THE QUIESCENT AND PROSPEROUS TIMES – 1960S

After the Sharpeville massacre on 21 March 1960, the government declared a state of emergency which resulted in mass arrests. On 8 April it banned the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). A significant number of political activists were either imprisoned or forced into exile, or compelled to operate underground.

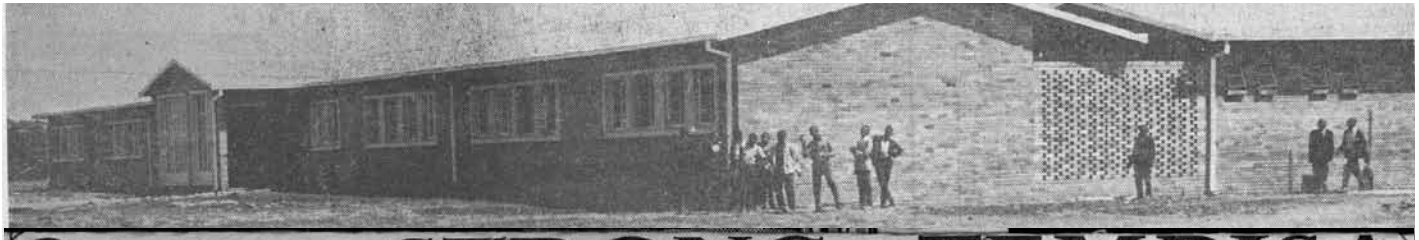
In 1964 the leadership of the ANC and high command of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), was sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. It was against this background that foreign investment began to flood into the country, increasing the country's economic growth and raising people's employment opportunities. Some of the residents of Tembisa found employment in the recently established industrial areas in the jurisdictions of Edenvale and Kempton Park. Pauline Masombuka recalls:

> I worked for PVM for five years. Then I quit. Then I worked for a dry-clean [sic]. I quit again and worked for Simba. I then went back to PVM in 1971[24]

Similarly, Mr David Mofokeng, who was originally from the Orange Free State, demonstrates how simple it was to find work during this period:

> I dropped out of school in the middle of Standard 10 and that's when I came to Gauteng, in 1967. I worked at Primrose at a garage, servicing cars. Andries Kunene is the one who found me work at that garage. He just told me that he quit his job at the garage, because he had found a better paying job. But he took me to replace him. I worked there for a short period and then after some few months Kunene called me again to come and work with him[25]

Tembisa African township, the first regional African township in the country, serves seven cities and towns and has a population of more than 80,000. It is expected this figure will grow to 130,000 in about three years.



80,000-STRONG TEMBISA THRIVING

From Our East Rand Bureau

LESS THAN 12 YEARS AGO 3,000 morgen of bare veld lay somewhere between Pretoria and Germiston. Today it is a thriving township of more than 80,000 people with a rail link that cost R8,500,000, 17 schools, 22 churches, a post office with its own telephone exchange, and an impressive police station which cost R184,000.

There are 10 soccer fields, about a dozen other sports fields, three creches and 27 shops. Nine different points supply beer. The communal hall seats 600 people at a time.

This is Tembisa, "The Place of Promise," the first regional African township in the country. It will eventually house about 130,000 people by which time the Provincial Hospital now going up will be complete and the two existing clinics will have increased to four.

The whole of Alexandra Township will have been resettled at Tembisa in about three years.

"By that time there will have to be about 8,000 new houses here, so we have no time just now for frills," said Germiston's Director of Bantu Affairs, Mr. F. W. C. Buitendag. He is confident that the programme will go according to plan.

The majority of Tembisa's houses belong to their occupiers and all are economic. The township provides no municipal revenue and receives no subsidy.

It serves Germiston, Kempton Park, Edenvale, Bedford View, Verwoerdburg, Modderfontein and the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board.

Germiston City Council is the controlling authority.

Mr. Buitendag, who has been in African administration for more than 40 years, believes the principle of regional townships with centralized transport, municipal services and other facilities, is a good one.

Because work was in abundance, black people were obliged to find employment. Unemployment and idleness could lead to arrest. Malabela recalls:

> We were living a difficult life, because the boers did not want to see anyone not doing anything during the day. They were going around, looking for people who were staying at home and not doing anything. If you can't find work, you must keep on hunting for it until you find it. People were given Special [permit] that indicated that you were looking for work. And if you found it, your employer would sign it so that the police could see that you were working[26]

The first two stores in Tembisa were established during this period, and they were both situated in Caleni section. Timothy Mabena remembers:

> When we arrived there was a businessman, who had moved from Edenvale, his name was Mr Thabethe. His first store was in Caleni section. This section was built next to the railway station called Oakmoor. Thabethe's store was called Verwoerd Huis. The second store was called Hlanganani and it belonged to Mr Nhlapo, still at Caleni. Part of Mr Nhlapo's store was used as a post office. That's where we collected our letters[27]

LEO'S