

Housing schemes continued to be built in places like Bridgetown, Retreat, and Nyanga West (Gugulethu) in 1955 and 1957. During 1961 and 1962 respectively, work continued at Retreat and Bonteheuwel, where 1863 dwellings were completed in 1961 and a further 1427 dwellings in 1962. Houses were subsequently built in Gugulethu, Heideveld (next to Manenberg), Kalksteensfontein, and Belthorn. In 1966, the first three storey flats (Courts) were built in Heideveld, Manenberg, Hanover Park, Lavender Hill and Parkwood.

Lemon further writes that before the apartheid city came about we had a segregation city. He quotes Davies' (1981) model of the segregation city. 'It incorporates a Central Business District (CBD) which includes a small Indian CBD on the edge of the white business area.' He adds that the Coloureds never took up the business opportunity to do the same as the Indians but Africans were denied the opportunity. In this model we had whites occupying most spaces within the CBD area. There were several mixed residential zones close to the city centre where all races lived but there were already several segregated housing schemes and townships for Indians, Coloureds and African on the periphery of the city centre. The apartheid city evolved out of this but was more radical in its demarcation of spaces for the various racial groups. Each of the four racial groups in South Africa had to reside within a designated area as per the regulations of the Group Areas Act of 1950. The Group Areas Act (Act No 41 of 1950) implemented the grand design of physical separation of the races (Coloureds, Indians, Africans and Whites). It specified separate residential areas for the different racial groups. As a means of removing black communities living in 'white' areas to their own separate areas, it proved particularly effective. Buffer strips separated the residential areas.

Establishment of Manenberg, an apartheid styled township

The Coloured township of Manenberg was established in 1966 at the height of the apartheid regime's forced removal programme. The 'Group Areas exemplify the fundamental tenet of apartheid ideology that incompatibility between ethnic groups is such that contact between them leads to friction, and harmonious relations can be secured only by minimizing points of contact,' says Lemon. Thus this led to forced removals and the real impact of the Group Areas Act was only felt in the 1960s and 1970s.

Residents of the new, raw and dusty Manenberg came from Constantia, District Six, Cape Town, the Bo-Kaap, Wynberg, Crawford, Sea Point, and Lansdowne areas. The effects of this forced removal have repercussions until this day.

Manenberg is about 20km away from the city centre of Cape Town. It is separated from Nyanga and Gugulethu townships by a railway line. It is flanked by another Coloured township Hanover Park on the west, Heideveld on the north and Nyanga on the east. Cape Town has all the hallmarks of an apartheid city, whereby the marginalized communities (Coloured, African and Indian) are located on the edges of the city. The roads, the public amenities, access to shops, access to railways, buses and access to employment were designed to put residents other than whites at a disadvantage. These policies helped keep people entrapped to this day.

A 1981 City of Cape Town Council document further elaborates how houses were then built in Mitchell's Plain in 1974 and how it expanded its operations throughout the city. Sprawling through documents of old City Council minutes of various committee meetings it states that as far back as November 1964, Manenberg was already being planned.

So in essence Manenberg was established according to official City Council documents around 1966 when houses and double and triple storey buildings were built. The building phase lasted until 1970. Between the years 1966 to 1970 housing cost R7, 386 817 million for a population of 33 922 people in Manenberg. A total of 5621 dwellings were built.

Manenberg was to be a sub-economic housing development area. It meant that houses and flats did not have ceilings, no inside water and no doors to their rooms. The sub-economic housing which was called dual occupancy homes/flats, consisted of one living room. There were 29 units built that had a living room bathroom into one and a kitchen. Other flats and houses had two living rooms and a shared toilet. In the same category 29 other houses were built which had their own toilets and a separate kitchen and living room. The double storey dwelling was another category of sub-economic housing. It had one living room/bedroom and a kitchen and 318 units were built. A further 636 houses were built which had one bedroom, a separate living room and a kitchen with another 636 houses which had two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. 366 cottages of superior quality were built that had two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. A further 91 of these were built that had three bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen.

43 others were built that had a living room/bathroom and a kitchen and lastly a further 43 houses built that only had one bedroom, a living room and a kitchen. Another phase of housing took place where 340 double storey flats were built. These had two bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. A series of triple storey 'korre' (courts) were built which had 858 flats with one bedroom, a living room, a kitchen and a toilet with 726 flats having two bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and a toilet. A set of 11 detached cottages were built which had three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and toilet.

Later in the mid-1980s, because of housing shortages and problems around squatting in Manenberg, a new kind of dwelling was built. It was called a maisonette (also known as the 'infill scheme') and 364 of these were built. These had three bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and a toilet. It had hot water and it was superior to all the other housing within Manenberg. Not only did the cottages, courts and maisonettes (infill scheme) form part of the establishment of Manenberg, other buildings and amenities sprang up. These were the different primary and high schools, the Silvertree Youth Centre, the Shawco building, shops, several churches, clinics, housing estate offices, community centres, soccer and netball fields and what would become the infamous Club Montreal venue in Sherwood Park.

It is argued here that the housing conditions and the basic design of Manenberg played a major role in how this community took it upon themselves to resist and partake in the call for making South Africa ungovernable. Residents of Manenberg have had a long and strong tradition in being involved in the anti-apartheid movements during the 1970s to 1990s. From the national 1976 riots to the meat boycotts of 1981 to the **United Democratic Front (UDF)** and **Mass Democratic Movement** era of the early to late 1980s. Manenberg had activists that helped make South Africa ungovernable, many of which were trained by the **African National Congress (ANC)** in the underground movement.

Early activism in the 1970s and 1980s in Manenberg

Community activists like Faldielah de Vries, Frank Gutuza, Rushdi Majiet, Keith Karl Dumas and others mobilized residents in Manenberg around the housing and living conditions. *Grassroots* newspaper was a newspaper that was started in 1980. It gained a reputation for being part of the alternative press movement in the 1980s. It was the first of a series of anti-apartheid community newspapers, with a circulation that grew up to 20 000. It is through *Grassroots* that we gain glimpses into activities in Manenberg and other townships. A *Grassroots* article dated March 1980 "Manenberg Tenants Stand Firm"• explains that 600 residents protested against broken toilets, unpainted homes and formed the Duinefontein Tenants Association (DTA). Mr. Rushdi Majiet was elected chairperson and he had a committee of twelve people who assisted residents in drawing up petitions against rent increases. The Association has elected a steering executive consisting of Mr. Frank Gutuza, a director of the Silvertree Youth Centre and Mr. Majiet as chairperson.

From the 1970s right through the 1990s, numerous community and civic movements and organisations were established making inroads into garnering support for the betterment of Manenberg. These organizations were the Manenberg Civic Association, Manenberg Educational Movement, the Manenberg Youth Organisation, Manenberg Area Committee, Call of Islam, Minister's Organisation, Manenberg People's Centre, Duinefontein Tenants Association, Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO), Silvertree Youth Centre, Self Help Manenberg, Salvation Army, Community Counselling Training Centre, Urban Renewal Organisation and the Manenberg Community Police Forum.

In the early days of Manenberg's existence there were already civic organizations that were trying to organize residents around issues such as rent. Another headline in *Grassroots* read, "Manenberg shows the way forward."• Different groups operating in Manenberg decided to work together to achieve unified action to deal with issues faced by residents in the area. The article mentions that the Manenberg Tenants Association and the Manenberg Educational Movement made a decision to work together. There was also the growing awareness of the need for a strong organisation which would be the voice of the people in Manenberg. Another article read: "Belinda Court organizes,"• residents in the court constituted a court committee and rallied around maintenance issues and decided to work together. This was reminiscent of the old days in District Six, where people worked together. *Grassroots* reported on one such incident, where the headline read: "We have the power to fight evictions – Manenberg Civic."• The story focused on how residents marched to the rent offices demanding affordable prices. It stated that: "Houses, security and comfort are basic human rights not privileges. In Manenberg, however, people have to fight to get and keep a roof over their heads. Here, evictions take place at a rate of twenty a week, a spokesperson for the Manenberg Advice office said."•

Key activists in Manenberg in the 1980s



Julian Jacobs, An ANC flag in displayed at a political gathering disguised as a cultural event in Manenberg c.1985. Source: Contributed by: Julian Jacobs

During the 1980s in Manenberg, a core group of people became part of a resistance movement that would mobilize, persuade people, conscientize people and convince people to take up arms, to make Manenberg ungovernable. The group was part of a wider network of activists throughout the country. Some of them went into exile where they were influenced or trained by others and in turn they came back to influence others. A new culture of resistance was born. These anti-apartheid activists were Mario Wanza, Faghie Johnson, Owen Munro, Irvin Kinnes, Christine Jansen, Faldielah de Vries, Emily Fairbairn, Mark Splinters, Maqbool Moos, Mickey Adams and many others. Most of these activists were influenced by the 1976 riots and agreed that Manenberg has had a rich history in playing a significant role in the 1976 riots and the uprisings of the 1980s within the Western Cape. Thus activism in Manenberg was nurtured in the 1980s at the three high schools in the area, namely Phoenix High, Silverstream High and Manenberg High through politically aware and militant educators.

So in the 1980s there were two distinct groupings in Manenberg, the one group which was more moderate and more visible and the other group which was an underground militant group who organised tyre burnings, throwing stones and petrol bombs at targets and later resorted to taking up arms. The latter were trained inside Manenberg. The first grouping consisted of thirteen people, who were mainly teachers and students from the three high schools in Manenberg. This group was called Manenberg Action Student Congress (MASCO), who had several teachers in it.



Moos Maqbool member of the Manenberg Action Committee and UDF. Source:

Contributed by: Julian Jacobs

The second grouping, Manenberg Action Committee (MAC), was more militant in nature and its membership was changing. Some activists belonged to both groupings playing both a visible and hidden role. They met secretly in the Manenberg library planning their military operations inside Manenberg. All members of the two groups constituted the inner circle of activists that operated in Manenberg in the 1980s.

Mario Wanza, Irvin Kinnes, Faldielah de Vries, Faghie Johnson, Mark Splinters, Maqbool Moos, Cameron Williams, Selwyn Daniels, Owen Munro and Mickey Adams were part of the first group, which was more moderate in nature. Shaheed Petersen, Mickey, Mario, Hattas, Faghie, Owen and others belonged to the second more militant group. These men and women helped change Manenberg forever.

Manenberg is also famously known after the great jazz pianist 'Dollar Brand' named one of his music albums Manenberg where he played with other great musicians from the Cape Flats. In the 1980s students used music, drama and poetry to air their frustrations against the racist regime. The activists used official school cultural programmes to air their political affiliations and to political educate students. Manenberg throughout those early days has had a rich history of minstrel (Kaapse Klopse) music and several minstrel teams still emanate from this part of Cape Town. It is a part of the slave history of Cape Town. But Manenberg was also a jazz hub where struggling musicians plied their trade at Club Montreal in Manenberg, where the like of Basil 'Manenberg' Coetzee, Jonathan Butler, and others played. A very successful jazz venue later opened in Adderley Street and then later at the V&A Waterfront called Manenberg Jazz Café. Music in Manenberg is encouraged through cultural and church programmes.

Presently, Manenberg is in the grips of poverty, high crime, and high unemployment where old anti-apartheid activists are trying to make a difference through many socio-economic programmes.

References: This article was written by Julian A Jacobs, and contributed to South African History Online via email on 21 June 2013. The article is a summarised excerpt of his MA Thesis. J. Jacobs (2011) Manenberg: Then and Now: Activism in Manenberg, 1980 to 2010. Unpublished thesis (MA), University of the Western Cape.
- See more at: <http://www.sahistory.org.za/place/manenberg#sthash.QZpByOPc.dpuf>