STRUCTURE AND EXPERIENCE IN THE MAKING OF APARTHEID

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THE BACKGROUND TO APARTHEID IN CAPE TOWN: THE GROWTH OF
RACISM AND SEGREGATION FROM THE MINERAL REVOLUTION TO THE
1930's.

When embarking on my recently completed Phd thesis entitled

"Commerce, Class and Ethnicity in Cape Town, 1875-1902", I

had obviously hoped to contribute to the historiographical

debate about the relative primacy of "class" or "race" as

units of collective social action in the past (1) . Somewhat

to my disappointment, this debate , of course, de-escalated

in the 1980's. The student of South African history is no

longer confronted with a stark choice between opposing

idealist and materialist explanations of this country's

past. Instead something of a synthesis is emerging as

Giliomee, reviewing Fredrickson's interactionist position in

White Supremacy, hoped that it would (2) .

This synthesis acknowledges the existence of White racism

before the Mineral Revolution, although the emphasis here

has moved away from seeing the frontier as the incubator of

this racism towards stressing the significance of racial

slavery in the South Western Cape (3) . In addition Shula

Marks, amongst others, has argued that many features of

South African segregation, as they developed into twentieth

1 JV Bickford-Smith, "Commerce, Class and Ethnicity in Cape
Town, 1875 to 1902", Phd thesis, Cambridge University, 1988.

2 H Giliomee, "White Supremacy: a comparative perspective",
Standpunt,36,1983.

3 R Elphick and H Giliomee (eds) The Shaping of South
African Society,1652-1840,(Cape Town,Maskew Miller
Longman,1989),ch.11.

century Apartheid, were a result of the nature of the resistance of African societies to their incorporation in settler states. These features included the reserves/homelands and the use of chiefs as agents of the colonial state (4) . The synthesis also argues that the demands of mining capital at Kimberley and on the Rand led to the establishment of central features of urban segregation such as the mining compound, migrant labour, the labour registration office and, more controversially I would think, the urban location and pass system (5) .

But despite our much better understanding of the history of the growth of segregation in South Africa, significant gaps remain . I believe that this is largely due to the fact that the synthesis is the result of scholarly focus on specific fields of pre-twentieth century South African history: slavery, African societies and the mining industry. As it is, a number of questions still suggest themselves, and it is worth mentioning just three as they are either tangential or central to the rest of this paper.

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4 S Marks, " 'White Supremacy': a review article", Comparative Studies in Society and History,29,2,(1987),385-397.

5 JW Cell, The Highest Stage of White Supremacy,(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press,1982), especially ch 3; WH Worger, South Africa's City of Diamonds: Mine Workers and Monopoly Capitalism in Kimberley, 1867-1895,(Craighall, AD Donker, 1987). RV Turrell, Capital and Labour on the Kimberley Diamond Fields,1871-1890,(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987). There had, of course, been de facto locations for Africans and coloureds in the Cape before the discovery of diamonds.

Firstly, what has been the changing nature of racist
discourse in South Africa and how can one account for
changes and continuities in this discourse? In other words,
as Saul Dubow has complained, there has been relatively
little examination of the content of South African racism
(6) . Secondly, and obviously closely connected, what has
been the relationship between different racist discourses-
how have they informed one another? In this respect what was
the relationship between British and Afrikaners/Dutch at the
Cape, or between merchants and farmers? Thirdly, what
difference has the dominance of merchant rather than mining
capital made to the history of racism and segregation?

So to racism and segregation in Cape Town-or should it be
the relative lack of racism and segregation in Cape Town?
Certainly George Fredrickson has argued, following David
Welsh in the Oxford History, that Cape Town in the early
twentieth century, Cape Town before 1948 perhaps, was an
exceptional place in its relative lack of segregation
compared to elsewhere in South Africa (7) . This argument
accords well with a belief popularly held by particularly
older Capetonians that segregation in the form of Apartheid

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6 S Dubow, "The idea of race in early 20th Century South
Africa:some preliminary thoughts",unpublished paper
presented to the Africa Seminar,UCT,1989.

7 GM Fredrickson, White Supremacy,(New York, Oxford
University Press,1981), p 267; D Welsh, "The growth of
towns", in M Wilson and L Thompson (eds), The Oxford History
of South Africa,vol 2, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1971),p
174.

was imposed on the city by a Nationalist Government after
1948. Fredrickson has argued that Cape Town's alleged
uniqueness in the early decades of the century was due to a
combination of the "notorious permeability of the color
line" with a "certain tolerance of miscegenation", that made
segregated accomodation in Cape Town "not only contrary to
local traditions but impracticable" (8) . Unfortunately
Fredrickson has explained very little. The existence of the
"notorious permeability of the color line" was certainly
used on occasion to explain why segregation in Cape Town
was, or could be, difficult to attain. It probably does help
to explain why de jure segregation was delayed in education
and some Government institutions in the city in the late
nineteenth century. But this permeability ultimately did not
prevent the introduction of pretty comprehensive segregation
in Cape Town before 1948, let alone thereafter. "Contrary to
local traditions" explains everything and nothing. It begs
the question of why those local traditions existed in the
first place, as well as why at least residential segregation
in Cape Town lagged behind the rest of South Africa. Answers
to both these questions can only be found in an examination
of Cape Town's social formation. How the latter differed
from that of a mining centre like Kimberley or Johannesburg
goes a long way in explaining the relative extent and nature
of segregation in these cities.

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8 Fredrickson, p 267.

At the advent of the Mineral Revolution Cape Town, like
Stedman Jones' London, and unlike Kimberley with its mine-
owners, was a place of "small masters". Indeed similarities
in the functions of London and Cape Town produced many
similarities in their social formations. In both cities
economic power lay with those whose income derived from
"rent, banking and commerce" (9) . Seasonality of
production, types of casual occupation and a strong
artisanal sector characterised both labour markets. What is
more, almost half of Cape Town's artisans were black, a
legacy of skills acquired in the era of slavery. The nature
of Cape Town's social formation helps to explain the nature,
and limitations, of segregation and an ethnic division of
labour in the city. The latter, in part· due to the imprecise
nature of the division of labour itself (within many
occupational categories) remained far from rigid.

Cape Town's elite consisted of merchants, professionals,
members of Government and the Civil Service. Few of .this
elite employed black labour, or any labour, in large
quantities. Indeed, for many, experience of black labour was
confined to their positions as employers of domestic
servants. Not surprisingly then, there were few signs in
Cape Town of a powerful capitalist class pushing for state
intervention to bring about the equivalent of the segregated
institutions of Kimberley.Nevertheless, Cape Town's elite

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9 G Stedman Jones Outcast London, (Harmonsworth,Penguin,1976)
p 239

identified whiteness with priveleged social position and, as
their predecessors would appear to have required from at
least the late eighteenth century, whiteness was a necessary
qualification for social success. Thus social position and
ethnic consciousness interacted to unite a dominant class
in Cape Town which at this stage displayed little evidence
of a racist discourse that argued for, or rationalised, the
separation of white and black amongst Cape Town's lower
classes.

Consequently, in the 1870's, segregation between white and
black in Cape Town was limited to what amounted to the
informal segregation of those deemed insufficiently white
from the institutions and facilities frequented by Cape
Town's dominant class. This kind of segregation I would dub
exclusion. Thus, in 1875, blacks were informally excluded
from the better schools, and were confined to either the
back pews of churches in the case of the Anglican cathedral,
or separate churches if they were DRC, Wesleyan or
Methodist. Dominant class Capetonians could also buy
residential exclusivity, given the absence of significant
numbers of sufficiently wealthy blacks. However, black and
white mixed in the poorer residential areas, in the Mission
schools and in working class Anglican congregations. Juries
were mixed, and those they sentenced were not segregated if
they ended up at the Breakwater gaol. Hospitals were not
segregated. There were both mixed marriages and
cohabitations amongst lower class Capetonians.

Cape Town's dominant class were mainly concerned with exclusion because throughout the nineteenth century, and to the advent of Apartheid, social mobility of "other than whites" threatened the dominant class belief that social order should coincide with racial order, if not be actually achieved via the latter. Any social recognition of "other than whites" as equals would destroy the assumption of racial superiority on which the rationalisation of dominant class position was legitimised and based (10) . Such a belief may seem to have been at variance with the non-racial political-legal tradition associated with Cape liberalism. However, as Trapido has written, "political democracy did not create social democracy". While making this point Trapido quotes JW Sauer, "one of the best known liberals" amongst Cape Politicians:

In England the workmen and the governing classes both have votes, but there is very little general equality between them—in fact, none at all; I suppose they are just as far apart in some respects as the white man and the native in this country. Political equality is by no means social equality (11) .

10 Bickford-Smith,"Commerce",ch 2, and JV Bickford-Smith, "Cape Town at the Advent of the Mineral Revolution (c.1875):Economic Activity and Social",Studies in the History of Cape Town, hereafter Studies,6,1988,61-82.

11 S Trapido, "The Friends of the Natives: Merchants, Peasants and the Political and Ideological Structure of Liberalism in the Cape,1845-1910", in S Marks and A Atmore (eds), Economy and Society in Pre-Industrial South Africa, (London,Longman,1980),p 258.

The English language newspapers, which defended the "grand
tradition" of Cape liberalism when it came to the question
of defending the non-racial franchise, and the protection of
the property and persons of "other than whites", saw no
contradiction between this tradition and segregation:
"social separation does not mean the political extinction of
the weaker race" (12) .

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the early
decades of the twentieth, the extent of segregation in Cape
Town increased considerably. One way of explaining much of
this segregation would be to argue that it was merely an
extension of exclusion at a time of greater opportunity for
black social mobility and, as Fredrickson has suggested,
when the number of "facilities" in Cape Town where exclusion
was deemed necessary also increased (13) . This argument
could explain why the town's roller skating rink was made
for whites only in 1879. After all there would have been
practical difficulties in distinguishing between whites of
different classes in a period of rapid commercial expansion
and white immigration. Exclusion extended would also seem to
explain why "wealthy Malays" were not allowed into the
town's agricultural show until after 12pm when "European
loafers" and "town girls" were admitted; why even "well-
dressed coloureds" were forced to drink at the "tap" at the

12 Cape Times 7-12-1889,leader.

13 Fredrickson, p 260.

back of good hotels, according to a ruling in a case heard
before the Resident Magistrate in 1887; why blacks were
apparently excluded from first class railway carriages and
bathing machines by 1889, from the YMCA in 1895, the Circus
in 1899, the Town Guard established in the war years from
1899 to 1902, the Tivoli Theatre in 1903 and from all the
superior hotels in the Peninsula by 1904. It could also
explain why some cricket teams or cricket competitions
excluded blacks in the course of the 1890's, as did some
residential suburbs and beaches. When cinemas came to Cape
Town in the 1900's, several of them were for whites only.
Equally it would explain why "facilities" such as trams or
third class railway carriages, some cinemas, cricket teams
or bars in working class areas, or, residentially, those
areas themselves, saw mixing of lower-class whites and
blacks right into the era of grand Apartheid.

But this argument does not easily explain the segregation of
hospitals in the early 1880's; the segregation of prisons by
the early 1890's; why only whites were, by this decade,
summoned to serve on juries; why locations were established
for African Capetonians in 1901, or why all schools were
segregated by the School Boards' Act of 1905. Clearly what
was new about segregation in Cape Town from the era of the
Mineral Revolution onwards was not just that it was
increasing to prevent the upward mobility of blacks, but
that segregation was now reaching down into the hitherto
undifferentiated lower classes to distinguish white from

black. This kind of segregation, which I have dubbed
separation, was accompanied by the growth of a seemingly new
racist discourse that argued both for the existence of
permanent difference between black and white and for the
need for all members of the two "races" to be socially
separate (14) .

Crucial to this development was the need of the dominant
classes in town and countryside to maintain political
power, and thus social position, after the granting of
Responsible Government to the Cape in 1872. The latter
required them to be responsive to an electorate the majority
of whom were white. Significantly, electoral arithmetic
ensured that the predominantly Afrikaans or Dutch-speaking
commercial farmers could dominate the parliamentary
institution if they could persuade lower class rural whites
to vote for them-a strong incentive for Afrikaner political
and ethnic mobilisation, which emphasised white solidarity
that cut across class lines and would enable commercial
farmers, as Stanley Greenberg has suggested, to use state
power to elaborate "the labour-repressive and racial
framework" of the countryside (15) . Such mobilisation was

14 JV Bickford-Smith, "A 'special tradition of multi-
racialism'? Segregation in Cape Town in the late nineteenth
and early twentieth centuries", in WG James and M Simons
(eds), The Angry Divide,(Cape Town,David Philip,1989).

15 S Greenberg, Race and State in Capitalist
Development,(Johannesburg,Ravan,1980), p 26. See also H
Giliomee, "Aspects of the rise of Afrikaner capital and
Afrikaner nationalism in the Western Cape,1870-1915", in
James and Simons, pp 47-62.

presumably facilitated by the fact that although some
farmers had at times experimented with white unskilled
labour, the majority wished to maintain a rigid ethnic
division of labour, given the reality of cheap and
controllable black labour and expensive and difficult white
(16) . Thus rural relations of production from the late
eighteenth century onwards had whites as landowners or
supervisors, blacks as the unskilled workforce. Although
there is, as yet, little research on the content of late
nineteenth century Afrikaner racial thought, it is clear
that a discourse existed that argued the need for separation
of white and black and that coincided sufficiently closely
with material realities in the countryside to be a practical
component of Afrikaner ethnic mobilisation, the quid pro quo
of lower class Afrikaner support for the elite (17) .
Equally it was undoubtedly this dynamic that led to the
discovery of "poor whiteism" as an Afrikaner problem in the
1890's, and which led the DRC and Afrikaner Bond to throw
their weight behind the need for superior and separate
schooling for whites (18) .

An ethnic division of labour was not nearly so clear cut in
Cape Town as in its rural hinterland. As late as 1893,

16 Bickford-Smith, "A'special tradition", p 52.

18 C Bundy, " 'Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen":
White Poverty in the Cape before Poor Whiteism", in W
Beinart, P Delius and S Trapido (eds), Putting a Plough to
the Ground: Accumulation and Dispossession in Rural South
Africa 1850-1930, (JOhannesburg,Ravan,1986), pp 101-128.

evidence to a labour commission showed that at the docks, on
building sites and in the homes of the white bourgeoisie,
white and black worked in similar categories of labour (19)
. Nevertheless, Cape Town's dominant class, and specifically
her mercantile and business elite, had its own political
agenda after 1872, an agenda concerned with tariffs, railway
building and, in general, the need for an improved
infrastructure for commercial expansion. In pursuing this
agenda, and going hand-in-hand with economic growth and
immigration from Britain in the late 1870's and 1880's, Cape
Town's dominant class promoted an assertively English ethnic
identity at both the local and central political levels.

Adapting an argument used by Crolls and Dodd for the mother
country, Englishness in the colonial, Cape Town context
necessitated the ability to speak English and the possession
of a white skin. Identifying black Capetonians as belonging
to the "other" was part of the process of establishing
English ethnicity (20) . Moreover as a serious economic
depression hit Cape Town in the mid-1880's, the ideology of
Englishness helped to ensure that Cape Town's dominant class
viewed poverty and social problems in general in ethnic
terms. Thus, parallelimg the attitudes of Stedman Jones'

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19 Cape Parliamentary Papers (CPP), G39-1893, "Labour
Commission".

20 Bickford-Smith, "Commerce", chs 3-4; P Dodd, "Englishness
and the National Culture", in R Colls and P Dodd (eds),
Englishness: Politics and Culture, 1880-1920,
(Beckenham,Croom Helm,1986), pp 1-28.

middle-class Londoners, some of Cape Town's dominant class,
particularly clergymen, journalists and doctors, came to see
the neeed for at least limited social intervention, to save
the deserving poor from the residuum. This perception was
furthered in both cities by demonstrations of the unemployed
as well as by riots. The difference was that in Cape Town
the respectable working-class, the deserving poor, were
deemed to be white, the residuum black (21) .

This conclusion was aided by the fact that despite the lack
of a rigid division of labour, the process of urbanisation
in Cape Town had produced an approximate division of labour
between lightness of pigmentation and status within and
between occupational categories, a tendency increased by
changes in the technology and techniques of production in
the late nineteenth century and, arguably, by the prejudice
or self-interest, of employers (22) . In Cape Town the
British theory of urban degeneracy was thus ethnicised, so
that journalists, doctors and English-speaking civil
servants propounded the "sanitation syndrome" (23) . In
other words they argued that whites needed to be protected

21 JV Bickford-Smith, "Dangerous Cape Town: Middle-Class
Attitudes to Poverty in Cape Town in the late Nineteenth
Century",Studies,4,(1981),29-65.

22 Bickford-Smith, "Commerce", ch 2 and pp 411-435; P Van
Duin, "Artisans and trade unions in the Cape Town Building
Industry,1900-1924" in James and Simons (eds), pp 95-110.

23 M Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and
Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909", Journal
of African History,xviii,3,(1977),387-410.

from contaminating blacks, an argument given both urgency
and pseudo-logic in the 1890's when laced with the rhetoric
of social Darwinism. Action on behalf of Cape Town's newly
discovered "poor whites" first took the rather meagre form
in the 1880's of temporary relief work for unemployed
artisans and clerks (24) . But by the 1890's, "poor
whiteism" was part of the rhetoric and concern of members of
the dominant class not only in Cape Town but also in the
countryside, and both could agree on the need for
compulsory, separate and superior education for whites as
the remedy (25) .

Thus the pursuit of separation and the seductive slogan of
"white supremacy" were common to both Afrikaner and English
ethnic mobilisation. However, the fact of the matter was
that in the first decade of the twentieth century the nature
of economic activity in Cape Town, and the continuing lack
of a rigid division of labour, ensured that few of Cape
Town's economically active elite, her businessmen and
merchants, had any direct stake in extending separation at
their own expense. They may have believed in the theory of
total separation, and applauded the segregation of
Government institutions, but most of Cape Town's employers
of labour, unlike Kimberley mineowners or randlords, had
little immediate material interest or incentive in bringing

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24 Bickford-Smith, "Dangerous Cape Town", pp 45-50.

25 Bickford-Smith, "A special tradition", pp 47-52.

about a far more comprehensive separation of black and white
workers that could only be achieved by residential
segregation. Indeed, when pressure built up in the 1890's,
particularly from local and central government medical
officials, journalists and petty-bourgeois whites, for the
need to residentially segregate a highly visible and
vulnerable part of the residuum, Transkeian Africans, Cape
Town merchants and builders expressed concern that their
labour needs, such as they were, would be endangered. Only
employers of dock labour came close to requiring, and
consequently demanding, the system of labour control that
the Kimberley magnates enjoyed by the late 1880's. The fact
that most Africans in Cape Town were forced into two
locations in 1901 had much to do with the combination of
bubonic plague, the fact that by far the largest number of
them were unskilled dockworkers, and that by that date their
employer was the Cape Government which took on the economic
burden of establishing the locations (26) .

By the early twentieth century Fredrickson's "special
tradition of multi-racialism" continued to survive, if in
truncated form, as a lower-class phenomenon. It existed only
in some facilities, social activities and residential areas
such as District Six. That it did so at all, when members of

26 Bickford-Smith, "A'special tradition", pp 57-61; E Van
Heyningen, "Cape Town and the Plague of
1901",Studies,4,(1981), 66-107; C Saunders, "The Creation of
Ndabeni: Urban Segregation and African Resistance in Cape
Town",Studies,1,(1979), 165-193.

Cape Town's dominant class could agree on the need for
exclusion—could even agree in theory on the need for social
separation—would seem to be because the vast majority of
those actively involved in employing labour, accumulating
capital, generating wealth and with possession of political
power in Cape Town, perceived some danger, little material
gain, and perhaps most importantly, considerable potential
expense in over-active social engineering.

Although the history of racism and segregation in Cape Town,
for the rest of the period considered in this paper, remains
little researched, it is possible from the available
evidence to assert that trends begun in the pre-Union period
continued up to 1948, and were in fact quickened after 1910.
The Union constitution, with its whites only parliament,
entrenched white political, and thereby economic and social,
supremacy. The black vote, which had anyway been of only
marginal significance in the pre-Union Cape, was further
watered down after 1910 by the absence of such voters in the
other three provinces.

The politics of grain and gold, concerns of, and for,
Greenberg's "bounded" white workers, insisted that
separation would extend in the decades after 1910 (27) .
State intervention on behalf of poor or poorer whites
increased in the 1920's, even before the Pact government of
1924, and even when the consequent legislation made no

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27 Greenberg, pp 273-327.

mention of colour. Thus the Juveniles Act of 1921 assisted

youths "subject to compulsory education"; the Apprentices

Act of 1922 made apprenticeship only available to those with

a minimum of a standard 6 education. Given the nature of

extant education legislation, both acts were effectively

helping whites only. The "Civilised Labour Policy" of 1924

may, under the Nationalist's "New Deal" have theoretically

included coloureds as civilised, but in practice it almost

exclusively benefitted whites. In the same year, the

Industrial Conciliation Act excluded Africans, as well as

domestic workers, the vast majority of whom were black. The

Wages Act of 1925 helped to undermine the bargaining

position of coloured artisans, because, according to Gavin

Lewis, it set wage levels so high that it removed the

incentive of white employers to choose coloured rather than

white labour (28) . In 1928 the Pensions Act gave coloureds

lower pensions than whites, while in 1930 a separate section

of the Department of Education was established to supervise

coloured education, which, throughout the twentieth century,

consistently received less per capita than white (29) . Much

of the above legislation combined with deskilling and

depression in the 1920's and 1930's to ensure that black

Capetonians, be they coloured or African, were unable to

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28 G Lewis, Between the Wire and the Wall: a history of
South African 'Coloured" politics,(Cape Town,David
Philip,1987), pp 88,119-120,132-133; I Goldin Making Race:
the Politics and Economics of Coloured Identity in South
Africa, pp 42,45.

29 Lewis, pp 134-5.

mount any sustained economic challenge to white supremacy.
The group that had arguably been in the best position to do
so, coloured artisans, had been "shaken out of virtually all
the traditional crafts and prevented by apprenticeship
barriers and prejudice from entering the new electrical,
machine and metallurgical crafts" (30) .

The "great tradition" of Cape Liberalism, which had helped
to restrain the widespread de jure imposition of segregation
in the Cape before Union, under attack before 1910 and
provincialised thereafter, was further eroded by the well
known legislation of the 1930's. Only white women were given
the vote in 1930, which reduced the coloured vote in that
year from twenty to ten per cent of the total in the Cape.
African men were put on a separate voters roll in 1936 (31).

At least at a local government level the presence of a
sizeable minority of black (overwhelmingly coloured) voters,
and the election of a number of articulate coloured town
councillors, such as Abdurahman and Cissie Gool, had some
effect on decolouring the rhetoric and legislation of the
city council in the 1920's and 1930's. It certainly helped
to keep a number of municipal facilities, such as the City
Hall concerts, open to all. Equally, Abdurahman had managed
to insist that municipal grants to the University of Cape
Town were conditional on that institution remaining an open

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31 Goldin, p 39; Lewis, pp 145-147.

one (32) . As the Council embarked, in this period and for
the first time, on major housing schemes, including the
establishment of whole new suburbs, conciliar reports,
minutes and regulations initially made no mention of colour.
But in practice, as Naomi Barnett has shown, such schemes
continued the pre-Union trend of social intervention-in
other words the separation of white and black. Thus Maitland
Garden Village in 1921; Athlone in 1925; Sunnyside in 1929
and Bokmakirie in 1930 were for coloureds only, as were
council tenements in District Six. A major housing scheme in
the mid-1930's in Schotsche's Kloof was for "Cape Malays",
while schemes in Roeland Street in 1921 and Devil's Peak in
1927 were for whites only (33) .

If whites were increasingly being separated from coloured
Capetonians by extended exclusion,(and Pinelands was a
whites only "Garden village" established in 1919),
separation, or by the far-from-free operation of the labour
market, the local and central states were intervening in an
attempt to maintain the separation of Africans from both of
these "groups" (34) . Thus the story of "legal" African
residence in Cape Town became, in general, one of increasing
insecurity and distance from the city. Ndabeni was
overcrowded by 1919, and consequently a court case in that

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32 Lewis, pp 27,74,187,199.

33 N Barnett, "The Racial Factor in the City Council's
Housing Policy 1918-1939",unpublished paper presented to the
Cape Town History Workshop,1989.

year determined that Africans could not be prosecuted for
living outsièd the location. However, this situation was
altered when the Cape Town city council took over control of
locations in the city, asked the Government to allow it to
apply the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, and began
establishing a new location, Langa (further from the city
centre) in the following years. Ndabeni was allowed to fall
into disrepair and, by 1936, was no longer operating as a
location. The position of Africans in Cape Town, as in other
South African cities, was made even more precarious after
1937 by the Native Laws Amenedment Act, which gave them only
fourteen days in which to find work. Thereafter, if
unsuccessful, they had to return back to the so-called
"native territories". With the City Council reluctant, as
ever, to spend money on African accomodation, and with an
increasing number of Africans staying "illegally" in the
city, it is hardly surprising that of the 65 000 in greater
Cape Town by 1955, four-fifths were in squatter camps (35).

The growth of segregation in the Cape Town of our period
took place despite frequent attempts to prevent it, and even
some victories, by black Capetonians. These attempts
involved the parallel ethnic/political mobilisation of
coloured and African elites initiated before 1910 in
response to white supremacy, and their intermittent
collaboration with predominantly black labour organisations

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35 C Saunders, "From Ndabeni to Langa",
Studies,1,(1979),194-230.

from the 1920's onwards against white political, social and
economic exclusion and separation.They also included the
testing of segregatory practices in the law courts,
demonstrations and communal rent boycotts (36) . Another
tactic was the changing of identity: "passing" from coloured
to white, or from African to coloured (37) . But perhaps the
most successful and enduring resistance, at least to
residential segregation, was that offered by African
squatters to enforced residence in locations (38) .

This paper has not argued that rigid segregation was
entirely in place before 1948 . It has argued that one must
investigate closely, and strictly qualify, Fredrickson's
statement that Cape Town had a "special tradition of multi-
racialism" before Apartheid. What was left of that tradition
was undoubtedly all but destroyed by the legislation of the
1950's and its subsequent enforcement.

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36 Apart from Goldin and Lewis, see Bickford-Smith,
"Commerce", pp 346-393 and 435-440; A Odendaal,
Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912,
(Totowa,Barnes and Noble,1984); Saunders "Ndabeni"; Saunders
"Langa".

37 G Watson, Passing for White,(London,Tavistock,1970).

38 B Kinkead-Weekes, "Africans in Cape Town: the Origins and
Development of State Policy and Poular Resistance to 1936",
unpublished MSocSci thesis,UCT,1985; J Cole, Crossroads: The
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