

THE COURSE OF INFLUX CONTROL IN THE BLOEMFONTEIN/MANGAUNG MUNICIPAL AREA, 1937-1986

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1. INTRODUCTION

Influx control played a pivotal role in the regulation of black urbanisation in South Africa. In contrast to the virtually uncontrolled urbanisation of white people, the urbanisation of blacks was strictly influenced by decision-making processes involving influx control, labour canalisation, the relocation of blacks from so-called white areas to the so-called homelands, and the decentralisation of industries. From a socio-economic and political viewpoint black urbanisation remained one of the greatest problems the ruling National Party and local governments had to cope with after the Second World War (1939-1945). In this context influx control had a direct bearing on important socio-economic issues like township planning, housing, health and job-creation - issues for which the relevant local authority had a legal responsibility.²

Despite the importance of the urbanisation and influx control questions the limited evidence on case studies like Bloemfontein is remarkable. Researchers like P Smit, JJ Booysen and the Urban Foundation referred in their studies on black urbanisation primarily to the main areas of Gauteng, Durban-Pinetown, Port Elizabeth-Uitenhage and the South West Cape region. Indeed, these four regions, occupying only four per cent of South Africa's land, accommodated about 58% of the total black urbanised population in 1970. The shared percentage of Mangaung, the black township of the Bloemfontein City Council, stabilised on 1,9%. However, despite the minimal shared percentage of Mangaung in the total black urbanisation pattern of the country, the township experienced a population increase from 36 000 in 1952 to 100 000 in 1986. It was a substantial increase which was not only due to the birth

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² P Smit and JJ Booysen, *Swart verstedeliking, proses, patroon en strategie* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 1982), pp. 55, 102, 107.

rate, but also assignable to unlawful migration and influx control regulating the labour needs of the industrial sector and private households and available housing.³

The question of influx control, acting as a control measure for urbanisation, was just as crucial to Bloemfontein as it was to the larger cities. In the light of the international evidence on the efficacy of direct migration policies, the most important question about influx control in South Africa is whether it worked effectively to control the country's (and Mangaung's) rate of urbanisation. Besides the universal rejection of the influx control system for blacks in South Africa, the majority of the councillors of the community councils in the Gauteng area, trade unionists and many of the employers of the 250 companies countrywide, disputed the efficacy of influx control as a means of preventing illegal migration to the cities in view of the large numbers of so-called "illegal" people in the urban centers outside the homelands. Indeed, according to the Riekert Commission, appointed by the government in 1979, the indications are that the number is considerable - at least 38% in 1980. A surprising confirmation of the impossibility of controlling urban influx came from the Cape Press and officials of the Western Cape Administration Board in 1984, admitting that it was impossible to try stopping the urbanisation process. It is consequently the aim of this article to determine the course of influx control in Mangaung and how successful it acted as a check on the urbanisation process in the township.⁴

South Africa has a long history of control, in one form or another, over the movement of people stretching from Jan van Riebeeck planting hedges for security reasons to keep the Khoikhoi (previously referred to as Hottentots) out, to the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, including the Transvaal and Free State Republics, regulating the movement of blacks to work in the towns and on the farms in the 19th century. An outstanding example of influx control followed in Natal when Theophilus Shepstone came out with a Schedule of "togt" (casual labour) regulations in 1874 to prevent the social congestion of blacks in the white townships. Despite the abolition of passes in 1828 by **Ordinance 50**, all kinds of control over the movement of blacks returned by the time the Union of South Africa came into existence in 1910. Some existed in all provinces: travel documents, labour documents, residential documents, curfew documents - the non-production of which, when asked for by officials, carried penalties of various kinds.

³ **Ibid.**; for more detail on migration patterns in Mangaung, consult CJ Nel (ed.), **Migrasiepatroon in Mangaung** (Department of Anthropology, UFS, Bloemfontein, 1991); L Botes, S Krige and J Wessels, **Informal settlement in Bloemfontein: a study of migrant patterns, socio-economic profiles, living conditions and future housing expectations** (The Urban Foundation, Bloemfontein, 1991).

⁴ A Bernstein, "Influx control in urban South Africa: an international and empirical view", in L Schlemmer and H Giliomee, **Up against the fences: poverty, passes and privilege in South Africa** (David Philip, Cape Town, 1985), pp. 85, 95-7, 340.

Control over the movement of blacks became even more complex when the **Native Administration Act, No. 38 of 1927**, was amended by the government in 1929 to bring all blacks outside the urban areas, including those living in scheduled native areas, within the pass districts to control the labour requirements of the mines.⁵

The years 1937 until 1986 demarcate the research field of this article. Through the **Native Laws Amendment Act, No. 46 of 1937**, the government attempted to keep farm workers on the land by restricting their inflow into urban centers. The industries, however, paying relatively high wages, attracted the blacks from the white-owned farms. The far-reaching influx control regulations of the **1937 Amendment Act** fell largely into abeyance during the Second World War due to the scarcity of all kinds of labour in the urban areas. It was re-introduced by section 10 of the **Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act, No. 25 of 1945**, followed by section 27 of the **1952 Natives Laws Amendment Act (No. 54)**, re-imposing section 10, but in a much more stricter and expanded form. Section 10 allowed blacks only three days (72 hours) to find employment in town, as against the fortnight of the **1937 Amendment Act**, also denying blacks the right to live in a white urban area, except under certain conditions which will be discussed presently. Section 10 gave new impetus to the enforcement of influx control by law. From 1984 South Africa witnessed the deepening of opposition to the influx control regulations of section 10. In 1986 the Natives (Urban Areas) legislation was consequently repealed, together with section 10, thus abolishing the carrying and production of documents of identification, allowing for greater freedom of movement by black urban residents.⁶

The term influx control indicates all practices aimed at restricting the urbanisation of blacks, whether through the pass laws or housing-permits. But influx control has far wider connotations. It is also associated with the politics of apartheid including concepts such as social engineering. It is also an international phenomena, closely linked with the migration policies of governments. Many developing countries in Africa and Asia, unhappy with their population distribution in the 1970s and early 1980s, devised influx control policies to affect migration and limit urban growth and population distribution. In practice this can involve forcibly evicting people and destroying shelters when they do settle in prohibited areas. The essential difference between the processes of urbanisation in South Africa and elsewhere in the developing world is that in South Africa attempts to limit urban growth took on an altogether different complexion - one of undisputed white hegemony. Indeed,

⁵ G Relly, "Influx control and economic growth", in L Schlemmer and H Giliomee, **Up against the fences: poverty, passes and privilege in South Africa** (David Philip, Cape Town, 1985), p. 296; TRH Davenport, **South Africa, a modern history** (MacMillan, London, 1991), pp. 102, 285-6, 511.

⁶ **Ibid.**, pp. 285-6, 511, 532.

the Stallard Commission as early as 1922 recommended that blacks should only be permitted within municipal areas for so long as their presence was demanded by the wants of the white population. This policy was a recognition of the importance of black labour to urban industrial development, but also of the fact that white political control of the cities could be lost if the urbanisation of voteless blacks was not kept to a minimum. A vast and complex system of influx machinery was developed to achieve this policy.⁷

Migrant labour was an essential aspect of influx control since it served to restrict access to the city to work-seekers only, forcing their families to remain in the rural areas. Influx control was subjected to severe pressure when agriculture in the homelands collapsed and the families of these workers were "pushed" from these rural areas to the cities - a reality quite contrary to the idealistic viewpoint that the homelands were viable entities - propagated by the Tomlinson Commission of the National Party government in 1955. The lucrative employment opportunities in the urban areas after the war instigated the government to step up influx control regulations in terms of section 10. This section indicated how serious the government was to look after the employment interests of its white electorate and to prevent the black townships from becoming overpopulated and unhealthy.⁸

In terms of section 10, influx control involved four major forms of restriction on the mobility of blacks. The first was direct control of the movements of persons. No black person could remain for more than 72 hours in a prescribed area unless he produced proof that he had since birth resided continuously in such area or had worked continuously in such area for one employer for a period of not less than ten years [10(1)a]; or had lawfully resided continuously in such area with more than one employer for a period of not less than 15 years, and had thereafter continued to reside in such area without being sentenced to a fine exceeding R500 or imprisonment exceeding six months [10(1)b]; or such black was the wife, unmarried daughter or son (not yet liable for general tax) of the black male mentioned in a and b and ordinarily resided with that male [10(1)c]; or in the case of any other black, permission had been granted by a duly appointed official to remain longer than 72 hours in an urban area, with due regard to the availability of accommodation in the black residential area [10(1)d]. The right to reside permanently in any area of South Africa outside the homelands was bureaucratically conferred in the form of a stamp on an identity document or reference book, which, in terms of the **Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act, No. 67 of 1952**, contained his photograph and information about his place of origin, employment

⁷ Bernstein, pp. 86-92; HW van der Merwe, "Urbanisation and the political position of Africans in South Africa", in **Woord en Daad**, 30 September 1983, p. 8.

⁸ Davenport, pp. 368-9.

record, tax payments and encounters with the police. These measures created the means of ensuring that control over black influx into towns could be exercised more effectively.⁹

The second control measure on black mobility was exercised through the bureaucratic allocation of employment opportunity. It was generally the pattern that the labour bureau of the municipal Department of Native Administration, through which all blacks had to be registered as work-seekers or employees, gave first preference to persons with permanent residential rights and second preference to so-called commuters - people in the homelands, living in approved township accommodation. Those without approved township accommodation stood third in the row. The third control measure on black mobility was indirect and took the form of restrictions in the provision of housing or sites for the erection of housing in townships. It is estimated the housing-shortage for blacks in all urban areas varied between 300 000 and 500 000 units in 1983. There was clearly a serious accommodation constraint on further urban housing. The fourth control measure was the policy of resettlement to the homelands. This measure was ostensibly malfunctioning, because only 450 000 people had been resettled against the estimated 3,5 million in 1983 due to the relatively higher wages paid by the industries, the employment of unqualified blacks for skilled work and the training of black builders. Practically, these job-creation initiatives of the local and central government were putting their influx control policy under severe pressure for more blacks were coming to the urban centres for these employment opportunities.¹⁰

2. INFLUX CONTROL IN MANGAUNG 1937-1972

Influx control and the registration of the applications of blacks for employment and residence were one of the three main sections of the municipal Department of Native Administration of Bloemfontein. The importance of this section was underlined by the fact that the influx of blacks, the issue of permits and passes, the registration of black employees and prosecutions were the direct concern of the manager of the department. Up to 1947 JR Cooper acted as manager, whereafter GJ Viljoen succeeded him, both very able administrators. CM du Plessis was appointed as location superintendent in November 1947, due to the increasing pressure from the white and black residents of Bloemfontein and Mangaung respectively, to increase the rate of influx of black work-seekers, relatives and friends, whatever the case may be, to settle in Mangaung.¹¹

⁹ **The Native Laws Amendment Act, No. 54 of 1952**, Article 27.

¹⁰ Schlemmer and Giliomee, pp. 334-5.

¹¹ Free State Archives, Bloemfontein (FAB), MBL 1/2/4/1/43, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 14 March 1947, pp. 18-9 and 12 November 1947, p. 10.

The geographical situation of Bloemfontein and its industrial potentialities were undoubtedly an attraction to black work-seekers from the rural districts, the nearby Basutoland (Lesotho), and from the so-called homelands like Thaba Nchu, Ciskei and Transkei. The City Council exercised its powers to control and restrict the abnormal high influx of blacks in Mangaung by proclaiming it a closed area as early as 1932. The Native Affairs Committee, representing the City Council, only considered applications from professional people like members of church denominations and teachers, if there was accommodation available, including blacks of Mangaung returning from military service or from the mines because they were contracted in Mangaung and had nowhere else to go after their contracts had expired. The outbreak of the Second World War and the wage determination in 1940, reduced the avenues of black employment in the industrial sectors like the railway and building sectors, the municipal departments and the domestic sector.¹²

The members of the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung, such as F Molise, JM Lingalo and JB Sesing, officially representing the interests of the residents, warned the Native Affairs Committee that they were very upset about these restrictions placed upon the freedom of movement especially of their children. In many instances these children wished to return to look after their aged, sickly or widowed parents after spending some years working in other centres. The **Natives Law Amendment Act of 1937** was actually oppressing the black residents, depriving them of the right of occupation, because their parents had houses built for them. The Board requested that the law be less stringently applied. The dilemma for the City Council was to prevent the indiscriminate influx of blacks that would lead to overcrowding in Mangaung, but also not to ignore the fair requests of its Board members.¹³

The serious shortage of employees in the afore-mentioned fields of employment compelled the municipal Department of Native Administration to permit a fairly large number of blacks into employment after 1945. RN Brits, Assistant Manager of the Department, admitted that the department experienced serious difficulties to exercise proper control over the influx of blacks from other urban areas, the homelands and the rural districts. Work-seekers from black countries outside South Africa like Zambia and Zimbabwe were of course prohibited immigrants and could only be allowed after approval of the government Department of Native Affairs had been obtained.¹⁴

¹² FAB, MBL 3/1/31, Mayor's Minutes, 31 March 1940, p. 18.

¹³ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/39, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 10 August 1945, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴ FAB, MBL 3/1/39, Mayor's Minutes, 31 March 1947, pp. 23-5.

Manager Viljoen framed the following guidelines for his influx control officials to meet the concerns of employers, relatives of residents who wanted to return to Mangaung and potential employees in 1946:

- Children whose parents or guardians resided in Mangaung, should be allowed to re-enter after any period of absence, provided that they were still under 21 years of age and not married.
- Women who married bona fide male residents of Mangaung must be allowed to enter, but not males who married female residents of the township.
- Blacks who left the township to seek employment elsewhere, leaving their spouses and children in continuous residence in Mangaung, should be allowed to return provided such blacks had not relinquished their domicile.
- Blacks not falling under the first two points, who had left Mangaung and desired to return after a period exceeding five years, should not be allowed to return except if the period of absence was prolonged military service. Each application should be submitted to the Native Affairs Committee for consideration.
- Blacks on bona fide transfer by government departments and private employers, should be allowed to return provided that accommodation was available. In the absence of regular accommodation, the Manager requested such departments to arrange for suitable accommodation before their black employees could be permitted. To this end a so-called railway location was for example established after the war. Church denominations were usually allowed to introduce black ministers from outside.
- Other applications based on reasonable grounds such as length of residence in the urban area of Bloemfontein but outside Mangaung, aged or sickly persons dependent on residents in Mangaung, etc., had to be submitted to the Native Affairs Committee for consideration.¹⁵

The Native Advisory Board expressed its appreciation for the leniency of the Native Affairs Committee towards otherwise harsh influx control measures, especially those involving the children of residents who wished to return. The Committee was also more lenient towards former residents of Mangaung who wished to return after a prolonged period of absence as they were usually not able to obtain residential rights at other urban centres due to the fact that few local authorities had a fixed policy for the acquisition of residential rights and thus simply ordered a black employee back to where he had originally come from when his term of employment expired. As to the question of blacks who were never domiciled in Mangaung, the Native Affairs Committee resolved that these blacks had to produce proof of five years continuous registered employment in the municipal area of

¹⁵ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/42, Report Manager Native Administration Department, June 1946, p. 6.

Bloemfontein before their application would receive favourable consideration. (This term was extended to seven years after too many applications for accommodation had been received in 1959.)¹⁶ The Native Advisory Board consequently failed to get unrestricted influx for blacks generally (but at least some concessions for the children of residents) and blacks originally domiciled in Mangaung or Bloemfontein, including those never domiciled in the municipal area.

The dust scarcely settled on the above question when three other questions, closely related to influx control, surfaced: Farmers protesting that about 50% of the employees in Bloemfontein came from the farming districts; being employed in the city, deprived them of their farm workers. This trend was followed by the influx of females, aged and indigent blacks to put even more pressure on the critical accommodation facilities in Mangaung. Pressure was especially exercised on influx control by the influx of females as they, most of the time, found accommodation on the premises of their employers in terms of **Proclamation 210 of 1938**, thus meeting the obligation of accommodation requested of females wishing to reside and do domestic work in Bloemfontein. The need for female domestic servants was reflected by the fact that 80% of these servants, boiling down to about 5 000 annually, came from outside the municipal area in the late 1960s. The chronic shortage of domestic servants was a contentious issue to both the members of the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung and the white housewives of Bloemfontein in the late 1960s. They were dissatisfied with the General Circular of 1966 putting an end to the influx of females from the surrounding rural districts, urban areas and especially from the nearby Thaba Nchu. Such prohibition caused a serious shortage of servants in the city.¹⁷

The influx of aged and indigent blacks from the rural areas into Mangaung and Bloemfontein was developing into a serious social problem in the 1950s and continued into the 1960s. Their influx was mainly ascribed to the subdivision of the farms around Bloemfontein into plots, leaving these people redundant and destitute, often with no relatives in Mangaung to look after them. The negligence of the officials of the influx control office to diligently consider the applications of these aged was ostensibly due to their struggles to keep up with the remarkable large influx of unskilled work-seekers (about 300 monthly) and their lodging illegally in the already overcrowded Mangaung in the 1950s. Influx figures for these years indicated the critical need for such unskilled employees in Bloemfontein (as was the case in the rest of the larger urban areas), namely 3 556 in 1950, doubling with-

¹⁶ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/45, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 8 July 1949, p. 2; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/72, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 4 October 1963, p. 8.

¹⁷ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/44, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 12 March 1948, pp. 23-4 and 16 April 1948, p. 19; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/46, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 9 September 1949, p. 5 and 9 January 1950, p. 8.

in two years to 6 952. Private employers and the departments of local authorities preferred employees from outside, because they were employed at cheaper rates and were more willing to do manual work like scavenging than unemployed local blacks.¹⁸

The municipal departments of Native Administration and of Health were concerned about the large influx of blacks and the resultant lack of accommodation in Mangaung. To assist the influx control office and the labour bureau (established in 1949 to allocate local and influx labour effectively), the Department of Native Administration re-activated the **Pass Proclamation, No. 150 of 1934** in 1955, stipulating that any black coming from an area outside the district of Bloemfontein, the homelands or the protectorates of Basutoland, Swaziland or Bechuanaland had to be in possession of an official pass or permit, issued by the magistrate or native commissioner of the district where he resided. A second legal device in this respect was the application of section 10, limiting the presence of employment-seeking blacks in Bloemfontein to 72 hours. Notwithstanding these stricter influx control devices the Department of Native Administration continued its struggle to harmonise the quest for labour with the large influx of work-seekers - lawful and unlawful - by the erection of a second hostel and temporary huts for the more than 600 migrant workers permitted for the Department of the City Engineer and some industries in 1958.¹⁹

These control measures and the establishment of a network of labour bureaux at urban centres to slow down black urbanisation countrywide, seemed to S van der Horst, a liberal theoretician and author on black labour, and colleagues like GV Doxy and WH Hutt, that the objectives of influx control and labour placement to meet industrial demands, were mutually incompatible because the primary (political) effect of the labour bureaux was to strengthen influx control, doing little to improve effective labour allocation to meet industrial demands. The course of influx control and sustaining legislation bore out this conviction after 1960.²⁰

The action of the responsible Native Affairs Committee was cause for more concern when it permitted at least 12 000 contract workers for re-employment in

¹⁸ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/48, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 4 May 1951, pp. 6,12; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/51, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 3 November 1952, p. 14; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/50, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 2 November 1951, p. 8 and 5 March 1952, p. 16.

¹⁹ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/52, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 11 June 1953, pp. 19-20; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/46, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 9 January 1950, p. 7; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/48, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 7 February 1951, p. 14.

²⁰ Smit and Booyesen, p. 48; D Hindson, **Pass controls and the urban African proletariat in South Africa** (Raven Press, Johannesburg, 1987), pp. 1-2; GV Doxey, **The industrial colour bar in South Africa** (OUP, Cape Town, 1961), p. 175; WH Hutt, **The economics of the colour bar** (Andre Deutch, London, 1964), pp. 1-2.

Bloemfontein after the expiry of their contracts in 1963, despite the admonitions of the extraordinary joint meeting of the Council's committees of native affairs, public health, housing and social welfare and the officers of the influx control and labour offices about the increasing accommodation and health crisis in Mangaung. These concessions that same year instigated 33 new applications for residence in Mangaung, involving about a 1 000 persons, included aged persons, minors who wanted to reside with their parents or guardians, females, contract workers and persons in special circumstances like clerical ministers, teachers and technicians for industrial concerns. The applications of these people were met in terms of the guidelines of 1946. This situation again accentuated the clash between the public interests of the City Council to limit the influx of blacks to curb its housing and health crisis and, ironically, its own labour interests and those of the industrial sector. The viewpoint of the Native Affairs Committee was that if these contract workers were not permitted to continue their employment after their contracts had expired, the City Council would soon reach a point where it would be unable to fulfil the labour needs of Bloemfontein, despite the 20 145 males already registered for work in 1963.²¹

Manager Viljoen found himself in a difficult position on the eve of the 1970s. On the one hand he was admonished by the Health Department to strictly control the influx of blacks to ease the housing crisis in Mangaung. On the other hand a large male migrant labour force was drawn to the expanding industries of the city such as the railway and building industry. In an effort to outline the policy of influx control more clearly (after criticism from the Native Affairs Committee in this respect), Manager Viljoen determined in terms of Chapter 5 of **Government Notice No. 63 of 1959** that black males and females had to lodge their applications at the labour offices of their home districts in order to enter the municipal area of Bloemfontein. The aim of this arrangement was to increase effective influx control and to gain time while the existing municipal hostels were being extended and the lay-out of the new suburb of Rocklands in Mangaung was nearing completion. These blacks from outside the city were to be employed on a contract basis by the railway, building industry and employers of domestic servants only. The rest of the sectors of industry and trade had to put up with the 1 500 unemployed blacks residing in Mangaung to get them off the streets - an aim that would naturally not materialise due to the aversion these people had for manual labour.²²

These arrangements of Manager Viljoen failed to deliver the expected results. The work force of Mangaung, counting at least 14 000 in 1970, was completely

²¹ FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/72, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 22 November 1963, p. 24.

²² FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/76, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 5 August 1965, p. 89; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/74, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 3 August 1964, p. 22.

absorbed by the different work sectors while "hundreds of migrant labourers" (to use the words of Mayor JNR van Rhyn) were coming in from the homelands such as Thaba Nchu, Ciskei and Transkei (the Eastern Cape Province). These migration tendencies were in line with tendencies in the rest of the country. This general increase in the black urban population was ascribed by Smit and Booysen, authors on black urbanisation, to the increasing labour requisites of trade, industry and mining, including of course the fertile birth rate and the failure of agricultural pursuits in the homelands.²³

Viljoen and the Native Affairs Committee identified negligence and ignorance of the law pertaining to the influx and labour regulations, including the employment procedures, on the part of the officials of the influx control and labour offices and the police service, as major reasons for handicapping effective influx control and labour allocation. These officials, not being up to date with the circulars of the municipal Department of Native Administration, such as **Government Notice, No. 63 of 1959**, consequently also neglected to explain personally, through the media or municipal circulars, the employment procedures to employers and employees. Incomplete information in the identity/registration books of employees caused unnecessary and time-consuming arrestations and charges like the 1 241 work-seekers and 298 employers charged in terms of section 10 during the first six months of 1965. It was also physically impossible for the few municipal inspectors to trace all the blacks who were in the unregistered service of employers. Practically it meant that employers employed blacks illegally from the streets and did not even give notice of discharge of employees, resulting in unreliable statistics, misleading the influx control and labour offices when calculating the number of blacks to be allowed for employment and residential purposes in Bloemfontein.²⁴

3. INFLUX CONTROL IN MANGAUNG 1972-1986

The government and local authorities pinned their hopes on the the Bantu Affairs Administration Boards to solve their influx control and labour allocation problems in the 1970s. These boards were proclaimed for demarcated regions throughout the country, including the Southern Orange Free State region which included the Bloemfontein/Mangaung (SOFS region) in 1972. Such a board controlled all the blacks in the townships of the region, including their municipal Departments of Bantu Administration.²⁵

²³ Smit and Booysen, p. 38; FAB, MBL 1/2/4/1/76, Minutes Native Affairs Committee, 5 August 1965, p. 89; FAB, MBL 3/1/63, Mayor's Minute, 31 March 1971, p. 59.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 91.

²⁵ FAB, MBL 3/1/65, Mayor's Minute, 31 March 1973, pp. 49-51.

The Board of the SOFS region expressed its concern about the ongoing influx of blacks from the homelands and the rural districts to the larger centres like Bloemfontein and Welkom for employment in the face of the fast growing housing shortage in the townships of these cities. An average of 5 700 males and 1 400 females were annually (475/120 monthly) permitted from the rural districts and the homelands to settle in Bloemfontein and Mangaung in the 1970s. The labour bureaux established at Thaba Nchu, Qwaqwa, Transkei, Ciskei and Bophuthatswana in 1981, had their hands full to regulate the almost uncontrolled influx of blacks to Bloemfontein and other urban areas in the SOFS region. Indeed, due to the continuous shortage of labour in the approximately 30 urban centres of the Administration Board of the SOFS region, 12 600 males were permitted from the rural region of the SOFS and the former homeland regions on an annual basis in the early 1980s. About 1 500 males, of whom 330 came from the homelands, and the greater part, about 1 150, from the rural region of the SOFS, were canalised to Bloemfontein alone. These figures revealed that the rural/farming region served as the major source for Bloemfontein's labour requirements. Since the Administration Board and its successor, the Development Board in 1984, took over the administration of black municipal affairs from the local authorities, these figures remained constant. Such large numbers necessitated the elimination of unnecessary administrative work. To this end the control of influx and the approval of applications for residential certificates were delegated to the housing and administration committee of the Board in 1984.²⁶

The labour bureaux in Mangaung, the rest of the SOFS region and the former homelands were upgraded by the appointment of more personnel to handle the increasing number of applications for employment and residence in Bloemfontein/Mangaung and in the other areas of the region. Nonetheless, the illegal employment of blacks continued in the 1980s, despite the notices and admonitions of the Administration Board that stiff fines would be imposed on employers employing blacks without complying with the stipulations of section 10.²⁷

The Administration Board of the SOFS region, and in particular the influx control office of Mangaung, were criticised for their influx control policy by the Kingdom of Lesotho and the governments of the former homelands like the Republic of Bophuthatswana (which included Thaba Nchu) and the Republics of Ciskei and Transkei. They complained about the staff of the labour bureau in Mangaung refusing the uncontrolled influx of blacks from these countries, even accusing the

²⁶ FAB, BOD 77, Minutes Executive Committee, 3 December 1982, pp. 3-4; FAB, BOD 60, Extraordinary meeting Administration Board, Report Organisation and Service Section, 12 February 1980; FAB, BOD 100, OR 23, Minutes Development Board, 13 November 1985, pp. 15-6.

²⁷ FAB, BOD 71, Minutes Executive Committee Administration Board, Annexures A, B, 2 October 1981, pp. 37, 43; FAB, BOD 73, Minutes Executive Committee, 28 April 1982, p. 65.

Sotho-speaking staff members of discrimination against the Xhosa and Tswana speakers. The Administration Board had to remind these governments of the labour agreements concluded with them in the 1960s and 1970s, stipulating that blacks from an independent country like Lesotho first had to obtain approval from the relevant South African passport control official located at the border post before entering an urban area in South Africa.²⁸

The question of the uncontrolled influx of black females and their children from the SOFS region, the homelands or independent black states, joining their husbands in urban centres like Mangaung, was a sensitive issue, not only because of the accommodation crisis, but also from a moral and social viewpoint as influx control undermined the hegemony of family life. In terms of section 10(1)a and b, few black families qualified to join their husbands - those blacks who had lived continuously in a white area since birth or had worked continuously in the same area for the same employer for 10 years, or who had lived in the area continuously for 15 years were permitted to have their wives and children living with them. Two court rulings, the case of N Komani (1980) and MT Rikhoto (1981), established the right of black women to live with their husbands in an urban area, thus confirming the stipulation of section 10(1)c, even if he was a lodger with permanent resident rights in terms of section 10(1)a or b and despite the fact that he was a contract worker, breaking the continuity of his residence in town for annual holidays, or to move from one prescribed area to another.²⁹

Above all, it clearly was the intention of section 10(1)c - and always had been since 1923 when the first **Natives (Urban Areas) Act** was framed - that legal wives were entitled to live with their husbands. The court's ruling was a triumph for human rights - the rights that any man should be entitled to enjoy, for it meant that a black man by right could have his wife living with him and also their legitimate offspring born in that town. The legal position of children born elsewhere was not clear. Presumably the intention was that children of school-going age, i.e. 18 years and younger, stay in the family. General Circular No.1 of 1980 reminded parents that children above 18 years were not covered by the court ruling nor by section 10(1)d (permission granted by an official to stay with his/her family in town). He was only permitted to stay in town for the purpose of employment on a contract basis, with

²⁸ FAB, BOD 418, File 20/3/4/1/2, Minutes Meeting officials of Department of Co-operation and Development, the Administration Board of SOFS and the Ambassador of Bophuthatswana, Bloemfontein, 6 March 1984, and Ref (14) N1/15/10, PGJ Koornhof – JC van den Berg, 29 June 1983 (letter); **Government Gazette**, No 5823, 6 December 1977, pp. 22-5.

²⁹ Davenport, pp. 399-400; FAB, BOD 388, File 20/3/3/1/3, Chief Director Administration Board – Chief Commissioner Department Co-operation and Development, Bloemfontein, 21 April 1983 (letter).

the option to renew the contract (which, as was said before, could become permanent due to the shortage of employees).³⁰

The court ruling and section 10 did apparently not restrict the authority of officials to control the influx of people into a black township, because the final word in the question whether women could join their husbands was spoken by the labour official who decided in conjunction with the municipal health officials about the suitability of the husband's house to accommodate his family. Secondly, in a desperate effort to check the large-scale re-uniting of wives with husbands, these wives were required to prove that they had already been living with their husbands before 26 August 1983 in terms of **Act No. 2 of 1983**. This meant that all who sought to qualify on the basis of residence taken up after that date, were excluded. This was a significant check on the influx of families, though it seemed ineffective, because the mere five families joining their husbands in Mangaung before 1980 increased to at least 14 families, due to too few and inexperienced or negligent officials to keep regular control on the influx of blacks, resulting in the critical shortage of more than 7 000 housing units in Mangaung in 1986. Backyard squatting and over-occupation of formal housing, including family lodges, were common.³¹

The early 1980s witnessed the final blows to the demise of influx control. The government was looking for ways of getting round the extreme unpopularity of influx control, especially after 1 418 blacks had been prosecuted for contravening the unpopular 72 hour restriction for seeking employment in Bloemfontein. After the ostensibly successful experimental lifting of the 72 hour restriction in Bloemfontein and Pretoria and the consequent recommendation for its abolishment by the Riekert Commission, the **Law on Black Community Development, Act No. 4 of 1984**, subjected influx to urban areas only to the conditions of employment and approved housing. Herewith, the stipulation that a black person could only remain for 72 hours in an urban area to find employment, was abolished, allowing blacks much more opportunity to find employment and become established in an urban area, thus also opening the door wider for wives and their families to join their husbands. The resultant multiplying squatter settlements in and around Bloemfontein (and other urban centres in the country) soon proved that the influx control conditions of employment and approved housing were yielding before the overpowering tendency of urbanisation, surpassing the approximate monthly influx figure of 1 500 in 1984 progressively towards 1986.³²

³⁰ **Ibid.**; Davenport, pp. 399-400.

³¹ **Ibid.**; FAB, BOD 85, Minutes Administration Board, 30 March 1984, p. 107; Botes, p. 9.

³² **Ibid.**; **Friend**, 7 February 1980. 72 hours, p. 3; Smit and Booysen, p. 78.

It was obvious that the National Party government finally left behind its conviction that blacks were only temporary sojourners in the urban environment of South Africa. When the Natives (Urban Areas) legislation was repealed in 1986, together with section 10, thus abolishing the carrying of documents of identification, greater freedom of movement by black urban residents was introduced, serving the final blow to influx control.

4. CRITICISM OF INFLUX CONTROL

Great disappointment had been expressed by the black community at large on the continued retention of the influx control regulations. Opinion survey data of black urbanisation in the main centres of the country indicated that the influx control system was universally rejected by blacks. Economic organisations like NAFCO (National African Federated Chambers of Commerce) and its executive director, MM Maubane, questioned the recommendation of the Riekert Commission to retain the qualifications for permanent residence set by section 10 because it disrupted the socio-economic life of the black people - not only those who migrated to the city without their families, but also those who were left behind, destitute in the economically unviable homelands. Even blacks, who had in terms of section 10 rights to permanent urban residence, resented the influx control regulations because these regulations did not protect them from competition by contract workers for urban employment opportunities and required them to carry identification documents, exposing them and their families to bureaucratic surveillance.³³

L Schlemmer and H Giliomee clearly indicated that formal restrictions on movement were a major grievance in virtually all black townships in South Africa. Among migrant contract workers who wished to establish themselves as urban people, the system of control evoked the sharpest reaction, even leading to political radicalisation. Not even to speak of the thousands of prosecutions and resultant convictions under section 10. South Africa is not unique in attempting to control urbanisation, but taking into account the large numbers of convictions (142 067 in 1983), it must have ranked very high among countries in which these controls were extremely direct, formal and coercive. These thousands of blacks convicted for technical offences in connection with influx control and pass books, only served to prohibit them from working legally, preventing them from living a normal family life.³⁴

³³ MM Maubane, "The case for black business" in JH de Lange and R van Wyk (eds), **Implikasies van die Riekert-verslag** (Unisa, Pretoria, 1980), p.105.

³⁴ Schlemmer and Giliomee, p. 335.

The conviction of the National Party government that the migration of blacks to the urban areas could be arrested by influx control or stabilised by decentralised industrial development in the homelands, were proven futile by these mounting technical offences. The Riekert Commission exploded the myth that the blacks were only temporarily in the cities to make their labour available, in due course to return to their homelands. Indeed, the official proportion of 38% urbanised blacks in 1980 was most probably grossly understated because urbanisation also involved the numbers of women and their families, joining their husbands in the city.³⁵

Frustration connected with influx control is associated with political and workplace discontent. The most significant is perhaps that the influx control system created a sense of grievance among all blacks, even among the lower-middle class and middle-class urban residents, whom the system was intended to protect. The application of the system was regarded as an affront to the dignity and esteem of the blacks because it created the sense that rights to domicile and movement were not basic, but had to be conferred by an alien authority. The influx control system became, in short, a symbol of oppression. It constrained the free flow of labour, reducing surplus labour in the city which limited the bargaining power of the black trade unions, also running counter to the interests of the industrialists.³⁶

Evidence gathered from trade unionists and 250 companies having large numbers of employees countrywide, including community councillors from the PWV region, indicated that influx control had a negative effect on industrial relations, as it was not in the interest of the unions and their members or in respect of racial relations because it actually depressed the quality of urban life. Though most employers viewed the urbanisation of blacks as an irreversible process not to be halted by influx control, the unions were of the opinion that the employers could do much more to influence government for more lenient control regulations. Employers actually favoured an increase in black urbanisation, being conscious of the contradiction between influx control and the freedom to move and seek employment embodied in the ethics of free enterprise. They consequently regarded the system of influx control as unfriendly to economic growth, though they wanted some form of regulation to remain to prevent overcrowded townships and resultant socio-economic problems like crime and poverty.³⁷

³⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 340.

³⁶ Schlemmer, "The fence of opportunity: influx and control and black reaction in South Africa" in Schlemmer and Giliomee, p. 112.

³⁷ Bernstein, pp. 95-7.

5. CONCLUSION

In the light of the international evidence about the efficacy of direct migration policies, the overall conclusion for Mangaung (and probably for the rest of the country) is that influx control failed to control the rate of urbanisation in Mangaung and to prevent illegal migration to the township. It is evident that many of the blacks who would move to the city if influx control was lifted, were already living there as illegals in the 1980s. Another key element ignored by local and central government was the natural growth rate of existing populations in the township in the face of a growing backlog in housing, health and educational facilities. These miscalculations indicated the absence of an overall urbanisation strategy. Local authorities attached their own interpretations to the broad guidelines for the administration of their townships in terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) legislation.

Black opposition to the influx control regulations does not surprise. It included the pass laws with their travel, labour and residential documents, being complex to the point of unfairness; secondly the Native (Urban Areas) legislation made rules for blacks which did not apply to whites, to enforce a segregationist legal system, to restrict the urbanisation of blacks in strict proportion to the availability of work and available accommodation and to expel blacks from the township for vagrancy after not being able to find employment within 72 hours.

The influx control process in Mangaung typified two central themes which were also true for the rest of the country, namely the clash between political ideology and the absence of a positive urbanisation strategy. Indeed, influx control was seen as an instrument of the National Party for political self-preservation by trying to limit the number of blacks in the urban centres, also hoping to cope with socio-economic problems like crime, poverty and overcrowding and to protect the opportunities for employment of urban blacks from undercutting competition of the rural and homeland blacks who accepted lower wages and poorer working conditions. However, the lack of sufficient money and well-qualified and experienced staff to diligently consider all applications in terms of the influx control guidelines, crippled the efforts of the succeeding Administration and Development Boards to solve these problems. But even the policy of influx control itself was in need of a clearer outline. The employers were also not without blame for these socio-economic problems. Their wilful negligence to heed the regulations of the influx control and labour regulations for employee registration played in the hands of the economic forces favouring the uncontrolled influx of labour.

It were these economic forces which clashed with the political ideology of the government that would eventually prove to be the winners, because these forces

required more and more black employees and migrants, but preferably a stable work force which increasingly endangered the political position of the white ruling class. In Bloemfontein, as in the rest of the country's larger urban areas, the necessities of economic growth, including the urgency to create employment opportunities for the growing numbers of blacks, led to the economic forces increasingly overpowering the ideological forces. The serious shortage of employees in Bloemfontein's industrial and building sectors, the railways, business enterprises and the municipal departments, compelled the municipal Department of Native Administration to permit fairly large numbers of male and female blacks to influx Mangaung from the surrounding rural districts at the cost of agriculture, other urban areas and the homelands like nearby Thaba Nchu. Though the Native Advisory Board of Mangaung failed to restrict the influx of blacks, some important concessions for children of residents, blacks originally domiciled in Mangaung, including those never domiciled in the municipal area, were obtained. Government and the local authorities, including Bloemfontein, accepted the influx of farm workers for industrial employment purposes as an accomplished fact despite protestations from the farming sector - a clear indication of the growing importance of industrial interests, putting, however, accommodation and health facilities at increasing risk.

The final blow to influx control in 1986, when it was formally lifted, came after many years of severe criticism of its disrupting effect on the socio-economic life of the black people in Mangaung and the rest of the country. Though its suspension instigated urban squatter settlements, blacks were at last free to enjoy greater prospects for employment and the freedom of movement without the burden of several identification documents.