance, (Stoler 1995).

(Touleier 1938) 6

(Touleier 1938) 27
(Grosskopf 1933), 184 on Durban; map between pp.xiv and xv. Touleier's booklet is written for popular dissemination of some of the ideas from the Carnegie Commission, and it notes that Durban and its environs attracted the attention of the Commission (Touleier 1938) 7.

DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor's Minutes, 1931, 7.

(Grosskopf 1933), 164-5.

Chapter 3: Jon Soske’s dissertation on anti-semetism applied to Indians


Killie Campbell, F323.125 COL, Colonial Born and Settlers’ Indian Association 1933-1934, First Natal Provincial Conference.

DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1935, 2-4.

DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 Mayor’s Minutes, 1936, 3, 5.

(D. Scott 1994) 249

(Scott 2003), 246, citing the Natal Chamber of Industries, 31st Annual Report, 1938-39, 28.


Smit: 55

Smit: 79

The term ‘racial Fordism’ formulated by John Saul and Stephen Gelb appears in retrospect to be a hasty modification of Gramsci’s concept to a context in which coercion was not exceptional.

Henri Lefebvre, but also some infrastructure stuff.

(D. Scott 1994) 255-6

(D. Scott 1994) 256

DAR, 3DBN ANN A4.11 14.6.1. Durban Borough Extension Enquiries Commission, 3-9

(Donzelot 1977) pp.6-7.

3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.8 Point Area, Assistant City Engineer to the Town Clerk, 17 September, 1937, enclosed transcript of Public Health (Slums) Committee Meeting, 2-3, 5, 9.

3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.8 Point Area, Assistant City Engineer to the Town Clerk, 17 September, 1937, enclosed transcript of Public Health (Slums) Committee Meeting, 13.

3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.8 Point Area, Assistant City Engineer to the Town Clerk, 17 September, 1937, enclosed transcript of Public Health (Slums) Committee Meeting, 17.

3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.8 Point Area, ‘Minutes of Public Health (Slums) Committee,’ 20 September, 1937, enclosed transcript of committee meeting, 5.

3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.8 Point Area, ‘Minutes of Public Health (Slums) Committee,’ 20 September, 1937, enclosed transcript of committee meeting, 5.


DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2097 643J MNH Merebank Native Men’s Hostel 1938-45, Letter from the Town Clerk to Central Housing Board, 9 September, 1942, 6.

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2097 643J MNH Merebank Native Men’s Hostel 1938-45, Extract from Report of City and Water Engineer, 21 December, 1943.

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2097 643J MNH Merebank Native Men’s Hostel 1938-45, Extract from Report of City and Water Engineer, 21 December, 1943.

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. ‘Chronological Record of the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme’ 1.

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. ‘Chronological Record of the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme’ 1.

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. ‘Chronological Record of the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme’ 2.

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. Schedules of Defects and Other Conditions of Nuisance, 5 March 1940.

Find cite

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. Town Clerk to W.D. Robertson, 14 August 1940, 1.

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. Town Clerk to W.D. Robertson, 19 August 1940, 2.
133 Juggernath’s *Diary*, 73.
134 Juggernath’s *Diary*, 74.
135 Juggernath’s *Diary*, 74-5.
136 Juggernath’s *Diary*, 75.
137 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. Merebank Indian Ratepayers Association to Town Clerk, 14 October 1940; City Medical Officer of Health to Town Clerk, 25 October 1940; Town Clerk to Merebank Indian Ratepayers Association, 29 October 1940.
138 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. ‘Chronological Record of the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme’—.
139 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. ‘Chronological Record of the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme’ 3.
140 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. ‘Chronological Record of the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme’ 4.
141 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. ‘Chronological Record of the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme’ 7.
142 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.2146 643J Slum Clearance SJ.7 Merebank Wentworth Area 1940. ‘Chronological Record of the Merebank/Wentworth Housing Scheme’ 7.
143谢谢给斯科特·斯佩克特的感谢，并要求引用本文。
144 Mabin and whatsisface 284-5.
145 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, 15 May, 1943, City Medical Officer of Health to Town Clerk.
146 Fred
147 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, 28 May, 1943, City and Water Engineer’s Department, Post War Development – Durban, 1.
148 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, 28 May, 1943, City and Water Engineer’s Department, Post War Development – Durban, 2.
149 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, 28 May, 1943, City and Water Engineer’s Department, Post War Development – Durban, 4.
150 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, 28 May, 1943, City and Water Engineer’s Department, Post War Development – Durban, 5. See also DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, May 1943. ‘Proceedings Resumed.’ 86.
152 DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission, 27 May, 1943, ‘Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission. Record of Proceedings.’ 51-4. Thanks to Stephen Sparks for pointing out that D.G. Shepstone was indeed the grandson of T. Sthepstone, and that according to the classic liberal history of Natal (Brookes and Webb’s *A History of Natal*) says “the fortunes of Natal were entrusted to D.G. Shepstone, in whom something of the ancient glories of Sir Theophilus were revived;” he worked closely with Smuts on the 'Indian question' around the time of the 'Pegging Act' controversy, and was Provincial Administrator of Natal from 1948 to 1958. Pers com. June 8 2012. Cite Keith on Shepstone.

68


Thanks to Geeta Patel for the conversation that sparked this, Jun 20, 2012.


Scott is of course a geographer, but ‘historian’ is a compliment of the highest order in South Africa.


The image is unattributed in (Mabin 1999), and the editor of the volume could also offer no clues as to its source; it is also on prominent display at the Apartheid Museum, but again with no attribution.


Ask Eprecht if I can cite him.


DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission. 1943 ‘Memorandum to the Natal Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission Submitted to the Durban City Council,’ 1, 9.


DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission. 1943 ‘Memorandum to the Natal Provincial Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission Submitted to the Durban City Council,’ 11-12.


DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission. ‘Proceedings Resumed at 2.15pm, 10 September 1943,’ 768-9 (15-16).

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission. ‘Proceedings Resumed at 2.15pm, 10 September 1943,’ 753-7 (1-4).

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission. ‘Proceedings Resumed at 2.15pm, 10 September 1943,’ 757-61 (4-8).

DAR 3DBN 4.1.3.243 Post-War Works and Reconstruction Commission. ‘Proceedings Resumed at 2.15pm, 10 September 1943,’ 763-766 (10-13).


Quick gloss on Wolpe?

Regional planning boomed through the establishment in 1940 of the Natal Town and Regional Planning Commission, with two key experts: Douglas Mitchell, who had had been on the Post-War Works, Planning, and Reconstruction Committee, and E. Thorrington-Smith, who had also spent time in the military where he had read about the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the US South. ‘Betterment Planning’ was a response to the Native Economic Commission of 1932, which concluded that the ‘native reserves’ were in a state of economic decline which would increase urban migration. Without reforming land tenure, or providing infrastructure or marketing facilities, ‘Betterment Planning’ was consistent with keeping Africans out of the city. (Smit: 91-3).

(Mabin and Smit: 202)

(University of Natal 1952) 347

(Donzelot 1977), with thanks to Gill Hart for leading me here.