

THE POLITICS OF DISEMBARKATION: EMPIRE, SHIPPING AND LABOUR IN THE PORT OF DURBAN, 1897-1947

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Abstract

This article examines the labor politics of race in Durban harbor between 1897 and 1947. It approaches the subject from an analysis of labor in a global, and particularly a British Empire, context. The article aims to move away from a solely “national” focus on the South African state and instead to look “up” toward connections to the British Empire, the world economy, and global social and political movements, and “down” towards Durban itself. These large scale (imperial and global) and small scale (city) levels were very concretely connected by Durban's role as a port. This article contends that in order to understand the place of working class Durban in an imperial world, we need to incorporate the shipping industry into other labor histories, studying how the movement of vessels and the actions of seafarers concretely linked these spatial levels. This article provides a broad overview of the sociological “shape” of the Durban working class and focuses on four “moments” of racialized labor in Durban harbor: the riot against M.K. Gandhi in 1897, the British seamen's strike of 1925, the insurgency of black dockworkers in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and the conflicts over the presence of Indian seamen in the port during the Second World War. These events revolved around what is here called a politics of disembarkation, in which the joining of the ship to the world of the shore created a zone of conflict.

On the morning of the 13 January 1897, mounted trumpeters galloped through the rainy streets of Durban, sounding the ‘rally’. They were summoning the white residents of the city to protest against the arrival of two ships, the *Naderi* and the *Courland*, carrying a group of Indian immigrants. The ships had been held up outside the port on grounds of quarantine for some time, but now they were entering the harbour, the captains intending to disembark their passengers at the Point, the long finger of land which stretched across the eastern, seaward side of the lagoon. The Durbanites were opposing further immigration of Indian indentured labourers and independent merchants. But they also particularly objected to the presence on the *Courland* of one Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, a young lawyer who had made a reputation for himself in Natal colony over the past few years through his advocacy of the rights of Indian immigrants, and was returning from a brief visit to India. About 5000 men (and a few women)

descended on the docks. Workers were to the fore of the demonstration. The largest single contingent, some 700 men, was provided by the Natal Government Railways workshop. They marched to the protest in a group under a banner which emphasized their Britishness: it bore a rose, for England, a shamrock, for Ireland and a thistle, for Scotland, and paraphrased Admiral Nelson's famous signal: "Natal expects every man will do his duty". There were also contingents of carpenters and joiners, store assistants, plasterers and bricklayers, saddlers and tailors.¹ When the white crowd reached the Point, about one thousand African dockworkers appeared, many carrying sticks. It is not entirely clear what this group were demanding, and whether their actions were spontaneous, or engineered by white anti-immigration politicians. But the black workers were diverted by police commissioner, Richard Alexander, who spoke to them, and led them off in a separate direction, to Grey Street where they dispersed. What then occurred has been commemorated in print, film and even opera. The white mob attacked Gandhi, and he was narrowly saved from serious injury or death.² In Gandhi's own account the key role was played by the heroic intervention of Jane Alexander, the wife of the police chief, who interposed herself between the future Mahatma and his attackers.³ The contemporary local press version suggests, more prosaically, that Gandhi was rescued by police officers, and by an appeal by protest leaders to their followers that attacking him would harm their cause.⁴ Whatever the case, Gandhi narrowly avoided a potentially fatal assault. Meanwhile, the white crowd was placated by an eloquent speech from the Attorney General of the Colony, Harry Escombe, who promised legislation to deal with Indian Immigration.⁵

The direct consequence of the events of 13 January was that the settler-ruled Colony of Natal adopted the 1897 Immigration Restriction Act, a measure creating a ferocious immigration bureaucracy. Driven by white workers' fear of Indian cheap labour competition, and white merchants' fear of the rivalry of Indian Muslim traders, the primary aim of this measure was to limit, and then reverse, the flow of people to Natal from India. The law made Durban into one of the more difficult ports in the world to enter, not only for would-be Indian immigrants, but also for seamen and others who arrived there. It also had a

considerable international effect – known as the Natal Act, its literacy test for immigrants, which gave immigration officers a means arbitrarily to screen out unwanted people without overtly discriminating on racial grounds, was globally imitated.⁶ After Natal became part of the Union of South Africa in 1910, this exclusionary policy continued in the new country's ports.

This article examines the labour politics of race in Durban harbour between that remarkable day in 1897 and 1947. It approaches the subject not from the standpoint of a purely South African labour history, but rather from that of an analysis of labour in a global, and particularly a British Empire, context. South African labour history now has a good forty years of vigorous research production behind it. It has generated some superb work. But, with some few exceptions⁷ it has thought about labour primarily in the context of the South African state. It has also tended to a dual teleology of the rise of the apartheid system, and the rise of resistance to it. The development of a more global approach in labour history has however opened up the possibility of rethinking these tendencies. The South African settler-controlled state itself did not come into existence for another thirteen years after the events in Durban, and its future construction, shape, and long-term policy direction were by no means inevitably given. And when that state was formed, it was situated, for the first several decades of its existence, inside the British Empire, which crucially shaped its politics. Moreover, Durban labour movements continued after 1910, to take directions quite distinct from those of the Rand and Cape Town, which tend to be the primary lenses through which South African labour history is viewed. Even when Durban labour politics was affected by global ideological and political influences, it put its own imprint on them.

The approach used here, then, tries to move away from a solely 'national' focus on the South African state and instead to look 'up' towards connections to the British Empire, the world economy and global social and political movements, and 'down' towards the regional and city level. And secondly, it attempts to examine how these macro (imperial and global) and micro (regional and city) levels were very concretely connected by Durban's role as a port, the ships which

sailed into it and the sailors who manned them. Throughout our period, in which aviation played a still relatively negligible role in terms of international transportation to South Africa, the ship was the mechanism which actually tied the British empire together in terms of flows of people, goods and (together with the telegraph, and later, radio) information. This means that in order to understand the place of Durban in an imperial world, we need integrally to incorporate the shipping industry into labour histories.

The paper is not intended as a comprehensive survey of the labour history of the city. Rather, it provides a broad overview of the sociological 'shape' of the Durban working class and focuses on four significant historic 'moments' in Durban harbour. Each of these moments illustrate different ways in which local and global politics interacted, and in each of which shipping and sailors played a crucial connecting role between these spatial levels. The four are the Gandhi incident in 1897; the strike of the British merchant navy in 1925; the transnationally-influenced insurgencies of black dockworkers in 1925-1931; and the conflicts around the presence of Indian seamen in the port in the Second World War.

The paper is therefore, informed by an attempt to think systematically about what is distinctive in the apparently commonsense categories of the harbour or the port. Ports are constituted, *inter alia*, by the intersections between hinterlands, urban political power relations, and the voyages which connect them to other ports.⁸ They are zones of uncertainty, at the shifting edge of land and sea, between the relative certainty of terrestrial power and the relative anarchy of the oceans: places where power only enforces itself with difficulty.⁹ Smuggling, pilfering, unauthorized landings are almost definitional features of ports. There is a constant tension between the need of states and empires to exploit oceanic trade networks and the threat to their control which openness to these anarchic flows implies. At the point of reaching the quay at the end of a voyage, the relatively isolated, and autocratic, social world of the ship needs to be aligned with the power relations of the port. This is what I would designate as the politics of disembarkation. The bureaucrat needs to reclaim the power of the

captain; states need to contain, manage, and if necessary repress conflicts which have developed at sea; officialdom needs to make decisions on who will be allowed to land and who must stay on board. Political forces in the port or in the interior may intervene politically to make their voices heard about these actions. The joining of the ship to the world of the shore then, creates a zone of conflict. Sometimes, as in case of the *Naderi* and the *Courland*, or indeed – on a vastly greater and more tragic scale – of refugee ships today, the terms of disembarkation can constitute a political crisis of an intense kind. This politics of disembarkation though, is also about rival imaginaries. As Foucault says, of the West (but it is perhaps more widely the case), the sea has been “from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination”.¹⁰ For British imperialists, the oceans were the stage on which the Royal Navy projected power and the Merchant Marine gathered wealth home. And as we shall see, the very force of that vision was mirrored by the enemies of empire in their counter-imagination of their own sea-borne realms.

In choosing 1947 as the terminal date of this paper, I am highlighting that the relationship with the British Raj in India was crucial to the politics of Durban. Natal whites were prone to take an extremely hard line against the Indian minority, despite the facts that Indian indentured workers had saved their sugar industry and that Indian traders were indispensable to their retail economy. From the perspective of white labourists, the imperial authorities were far too willing to placate Indian nationalist opinion: by contrast, Whitehall and Simla found the white Natalians obtuse. Even the government of Lord Curzon, the turn of the century Viceroy of India, generally regarded as very reactionary, in 1903 clashed with a Natal delegation that was demanding he facilitate the ‘repatriation’ of time-expired indentured workers. Curzon’s officials rapped the Natalians over the knuckles for their unwillingness to make reasonable concessions to the demands of Natal Indians.¹¹ Over a fifty year period, there was a complex triangular politics, in which the rulers of the Empire were forever struggling to balance their need to retain the support of white colonists in southern Africa, with their even greater need to contain the forces of nationalism

in India, where political activists were continuously outraged by those same southern African colonists' treatment of their countrymen. Indian-origin Natalians consistently appealed to Indian nationalist politicians, the Government of India, and the imperial government in their struggles. Those dynamics would only really change when India attained independence in 1947, and could fully confront South Africa.

In our period significant movements and forces which contested against the empire – anti-colonialism, Pan-Africanism and Communism - were to have their transnational impact in the port. But again, how these influences played out in the context of Durban needs to be understood: the local appropriations of such politics were always idiosyncratic. African dockworkers, like those who paraded on the Point, showed considerable militancy throughout our period. Yet theirs is a story which is difficult to recruit into narrative of the steady national march of the South African labour movement: their political identities were strongly regionalized. Nor did they take up transnational influences in any uncomplicated way. The striking feature of these movements of the port's African workers is the extent to which they reflected regional and ethnic identity, and their unease with organizations functioning at the level of the South African state. Similarly, white workers in Natal, while sharing an interest in racial protectionist measures with other white South African workers, were strongly inclined to a regional chauvinism and to an imperial identification. Seeing themselves as British loyalists, they were somewhat reluctant to make common cause with Afrikaner workers in the interior, or to do anything that would limit Natal's autonomy as a pro-British enclave.

The shape of the Durban Harbour working class

Despite Durban's growing economic importance, it was rather a small city. The peacetime population in the first decade of the Twentieth Century was well under 100 000. 1911 official figures showed that the 36 289 whites and 37 599 Indians vastly outnumbered the 19 245 Africans.¹² The white working class

clustered in the suburbs near the port, while the elite resided in the airy hills of the Berea, overlooking the town. Prosperous Indian merchants, mostly Gujarati in origin, were concentrated just north of the harbour in the Grey Street area, where they formed the centre of a remarkable network of retailers stretching through Natal, the Transvaal and beyond.¹³ Indenture-completed Telegu and Tamil workers provided much of the workforce in the city's light industries and market gardening sector. Africans were overwhelmingly male migrants, mostly from Zulu-speaking areas, but with an increasing flow from Basutholand and the Transkei. There was a dramatic preponderance of male migrants, with very few African women in the city. As the male migrants grew in numbers, private and municipal hostels spread across the town. In 1908 Durban Council established a monopoly over the selling of sorghum beer (*utshwala*), distributed through official beer halls, and in the subsequent 20 years the municipality made a profit of over half a million pounds sterling out of the brew.¹⁴ This enabled the management of the African workforce at minimal cost to white tax payers, and the 'Durban system' became widely emulated by British authorities elsewhere in Africa.¹⁵ However, the project was always threatened by the men's preference for illegal drinking clubs. The small number of African women in the city - only 1152 African by official figures - were prominent in the long-term growth of these enterprises.¹⁶

Some long term patterns of working class life in the port area were already established at the turn of the century. There was a core of African migrant labourers, constituting the core of the dockworkers and living on the Point in the so-called *Togt* barracks. The men had a self-image as the hardest and toughest of workers, calling themselves *Ozinyathi*, meaning Buffaloes.¹⁷ They were day labourers, receiving a *Togt* badge, which enabled them to look for work, and which could be withdrawn by the authorities. The supply of labour tended to be inadequate, because of the continuing strength of African subsistence agriculture. But this was to change in the subsequent decade, with the Natal authorities' crushing of the Bambatha Rising of 1906, which ensured the effectiveness of a poll tax, forcing rural men to seek paid employment. Although the municipality was to establish a system of hostels across the town, the Point

barracks were to retain a central importance for dock labourers across the period dealt with in this paper. Young African migrant men in the city developed a culture of distinctively dressed 'amalaita' groups, which engaged in ritualized stick fighting competitions, and sang Zulu military regimental hymns, reflecting an assertiveness that would feed into later protests.¹⁸

In the post-Boer War period, the Esplanade, the coastal strip north of the Point developed as a resort and hotel area, catering to up-country tourists and passengers arriving on the liners.¹⁹ This trade of course required numerous catering workers, and they were especially drawn from the Indian population. An important part in connecting the port and this area was played by a rickshaw service, established by local entrepreneurs in the early 1890s. It was also manned by African migrants, and took passengers and seamen into town. The African labour force was highly regionalized, with concentrations of workers from particular chiefdoms: there was strong representation of the Qwabe amongst *togt* workers, men from Mahlabitini amongst rickshaw pullers, and so forth.²⁰

Yet such a description is also to set up the working class of the city in a fairly conventional way. For its workforce comprised also those who worked on the ships in the harbour, and they have attracted almost no attention from South African labour historians. The Union Castle Line (UC), which became the dominant passenger carrier to Durban well before the First World War, drew most of its crews from Southampton, and they generally returned intact to their home port with minimal interaction onshore. Other lines serving the port made increasing use of Asian, African and Caribbean workers. Many of these workers transferred ships in the port, and a few beat the system and stole ashore. The crew lists of Bullard King's Natal Direct Line, a competitor of UC until its take over by the bigger company in 1919, show extensive recruitment of workers in Bombay and Calcutta, most of whom returned to India, but some of whom took their discharges or deserted in Durban or other Indian Ocean ports.²¹ There were several international companies that contested the passenger routes to South Africa with the British. Especially notable here was the activity of the

German East Africa Line, which put in a strong challenge in the passenger trade before the First World War and made a remarkable come-back thereafter, despite the post-war confiscation of a large number of German ships.²² Each of these challengers had their own pattern of recruitment. The sailing ships (until the 1920s) and tramp steamers of a number of European countries also contested British dominance in the cargo trades – German, Swedish, Norwegian companies and later, Greek. However, the very tight restrictions on seamen prevented the formation of the ‘sailor town’ typical of large ports. Little attention has been given to the rather few, but interesting African and white seamen who voyaged from Durban on international steamers and on the government Jarrah wood transports from Australia.²³ There was at least one particular cluster of African ocean-going workers which has been documented though, in the whaling industry.²⁴ In 1908, Norwegian businessmen set up a whaling station on the Durban Bluff, which, with one brief interruption towards the end of the Second World War, and after overcoming some internecine competition, was to survive to the 1970s.²⁵ The workers in the shore-based processing plant and on the whale boats were isiZulu speakers from the Eshowe area in northern Natal. They were recruited through Norwegian missionaries, who had a strong following in that area.²⁶ The Norwegian-origin merchants also, in the early years of the industry, deployed some of their African workers on the freezing South Atlantic islands of Kerguelen and South Georgia, where they worked in appalling conditions.²⁷ Whales caught near the Natal coast were winched ashore and processed at the Durban whaling station. In 1935, the station was employing about 30 white and 500 Zulu workers.²⁸

The Power of White Labourism

It may be tempting to put the actions of the white workers who protested at the Point in January 1897 down to specifically southern African white racism. But as we have seen, they appealed for justification of their actions not just to their economic interests but to a British identity, and this links them to a much broader global context. As I have argued elsewhere, there was within late

nineteenth and early twentieth Century Britain and its settler colonies, a strand of globalized politics which I have called White Labourism.²⁹ White workers in Britain and its diaspora felt themselves under threat from capitalists' recruitment of the cheap labour of Asian and African workers and appealed for protectionist measures to both the imperial and colonial governments. This politics could often be accompanied by deep social radicalism in relation to inequality within white society. Yet as the railwaymen's banner suggests, it was also frequently connected to a notion of special rights as imperial subjects of British descent. And although rooted in economic fears, white labourism took sustenance from current 'scientific' racial ideology, which was sometimes deeply internalized by activists. Connected by the rapid movement of white workers across the Empire, this ideological assemblage had significant influence on the shape of world politics, most notably in the adoption in 1901 of the White Australia policy, excluding workers of colour from immigrating to that country. The globalized project of White Labourism would be extremely strong in Durban through until the end of the 1920s, and continue to exert an enduring influence until the end of our period. Durban's white workers thus adhered to a shifting combination of anti-capitalist, racist and imperial loyalist notions.

Natal was economically controlled by an oligarchy of Durban merchants, manufacturers and coal owners and an overlapping coastal and inland class of plantation owners and commercial agriculturalists. But up to the 1930s, they faced some serious trouble from immigrant British labour activists organized in trade unions. Some of these were branches of British organizations such as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, but the workers also built their own local union and political formations. These political forms were initially somewhat ephemeral, but did secure some representatives on the Durban town council and in the provincial legislature. From 1909 white working class activists supported the South African Labour Party (SALP). The SALP eventually, in 1924, entered the South African government as a minority coalition partner to Hertzog's Afrikaner Nationalists.

The hegemony of racial labour exclusionism is demonstrated by Durban's handling of the remarkable episode of the transportation of Chinese workers during the so-called Chinese labour experiment on the mines in the Transvaal, from 1904 to 1907. The political importance of the avoidance of any possibility that these 60 000 workers would enter the Natal workforce resulted in them being situated in a veritable 'cold chain', in which they were excluded from any social contact with Natal colony as they passed through it. Chinese workers were placed in isolation in facilities at their point of recruitment, notably the camp at Chinwangtao. There they were photographed, vaccinated and screened for 'Asiatic diseases'. They were shipped on the vessels of China-centered British shipping companies, under close supervision of the Foreign Labour Department of the Transvaal.³⁰ On arrival in Durban, the Chinese workers were closely guarded, and moved immediately to a camp at Jacobs on the western side of the harbour, which had been used as a concentration camp in the Boer War. They were then placed on sealed trains, which took them to the Transvaal, where they were largely confined to closed compounds from which they were only allowed out once a week. On their return to China, the process was repeated.³¹ The voyages were closely supervised by bureaucrats, and medical officers, not primarily for altruistic reasons, but because the conditions of Indian indentured labourers had already made indenture practices an international political issue, and the British administrators in Transvaal hoped to avoid scandal. A typical Durban-bound steamer carried about 2000 workers.³²

Workers of two institutions were the core of the white labour politics of the port of Durban: the railway workshop and the municipality. When Natal Government Railways (NGR) made its connection to Johannesburg in 1895, it transformed the economic prospects of Durban, by linking it to the biggest market of the subcontinent. Close to the harbour lay the railway workshop, at the time by far the biggest industrial facility in the city. As of 1899, the workshop had 785 white, 263 Indian and 196 African employees.³³ Amongst white workers, there was a British-style apprenticeship system.³⁴ Skilled men earned a respectable 10 to 12 shillings a day.³⁵ The harbour initially had a separate workshop on the Point, but in 1907 it was amalgamated with the railway workshop.³⁶ After the Union of

South Africa was created, NGR was incorporated to South African Railways, which also eventually took over the running of Durban harbour. The municipality had a well-organized bureaucracy and provided a range of services, including taking over the originally privately-owned trams, which were the most important form of public transport.

Probably the most important leader amongst the railwaymen was a Scotsman, A.L. Clark, who immigrated to Natal in 1881 as a 22 year old.³⁷ In the post-Boer War period, together with another Scot, Harry Norrie, he formed a group of supporters of the *Clarion*, the paper of the English socialist Robert Blatchford, which they later transformed into a small Marxist group called the Social Democratic Federation. Norrie spoke regularly in the town gardens, his meetings becoming something of a forum for local labour militants.³⁸ There was thus a real streak of militancy in the local unions. In 1909, a strike in the NGR workshop against overtime spread throughout the colony's railway system. It failed, leading to the blacklisting of 400 workers, but in the longer run, railway unionism continued to grow.³⁹ Tramway workers engaged in long running series of industrial actions, culminating in a nine week long strike in 1921.⁴⁰ In 1920, in response to the dismissal of the popular Assistant Town Clerk, H.H. Kemp, municipal employees evoked the rhetoric of the 'Soviet', and seized the council offices – albeit only for a day.⁴¹

All of this activity was however, was within the framework of white labourism. As we saw in the 1897 protest, white workers in Durban, militantly critical of capital and the town's social hierarchy as they might be, felt especially threatened by Indian labour competition and were viciously hostile to Indian immigration. Clark and Norrie's professed Marxism does not seem to have taken them outside this framework. Clark in 1919 initiated an attempt to organize 'all grades' of workers into a National Union of Railway and Harbour Services, but this meant only white workers.⁴² H.H. Kemp was a vociferous anti-Indian, and advocate of Natal separation from South Africa on the grounds of anti-Afrikaner chauvinism.⁴³

White labourism in Durban was strongly linked to imperial loyalism, which could reach rabidly jingoistic levels at times of crisis. Following the 1915 sinking of the *Lusitania* – a political moment of oceanic imagination if ever there was one – there were severe anti-German riots in the area immediately around the port, in which white workers, and especially the men in the railway workshop, appear to have played a major role. Large-scale arson took place against the hotels, shops and factories allegedly owned by the city’s small German population (and of Jews with German-sounding names). Police records suggest that the riots were in fact manipulated by a small group of local elites, and were linked to competition in the liquor trade. The riots were only put down by the deployment of marines from a British naval vessel in the harbour.⁴⁴

The worldwide 1925 British seamen’s strike against wage reductions, interacted with Durban white labourism and the complexities of Natal’s relationship with India, in a remarkable moment of political ‘disembarkation’. The strike was opposed by the largest British union in the sector, the National Seamen’s and Firemen’s Union. It had been initiated by a smaller organization, the Amalgamated Marine Workers Union (AMWU), with the support of the British Communist Party’s National Minority Movement, which aimed to organize the disaffected trade union militants under party leadership. The strike achieved little in the UK itself, but became significant in foreign ports, especially in Australia and New Zealand.⁴⁵ It was also especially effective in South Africa, because the AMWU was the dominant union in Southampton, the home port of the Union Castle Line (UC), which was by far the most important passenger service on the South Africa run. UC also carried a significant amount of South African cargo, especially the economically important fruit exports. The militants who led the strike seem to have deliberately aimed to start it up in the strategic choke-points of the colonial harbours. Jonathan Potter, an Australian syndicalist who was one of the initiators of the action told a Durban official: “Well Sir, I’ve done my job. I joined the ‘Sandgate Castle’ to bring the men out on strike and I’ve succeeded. That’s my part. I am now quite content to be returned home”.⁴⁶

In terms of the political dynamics of Durban, the UC management made a cardinal political error at the start of the strike, when they threatened to bring Indian 'lascar' seamen from Bombay to man the ships in South Africa. This resulted in an outpouring of fury by the Natal white labour militants, with H.H. Kemp to the fore of the populist politics that erupted. But it also swung middle and upper class opinion in Durban behind the sailors, in a way which would not otherwise have been the case. Seamen, normally closely restricted in the port, were allowed to come ashore and given official support in finding accommodation. Thus the strike enjoyed a hospitable political environment in Durban, with Union Castle management, and later the South African government itself, complaining of the lack of effective action by local officials against the strikers. In this case, 'Britishness' trumped class identity for the upper strata, while nicely coinciding for white working class Durbanites.

This strike was the high water mark of British immigrant white labour politics in the port. By the 1930s, an earlier generation of turn of the century British working class artisans, many of whom had emigrated during the gold boom of 1890-1906, were beginning to fade away, and their children often enjoyed upward mobility into the middle classes. Although more Afrikaner white workers began to appear in the port, especially as the 1924-1939 governments of General Hertzog used the railways and other public services to create employment for their constituency, these workers were largely hegemonized by nationalist rather than labour ideology. However, what the remnants of labour politics in Durban did was to make any perceived breach of the labour 'colour bar' in the city actually or potentially politically explosive.

Insurgency and Global Radical Politics c. 1920-1942

The decade of the First World War saw a wave of wartime import-substituting secondary industrialization. The value of manufacturing in Natal – almost all of which was centred in Durban – went up from £ 4 434 562 in 1911 to £ 23 790 541 in 1921.⁴⁷ Combined with the collapse of African subsistence agriculture, this fostered a growth of Durban's overall population to 144 834 in 1921. The

African population was now 37 236 (but still only 3 224 of these were women).⁴⁸ Perhaps 15 000 of the men were domestic workers. Numerous shack settlements sprung up on the periphery of the town. ⁴⁹ By 1921 there were 56 397 whites, and Indians numbered 47 341, the shift in this balance towards whites reflecting the effectiveness of the suppression of Indian immigration.

In the mid-1920s, the longstanding domination of the politics of the port area by white workers was challenged by the emergence of the first wave of labour-political organization by black dockworkers. The history of these mobilizations has been exceptionally well documented in the work of Shula Marks,⁵⁰ Dave Hemson,⁵¹ Paul La Hausse⁵² and Ralph Callebert.⁵³ However, one dimension that has perhaps been insufficiently emphasized in this locally-focused literature, is the way in which these political struggles were also a struggle of political imaginaries of the oceans. This period was one in which two extremely potent visions of the seas challenged that of the British Empire on a global stage. The one was the Garveyite movement's project of a Pan-African shipping line that would return the African diaspora of the New World to a future African Empire. Though in reality the Black Star Line was a somewhat farcical episode, Marcus Garvey's ships sailed through the imagination of the colonized world far more effectively than they did the seas, providing a popular counter-point to the world-wide image of power constituted by colonial shipping. Seamen seem to have been particularly attracted to Garveyism, and their disembarkations across the African world had important political consequences for the spread of the message.⁵⁴ The other radical maritime vision was that of the Communist International, which saw seamen and harbour workers as a genuinely world-wide working class, a section of the proletariat perfectly placed to challenge the imperial powers, and especially Britain, at the very points where the economic sinews of Empire connected. A global strategy of winning over workers in the maritime industry, under the banner of the International of Seafarers and Harbourworkers, led from Hamburg by its Secretary, Albert Walter, was the focus of enormous Comintern energy in the 1920s and early 1930s.⁵⁵ In the 1920s and the early 1930s, the Comintern made a particular effort to organize African and black New World ports, using the magazine *Negro Worker*, edited by

George Padmore, as its vehicle.⁵⁶ At this moment, Durban was to take on a particular significance for the Comintern: it especially took up the death of a young Communist organizer, Johannes Nkosi, at the hands of Durban police in December 1930. In mid-1931, for example, a headline in the Berlin *Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung* declared that “The Black Race Rallies to the Red Front”, including a picture of Nkosi in a striking visual panorama of global anti-racist insurgency.⁵⁷ At a 1932 ‘World Congress of Seamen’ held at ISH Headquarters in Altona, Padmore hailed the recent labour insurgency in Durban.⁵⁸

The politics involved was one of aspiration though, because the *direct* political successes of both Garveyites and Communists in Durban in this era were relatively negligible. No durable Garveyite organization was built there, and the Communist Party remained extremely weak through the inter-war period. *However*, what both movements did do was, on the one hand, to inspire locally-fashioned movements that were partly derivative of their ideas, and on the other to evoke a disproportionate fear on the part of settler officialdom and society.

Just after the First World War, black seamen from the western hemisphere began to bring the militant doctrines of Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association to Durban and the Natal hinterland. Garveyism provided the impetus for apocalyptic rumours that swept southern Africa from around 1919, that a black American navy was coming to liberate Africans from the white yoke. Visiting sailors were certainly one vector through which these stories got a hold.⁵⁹ For example, in 1920, police reported on a sailor called Moses, recently arrived from New York, who had come ashore at Durban and addressed a meeting, telling his audience that “Marcus Garvey was the man to be relied upon ... who would free Africa ... the first vessel of the fleet was named ‘Fredrick Douglas’ and had been sailing to different places ...”.⁶⁰ In 1923 an African American called Holan told a public meeting in Pietermaritzburg, presided over by ANC activist J.T. Gumede, that “When you have combined, we will come to you and send millions of natives to teach you to rule yourself”.⁶¹ Subsequent police investigations revealed that Holan was a sailor, who had also addressed meetings in Durban the previous year.

Officialdom was delivered from the task of tracking this external threat by the rapid implosion of Garvey's movement, but his seaman-disciples helped prepare the way for the spread of the home-grown Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU). Started in Cape Town in 1919 by the Nyasaland migrant Clements Kadalie, and initially reflecting a hybrid of syndicalist and Garveyite influences, the ICU became, during the 1920s the first black mass political movement of modern South Africa.⁶²

The ICU was established in Durban in 1925 by AWG Champion, a mission-educated ex-policeman and former mine clerk and a small landowner. He was amongst the members of the African lower middle class pushed toward a more radical position by the extreme racial policies of the Hertzog government. Champion had been recruited by Kadalie to start up the movement in the Durban, and did so with great success. He proved particularly adept at bringing legal pressure to bear on Durban City Council over restrictive measures they had applied, for example succeeding in abolishing the night curfew on black residents.⁶³ The ICU recruited on a large scale amongst dockworkers. They also found support amongst car-drivers, garage workers and waiters, rickshaw pullers and domestic servants.⁶⁴ However the very success of Champion appears to have been rooted in a skillful linking of the cultural capital of the Christian Zulu elite of which he was part, with the militancy and political identity of the predominantly Zulu-speaking workers, which produced a strongly regional identity to the movement. As the charismatic Champion built a regional fiefdom, he faced increasing tensions with Kadalie and the national organization. At the end of 1927 Kadalie had Champion suspended over alleged financial irregularities. Champion formed a new organization, the ICUyaseNatal (ICUyN), and received almost unanimous backing from his Durban and regional constituency.⁶⁵

The late 1920s certainly saw a push by the Communist leadership from Johannesburg to influence the dockworker movement in Durban. At the time, the SACP had an advantage in the form of their alliance with a pro-Communist

faction led by J.T. Gumede, who briefly managed to capture the leadership of the ANC in the period, before being displaced by a more conservative group. In May 1929, the ICUyN established a 'Anti-Kaffir Beer Manufacturing League', protesting the municipality's beer monopoly. Dockworkers smashed the official Point Beer Hall. After a dispute with an official over the brewing of non-alcoholic beer, the Point workers called for a boycott of beerhalls, and held a meeting calling for strike action. An ICU meeting endorsed the boycott, although Champion was clearly somewhat nervous about it. A mass meeting at Cartwright's flats took place. J.T. Gumede appeared and put forward positions based on the ANC radicals' support of the Communist Party's 'Black Republic' slogan, while Champion focused on the local issues. The boycott spread across the city. A white motorist was killed by protestors. Champion now tried to stop the protest, but a mob of 600 white vigilantes appeared and besieged the ICU Hall. They were confronted by ten times their number of African workers. Violent clashes ended with six workers and two vigilantes dead. On 14 November 1929 the extremely reactionary Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow arrived in the City. Seven hundred members of a national 'Police Mobile Squadron' were used to raid worker's compounds and illegal drinking clubs. They checked poll-tax receipts, confiscated alcohol, arrested over 2000 people and extracted £ 5000 in back taxes. The boycott of the beer halls was wound down. Through 1930, tensions continued. Champion was temporarily banished from Durban by the authorities. The Communist Party made a strong attempt to influence the situation. At the end of 1930 it launched a pass-burning campaign. At a Cartwright's Flat meeting on 'Dingaan's Day', 16 December 1930, Johannes Nkosi was stabbed to death by African police officers.⁶⁶

Communist Party activists were certainly at work in these events and the Comintern even dispatched travelling representatives to check on the operations of the party from time to time.⁶⁷ But the party they were by no means in control of what happened in Durban. Privately, they were all too aware of the limits to their influence in the harbour. Party leader Albert Nzula commented on 1929: "What did we do? The masses in Durban were moving forward and we told them to keep cool, the forces against you are so big, you have to keep cool ... A disbelief

in the native masses having the spirit to fight for their rights ... has resulted in the party lagging behind the masses".⁶⁸

Ultimately, the portside movement crumbled because, on the one hand Champion and the elite leadership were incorporated by the authorities and the worker activists were repressed, and on the other, the Communist Party's politics did not prove able to offer a workable alternative to the Zulu populism of the ICUyN.⁶⁹ A commission of inquiry into the 1929 events criticized the city's management of black workers and called for the building of accommodation for married workers in the city. Inquiries by the council identified low wages, lack of family housing and the absence of recreation facilities as problems. The Council introduced measures to address some of these questions. In January 1930, a Native Advisory Board (NAB) for Durban was established by the council. Champion at this point became visibly more conservative, closely aligned with the anti-Gumede faction of the ANC and the deposed but popular Zulu King, Dinizulu, who had previously been anti-ICU. After Champion was allowed to return to Durban in 1934, he became a much more conciliatory figure in local politics. The NAB system (despite its lack of real power), new housing and other reforms, gave the local elite enough concessions to contain them for the present.

The Communists were not able to connect with the identity politics of rural migrants in the way that the ICUyN had. They lacked, for example, sensitivity to established notions of hierarchy – during the anti-pass campaign, Johannes Nkosi was taunted by dockworkers, who asked whether his parents knew what he was doing.⁷⁰ When Eugene Dennis, an American Comintern emissary, visited Durban in 1932, he did his best to be politically optimistic, but the evidence was very much against him. In his reports to Moscow, he claimed the party had about 200 members in the city, mostly dock workers, in 1928, although his formulations suggest that these were mainly 'paper' members. He also claimed that about another 400 had been recruited at the time of the Dingaan's Day protest. However, virtually all of them had been deported to rural areas almost immediately, leaving a total Durban membership of about 60 members in the city at the start of 1932.⁷¹ Dennis placed great store by the prospects of the small

Seamen and Harbour Workers Union in South African ports, and especially in Durban. He claimed that 40% of the Durban whaling workers had been organized by this Communist-led union, and that a strike in that sector had only been prevented by a premature ending of the whaling season. A Seaman's Club had been formed in Durban as a base for proselytization, and Dennis was distinctly upbeat on the future of seamen's militancy.⁷² However, not much that is visible in the archival record ever came of these hopes.

The power of the ICUyN moment had been the connection between politically skilled elite leaders like Champion and the rural migrant dockworkers and other labourers. With the introduction of the Native Advisory Board and the Durban authorities' subsequent building of family housing in a way which favoured the elite, the connection was broken. Garveyites and Communists disembarked powerful visions of the Black and Red Oceans in South Africa. They had real effects in Durban, but not entirely the ones that their apostles envisaged, as local actors reworked those ideologies in very specific local ways. In Champion's movement, radical militancy combined with Zulu particularism.

Anti-Indian Politics and Global War 1939-1945

As the South African Labour Party's support in Durban gradually declined, the torch of anti-Indian populism passed to a new force. In 1933, Jan Smuts's pro-imperial South African Party was constrained by the Great Depression to enter into a coalition with Prime Minister Hertzog's Afrikaner Nationalists. A section of British loyalists, especially in Natal, were unable to stomach what they saw as Smuts' move away from British commitment and capitulation to the idea of a constitutional separation of the country from the imperial centre. This group split away from the SAP to form the Dominion Party under Colonel Charles Stallard.⁷³

Though the Dominion Party was not a success nationally, it was exceptionally strong in and around Durban. In the 1936 provincial elections it got slightly more votes overall in the city than Hertzog and Smuts' new United Party, and in

the 1938 general election it won four Durban seats, including the elite Berea and the more working class harbourside Point and Greyville constituencies.⁷⁴ This electoral pattern resulted in a strong fusion of the DP's loftier constitutional goals with white Durban's anti-Indian populism. By the end of the thirties, as some working class and lower middle class whites in Durban had become more affluent, they were increasingly tending to move out of the lower lying suburbs near the port, like Greyville. These properties began to be bought up by Indian merchants. The result was a white outcry, stirred up by the Dominionites and other racists, against what the local white political leadership liked to refer to as Indian 'penetration'.⁷⁵ Durban was now a city of about quarter of a million people, divided into roughly equal white, African and Indian segments,⁷⁶ and white populists had the sense that the demographic balance was shifting against them.

With the outbreak of the war, the Hertzog-Smuts parliamentary coalition was wrecked over the issue of whether to remain neutral, as Hertzog and his Afrikaner nationalists wanted, or to support Britain, as advocated by Smuts. Smuts won a parliamentary majority and resumed the Prime Ministership, initiating a vigorous policy of South African military and economic participation in the empire's war effort. Smuts needed the support of the Dominionites and brought Stallard into his cabinet, which entailed concessions to their anti-Indian views. The consequence was that Smuts, over the next several years, truckled to white Durbanites by passing a series of laws against expanded Indian property ownership.⁷⁷

At the very beginning of the war, a dramatic development, which began in Durban had changed the imperial attitude to the Indian seamen or 'lascars'. On 13 September 1939, 63 Indian Muslim seamen from the Bullard King company ship *SS Umvoti* appeared in the Durban magistrate's court after refusing to sail. The next day they were sentenced to six months hard labour.⁷⁸ This was the first moment of a worldwide revolt by Indian seamen. In Cape Town, on 11 September, mutiny broke out amongst 'lascars' on the Clan Line ship *SS Clan Alpine*, and later in the month on the same company's *SS Clan Buchanan*. The

trouble on the *Clan Alpine* was temporarily resolved without immediate resort to the courts, by negotiations between the South African harbor authorities and the sailor's representatives, but the result was that the ship sailed on to London, carrying its dispute to the imperial metropolis.⁷⁹ But even before it arrived, the strike spread to British, and later to Australian and Burmese, ports.

The organization of this important strike is still poorly understood by labour historians. Both Communists and Indian nationalists had taken a stance against the war, so both had an interest in encouraging the action. In the UK, the India League of left-nationalist Krishna Menon and Communist activists played a key role in supporting it.⁸⁰ But it seems possible that pre-war preparation of the action was undertaken by the Seamen's Union of Bombay, led by the anti-Communist Goan Socialist O.C. Mendes, which had organized a major strike in its home port in 1938,⁸¹ and by the Seamen's Union of Calcutta, led by Aftab Ali, who was aligned with Menon, and had an ambiguous relation to the British Communists.⁸²

The central issues of the strike related to war bonuses and pay. Coming at the beginning of a war in which shipping would play vital part, the strike was a serious threat to British security. The London cabinet applied pressure to the shipping companies to settle the dispute, leading to significant concessions to the strikers. There were massive wage increases. In the Durban case, the need to get transport moving led to the personal intervention of Prime Minister Smuts, to have Edris Allee and his 62 companions from the *Umvoti* released after they had served only a few weeks of their sentence.⁸³ By February 1940, almost all the seamen imprisoned in the strike around the world had been let go.⁸⁴

Slightly later, during Churchill's coalition government, the British Ministry of Labour under Ernest Bevin became strongly committed to improvements in Lascar working conditions, and Bevin himself made a speech in which he denounced the use of the term 'lascar' as inherently discriminatory.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, tensions amongst this workforce remained high. In 1942 there was a spectacular riot in Durban harbour by the Indian crew onboard the *SS*

Jeypore.⁸⁶ The British authorities were anxious to avoid any action that might trigger a repeat of 1939's disruption of wartime supply routes.

The port of Durban became crucial to the British war effort between mid-1940 and mid-1943, when the Mediterranean was almost impassable to British supply ships and troop transports, necessitating the use of a round-Africa route to reach the Middle East and Asia.⁸⁷ The needs of the British merchant marine, which by now was heavily reliant on so-called lascars, dictated that large numbers of Indian seamen, transferring between ships, needed to be accommodated in the Durban, often for quite long periods. This went very much against the established exclusionary practices in the city, but South Africa really had very little choice in the matter. One of the implications of Smuts's integration of South Africa into the imperial war machine was that considerable elements of sovereignty were surrendered. This was especially true in ports, where the gigantic task of moving the troops around the world was seen as necessitating a considerable portside role for the British Ministry of War Transport (MOWT). MOWT's Southern and East African representative between 1942 and 1944, Charles Wurzburg, a former director of the Glen Shipping Line, became a power in the land.⁸⁸ MOWT representatives were installed in the individual ports. The British National Union of Seamen appointed representatives in Durban who played a role in coordinating the movement of sailors. The MOWT needed Indian seamen in the port, whether white Durban liked it or not. These seafarers had to live somewhere, and most of this slack was taken up by Indian boarding house keepers in the Durban city centre and inner suburbs, paid by the shipping companies. This resulted in slum landlordism of exactly the kind that could be manipulated by the anti-Indian propaganda of the Dominion Party. Welfare officers began to report atrocious housing conditions amongst the Indian seafarers.

The British government was extremely concerned about the management of seamen in general, given their pivotal role in sustaining the war economy, and a model for the construction of seamen's welfare committees was developed in British ports. In April 1943, following discussions with the Union government,

the MOWT's Durban representative, J.H. Hankinson, initiated a Durban Port Seamen's Welfare Committee, comprising representatives of seamen's welfare organizations, the shipping industry, government departments, the police and military authorities.⁸⁹ The committee was able to draw on the resources of the Anglican Church's Mission to Seamen, which already had a very active programme to support and house British seamen and to support (but, importantly, not to accommodate) 'lascars',⁹⁰ and the Seamen's Institute, a charitable organization which provided accommodation to white seamen (but apparently not to seamen of colour). A striking feature of the committee was the later addition of representatives of the National Union of Seamen, who, as well as disciplining their own members, attained a sort of managerial status over the Indian seamen who were excluded from their ranks. Despite an often acrimonious relationship with the Pretoria bureaucrats, who were felt by the committee to be giving it insufficient recognition and paying too little regard to its recommendations, the committee had a real impact on Durban over the next few years. It coordinated the existing welfare services for seamen, provided support for the numerous sailors who were shipwrecked as a result of torpedo attacks,⁹¹ improved health education and treatment in the city's venereal disease units,⁹² and looked after the personal needs of seamen in long-term tuberculosis treatment in the Springfield clinic. It also took a somewhat racially egalitarian stance in advocating equal pensions for white and 'Coloured' South African seamen.⁹³ The committee was suspicious of labour radicalism though, encouraging the authorities to pursue the small – and apparently not very effective – South African Maritime Union, and the International Seamen's Club, which they believed to be Communist-influenced.⁹⁴ They were particularly alarmed by an International Seaman's Club Meeting on 5 July 1943, which attracted 300 seamen.⁹⁵

The housing and movement of lascar seamen, though, was the particular focus of the Seamen's Welfare committee. The management of lascars in Durban produced a complicated politics of disembarkation. The British representatives on the Seamen's Welfare Committee wanted to be seen, from the point of their government's efforts in the steering of public opinion in India, as treating the

lascars fairly. The South African representatives were under strong political pressure to close down the boarding houses, which were very visible examples of the increased Indian presence in the city centre, and to maintain white Natal's exclusionist immigration policies. A sub-committee was set up to investigate the lascar housing situation. Its report painted a picture of Dickensian squalor in the boarding houses – extreme overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, and unhygienic eating facilities.⁹⁶ The committee also uncovered a system of corruption around the lascar boarding houses. In many cases shipping companies sent whole ships crews to a particular premises. But intermediary agents demanded kickbacks from boarding house owners for arranging this, and those owners who did not pay up did not receive these large groups of boarders.

At a meeting in July 1943 the committee “expressed perturbation at the number of men in Durban awaiting repatriation, and referred to the loss to the war effort of the valuable services of the men because of their lengthy stays here awaiting accommodation in oncarrying vehicles. There was the additional problem their presence created from a welfare point of view”.⁹⁷ Common ground was found in the vigorous pursuit of an interest in moving workers into more circumscribed accommodation and back to the ships. British officials wanted that from the point of view of labour efficiency, and the South Africans because of their desire to move the men of the Durban streets and out of the country as soon as possible. The committee's main recommendation on housing involved placing the men, as far as possible, in the newly expanded Indian Immigration Barracks.⁹⁸ They favoured the closure of the boarding houses in most cases. They were not absolutely unfair to Indian landlords – the activist I.C. Meer recalled in his memoirs that Indian students had themselves campaigned against the behavior of these boarding house proprietors.⁹⁹ And the committee reported favourably on a few landlords. But the general mode was perhaps an example of what Maynard Swanson famously called the ‘Sanitation Syndrome’, in which real or imagined health problems become a stalking horse for segregationist politics.¹⁰⁰

The committee succeeded in its aims. Most importantly, the concentration of the lascars in the immigration barracks made their movements easier to regulate.

But much else was done to move them along. For example, information was gathered about sailors who had been arrested, “so that seamen would not be wrongly classed as deserters, and also for the purpose of allowing any vessel to take steps, if possible to secure the quick release of men essential for the maintenance of the ship at sea”.¹⁰¹ Captains were to be “advised immediately upon the arrest of a seaman in order that the ship may be able to render such assistance to the seaman in order to enable him to proceed with his ship”.¹⁰² The committee even paid attention to such minutiae as persuading the Minister of Justice to give instructions that imprisoned seamen were not to have their heads shaven, as was the usual practice, so that their ‘convict’ appearance would not deter captains from hiring them. In August 1943, the committee enthusiastically reported that Hankinson had arranged for the repatriation of 560 Indian and Goanese Seafarers.¹⁰³ By January 1944 the committee was able to state that it had been responsible for moving on “the large number of Lascar and British and Allied seamen who had been at this port for a period of 4 to 8 months”.¹⁰⁴

The committee clearly favoured a move from a situation where sailor accommodation was integrated into the town, to one that, by placing the lascars in an immigration facility, defined the presence of Indian seamen as an immigration problem, and one to be addressed through repatriation. To this extent, their views coincided with both the British government’s interests in utilizing the seamen’s labour in the Merchant Navy, and the white Natalians’ determination to prevent further Indian immigration. The exclusionary logic of the policy that Natal had adopted toward Indians in 1897 was not, in the end disrupted.

Conclusion

In 1946, Jan Smuts had a famous confrontation at the New York meeting of the United Nations, with the representative of the transitional Government of India, Lakshmi Pandit, over the treatment of the South African Indian population.¹⁰⁵ The specific issue which provoked the clash was the laws which Smuts had

passed discriminating against Indian property owners. And the political impetus for that legislation had come specifically from the Prime Minister's need to maintain his alliance with white voters in Durban who were mobilized around the Indian presence in the city, a campaign which coincided with the lascar accommodation 'crisis'.¹⁰⁶ There could be no better illustration of how the micro-politics of a port city can resonate with global political developments.

This Pandit-Smuts confrontation signaled that South Africa's relationship to India would be fundamentally changed with the imminent British withdrawal from the sub-continent. Britain was no longer the intermediary power between South Africa and India. And the debate heralded the end of the prestige that the white South African state had enjoyed as part of the victorious wartime alliance. The preceding half-century represented a pattern of transnational connection which was now passing.

The paper has highlighted four moments in which the labour politics of the city had interfaced, in important ways, with the movements and actions of ships and seafarers, in what might be called a politics of disembarkation. In 1897, the riots around the arrival of Gandhi had generated a political crisis with policy consequences for the whole subsequent period. In 1925, the British seamen's strike had marked the apogee of the influence of white labourism. The sea-borne Garveyite (and perhaps Communist) activists of the 1920s had helped stimulate the first organized mobilization of the Durban African working class. And in the Second World War, the presence of Indian seamen in the port intersected with a complex set of political tensions between imperial and settler interests, contributing to a local political crisis with international implications. These critical moments point to the need to understand labour in imperial ports not just in a national context, but in one that is simultaneously local/regional and transnational, and which is crucially mediated by the peculiar characteristics of ships, voyages and harbours.

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- ² *Natal Mercury*, 14 January 1897.
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- ⁴ *Natal Mercury*, 14 January 1897.
- ⁵ *Natal Mercury*, 14 January 1897.
- ⁶ Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008).
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- ¹⁸ Paul La Hausse, "The Cows of Nongoloza": Youth Crime and Amalaita Gangs in Durban, 1900-1936", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16:1, 1990, 79-111.
- ¹⁹ Anonymous, *Natal Province: Descriptive Guide and Official Hand-Book* (Durban, South African Railways, 1911), 72-4.
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- ³⁵ Ingram, *African Port*, 124.
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- ³⁸ Gitsham and Trembath, *First Account*, 172-3.
- ³⁹ Gitsham and Trembath, *First Account*, 20.
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- ⁶⁰ Vinson, *"The Americans"*, 72.
- ⁶¹ NASA Pta SAP 41 Conf 6/953/23/4, W.E. Earle, Senior inspector, CID, Pietermaritzburg, to Deputy Commissioner of Police, Pietermaritzburg, 9 November 1923.
- ⁶² Van der Walt, "First Globalisation".
- ⁶³ Marks, *Ambiguities*, 76.
- ⁶⁴ La Hausse, "Message", 21
- ⁶⁵ An immigrant British trade unionist, Alfred Batty, may have played a role in this split NASA Pta NTS 7665, Native Riots Commission, Minutes of Evidence 8th Day, 14 July 1929.
- ⁶⁶ La Hausse, "Message" is the best account of these events; see also Marks 85-86.
- ⁶⁷ The recent work of Hakim Adi provides an extremely interesting account of the Comintern's initiatives in the African world in the period, but in my view tends to reproduce the Comintern's own, optimistic, readings of its role. Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora* (Trenton, Africa World Press, 2013).
- ⁶⁸ Minutes of Ninth Conference CPSA 26-28 December (extracts) in A. Davidson et. al., *South Africa and the Communist International: A Documentary History volume I* (London, Frank Cass, 2003), 253.
- ⁶⁹ La Hausse, "Message".

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- ⁷⁰ La Hausse, "Message, 48.
- ⁷¹ Letter from E. Dennis to ECCI 16 July 1932 in A. Davidson et. al., *South Africa and the Communist International: A Documentary History volume II* (London, Frank Cass, 2003), 29.
- ⁷² Letter from E. Dennis to ECCI 22 October 1932 in A. Davidson et. al., *South Africa and the Communist International: A Documentary History volume II* (London, Frank Cass, 2003), 38-39.
- ⁷³ P.S. Thompson, *Natalians First: Separatism in South Africa 1909-1961* (Johannesburg, Southern, 1990), 107-113.
- ⁷⁴ Thompson, *Natalians First*, 121.
- ⁷⁵ Edgar Brookes and Colin Webb, *A History of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal, 1965), 290-291; Jermy Grest, 'The Durban Council and "Indian Penetration" : Local Politics in the 1940s (1), Seminar Paper, University of London, 1988, [http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4133/1/Jeremy_Grest -
_The_Durban_city_council_and_the_indian_problem_local_politics_in_the_1940's.pdf](http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4133/1/Jeremy_Grest_-_The_Durban_city_council_and_the_indian_problem_local_politics_in_the_1940's.pdf) downloaded 30 May, 2016.
- ⁷⁶ DCC, *Industrial Durban*, 21.
- ⁷⁷ Brookes and Webb, *History* 290-1; Grest, 'Durban Council'.
- ⁷⁸ Durban Municipal Archives, Magistrate's Court Record, 1939.
- ⁷⁹ IOR LP&J /12/630/3 Inspector A.P. Newman, New India Dock to the Chief Police Officer, 30 October 1939.
- ⁸⁰ IOR L/P& J /12/630/12 'V.K. Menon and the India League', 1939; L/P& J /12/630/2 Anonymous memo, 1939; LP&J /12/630/6 Anonymous Memos from Police Office, West India Docks to Chief Police Officer, 1 November 1939 and 2 November 1939.
- ⁸¹ A. Colaco, *A History of the Seamen's Union, Bombay* (Bombay, Vaz, 1955).
- ⁸² See footnote 91.
- ⁸³ NASA Pta URU 3015-3044 1939 Smuts, Pretoria to Governor General, 6 October 1939.
- ⁸⁴ IOR L/E/9/1976 112 Commerce Department Delhi, 'Press Note: Lascars released from Gaols', 22 February 1940.
- ⁸⁵ *Daily Mail* 25 November 1940.
- ⁸⁶ <http://www.historybuffs.co.za/mutiny-in-durban-harbourhttpwww-historybuffs-co-zawp-contentuploads201207ss-jeypore1-300x119-jpg/> Downloaded 30 May, 2016.
- ⁸⁷ Archie Munro, *The Winston Specials: Troopships Via The Cape 1940-1945* (Liskeard, Maritime Books, 2006).
- ⁸⁸ Michael Miller, *Europe and the Maritime World: A Twentieth Century History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014), 285-6.
- ⁸⁹ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Rev. John MacDowell, Durban to Minister of Social Welfare, Pretoria, 21 May 1944.
- ⁹⁰ Missions to Seamen Office, Durban, Annual Reports of The Missions to Seamen, Durban, 1929-1945 (incomplete).
- ⁹¹ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee Minutes 1943-1947.
- ⁹² NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee Minutes 1943-1947.

⁹³ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee Minutes 1943-1947, 29 September 1943.

⁹⁴ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee Minutes 1943-1947. See 14 December 1943 for the union, and 31 August 1943 and 21 September, 1943 for the Seamen's Centre.

⁹⁵ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee Minutes 1943-1947, 6 Aug 1943.

⁹⁶ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee Minutes 1943-1947.

⁹⁷ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee 1943-1947, 20 July 1943.

⁹⁸ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee 1943-1947.

⁹⁹ I.C. Meer, "I Remember: Reminiscences of the Struggle for Liberation and the Role of Indian South Africans 1924-1955" (E.S. Reddy and F. Meer eds.), South African History Online <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/i-remember-reminiscences-struggle-liberation-and-role-indian-south-africans-1924-1958-i-c> Downloaded 30 June 2016.

¹⁰⁰ Maynard Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony 1900-1909", *Journal of African History*, 18:3, 1977, 387-410.

¹⁰¹ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee 1943-1947, 25 May, 1943.

¹⁰² NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee 1943-1947.

¹⁰³ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee 1943-1947, August 1943.

¹⁰⁴ NASA Pta VWN 1037 SW 443/2 Minutes of Port Seamen's Welfare Committee 1943-1947, January 1944.

¹⁰⁵ For the most insightful discussion of Smuts and the UN see: Mark Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Future of the United Nations* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2013).

¹⁰⁶ Grest, "Durban Council".